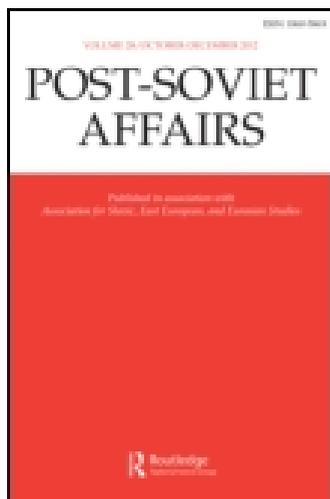


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Is electoral authoritarianism good for women's representation? Evidence from the 1999–2011 regional legislative elections in Russia

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This article employs a comprehensive set of data on 226 regional legislative elections held in Russia in 1999–2011 in order to assess the impact of electoral authoritarianism upon women's representation in sub-national legislative bodies. The analysis of 50,520 cases of candidate nomination and 9553 cases of electoral success, supported by a cross-regional statistical study of the factors of women's nomination and success, empirically confirms an explanatory model that incorporates three working hypotheses derived from the mainstream literature on women's representation. According to this model, the 2002–2003 electoral reform, by introducing proportional representation into regional electoral systems, strongly facilitated women's representation. After the advent of electoral authoritarianism, proportional rules, in combination with the increased 'