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DEMOCRATIZATION AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN POST-SOVIET NATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Why did some Post-Soviet States progress more positively regarding levels of democracy and levels of women's rights compared to others? This paper examines this question in two parts by studying different political, social, and economic variables and their effect on democracy and women's rights levels. The first part is a quantitative analysis that examines the relationships between GDP, Muslim population size, and international organization membership and democracy levels, measured by Polity scores, and women's rights levels, measured by V-Dem women's empowerment scores. The results suggest a negative relationship between size of Muslim population and both dependent variables and an insignificant relationship between GDP and both dependent variables. The results for international organization membership vary by the type of organization, with membership to economic and "western" international organizations having a positive relationship with the dependent variables, and membership to a "non-western" international organization having a negative relationship to both dependent variables. The second part of this paper, the qualitative analysis, provides further context as to why Muslim population size had a negative effect on women's rights as well as explores the effect of violent conflict on women's rights. The results from both analyses contribute knowledge, understanding, and context within which to discuss how and why Post-Soviet nations have experienced such divergent histories since their independence.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On December 26, 1991, one of the largest and most powerful empires in history collapsed. When the Soviet Union dissolved, fifteen states were created and catapulted into independence. Because of their shared historical experiences, one might have expected Post-Soviet states to have progressed similarly after independence (McFaul, 2002). However, in the over twenty years since 1991, there has been a large amount of variance in the progression of the Post-Soviet States. In fact, the independence of the Post-Soviet countries is unique compared to most other independence movements in that the regimes did not necessarily all transition to democracies, and also included transitions to anocracies and autocracies (McFaul, 2002). Additionally, the progress of Post-Soviet states regarding the rights and protections of women has been diverse. This phenomenon is especially interesting considering the role that women were able to play within the USSR republics before their independence in 1991.

For most women, their position in society increased dramatically under the governance of the USSR. Before the revolution, nearly no women were formally employed, yet in 1981, 47% of the workforce was women and at work, women were guaranteed equal pay and a year of paid maternity leave. The formal representation of women in the government was mandated, and under the Soviet Union women had free and easy access to abortions (Handrahan, 2001). In some places, such as Central Asia, the Soviet Union employed a very specific strategy that targeted women, promising them equality, dramatically increasing their rights and liberties.

While the Soviet Union was implementing these policies for their own program objectives, their actions had the unintended consequence of creating an environment that some scholars would argue was progressively feminist (Northrop 2004).

When the Soviet Union dissolved, however, women did not always maintain these rights and protections. Some scholars argue that this shift was so drastic in certain Post-Soviet states, such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus, because women became “the victims” of the independence transitions in these countries. They were the first to be laid off and suffer financially, and if they decided to stay at work, the backlash manifested in the form of sexual work harassment. Women’s participation in government severely dropped, and women’s representation in parliament decreased dramatically. Progress in integrating women into the public sphere stopped and women were forced back into their homes (Molyneuz, 2004). Other Post-Soviet states however, such as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, succeeded dramatically regarding the protection of women’s rights, and democratization. Figure 1 and Figure 2 depict the trends of democracy levels and women’s rights levels, respectively, since 1991 through to the present day for each of the fifteen Post-Soviet states. The democracy levels in Figure 1 are the yearly Polity scores assigned to each country, with -10 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest score (Figure 1). The women’s rights levels in Figure 2 are the yearly women’s empowerment scores assigned by V-Dem, with the lowest score being a 0 and the highest score being a 1 (Figure 2). Both of these variables, and figures, will be further explained in Chapter 3.

[insert Figure 1]

[insert Figure 2]

Studying this region presents the unique opportunity to investigate relationships while having built in controls for some historical factors. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the

question, “Why have some Soviet Countries progressed more positively regarding democracy levels and women’s rights post-independence compared to others?”. I will accomplish this by first conducting a large-N quantitative analysis that includes all fifteen of the Post-Soviet States and how three independent variables (International Organization Membership, GDP and Muslim population size) affected the democratization and women’s rights progress in these countries since 1991. The second part of my analysis will be a qualitative case study of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The purpose of this research is to further explore one of my quantitative variables, Muslim population size, as well as address an additional variable, violent conflict, that appeared to be significant in my historical review of the Post-Soviet histories. I picked these three countries because they have variance on both the independent and dependent variables and they are also all situated in the same region. This will allow me to control for different cultural and historical factors that could complicate the analysis so that I can better isolate my independent variables and draw stronger conclusions.

My findings suggest that that there were two main, vastly different, paths that Post-Soviet countries embarked upon after their independence. The first was one that embraced social, economic, and political “modernity” and sought for the inclusion in and approval of “western” countries. The other sought to reject Soviet rule by returning to traditional institutions and rejecting “western” norm constraints. These two paths are associated with very different outcomes, both for a country’s general levels of democracy, but also more specifically the women’s rights climates. These findings contribute to and fill a whole in the literature that has failed to adequately address the unique experiences of independence for the Post-Soviet states, especially the experiences of the women in these states. While I will argue the significance of these findings, it is important to note that there were several limitations, including unavailable

data as well as a high level of correlation between some of the independent variables, which I will further explore in my Conclusions. Additionally, this paper only explores a select few social, political, and economic variables, and therefore further research should expand upon these variables while also still filling the gap in the literature that specially addresses the Post-Soviet States.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theory

As the fifteen Post-Soviet nations continue to define their sovereignty, a small and inconclusive literature has attempted to address why some have experienced greater success with democracy building, and an even smaller literature has formed to begin to address the unique experiences of women in a Post-Soviet context. When there is a literature that addresses Post-Soviet states, it is often done through heavily specific case studies and lacks the inclusion of quantitative analysis. Therefore, this paper will seek to address this hole in the literature by providing a quantitative, comparative analysis of all fifteen Post-Soviet countries, as well as a brief qualitative analysis to provide a thorough overview of the Post-Soviet countries and their climate for democracy and women.

When not specifying on the specific Post-Soviet countries, there is a robust literature that has formed to address more broadly the phenomenon of democratization and the factors that contribute to successful democracy building. The same can be said for women's rights, but once again, this literature is comparatively much smaller and less complex. The most common variables that are thought to affect both democracy and women's rights include differences in international involvement, GDP per capita, religious makeup and the presence of violent conflict. While each of the literatures surrounding these variables often fails to specifically address the Soviet Union and the unique case that it presents, it does tell an important story about general trends and theories. Therefore, I applied this literature to the Post-Soviet context to inform my theories regarding the trends of the Post-Soviet countries. The rest of this chapter explores each

of these independent variables, the literature surrounding their effect on democracy building and women's rights, and finally the purpose of this paper in filling the gaps in that literature.

International Involvement

It has been argued that international involvement is an example of a universally experienced independent variable by the Post-Soviet states (Molyneux, 1994). This is because these countries experienced their transitions in a heavily globalized context, causing their subsequent development to also include a large amount of international involvement. Economically, they transitioned into an international system that included a world market with more interconnected economic policies than previously seen in history (Molyneux, 1994). Therefore, as soon as these countries gained independence, the political leaders of these nations began defining their countries in terms of the international alliances and organizations they could form and enter (Molyneux, 1994). While the literature agrees that democratic transitions and domestic policies, such as women's rights, are not strictly domestic processes, the mechanisms through which the international system played a role, as well as which international organizations exerted high levels of influence, are contested.

The link between international organization membership and democracy promotion builds off the "second image reversed" framework (Pevehouse, 2002). This framework argued that the international system was both an effect of and an influence on domestic policies. The purpose of this paper will be only examining the first aspect of this framework - how the international system has an effect on the domestic policies of a nation. How this relationship was established and enforced is split into two different theories, new institutionalism and sociological

institutionalism (Pevehouse, 2002). New institutionalism argues there is an explicit link between international organizations and domestic policies by holding domestic actors accountable to their commitments and their actions. Sociological institutionalism, however, argues that the influence of international organizations was not due to explicitly applied constraints, but instead that international organizations helped to establish norms and preferences for domestic institutions (Pevehouse, 2002). It has been argued that international organizations work through similar mechanisms when examining the formation of politics surrounding women's rights (Molyneux, 1994). Much like democracy promotion, these theories argued that international organizations allowed for the spread of information as well as resources that led to the advancement of women's rights, as well as established a world culture that was progressively more inclusive of women (Berkovitch, 1999). While the relationship between women's rights and international involvement is less researched than the relationship between democratization and international involvement, there is still evidence of a significant relationship. Morford (2007) found in a study that foreign funding was a significant and positive influence on the progress for women's groups (Morford, 2007). Additionally, there has been research into specific organizations and their role in the advancement of women's rights, most notably the UN and the positive impact it has had on women's issues (Berkovitch, 1999). While this literature is important background information, the purpose of this paper will more specifically analyze to what extent different types of international organizations influence democracy building and women's rights outcomes.

The literature also examines the types of international organizations and how they affected democracy building. Some research classifies the international organizations into two main groups of international economic organizations and military/peace-building organizations. According to Gourevitch (1978), economic organizations were significant because countries

constructed their policies and regimes based around what would lead to the greatest economic outcomes given the constraints and climate of the international system (Gourevitch, 1978). Others, however, argued that state security was the main influence that the international system played on domestic policies. This was because countries believed that there was an external threat, which caused resources to be diverted and strategies to be implemented that often led to the setback of democracy. A way to mitigate those threats was to become allied with other nations, and to join international organizations that offered protection and resources against threats. This then also led to greater democratization because political leaders felt more secure and protected (Pevehouse, 2002). In Pauline Luong Jones's work, she also organized international involvement into two similar categories. Luong discussed how the international community played a larger role in the Soviet succession states than other democratized states, specifically examining the international involvement in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. While she argued that international involvement was important in each, she distinguished between high and low involvement and described that there were two main types of involvement. These types of international involvement were financial support, such as through foreign investment, and government capacity building, such as through the presence of foreign NGOs and government bodies (Luong, 2002).

Other literature chooses to distinguish international organizations based on the regions they represent. According to Levitsky and Way (2005), while the international community affected all of the different post-Soviet States, these effects were vastly different from country to country, and more specifically from region to region. They identified that the two types of international involvement were western leverage, or the government's vulnerability to being influenced, and western linkage, or the country's ties to western countries. They concluded that

leverage has very little to do with how a country democratizes, but that linkage to western nations plays a substantial role because these links more strongly established norms and accountability. Finally, they concluded that linkage was strengthened through international organizations such as the EU and NAFTA (Levitsky & Way, 2005). Dimitrova and Pridham (2004) further explored this hypothesis in their research. They specifically examined the process of the democratization of central and eastern European. They argued that the process of becoming a member of the EU has led post-communist states in this region to succumb to the pressures of membership and therefore has led to a unique process of democracy promotion. They argued this process was more successful than the efforts of other organizations such as NATO, OSCE, and other regional bodies. This was because of a unique combination of hard conditionality and soft measures that strengthen democratic institutions. They noted, however, that this model did not work for countries that had little chance of becoming a member of the EU (Dimitrova & Pridham, 2004).

Both of these theories built off the Seeley-Hintze Law, which stated that the more isolated a country is from the international system, the less power that country would have. Therefore, becoming involved in the international system not only was important for economic and security reasons, but also increased the potential power of a nation (Pevehouse, 2002). These theories illustrate the connection between the international and domestic system as a way to demonstrate why international organizations play an important role in domestic policy.

There is a gap, however, in the literature that fails to address how the several different types of international organizations may or may not influence the level of democracy and women's rights in specifically Post-Soviet countries. Additionally, the literature fails to address whether the type of role that the countries play in organization can affect the level of influence

the international organization plays on the member country. This paper seeks to address this gap in the literature by looking at four different international organizations independently by measuring their relationships with level of democracy and women's rights in Post-Soviet countries. Additionally, some of these organizations will have differing levels of involvement in order to address that gap in the literature. The four different organizations were chosen based on the arguments in the literature that advocated for their importance, and therefore include regional, both western and non-western, economic, and peace-building organizations. These justifications are included in Chapter 2.

GDP per Capita

The role of economic growth and democratization is one of the most researched phenomena in international politics, but it is also one of the most varied and controversial. In the literature, there are two competing theories; that economic development and democracy are related, and that they are not. Lipset (1959) developed the theory that there was a relationship between the two, also known as the modernization hypothesis. He did so by measuring economic development as wealth, industrialization, urbanization and education in European and Latin American countries. He found that in every measure, the levels were higher in countries that were more democratic, and when specifically looking at wealth, the lowest range of countries were also in the lowest range for democracy and the highest range were in the highest range for democracy (Lipset, 1959). Lipset outlined a number of explanations for these trends, most notably the "class struggle", which explained how new political norms, specifically how democratic norms, were developed in a country. He argued that economic development allowed

for increased income, security and education amongst the lower class, which then allowed for those people to develop long term perspectives and become for engaged in politics. Additionally, with increased economic opportunities, the lower class became more integrated into a national culture instead of a distinct class culture, which then led to a decreased likelihood of supporting extremist ideology. For the middle class, increased economic development led to an increase in the size of the middle class, who then served as a moderator of conflict by rewarding democratic institutions and punishing extremist organizations. Finally, increased economic development encouraged democracy support in the upper classes because, with increased development, there was often a decrease in income inequality. When there was greater inequality, the upper class was forced to view the lower class as something nearly subhuman so that they could exist comfortably knowing the conditions those people lived in. This then caused the upper class to support more autocratic regimes that would limit the political power and rights of the lower class. When this wealth gap decreased, the upper class could comfortably view the lower classes as deserving of political power and representation, and therefore became more likely to support democracy. Therefore, increased levels of economic growth and wealth lead to increased democracy because the different classes became less tolerant of authoritarian regimes (Lipset, 1959).

Przeworski and Limongi (1997) however argued that there is not a causal relationship between economic modernization, and more specifically an increase in GDP per capita, and democratization. While they agreed with Lipset that there was a strong relationship between economic development and indices of democracy, they argued that countries developed democratically independently of economic development and that the relationship between the two variables was instead that democracies were more likely to survive in developed economies

(Prezeworski and Limongi, 1997). They studied their theory by classifying democracy as a dichotomous variable of either democracy or dictatorship and then studied 135 countries between 1950 and 1990. In total, they observed 224 regimes, 101 of which were democratic and 123 were authoritarian. They theorized that if Lipset were correct, then transitions to democracy would be more likely to happen as an autocratic regime reached higher levels of economic development. However, they found instead that after \$6,000 per capita income, autocratic regimes became more stable with increased development, and that dictatorships in countries with per capita income under \$1,000 were very unlikely to transition to democracies. This is in line with Huntington's assertion that dictatorships functioned on a bell curve of instability. Instead of increased development, they found that democracy was the product of political actors initiating the democratization process, which could occur at any point of economic development (Prezeworski and Limongi, 1997).

Criticism of these findings are directed at the classification of democracy as a dichotomous variable. Epstein, Bates, Goldstone, Kristensen, and O'Halloran challenged their findings in a study, which applied democracy as a three-way variable in order to include "partial democracies." They then ran the same type of statistical analysis, but had very different results. These results indicated a significant positive relationship between GDP per capita and democratization. They argued that GDP has this affect by increasing the consolidation of democratic regimes and by promoting democratic transitions by authoritarian regimes (Epstein, Bates, Goldstone, Kristensen, & O'Halloran, 2006). This provided evidence to Lipset's modernization hypothesis and highlights the contention in the literature

Within these two competing theories, there is also a smaller yet still notable body of literature on the way that economic development specifically affects women's issues. The

economic crisis of 1978-82 that affected many nations reshaped economic policies and therefore the space in which conversations surrounding gender had in these policies (Molyneux, 1994). Cross-country data indicate that the two variables were highly correlated. When examining countries historically, it typically was not until after economic development expanded that women's rights also expanded (Dollar & Gatti, 1991). Doepke, Tertilt and Voena explained this phenomenon by stating that an increase in capital caused men to vote for women's rights and initiatives. They examined the relationship between the United Nations Development Program's Gender Empowerment Measure and GDP per capita, finding that the relationship was notably strong and positive (Doepke, Tertilt & Voena, 2012).

However, others advocate for a competing viewpoint, stating that GDP does not necessarily indicate economic health, and that instead the type of economy is far more indicative of the status of women's rights. Some commenters argued that in neoliberal economies, while they may have led to greater GDP per capita, the social and human costs were incredibly high (Molyneux, 1994). Evidence for this argument was found in increased violence against women in the public sphere as well in the home after economic development. Additionally, statistics from the former USSR indicated that women were the most adversely affected by the economic restructuring that occurred when these states transitioned from socialism to neoliberalism (Molyneux, 1994). Others viewed economic liberalization as positive for women. This argument was that privatization and marketisation have not dramatically worsened women's conditions and that instead have provided women greater opportunities and flexibilities (Molyneux, 1994). Due to these different arguments, this paper seeks to examine the relationship between GDP per capita and level of democracy as well as women's rights to determine if GDP, irrespective of type of economy, has a positive effect on the expansion of democracy and women's rights.

Muslim Population

Due to the prolonged world recession of the early 1980s, political disillusionment associate with the failed promises of the USSR, and lack of viable left political voices, Post-Soviet nations experienced an increase in religious nationalism and fundamentalism, both of which have been found to be strongly gendered and patriarchal (Molyneux, 1994). The literature, however, does not paint a picture that all countries experienced these outcomes, but instead that religious fundamentalism affected Muslim dominated countries in a unique way. Because of this outcome, the literature focuses on the historical perspective of specific case studies within the Soviet Union. The general lack of quantitative data surrounding the relationship between Muslim population size and democracy and Muslim population size and women's rights is what inspired me to include Muslim population size as one of my quantitative variables.

Douglas (2004) discussed that the goal of the Soviet Union was to "emancipate" Muslim women because the USSR viewed women as victims of a cruel patriarchal society. The case study specifically looked at how the Soviet regime de-veiled women, and outlawed polygamy and the payment of bribery. He concluded that gender policy in Central Asia was central to the Soviet strategy to spread and implement Soviet socialism in the region (Douglas, 2004). Lubin (1981) agreed with Douglas that the USSR specifically targeted women as a means to implemented socialism in Central Asia. Her research consisted of a case study on the five Central Asian countries, and the role that women currently play in those countries compared to the role they played pre-Soviet rule. Lubin explained that the Soviets viewed female liberation as a means to achieve their ideological goals, which were to undermine the traditional and religious communities in these communities in order to create a vacuum that the Soviet Union could fill (Lubin, 1981). As George Massell explains, women became the "surrogate proletariat" and

therefore the Soviet Union worked diligently to emancipate and empower them in order to undermine the non-Soviet power structure (Massell, 1974).

Kamp (2006) further analyzed the role that the mandatory de-veiling had on women's rights during Soviet rule and after independence. She did this through amassing oral histories and different documents, and focused specifically on the unveiling campaign orchestrated by the Soviets in 1927. By analyzing these documents, Kamp concluded that the unveiling was still an important and formative event in how Uzbek women today are viewed and integrated into modern society (Kamp, 2006). Keller (1998) confirmed Kamp's findings in a similarly focused case study examining the Soviet campaign to liberate Uzbek women. Keller argued that this campaign could be split into two parts, with the first part "liberating" women from religious social structures and the second wave opening the agriculture and industrial workplace to women. According to the article, the Soviet Union attempted to accomplish these goals through administrative legal change such as outlawing arranged marriage, bride price, and polygamy. Keller concluded that this caused women under Soviet rule to be torn between obeying the government and remaining loyal to their families and communities (Keller, 1998).

The impact of this policy is known as the "backlash effect." Essentially, this theory argues that if the practice of the dominant religion of a group was severely oppressed before that group's independence, there is a greater chance that after the country gains independence, there will be a resurgence in traditionalism. This resurgence causes the governing body to reject the anti-religious laws and practices that had been in place before independence, re-establish traditional norms, and therefore cause a return to the former religious, often patriarchal, societal structure. Unfortunately, this religious traditionalism often creates an unfriendly and non-progressive environment for women (Molyneux, 1994).

Essentially, these analysts agreed that the Soviet Union specifically targeted women, particularly Muslim women in Central Asia, and that this complicated women's relationships with their communities and countries post-independence. Not only, however, has this affected the current status of women's rights, but also democracy in general. Nasar (2005) drew this connection by concluding that there was a very specific type of democracy created in the Muslim world, "Muslim Democracy." In this democracy, parties that won and that were successful were those that balanced religious and secular concerns. Many times, this balance created an environment for women and minorities that was more authoritarian. He illustrated this through examples such as Pakistan and Turkey (Nasar, 2005).

While this literature tells a very interesting qualitative story about the Post-Soviet central Asian countries, it lacks a comparative approach that would make it necessary to generalize across all of the former states. This paper will address this shortcoming in the literature by not only quantitatively analyzing the religious makeup of the Post-Soviet countries, but then also addressing in the second part of this paper through qualitative case studies why this affected the Soviet countries during their Soviet reign and also after their independence.

Violent Conflict

The literature surrounding the effect of violent conflict on women's rights centers around the ways that war manifests in women's lives, and then how these effects can be felt even after the conflict concludes. Women's bodies have often been specific targets for the terrors of violent conflict (Machel, 1996). Women make up the majority of civilian casualties during war, and suffer from increased risk of violent acts ranging from sexual exploitation, psychological

violence, domestic violence, and discrimination. If the goal of the conflict includes destruction of culture, women are targeted because of the role they play in the family and community structure (McKay, 1998). According to UNICEF, women and girls have a unique experience with war and violent conflict because of gender roles and different gender responsibilities (Machel, 1996). This is also because, while war disproportionately affects women, men are the ones who organize and strategize war, and therefore women's concerns are often neglected and ignored (Buckley, 1997). Additionally, in the latter half of the 20th century, war tactics evolved specifically to target the most vulnerable groups of the population, women and children, such as through targeting community centers and institutions for violence and attacking food and medical supplies (Machel, 1996).

McKay (1998) found that times of conflict not only create new problems of gender equality, but exacerbate existing gender disparities. Essentially, women and girls suffer not only because of the unique stresses war places upon all civilians, but then additionally because of their status as female. For example, if there is limited food supply due to conflict, all people will suffer. However, women and girls suffer more because the men and boys of the household will always be fed whatever limited food is available first (McKay, 1998). While women and girls typically suffer more risks of physical and financial insecurity than men do in times of peace, times of wars and conflict amplify these issues. For example, during periods of violent conflict, women and girls are vulnerable to sexual violence, and they are at the greatest risks for hunger and food exploitation in any refugee or internally displaced persons camps because men typically control the food sources. Additionally, they are at greater risks for malnutrition because food aid can neglect the specific dietary needs of women and girls, and finally, conflict causes the breakdown in institutions leading to inadequate access to health services. The breakdown in

institutions caused by war also discourages girls from attending school and therefore accelerates early marriage. While this breakdown can be caused by an inability to provide funding and support, governments also have been known to use the threat of violence as an excuse to underfund or stop funding for women's programming (Buckley, 1997). Economically, women become more vulnerable because during times of war, women are more vulnerable to losing their property and possessions (McKay, 1998).

Sexual violence as a war tactic is an area of literature that has gotten more attention within the past few decades. Rape is recognized as an official war tactic meant to demoralize and terrorize an enemy population (McKay, 1998). The numerous psychological and physical damages that sexual violence has on female populations, combined with the cultural stigma and shame, makes sexual violence a particularly abhorrent element of the female experience with violent conflict. Increases in unwanted pregnancies, suicides, and sterility as a result of widespread wartime sexual violence decimate women's identities and therefore can permanently damage communities (McKay, 1998).

The literature surrounding the effect of war on women's rights post-conflict is much smaller. Broader conclusions, such as the general effects of war on national post-conflict growth and recovery, can be stretched to apply to women's issues (Machel, 1996). The literature establishes that war attacks institutions of health and education, both of which I would argue are central to family and community survival, spheres that are dominated by women. Additionally, one could logically assume that defunding the programs and institutions that cater to women's needs during a conflict would continue to disenfranchise women after the war has concluded (Machel, 1996). Finally, there is evidence that when a woman experienced sexual violence as a part of a state conflict on an individual level, there was an increased likelihood that she would be

sexually exploited and trafficked after the conflict ended. This could also have a lasting negative imprint on the community by increasing disease, death, and mistrust (McKay, 1998).

While this literature creates a strong story on how war targets women, the literature that addresses how violent conflict can affect the status of women after the conflict has been resolved is much weaker. Additionally, most of the evidence that the literature employs addresses only one type of violent conflict, genocides, with Rwanda being a reoccurring country of focus. There is a general lack of a comparative approach, and very little literature addressing the role of violent conflict in Post-Soviet countries in general. Therefore, in the second half of this paper, I will address this gap in the literature by addressing the role of violent conflict in Post-Soviet states in a comparative, qualitative analysis, with a focus on how violent conflict continues to influence the women's rights climates in the case countries.

Women's Rights and Democratization

It is important to examine both democratization and women's rights because they are not necessarily a direct reflection of each other. The recent trends of women's rights in the world are paradoxical because, while the global trends towards greater democratization often are thought to lead to greater liberties and protections for women, on a wide range of issues in certain regions of the world, women's situations stayed virtually the same or got worse. Several regions, such as Central Asia, have seen a swing back to more "traditional" values, which typically accompanies decreased women's rights in the family as well as the public sphere. Under the USSR, women had employment rights, political representation, and many different social rights and programs. Some argue that the anti-communism that prevailed across Post-Soviet states after the transition

also included an element of anti-feminism (Molyneux, 1994). This could explained why, in an increasingly gender equal world, many countries have experienced the relocation of women to subordinate societal positions (Molyneux, 1994). Therefore, this paper will explore level of democracy and women's rights as two different dependent variables in order to identify the specific relationships between theorized independent variables, and also to explore if, how, and why there are differing relationships between the independent variables and each of the dependent variables.

Theory

Studying the above literature lead to the formation of four main theories surrounding my four independent variables. The first part of my analysis, the quantitative section, theorizes on both dependent variables (democracy and women's rights). My qualitative analysis, however, focuses my hypotheses on women's rights, my second dependent variable, in order to isolate the specific relationships that has led to the unique experiences of women in my three case countries. The following paragraphs outline each of these theories individually to indicate how I reached my hypotheses.

Regarding my first independent variable, the literature established that the effect an international organization can have on a country is related to the type of organization. The literature specifically advocates for the importance of economic and peacebuilding organizations in democracy promotion and in turn women's rights. This is because a desire to be economically successful and to avoid the consequences of war leads countries to want to members of these organizations. These organizations often promote democratic principles, and therefore the

prospective member country is forced to ascribe to these norms and principles in order to be included. This causes the prospective country to become more democratic, and the literature argues, subsequently more friendly and inclusive towards women. An example of an economic organization would be the World Trade Organization, and an example of a peacebuilding organization would be the NATO Partnership for Peace. There is also a literature surrounding the regional association of an international organization and how that can affect democracy and women's rights promotion. "Western" international organizations promote democracy and women's rights in their members by holding them accountable and creating norms which promote these values. This is because many of the powerful players in "western" international organizations are strong democracies, such as the United States and Western European countries. Taking this theory conversely, being involved in "non-western" international organizations could lead to the promotion of "anti" democracy and women's rights values, norms, and expectations if the countries involved are not democracies, or are weak democracies.

Economic development has a positive impact on democracy because it decreases the class struggle, leading to increased cooperation amongst the classes that then promotes democracy and the expansion of rights, including women's rights. Essentially, countries with greater economic development, often operationalized as GDP, have smaller income disparities. Therefore, there are less tensions between the upper and lower class. The lower class becomes empowered and able to engage politically due to their financial security, and the upper class no longer mistrusts the lower class and therefore begins to believe in their inclusion in the political sphere. This creates a climate with promotes democracy building and advocates for human rights.

Additionally, greater economic development leads to greater capacity building for the state, and therefore the increased ability to address the concerns of the people. This increased ability to

address concerns encourages people to voice their concerns and participate in the government. This desire and ability to participate encourages the development of a democracy. Additionally, there is evidence that democracy development and women's rights development are related phenomenon. Specifically, there is evidence that demonstrates that increased capital leads men to vote favorably on women's initiatives. Therefore, the theory thinks economic development to an increased interest in and ability to promote democracy and women's rights.

As was outlined in the literature, countries with Muslim populations required a different strategy from the Soviet Union when it came to fulfilling their policy objectives. In order to establish the Soviet Union as the ruling power, the USSR had to break down the existing power structure, which was heavily based on traditional and religiously oriented hierarchies in communities. To undermine this, the USSR targeted the empowerment of women as a way to break down these community structures, making women in many Muslim dominated countries the "surrogate proletariat." This led to the implementation of many "anti-Muslim" policies in Soviet Republics with larger Muslim populations, where women were "empowered" through policies that attacked religious norms and laws, such as de-veiling campaigns and outlawing practices such as polygamy. The effect after independence was that these countries rejected all elements of the Soviet rule, including women's empowerment and other "modern" institutions, also known as the backlash effect.

Finally, there is strong evidence throughout the literature that, because of their unique vulnerabilities, women have to bear the brunt of the consequences of war. This has become especially true in the last few decades as sexual violence has a common war practice. The literature also outlines a weaker association between the violence and hardships women experience during times of violent conflict and a decrease in women's rights after the conflict

has ended. Based on this literature, my theory is during times of violent conflict, women are individually targeted for violence to terrorize and destabilize their communities. The programs that service women in important and unique ways, such as health and education services, are neglected and sometimes annihilated, and finally, conflict often causes the men of a community to leave. Without their protection, women often become the vulnerable to losing their property and possessions. Together, this illustrates that women are destabilized and disempowered during times of war. Because the effects of war are not immediately resolved following the end of the conflict, I believe that women continue to suffer after the war concludes. A more devastating war would affect women in a more negative way, which would then lead to graver consequences after the war and therefore lower status of women.

Hypothesis

The above theories informed the formation of my six different hypotheses. Hypotheses I through IV pertain to the first part of this paper, the quantitative analysis. Hypotheses V through VI pertain to the second part of this paper, the qualitative analysis:

- I. There will be a significant negative relationship between Percent Muslim and level of democracy and women's rights.
- II. There will be a significant positive relationship between GDP and level of democracy and women's rights.
- III. There will be a significant positive relationship between being a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace and WTO and level of democracy and women's rights.

- IV. There will be a significant negative relationship between being a member of CIS and level of democracy and women's rights.
- V. The stricter the "anti-Muslim" policies the USSR implemented in a republic during Soviet Rule, the less friendly the current climate is for women in that region.
- VI. The greater, longer, and more deadly the violent conflict a state experienced after its independence, the less friendly the current climate is for women in that region.

It is the goal of this paper that after examining each of these hypotheses, a clearer picture will emerge surrounding how and why the Post-Soviet countries have experienced a wide range of success post-independence regarding democracy building and, more specifically, the rights of women.

In order to test the first four hypotheses, I gathered data on each variable for each of the fifteen Post-Soviet states that gained their independence in 1991. I included as many data as were available from the years 1990, one year before independence, to 2014 (present day). After coding and categorizing these data, I ran regressions for each variable against each of my five dependent variables measurements. In order to study my last two hypotheses, I collected data from databases, research studies published at the time of independence, historical data, and information regarding USSR policy programs to outline the experiences of my case countries with each independent variable. The following chapter outlines this process and my findings.

Chapter 3 Post-Soviet States

Historical Background

While the USSR was in power, it was the largest, and one of the most diverse, countries in the world (Dewdney, 2015). In 1922, the Union Treaty brought together Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan under one governing body, the Soviet Union. In 1924, Joseph Stalin came to power, and in 1928, the USSR adopted the Five-Year Plan, which transformed the economic policies to collectivist agriculture and led to the confiscation of peasant property. In 1933, the United States recognized the Soviet Union as a sovereign nation, and in 1934, the Soviet Union became a member of the League of Nations. During WWII, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, all of which would be incorporated into the USSR, and also declared present day Moldova as a Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1955 the USSR and Soviet influenced eastern European states created the Warsaw Pact (Dewdney, 2015). Figure 3 depicts the territory that was under the control of the Soviet Union in 1989, right before the independence movements began to destabilize the empire.

[insert Figure 3]

The revolutions of 1989 caused the dissolution of Soviet-imposed communist regimes across central and Eastern Europe. The revolutions began in Poland and then spread to Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania throughout the year. On November 9, 1989, mass rallies in East Germany led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This rejection of Soviet rule would spread to the Soviet Republics and would ultimately lead to the fall of the Soviet Union in

1991 (Dewdney, 2015). In September of 1991, the Congress of People's Deputies voted to break up the Soviet Union, and on December 8, 1991, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On December 21, eleven states signed the protocol to officially create the CIS. On December 25, 1991 the United States recognized the remaining Soviet republics as independent countries (BBC, 2013). By the end of 1991, all Soviet institutions stopped functioning and Russia assumed the USSR's seat on the UN Security Council (Dewdney, 2015).

While these fifteen independent states shared this common history, their independence and progress, both democratically (Figure 1) and regarding women's rights (Figure 2), has been drastically different. Based on the above outlined literature, I identified three quantitative variables as well as two qualitative variable as to why these differences occurred. The methods below include the methods for both my quantitative and qualitative research. The following analysis is my quantitative analysis on the effects of GDP, international organization membership, and Muslim population size on democracy and women's rights in each of the fifteen soviet states (BBC, 2013). The later chapters will explore my qualitative analysis.

Methods

Because I ran two different types of analysis, I have included both of the methods. For my quantitative analysis, which I will explore in the rest of this chapter, I will run multivariate regressions to determine the relationship between GDP, international organization membership and Muslim population size on democracy and women's rights. I will run two different models for my two dependent variables (democracy level and women's rights level).

For my qualitative analysis, I will choose three different case countries. The process for choosing my cases will be outlined in Chapter 4. I then gathered data from several different sources to weave an explanation surrounding my two variables and how they impact the current climate for women's rights. The data I gathered came from several different databases, the historical record for each of my case countries, the background information published in research articles, articles published by news sources, interviews conducted by government bodies, and other primary and secondary sources that could outline Soviet policies and confirm historical information. I then comparatively analyzed all three of my case countries by each of my independent variables. I made sure to include factors that could be compared across all three cases so as to maximize the conclusions that could be drawn. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will specifically address my qualitative analysis.

Variables

The following section depicts my quantitative analysis. My two dependent variables are democracy level and women's rights. To measure democracy level, I used Polity scores, recoded on a 0-20 scale, with -10 being 0, -9 being 1, -8 being 2 and so on. The Polity IV dataset includes data for 167 countries from 1800 through 2014, and assigns scores on a 21 point scale, ranging from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy). Scores from -10 to -6 signify an autocracy, scores from -5 to +5 signify an anocracy, and scores from +6 - +10 signify a democracy. In order to compute a score, Polity measures qualities of executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority, political competition, and governing institutions (Marshall, 2011). The Polity classifications for each of the fifteen Soviet countries are indicated in Table 1.

The three years I chose to highlight are 1991, the year of independence, 2000, as a “halfway” update and because it marked the turn of the century, and finally 2014 as it was the last year data is available.

[insert Table 1]

My second dependent variable is women’s rights. To operationalize women’s rights, I used V-Dem’s Women’s Political Empowerment Index. This index is an average of the women’s civil liberties index, the women’s civil society participation index, and the women’s political participation index. V-Dem defines women’s political empowerment as “a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making” (Coppedge et al, 2015). The Women’s Political Empowerment index is quantified on an interval scale from 0 to 1, with 1 signifying the highest level of women’s rights. The data available for the Women’s Empowerment Index in the Soviet countries was from 1991 to 2012. The Women’s Political Empowerment scores for the fifteen Soviet Countries are indicated in Table 2. The years are similar to Table 1 with the only difference being the latest available year for data is 2012.

[insert Table 2]

My three independent variables are International Organization Membership, GDP, and Percent Muslim. I collected the Percent Muslim data from the Pew Research Data for the year 1990 (Pew Research Center, 2011). I collected the data from 2000 to 2014 from the CIA World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Analysis excluded the years from 1991 to 1999 as corresponding data were unavailable. When specific percentages of Muslim populations were available, they were included. When the data were a range, such as for Russia with the data being “10-15%”, I took an average, and when the data were a “less than” value I subtracted 1, or .1

depending on the size of the value. For example, <3.2% was recoded to 2.2%, <1% was recoded to .09%. If Muslim was not listed as one of the religions by the CIA World Factbook within a country, then the data were coded as a 0%, and if Muslim was listed but without any specifics regarding numbers, that year of data were excluded from the analysis. I then recoded these data on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5. 1 represents 0-20%, 2 represents 21-40%, 3 represents 41-60%, 4 represents 61-80% and finally, 5 represents 81-100% (Table 3) (Central Intelligence Agency^b, 2014). Table 3 organizes these classifications for each of the Post-Soviet States in 1990, as it was the earliest year data was available, 2000, and 2014.

[insert Table 3]

In order to measure GDP, I used GDP per capita in U.S. dollars. The data were collected from the World Bank and, for most countries, included data from 1990 until 2014, with the exceptions of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were all missing data from 1990 to 1994 (Table 4) (The World Bank, 2014). Table 4 lists the GDPs in U.S. dollars for each of the Post-Soviet States in 1990, as it was the earliest year data was available, 2000, and 2014.

[insert Table 4]

In order to measure International Organization Membership, I gathered data for membership in the UN, the CIS (Table 5), the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Table 6), and the NATO Partnership for Peace (PFP) (Table 7). I gathered this information from 1991 to 1999 from the Statesman's Yearbook (Turner, 2016). From 2000 to 2014. I gathered this information from the CIA World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency^a, 2014). I excluded the UN from the analysis because there was no variance. I chose the CIS because, according to the literature, regionally "western" international organizations are important to positive democracy and women's rights building, such as the NATO Partnership for Peace. I wanted to explore this by

including the CIS as a non-western regional international organization created by the newly independent states to represent their interests, and also the PFP, a western international organization (Levitsky & Way, 2005). Additionally, I chose the PFP because the literature emphasized the importance the role that peacebuilding and peacekeeping international organizations play in democracy building and women's rights (Pevehouse, 2002). Finally, I chose the WTO because international economic organizations play an important role in democracy and women's rights building because countries construct their policies and regimes based around what will lead to the greatest economic outcomes given the constraints and climate of the international system (Gourevitch, 1978). More specifically, the WTO is important as it can reduce costs, provide information, and monitor the domestic behavior of its members (Goldstein, 1998). I coded CIS and PFP as dichotomous variables, with 1 meaning the country was a full member and 0 meaning the country was not a member. I created two classifications for the WTO to indicate being a full member (1) or being an observer (1) with the reference group for both being not a member, indicated by a score of 0.

Table 5 details which countries were and were not members of the CIS. "YES" indicates that that country was a member, while "NO" indicates that that country was not a member. Table 6 details the same information for the World Trade Organization (WTO) but with the additional classification of "OSERVER", which indicates that the country has observer status with the WTO. Finally, Table 7 indicates which Post-Soviet countries were a part of the NATO Partnership for Peace (NATO PFP). All three tables show information for 1991, the first year of available data, 2000, and 2014.

[insert Table 5]

[insert Table 6]

[insert Table 7]

Results

The following two tables represents the two models I ran in SPSS, one where the dependent variable was democracy level and the other where the dependent variable was women's rights. Each of the models includes GDP, percent Muslim, and international organization membership (WTO full/associate, CIS, PFP) as the independent variables. As demonstrated in Table 8 and Table 9, percent Muslim is a statistically significant indicator of both polity (1.614) and women's political empowerment (-0.068) and demonstrates a negative relationship, giving support to my first hypothesis. GDP, however, when run with the other independent variables, is not significantly related to women's political empowerment. GDP is significantly related to polity, but demonstrates a negative relationship, which does not align with the literature or my hypothesis. However, when I ran a separate regression of GDP as the independent variable and polity as the dependent variable, there was the anticipated significant positive relationship of 0.000439. I believe that this relationship is not reflected in the multivariate regression model because of the significant correlation (-0.544) between GDP and CIS membership. CIS membership is a statistically significant predictor of polity (-2.313) and women's political empowerment (-0.052) and demonstrates a negative relationship, giving support for my fifth hypothesis. PFP membership is a statistically significant predictor of polity (-3.335) and women's political empowerment (-0.071), but the relationship was negative, which does not align with half of my fourth hypothesis, as I predicted that PFP membership would have a positive relationship. Finally, only being a full member of the WTO is statistically significant

for both polity (6.968) and women's political empowerment (.115), and being an observer member was statistically significant for women's political empowerment (.111). In all cases, the relationship is positive, providing support for the other half of my fourth hypothesis. Table 8 shows the relationship with each of the independent variables and polity, and Table 9 shows the relationships between each of the independent variables and the women's empowerment index scores.

[insert Table 8]

[insert Table 9]

Discussion

Hypothesis I

There will be a significant negative relationship between Percent Muslim and level of democracy and women's rights.

The above results give support for my first hypothesis, that Percent Muslim is negatively related to level of democracy and women's rights. This confirms with the established literature and my theory, and I will further explore these findings Chapter 6 using Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan. According to the literature, this relationship occurs because in countries with larger Muslim populations, there was stricter laws and norm enforced that sought to undermine Muslim influences and "liberate" women. When these Muslim countries then gained independence, there was a backlash by the government to reinstate a Muslim rule and society that included reestablishing traditions and laws that had been previously outlawed. My quantitative findings supported this theory. I will explore why exactly the Soviet Union pursued these policies and the direct impacts they had on women in post-independence contexts.

Hypothesis II

There will be a significant positive relationship between GDP and level of democracy and women's rights.

While there was not a significant relationship when GDP was run with the other variables, I do believe that this is not a theoretical problem, but instead a problem with how I ran my model. There was a high correlation between GDP and CIS membership. I believe that this is the case because the Commonwealth of Independent States was an international organization formed immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While its purpose was to encourage the “cooperation of the political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural and other fields among a number of former Soviet Republics”, many of the more “developed” post-Soviet countries, such as Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, chose to not get involved (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, 2016). Instead, they began to actively pursue involvement in the EU. Therefore, involvement in CIS was more typical amongst less developed countries. This could explain why GDP and CIS were so heavily correlated because both are related to economic development.

When I ran GDP as an independent variable it was both positive and significant, which is in line with the literature and my theory and therefore provides evidence for my hypothesis. The reason that GDP has a positive effect on democracy and women's rights is because greater GDP leads to a smaller income disparity, which creates greater opportunities for income, security, and education across the classes. This then encourages cooperation across the classes that allow for larger success towards increasing democracy and human rights. Additionally, the wealthier a country, the greater institutional capacity the country may have to support democratic and women's rights institutions, programs, and initiatives. While some of the literature argued that

the type of economy could matter more than indicators like GDP, the data, when run as a single variate regression, suggest that GDP itself is important.

Hypothesis III

There will be a significant positive relationship between being a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace and WTO and level of democracy and women's rights.

The outcomes of my regressions did not provide evidence for the first part of this hypothesis. Instead, being involved in the NATO Partnership for Peace was significantly and negatively correlated rather than positively correlated. I was lead to this hypothesis because the literature suggested that being linked to “western” international organizations increased the level of democracy and the levels of women’s rights within a nation. The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Partnership for Peace is defined as “a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation” (NATO, 2014). This mission led me to believe it would fall under the categorization of a “western” organization. Also, as I discussed in my literature review, there was evidence that “western” international organization are able to promote democracy because they are able to establish democratic norms, such as peace-building norms. Again, I felt that the NATO Partnership for Peace would fall under this classification as peacebuilding and increasing stability and cooperation is specifically noted as one of their focuses (NATO, 2014). However, the data do not reflect this theory.

Upon further investigation, I realized that while the NATO Partnership for Peace is certainly a part of NATO, which does quality as a “western” international organization, there is a distinct difference between being a member of NATO and a member of the Partnership for

Peace. NATO described the “most important layer in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are the member countries themselves.” Being a member country, such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, is different than being a partner, which is the classification given to countries who are a part of the NATO Partnership for Peace, such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. I believe that being a partner does not have the same effect as being a member because of the expectations and benefits afforded to members compared to partners. Members are seen as equals, involved in collaborating with the other member states and contributing to determine goals and activities of the organization. Therefore, they would fall under the influences described in the literature of democratic and human rights accountability. However, the role that partners play in NATO is one of receiving a service from NATO, including education, and cooperating on specific country programs rather than on the mission of the organization itself (NATO, 2014).

There was evidence for the second half of my hypothesis because being a member or an observer of the WTO had a statistically significant and positive relationship with polity scores. Being a full member was also statistically significant and positively related to women’s empowerment scores, but being an observer was not statistically significant. This confirms with the literature that involvement in international economic institutions increases levels of democracy and women’s rights. This is because these organizations typically promote trade and cooperation amongst countries, transparency, and free trade, which are all elements that typically are associated with democratic free market economies (Bacchus, 2004). Additionally, the WTO is strongly member driven, and the current members decide who is granted member status. A majority of the members of the WTO are democracies, which further creates a culture of democratic and human rights expectations, a phenomena called “democratic governance”

(Bacchus, 2004). Therefore, involvement in the WTO encourages democratic norms, which also typically encourage human rights norms.

I believe that being an observer versus a full member of the WTO did not have the same effect as being a full member versus being a partner of NATO because of the implications of being an observer. According to the WTO website, “observers must start accession negotiations (the process to becoming a full member) within five years of becoming a member” (WTO, 2016). This insinuates that being an observer is an interim step to becoming a full member. Therefore, a country would reasonably feel the same types of pressures regarding adhering to the organizations norms and expectations so that their application for full membership would be approved.

Hypothesis IV

There will be a significant negative relationship between being a member of CIS and level of democracy and women’s rights.

The literature surrounding the types of international organizations and how they affect levels democracy and women’s rights focuses on the positive role that “western” international organizations can play. This begs the question about how “non-western” international organizations affect democracy and women’s rights levels. One could argue that, according to the literature, what matters would be the values that the organization encourages or mandates amongst its members. The CIS’s mission, however, is more ambiguous in just that it sought to empower the former Soviet Republics. I would argue that because there appeared to be a lack of a democracy building focus within the CIS, combined with the fact that the member states were not western countries and were not strong democracies, provides an explanation as to why there was a negative relationship.

By examining GDP, percent Muslim, and international organization membership, a story emerges of why some post-soviet countries have experienced more successes with democratic progress and increasing women's rights. Essentially, those countries with the highest GDPs, the smallest Muslim populations, and the strongest connections with "western" and economic organizations have the highest polity and women's empowerment scores. While these findings are significant, there are several other factors that cannot be explored quantitatively and beg a more in depth analysis of their impact. Therefore, the remaining chapters will explore the effects violent conflict and party structure on women's rights, as well as look further into why having a large Muslim population has had a negative impact on progress with securing women's rights.

Chapter 4

Case Justifications and History

When confronted with conducting a qualitative analysis, I relied on my quantitative analysis to guide my variable selection as well as my case studies. The findings of my quantitative analysis demonstrate that there was a negative and significant relationship between Muslim population size and women's empowerment score, but it did not provide an explanation as to why this relationship exists. Therefore, I chose to further explore this relationship qualitatively so as to develop a response to the "why" question. Additionally, my quantitative analysis did not directly control for, or study any historical variables. I hoped that during my qualitative analysis I could choose cases that would control for some historical factors while also examining if there seemed to be any historical events that could have played a significant role in the development of the women's rights climates of Post-Soviet countries. After compiling historical records for the Post-Soviet states, I noticed that the presence of violent conflict was a historical event that occurred in some, but not all, Post-Soviet states. I decided to explore further, if there was a relationship between violent conflict and women's rights. Ultimately, the goal was to explore new variables, such as violent conflict, or explore variables in ways such as Muslim population size, that had been impossible in my previous analysis. Finally, my quantitative analysis helped to inform my case selection, which I will further explore and justify in the following section.

Case Justifications

Central to the Soviet Union's strategy was the inclusion and liberation of women. This strategy to achieve liberation ideally would include the equal empowerment of women economically in the work force, as well as providing women with the necessary support system to fulfill their ultimate role as a Soviet mother. However, the strategies that the Soviet Union employed to achieve these goals varied dramatically across the different territories (Lubin, 1981). This is because each of the territories had vastly different cultural and historical backgrounds. For example, unlike the Eastern European and Baltic states, the five Central Asian countries did not want to be independent. They did not attempt to foster their own liberation, and instead felt like the USSR was a legitimate political community to which they belonged. This has been posed by the literature as an example of why the Central Asian countries progressed differently than the other Post Soviet Nations (Handrahan, 2001). Another variable controlled for by focusing on three Central Asian countries is international organization involvement, one of my independent variables in the quantitative analysis outline in Chapter 3. My three case countries are all members of CIS, the UN, and the WTO. By focusing on one specific region, Central Asia, the following case studies will attempt to control for some of these cultural and historical variables.

Additionally, it would be reasonable to conclude that certain countries progressed more favorably regarding democracy and women's rights because they began their independence at already a more favorable level. For example, one may argue that the reason Lithuania has a 2014 polity ranking of 10 is because it began its independence in 1991 with a polity ranking of 10. To

compare countries that started their independence at a far more advantaged place, represented by having higher democracy and women's empowerment scores, to others limits the conclusions that can be drawn about the variables that affected the creation of their current climate of women's rights. In order to control for this, the next three chapters will explore three Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) who began their independence at similar places regarding democratization (Figure 1). This was done to control for any differences in democratic institutions that could have greatly either advantaged or disadvantaged each countries progression with women's rights that was in place or established before independence was achieved.

The next three case studies will focus specifically on the role that Muslim population size and violent conflict played in the establishment of women's rights in a post-independence world. There is variance when examining these three cases and their respective women's empowerment scores, with Kazakhstan having the highest score, then Kyrgyzstan, and finally, Tajikistan (See Figure 4). Figure 4 shows the women's empowerment scores over time for my three case countries from the year 1991 until 2012, the last year with available data.

[insert Figure 4]

While I did my best to choose counties with the most similar cultural contexts (by focusing on one region), there is still a notable amount of variance in their historical records. Additionally, it is important to have a historical background for each case country to contribute to the general understanding of the historical similarities and differences in each, some of which I will expand upon in later chapters as evidence for the exploration of my independent variables.

Therefore, I have included below the three histories of each of my case countries, broken down into important developments intended to increase the ability to compare them to one another.

Kyrgyzstan History

Pre-Soviet Union

Russian rule in Kyrgyzstan dates back to 1876, when Russian forces conquered the khanate of Kokand (what is now considered Kyrgyzstan) (BBC_b, 2015). Opposition of Russian rule similarly dates back far before independence was gained, with early anti-land reform dissent beginning in the 1920s and the 1930s (BBC_b, 2015).

Soviet Rule

In 1921, the area now known as Kyrgyzstan became a part of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR). After the Soviet reformed territorial borders to better match ethnic lines in 1924, the Kara-Kirgiz Autonomous Region was formed. In 1936, Kirgizia became a constituent republic within the USSR (BBC_b, 2015). In 1989, the local Kirgizia language became the official language (U.S. Department of State_b, 1989).

Path to Independence

1990 marked the turning point towards independence for Kyrgyzstan. During this year, clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz lead to several hundred deaths (BBC_b, 2015). Elections were held by secret ballot with universal suffrage on October 12, but opposition parties offered no candidates (U.S. Department of State_b, 1991). Askar Akayev, a liberal reform member of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, was elected by the legislature to the new position of president and assumed office in November (BBC_b 2015).

Independence

In 1991, the country was officially named Kyrgyzstan and it became an independent state on August 31 (U.S. Department of State^b, 1992). President Akayev, a Gorbachev sympathizer, won another term in direct elections where he ran unopposed (BBC^b, 2015). In 1991 Kyrgyzstan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (BBC^b, 2015). It is important to note, however, that Kyrgyzstan did not declare its independence from the USSR, but instead that the USSR removed itself from the region (Handrahan, 2001). In fact, on March 1991, all of the Central Asian countries voted in a referendum to stay a part of the Soviet Union (Handrahan, 2001).

Post-Independence

In 1992, Kyrgyzstan joined the United Nations (BBC^b, 2015). They began to look at constitutional reforms as well as move away from a centrally planned economy to a market economy (U.S. Department of State^b, 1991). Minority relations seemed to pose the most significant obstacle to the protection of human rights (U.S. Department of State^b, 1992).

Kazakhstan History

Pre-Soviet Union

Russian rule in Kazakhstan began in the mid-1700s, when the tribes of the region joined Russia in an attempt to protect themselves from Mongol invasion. Opposition to this rule would begin around a hundred years later in 1822, but Russia would retain control of the region despite the uprisings. The first major anti-Russian uprising occurred in 1916 and resulted in 160,000 deaths.

Soviet Rule

In 1920, Kazakhstan became an autonomous republic of the USSR and then in 1936 it became a full union republic (BBC_a, 2015). In 1986 there are the first recorded anti-Soviet protests, with around 3,000 people taking part in a protest in Almaty after Mikhail Gorbachev appointed Gennadiy Kolbin (ethnic Russian) as the head of the Kazakhstan Communist party (CPK) (BBC_a, 2015).

Path to Independence

In 1989 an ethnic Kazakh became the head of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan and the parliament adopted Kazakh as the state language (BBC_a, 2015). In 1990 the Supreme Soviet, the legislature, elected Nursultan Nazarbayev as the first Kazakh President and on October 25 the Supreme Soviet declared Kazakh state sovereignty (BBC_a, 2015). It was also during this year that Kazakhstan instituted a multiparty system, with three groups forming to be political parties (U.S. Department of State_a, 1990). This may have been caused by the Soviet Union formally relinquishing its monopoly on power and the Supreme Soviet passing legislation that outlined the legal basis for a multiparty political system (U.S. Department of State_a, 1990). However, the explosion of political movements during this time prevented the formation of a strong and united anti-communist system (U.S. Department of State_a, 1990). Anti-Russian riots occurred throughout Central Asia (U.S. Department of State_a, 1990).

Anti-Soviet sentiments continued into 1991. Democratic Union activist Viktor Leontev was arrested and sentenced to 2 years of correctional labor after creating an anti-Soviet calendar (U.S. Department of State_a, 1991). In 1991, President Nazarbayev condemned the anti-Gorbachev coup and the CPK withdrew from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (BBC_a, 2015). The party disbanded and reformulated as Socialist, which Nazarbayev refused to join.

Instead, he addressed the founding session of the People's Congress of Kazakhstan, a party founded to unite opposition forces (U.S. Department of State_a, 1991).

Independence

In December of 1991, Kazakhstan declared its independence and was the last non-Russian republic to do so (U.S. Department of State_a, 1992). That same month Nazarbayev won an uncontested presidential election and Kazakhstan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (BBC_a, 2015). In 1991, the government of Kazakhstan said it would welcome the permanent establishment of representatives of international human rights organizations (U.S. Department of State_a, 1991).

Post-Independence

In 1992, Kazakhstan was admitted into the UN (BBC_a, 2015). While the country was rich in resources, 1992 marked a crisis in the economy. Unemployment was rising, production was declining, and many people found themselves without necessities such as access to medicines. The transition to a pluralist democracy was difficult due to underlying ethnic tensions, where the Kazakh group (40%) discriminated against non-Kazakhs (in part apparently due to the discrimination the Kazakhs endured under Soviet Rule). New political parties appeared but, because of the government's fear of opposition, they were not allowed to register and operate openly. Several individuals were imprisoned for insulting the president (U.S. Department of State_a, 1992).

Tajikistan History

Pre-Soviet Union

Russian involvement in Tajikistan began in 1860 when Tajikistan became divided and Tsarist Russia gained control of the northern region of the country. Opposition to Russian rule amounted to a failed insurrection in 1917 (BBC, 2014).

Soviet Rule

In 1921, Northern Tajikistan became a part of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Republic (ASSR). In 1929, Tajik ASSR became a full member of the USSR, and soon after, agricultural resistance began to spread across the country. Violence and resistance increased in the 1970s, especially inter-ethnic violence. In 1978, 13,000 Tajiks participated in anti-Russian riots (BBC, 2014). In 1989, Tajik Supreme Soviet declared Tajik to be the official language and also during this year, the Rastokhez People's Front was established (BBC, 2014).

Path to Independence

In 1990, a State of Emergency was declared and the Soviet Union sent 5,000 troops into Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe to suppress protests (BBC, 2014). The protests began as an opposition to the threat of resettlement of Armenia refugees in the capital because of the already limited resources. The protests targeted the communist government because the people did not believe the promise the government made where they claimed they would not be accepting refugees. The demonstrations quickly turned violent, and, in response, the military became involved. Over 20 people were killed and more than 500 others were injured. This created an even greater opposition to the government and communist party in the region (Gvosdev & Takeyh, 2004). Like the other republics, it was also during 1990 that the Supreme Soviet declared state sovereignty (BBC, 2014).

Independence

In 1991 the Tajik Communist leader was forced to resign after supporting the failed anti-Gorbachev coup. The failed coup attempt spurred protests across Central Asia, but the most serious demonstrations occurred in Tajikistan. The government supported the peaceful demonstrations, and the government did not attempt to use force to stop them (State Department, 1991). In 1991, the Supreme Soviet declared Tajikistan independent and the Tajikistan constitution was amended, stating within it that Tajikistan was a republic, multiparty, and secular (State Department, 1992). It was under the new constitution that the election was held and Rahmon Nabyev, a communist, won the first direct presidential election by a slim majority (BBC, 2014). During this election, unlike the elections in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, there were multiple opposition parties and competition amongst multiple candidates (State Department, 1991).

Post-Independence

While the election was not formally contested despite claims of impropriety, opposition to the regime protested President Nabyev after his election. The response of the government was to deal with the opposition with authoritarian measures. Tensions peaked when, on May 10, 1992, over twelve government protestors were shot and killed during a demonstration. The government attempted to deescalate the violence by creating a Government of National Reconciliation, which acted as a check on presidential power and also placed oppositional leaders in parliament. However, the violence and opposition had already polarized the country, and these internal divisions made it very difficult for the government to control the increasing violence (State Department, 1992). The violence caused Nabyev to resign in September and then in November, Emomali Rahmonov assumed power. The tensions escalated into a civil war between pro-government forces and pro-democracy groups. The government was able to re-

establish control starting in 1993, but violence continued until 1996 (BCC, 2014). The Tajik Civil War will be further explored in Chapter 7 to illustrate the impact of violent conflict on the development of women's rights.

Conclusion

These histories are important to examine because they show how there were some similarities, such as a history of Russian influence in the region before the regions became official Republics and the USSR, but also some differences, notably the presence of violence in the post-independence context. These similarities and differences will become more important as I discuss two independent variables in the next two chapters. These variables are Muslim population size and violent conflict.

Chapter 5

Women's Empowerment and Religiosity

The purpose of this chapter is to further examine why there is the significant negative relationship between Muslim population size and women's rights that was established in Chapter 3. The three case studies provide the opportunity to explore this question because each have different levels of Muslim population size and also different levels of women's rights. As was mentioned earlier, the literature informs a theory that the more the Soviet Union focused on the emancipation of Muslim women, through the implementation of traditionally "anti" Muslim laws and norms, the greater the backlash effect after these countries gained their independence. This backlash effect manifested in the "traditionalizing" of the outlawed practices, therefore instituting and ingraining anti-women laws, norms, and customs back into society. This led to decreased women's rights, demonstrated by women's empowerment scores. Therefore, my hypothesis is that the greater the Muslim population size, the stricter and more oppressive the anti-Muslim policy was, which therefore led to lower levels of women's rights post-independence.

To begin my qualitative analysis, I constructed a table to show the correlation between Muslim population size and women's rights. Table 10 includes women's rights, operationalized by the V-Dem women's empowerment score, and Muslim population size. The classifications for Muslim population size are the same as they were for my quantitative analysis. The specific percentages for Muslim population were recoded on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5. 1 represents 0-20%, 2 represents 21-40%, 3 represents 41-60%, 4 represents 61-80% and finally, 5 represents

81-100%. As is evident in Table 10, Tajikistan had the highest Muslim population size and the lowest women's empowerment score, Kyrgyzstan had the second highest Muslim population size and the second lowest women's empowerment score, and finally, Kazakhstan had the lowest Muslim population size and the highest women's empowerment score.

[insert Table 10]

When examining the role that having large Muslim populations had on the development of women's rights in Central Asia specifically, it is important to examine the history of USSR policies in the region. As the Soviet Union attempted to build the party's socialist programming in Central Asia, they quickly discovered that because of the little development in the region, there was not a proletariat to galvanize. During the 1920s, the Central Asian USSR administration identified Muslim women as the oppressed group in the region, and therefore began implementing programs that specifically targeted women as the "surrogate proletariat." This campaign was officially launched on March 8, 1927 and as titled "hujum." The purpose was an assault against the traditional ways that kept women secluded and isolated. In each country, the execution of "hujum" varied in strategy and severity, and continued throughout the entirety of the USSR's rule (Northrop, 2004). The following chapter will explore how the USSR treated the Muslim populations in each of my case countries, and specifically the female Muslim population when that data was available. This includes an examination of specific USSR policies and practices, and the effect they had on the practice of Islam and women's rights after independence.

Kazakhstan

Like in all of the Central Asian Republics, the Soviet Union attempted to oppress the practice of Islam (Esposito, 2016). However, the only evidence of targeted anti-Muslim policy in Kazakhstan was the outlawing of bride kidnapping (Werner, 2009). Additionally, there was no evidence of the aggressive de-veiling campaign that was pursued in other Central Asian Republics. This may be why some scholars claim that the Soviet Union's policies in this country actually had very little success with suppressing Islam in rural areas, which made up a large portion of the country's landscape (Esposito, 2016).

The backlash effect after independence seems similarly muted. The only evidence of a resurgence of religion was an increase in the number of mosques and schools that were built (Esposito, 2016). In fact, many scholars would classify the practice of Islam in Kazakhstan today as modern and moderate. This is because the individual practice of Islam in Kazakhstan is less centered around the Islamic laws compared to other predominately Muslim countries. Additionally, there have been low levels of radical Islamic movements. This is not say that there was not an increase in people practicing Islam after independence, because there was, but that the practice itself was tied to more to tradition and community and therefore was significantly less strict than the other Central Asian countries. This continues to be the case today and the Islam practiced in Kazakhstan continues to be more moderate (Omelicheva, 2011).

Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, the Soviet Union targeted specific practices and traditions that it deemed patriarchal in order to undermine the Muslim influence in the region. While some of these policies

were also implemented in Kazakhstan, notable outlawing bride kidnaping, the severity in which it occurred in Kyrgyzstan and the reaction of the public were both more extreme (Werner, 2009).

Other examples of Muslim religious traditions that the Soviet Union outlawed in Kyrgyzstan included the bride price and polygamy (Cooper & Traugott, 2003).

After independence, examples of Muslim traditions that became legal mirrored exactly those that had been previously outlawed, such as kalym, the bride price, bride kidnaping, stealing a bride when her family cannot pay the kalym, and finally practicing polygamy. This is a very literal example of the backlash effect. Reinstating polygamy was debated for two days, and the convincing point for reinstating it was that only through that would Krgyz men be truly men again, demonstrating how reinstating these policies was a resurgence of traditionalism which served the purpose of reinstating a national identity.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union's power in the region also allowed for Muslim groups to practice again more publicly. While in many cases this meant normal religious participation in congregations, it also created an environment where extreme groups could be supported. In the South of Kyrgyzstan, the presence of the Wahhabis, a group of Sunni Muslims supported by the Taliban, worked post-independence to implement an anti-feminist agenda. This agenda includes specifically targeting girls for violence and radicalization education. This problem, however, is more exacerbated in Tajikistan due to the mujahedin having a permanent base in Tajikistan, which aligns with my theory as Tajikistan has the lowest score for women's empowerment (Cooper & Traugott, 2003).

It is important to note that there is no evidence that an aggressive de-veiling campaign was pursued in Kyrgyzstan. The impact of the pursuit of this campaign, which it appears only occurred in one of my three case studies, will be explored in the following section on Tajikistan.

Tajikistan

When examining why the larger Muslim population may have affected the current state of women's rights in Tajikistan, it is important to start with the policies that were implemented specifically in Tajikistan to liberate this large population. The Soviet Union targeted the large female Muslim population by aggressively pursuing a de-veiling agenda that Muslim women and girls wear in the public presence of men (Northrop, 2004). This policy, also implemented aggressively in Uzbekistan, was carried out using the threat of and implementation of violence, and therefore became a symbol of Soviet resistance in the region. It is important to note that this policy was not pursued, nor violently enforced, in either Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan. Like in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan also experienced Soviet outlawing of traditional Muslim practices. Between 1921 and 1923, polygamy, kalym payment, and forced marriage all became illegal (Falkingham, 2000).

The Soviet Union additionally only allowed for a small number of mosques to operate in the region. In order for a mullah to even be considered for Soviet recognition, which was required to operate legally, twenty people needed to independently petition the state for recognition. However, even when this was accomplished, the state nearly always denied the request. It is estimated that only 100 mullahs existed in Tajikistan in 1989. Publications of the Quran were also heavily limited, with the 1977 edition only being permitted to be printed 10,000 times. Because the formal propagation of Islam was heavily restricted, "folk Islam" in villages and rural areas began to take its place. The establishment of this "folk Islam" was crucial in the development of the Muslim resistance to the anti-Muslim policies that were implemented in Soviet Tajikistan. This enabled and encouraged the Post Soviet Tajikistan swing back towards traditional Muslim values that were unfriendly for women (Atkin, 1989).

Since independence, there has been a resurgence in traditional values, which has also accompanied a shift in gender roles. There was a notable decrease in women's involvement in political and public life, and there was a resurgence in wearing the Muslim headscarf. This practice itself is not inherently a backlash against women's rights, but a group of women in Dushanbe noted that the reason they wore the headscarf was out of fear of retaliation of Muslim men if they did not. This speaks to a greater theme of the imposition of Muslim ideals by men onto women in Tajikistan post-independence, which is an example of the backlash effect and a resurgence in traditionalism (Falkingham, 2000).

Discussion

The transformation of the outlawed practice to a tradition and symbol of resistance created a stronger backlash effect in that country. It appears that this transformation is related to the strictness of the policies. With greater oppressive policies, the size of the resistance also grew. Finally, the size of the resistance correlated to the size the affected population, or the size of the Muslim population. Tajikistan has the largest Muslim population, experienced the vastest and most strict anti-Muslim Soviet policy, evident in a widespread de-veiling campaign and restriction in places of worship. Subsequently, the country experienced the greatest resurgence in traditionalism and backlash against these policies. Kazakhstan, however, had a smaller Muslim population, little recorded anti-Muslim Soviet policy, and subsequently, little recorded resurgence in traditionalism and backlash against these policies. Kyrgyzstan fell in the middle. The three case countries also followed this pattern regarding their women's empowerment scores, with Kazakhstan having the highest score, then Kyrgyzstan, then Tajikistan. It is

important to note, however, that just because it was not recorded does not mean it did not happen, and I will further explore these limitations in my conclusions.

Chapter 6

Violent Conflict and Women's Empowerment

Violent conflict affects women in uniquely catastrophic ways. Violence causes the breakdown of important health and education institutions, increases the prevalence of sexual violence against women, and exacerbates existing gender disparities. Therefore violent conflict increases women's physical and economical vulnerability in a different way compared to men. Their experiences with violent conflict disenfranchises them during the time of conflict and also serves as a barrier to the growth of women's rights after the conflict ends. Based on this theory, my hypothesis is that the greater the violence, and more specifically the greater the sexual violence, a country experienced during the transition to independence or during the post-independence period, the lower the women's empowerment scores.

My case countries provide the opportunity to explore this variable because of the variance they have regarding women's empowerment scores and also the level and type of violent conflict that arose during their histories. Table 11 outlines these differences. Once again, V-Dem women's empowerment scores operationalize women's rights. The violent conflict data was gathered from combining the Major Episodes of Political Violence and Conflict Regions dataset 1946 - 2014 and the World Bank's Conflict dataset 1991 – 2008. As the table demonstrates, Kazakhstan, with the highest women's empowerment score, has no recorded formal violent conflict, Kyrgyzstan, with the second highest women's empowerment score, has recorded "ethnic violence," and finally, Tajikistan, with the lowest women's empowerment score, has a recorded civil war. In order to explore my hypothesis, the details, years, and

deadliness of these conflicts, as well as how they targeted and impacted women specifically, are detailed below.

[insert Table 11]

Kazakhstan

After investigating several different datasets, I have found that Kazakhstan has no recorded violent conflicts post-independence. While there are some records in newspaper articles of small ethnic clashes, none of these were large enough to be coded and included in the datasets. For example, the Major Episodes of Political Violence and Conflict Regions dataset gave Kazakhstan a 0 for civil war and a 0 for ethnic violence from 1991 through 2012 (Marshall, 2015). The World Bank's Violent Conflict Dataset 1991-2008 also confirms this classification as it does not include Kazakhstan as an episode of armed conflict and collective violence (Petrini, 2010). This is in line with my theory that the greater the conflict a country experiences, the greater the negative impact on women's rights. Therefore, the little amount of violent conflict in Kazakhstan matches well with it having the greatest women's empowerment score out of my three case countries.

Kyrgyzstan

While Kyrgyzstan did not experience any large wars of violent conflicts, there were some notable clashes that impacted women's rights (Petrini, 2010). According to the Major Episodes of Political Violence and Conflict Regions dataset, Kyrgyzstan experienced level 2 ethnic violence in 2010 (Marshall, 2015). 2010 was a painful year in Kyrgyzstan's history, and also stands as a

reflection for the ethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan that had been building since independence. According to BBC, at least 200 people were killed in the clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in June 2010 in southern Kyrgyzstan (BBCb, 2015). Other estimates put the casualty rate as high as 900. Between June and August, which would later be described as Kyrgyzstan's Bloody Summer, an additional 300,000 were internally displaced and a total of 985,000 were affected by the violence (Caster, 2014). A result of the ethnic violence was the imprisonment of Uzbek human rights activist Azimjon Askarov, an action that has been uniformly condemned by human rights organizations (BBCb, 2015).

The ethnic violence of 2010 did specifically affect women. Most of the 75,000 ethnic Uzbeks who fled Southern Kyrgystan because of the violence were women and children (Harding 2010). As was discussed in the literature, when women become displaced persons, they are vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. Additionally, some specific instances of violence specifically targeted women, such as when a group of ethnic Kyrgyz violently attacked a group of women in the province of Osh in front of the authorities, who were unwilling to intervene, according to the Human Rights Watch. Additionally, while it did not appear to be widespread, there were several recorded instances of sexual violence, including one account from a 16 year old Uzbek girl where she was raped by a group of Kyrgyz men (Solvang, 2010). Uzbek women were targets for theft and looting, as well as detention during raids conducted by Kyrgyz authorities in Uzbek neighborhoods (Solvang, 2010).

Tajikistan

While Kyrgyzstan experienced some form of ethnic conflict, it has no recorded wars after they achieved independence. The only country of the three that did appear to experience regime transitional violence, and later ongoing intrastate violence, is Tajikistan, which also exhibits the lowest women's empowerment score. From 1992 through 1996, and then again in 1998, Tajikistan had a civil war. According to the World Bank Violent Conflict Dataset, the two sides in this conflict were Tajikistan, with Russian Federation and Uzbekistan as allies, and the opposition, also known as the UTO, the United Tajik Opposition. The conflict amounted to a "war" classification from 1992-1993 and then decreased to a "minor" classification for the years 1994 through 1996 and 1998. Essentially, the conflict was a struggle for power as Tajikistan gained its independence between different regional groups. There was a total of 30,000 "Major Episode of Political Violence" deaths, or deaths that were caused directly by the political violence. Additionally, as estimated 60,000 people were displaced (BBC, 2014). When including the civilian population in the number of deaths, there was an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 casualties (Petrini 2010). To summarize the conflict, in 1992, anti-government protests began in Dushanbe and they quickly escalated into a war between pro-government forces and pro-democracy forces. The government was able to establish control in 1993, and as a result banned opposition parties and restricted the media. In 1994, there was a ceasefire between the government and opposition forces. Unfortunately, fighting on the Afghan border erupted in 1995, ending the short-lived peace of the 1994 ceasefire. In 1997, the UN helped to mediate another ceasefire and the government and rebel force, the UTO, signed a peace accord. Rebel violence briefly erupted again in 1998 but was quickly stopped, signifying the official end to the intrastate violence in the country (BBC, 2014).

Additionally, there was sexual violence during the civil war, which as the literature illustrates, has lasting impacts on women's empowerment after the conflict concludes. During the civil war, the threat of sexual violence caused an increase in the number of early marriages as parents were hoping to protect their daughters from potential sexual violence by marrying them off. Other young girls were abducted and forced to be the brides of combatants. The trend of early child marriage continued after the war, and still is a women's rights problem today in Tajikistan (OECD Development Center, 2016).

The breakdown of institutions and the effect on women's rights is also evident in the Tajikistan civil war. Because of a lack of legitimate government actors, combined with violence creating power vacuums, several prominent warlords rose to power during the civil war period. These men would, after the civil war ended, go on to become the most prominent human traffickers in the country. Human trafficking in Tajikistan specifically targets women as sexual slaves, forced brides, and forced labor, and the Department of State has identified Tajikistan as a country of origin and transit for female human trafficking victims (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2013).

Civil war also affected Tajik women in more inexplicit ways. While polyamory is illegal in Tajikistan, it is still a common practice amongst women. Some researchers argue the resurgence of this tradition was caused by the large amount of men who died in the civil war, making it a necessary practice for women to engage in. However, because it is considered illegal, this leaves women who are in these arrangements with little to no legal or economic protections if their husband is abusive, violent or neglectful since the state refused to acknowledge her relationship with him (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2013).

Discussion

When looking at these three case examples, it is clear that each represents a different level of violent conflict. Kazakhstan has no reported violent conflict, Kyrgyzstan has one reported ethnic violence conflict, for one year in the summer of 2010, and finally, Tajikistan has a reported civil war, occurring over several years. Tajikistan's civil war was also the deadliest conflict, with the most casualties. As I moved through the cases, the violence experienced in each country accelerated, and the ways that women were affected by this violence matched. This increase in violent conflict levels matches with a decrease in women's empowerment scores, with Tajikistan having the lowest score, then Kyrgyzstan, and finally Kazakhstan with the highest score. This, combined with the qualitative evidence of how the conflicts specifically affected women during and after the violence, lends evidence that there is a negative relationship between level of violent conflict and women's rights.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

This paper sought to place the progression of women's rights in post-Soviet countries within a specific context that would allow for there to be conclusions as to why certain countries experienced greater success when it came to democracy building and women's rights and why others have and continue to struggle. Each of the independent variables explored, both quantitatively (international organization membership, GDP and Muslim population size) and qualitatively (Muslim population size again and violent conflict), demonstrated, with significant evidence, that they were related to the level of women's empowerment in a country. This fills an important gap in the literature that currently fails to address women's rights in Post-Soviet countries and the different political, social, and economic variables that could have affected that climate.

However, through the completion of this research, I have identified several limitations and subsequently several areas of future research that are necessary in order to appropriately draw conclusions upon these findings. One of the main limitations was the lack of information specifically surrounding my case countries. Central Asia is an underrepresented region in feminist and international politics literature, and in order for there to be a more complete analysis of how women's rights in the region has progressed, there needs to be more, specifically quantitative, data compiled for the region. Another limitation of my quantitative research was the lack of controls that I included. After concluding my research, due to the apparent regional and cultural differences that arose in the later stages of my research, my suggestion would be to

include regional and cultural controls, and perhaps to address the post-Soviet countries separately by the regions they are located within. Finally, in my quantitative data, there were several years of missing data. Most notably, I was unable to find the percent Muslim in the fifteen post-Soviet countries for the years 1991 through 1999. While the effect Muslim population size on democracy and women's rights was strongly negative and significant, it is a concern that these findings were based on an incomplete dataset. Hopefully further research can fill this hole in the data to allow for a more complete analysis.

As I mentioned earlier, many of these limitations were caused by a lack of available research, especially quantitative research, and data surrounding post-Soviet countries and women. This research is important because, as foreign policy consistently focuses around the promotion of democracy abroad, we must understand how and in what democratic contexts, women's rights flourish, and what barriers there are to democracy building and to strengthening women's rights within sovereign nations. As an increasing amount of literature confirms the positive role that increased women's rights has on the economic, political, and social capabilities of a nation, it has not only become in the best interest of human rights groups to secure the empowerment of women, but for countries themselves to make women's empowerment a focus. Understanding the barriers to this promotion, such as a resurgence of traditionalism or intrastate violent conflict, is important for international allies of women's empowerment to know. This paper sought to contribute evidence for the barriers and assets towards a positive progression of women's rights, and advocates for further research into the field, especially in regions of the world where women's rights seem to be struggling, such as Central Asia.

Appendix A Figures

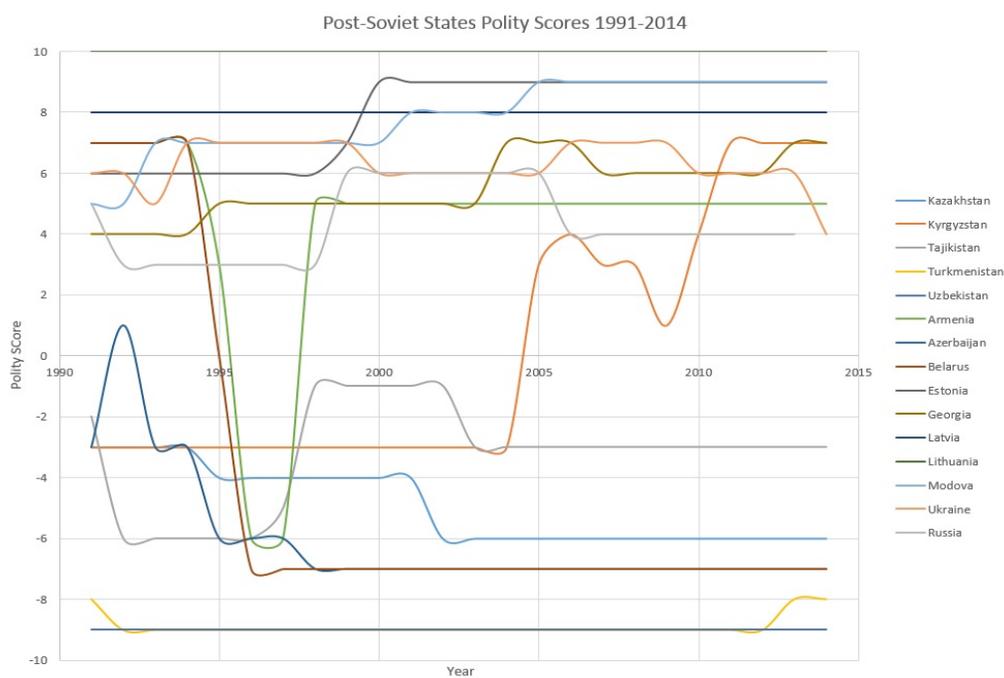


Figure 1. Post-Soviet Polity Scores 1991-2014

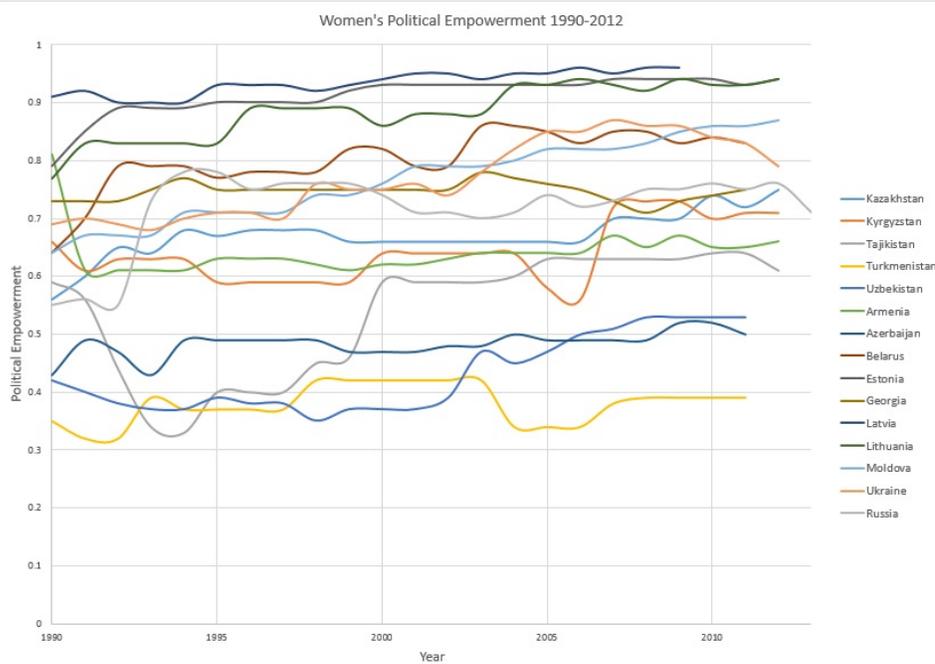


Figure 2. Post-Soviet Women's Political Empowerment Scores 1990-2012



Figure 3. Map of Soviet Union

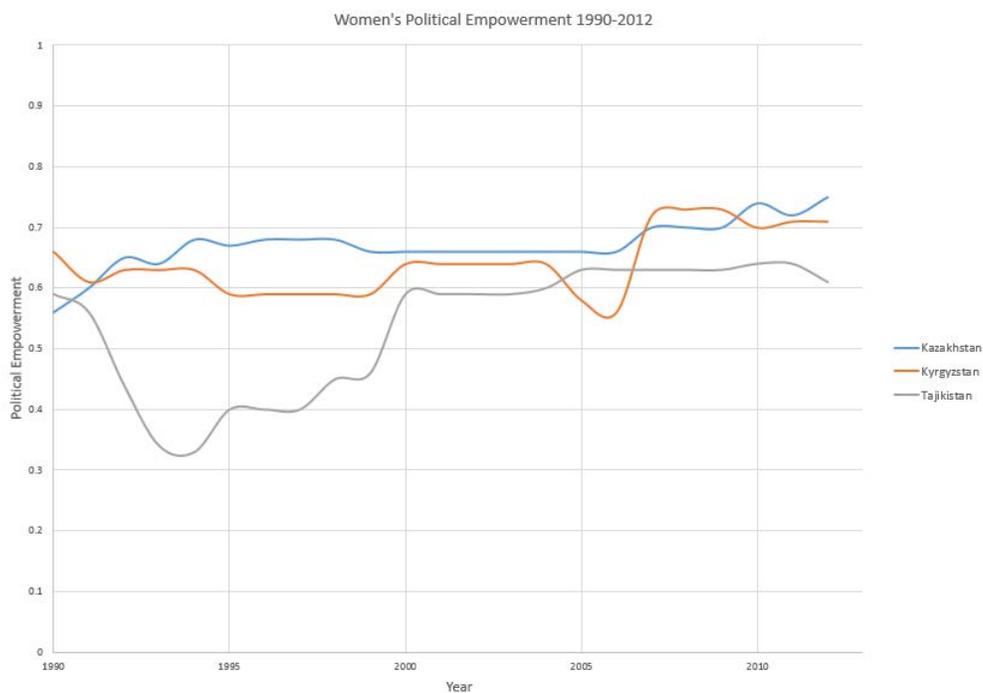


Figure 4. Case Study Women's Political Empowerment

Appendix B Tables

Table 1. Post-Soviet Polity Classifications per Country

Country	1991	2000	2014
Armenia	democracy	anocracy	anocracy
Azerbaijan	anocracy	autocracy	autocracy
Belarus	democracy	autocracy	autocracy
Estonia	democracy	democracy	democracy
Georgia	anocracy	anocracy	democracy
Kazakhstan	anocracy	anocracy	autocracy
Kyrgyzstan	anocracy	anocracy	democracy
Latvia	democracy	democracy	democracy
Lithuania	democracy	democracy	democracy
Moldova	anocracy	democracy	democracy
Tajikistan	anocracy	anocracy	anocracy
Turkmenistan	autocracy	autocracy	autocracy
Ukraine	democracy	democracy	anocracy
Uzbekistan	autocracy	autocracy	autocracy
Russia	anocracy	democracy	anocracy

(Marshall, 2011)

Table 2. Post-Soviet Women's Empowerment Scores per Country

Country	1991	2000	2012
Armenia	0.43	0.47	0.50
Azerbaijan	0.43	0.47	0.50
Belarus	0.64	0.82	0.83
Estonia	0.85	0.93	0.94
Georgia	0.73	0.75	0.75
Kazakhstan	0.56	0.66	0.75
Kyrgyzstan	0.61	0.64	0.71
Latvia	N/A	0.93	0.96
Lithuania	0.83	0.86	0.94
Moldova	0.67	0.76	0.87
Tajikistan	0.56	0.59	0.61
Turkmenistan	0.35	0.42	0.39
Ukraine	0.7	0.75	0.79
Uzbekistan	0.42	0.37	0.53
Russia	0.56	0.74	0.76

(Coppedge et al., 2015)

Table 3. Post-Soviet Percent Muslim per Country

Country	1990	2000	2014
Armenia	1	1	1
Azerbaijan	4	5	5
Belarus	1	1	1
Estonia	1	1	1
Georgia	1	1	1
Kazakhstan	3	3	4
Kyrgyzstan	3	4	4
Latvia	1	1	1
Lithuania	1	1	1
Moldova	1	1	1
Tajikistan	4	5	5
Turkmenistan	4	5	5
Ukraine	1	1	1
Uzbekistan	5	5	5
Russia	1	1	1

(Pew Research Center, 2011)

(Central Intelligence Agency^b, 2014).

Table 4. Post-Soviet GDP per Country

Country	1990	2000	2014
Armenia	636.68	621.42	3873.53
Azerbaijan	1237.32	655.10	7884.19
Belarus	1704.74	1273.50	8040.05
Estonia	N/A	4070.03	20161.58
Georgia	1614.64	692.00	3669.98
Kazakhstan	1647.46	1229.00	12601.70
Kyrgyzstan	608.95	279.62	1269.14
Latvia	N/A	3351.47	15719.24
Lithuania	N/A	3297.35	16506.86
Moldova	972.09	354.00	2238.90
Tajikistan	496.37	139.11	1114.01
Turkmenistan	881.15	645.28	9031.51
Ukraine	651.42	558.22	2036.69
Uzbekistan	651.42	558.22	2036.69
Russia	3485.11	1771.59	12735.92

(The World Bank, 2014)

Table 5. Post-Soviet States CIS Involvement

Country	1991	2000	2014
Armenia	YES	YES	YES
Azerbaijan	YES	YES	YES
Belarus	YES	YES	YES
Estonia	NO	NO	NO
Georgia	YES	YES	NO
Kazakhstan	YES	YES	YES
Kyrgyzstan	YES	YES	YES
Latvia	NO	NO	NO
Lithuania	NO	NO	NO
Moldova	YES	YES	YES
Tajikistan	YES	YES	YES
Turkmenistan	YES	YES	YES
Ukraine	YES	YES	YES
Uzbekistan	YES	YES	YES
Russia	YES	YES	YES

(Central Intelligence Agency^a, 2014)

(Turner, 2016)

Table 6. Post-Soviet States WTO Involvement

Country	1991	2000	2014
Armenia	NO	NO	YES
Azerbaijan	NO	OBSERVER	OBSERVER
Belarus	NO	NO	OBSERVER
Estonia	NO	YES	YES
Georgia	NO	NO	YES
Kazakhstan	NO	NO	OBSERVER
Kyrgyzstan	NO	YES	YES
Latvia	NO	NO	YES
Lithuania	NO	NO	YES
Moldova	NO	NO	YES
Tajikistan	NO	OBSERVER	YES
Turkmenistan	NO	OBSERVER	NO
Ukraine	NO	NO	YES
Uzbekistan	NO	NO	OBSERVER
Russia	NO	NO	YES

(Central Intelligence Agency^a, 2014)

(Turner, 2016)

Table 7. Post-Soviet States NATO PFP Involvement

Country	1991	2000	2014
Armenia	NO	YES	YES
Azerbaijan	NO	YES	YES
Belarus	NO	YES	YES
Estonia	NO	YES	NO
Georgia	NO	YES	YES
Kazakhstan	NO	YES	YES
Kyrgyzstan	NO	YES	YES
Latvia	NO	YES	NO
Lithuania	NO	YES	NO
Moldova	NO	YES	YES
Tajikistan	NO	NO	YES
Turkmenistan	NO	YES	YES
Ukraine	NO	YES	YES
Uzbekistan	NO	YES	YES
Russia	NO	YES	YES

(Central Intelligence Agency^a, 2014)

(Turner, 2016)

Table 8. Influence of Independent Variables on Polity

Dependent Variable	%Muslim	GDP	CIS	PFP	WTOfull	WTOobsv
Polity Score	-1.614*	-0.0003*	-2.313*	-3.335*	6.968*	-0.116

*p≤0.01

Table 9. Influence of Independent Variables on Women's Political Empowerment

Dependent Variable	%Muslim	GDP	CIS	PFP	WTOfull	WTOobsv
Women's Political Empowerment	-.068*	0.000001	-0.052*	-0.071*	0.115*	0.111*

*p≤0.01

Table 10. 2012 Percent Muslim and Women's Empowerment Score Comparison

Country	%Muslim	Women Empowerment Score
Kazakhstan	3	.75
Kyrgyzstan	4	.71
Tajikistan	5	.61

(Pew Research Center, 2011)

(Central Intelligence Agency^b, 2014)

(Coppedge et al., 2015)

Table 11. Recorded Violent Conflict Type and 2012 Women's Empowerment Score

Country	Conflict Type	Women Empowerment Score
Kazakhstan	None	.75
Kyrgyzstan	Ethnic Violence	.71
Tajikistan	Civil War	.61

(Marshall, 2015)

(Coppedge et al., 2015)

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ACADEMIC VITA
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EDUCATION:

The Pennsylvania State University – Schreyer Honors College

University Park, PA
May 2016

Bachelor of Arts in International Politics

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Minor: Spanish

Study Abroad Programs: Greece, Israel, Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, London

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE:

US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Washington D.C.

May 2015-Aug. 2015

South and Central Asia Unit Intern

- Planned and facilitated the week-long visit to the U.S. of the Human Rights Defender Award Recipient.
- Conducted research and attended meetings on behalf of the Unit across the Department.

The Malini Foundation: women's empowerment nonprofit based in Sri Lanka

University Park, PA

January 2014-Jan. 2015

Partnerships Relations Manager

- Directed creative initiatives in event planning, social media, and public relations.
- Managed two interns and worked collaboratively with them to help them meet their objectives.
- Developed innovative strategies to establish relationships with organizations including the Honors College.

Lehigh Valley Health Network

Allentown, PA

May 2013 - Aug. 2013

Research Scholar Intern

- Conducted interviews, analyzed, and presented findings to hospital leadership, employees and the public.
- Won Best Overall Presentation.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:

State of State: daylong conference on issues facing the Penn State Community

University Park, PA

September 2013 - Present

Executive Director, Spring 2015 - Present

- Overseeing a twelve person board and forty-five member general committee.
- Coordinating between eight different committees across all aspects of conference planning.
- Meeting with important partners such as the Penn State Office of the Presidency.
- Developing and facilitating yearlong initiatives, including smaller events as well as projects development.

Schreyer Honors College Freshman Orientation

University Park, PA

April - Sept. of 2013, 2014, 2015

Team Leader

- Created, planned, and then implemented creative and engaging events for incoming freshman
- Lead and prepared a team to interact with new students, their families, and the faculty and administration

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Psychology 497, Honors India Program

India

July 2014 - Aug. 2014

- Travelled to India for 5 weeks as a part of a comprehensive course on Indian culture and history
- Participated in a variety of cultural experiences.
- Attended lectures at Indian Universities and non-profits on globalization, development, and social structure.
- Won first place on a collaborative presentation with Indian University students on government corruption in India and the United States.
- Interacted with people in a variety of settings, including home visits, rural communities, and urban environments.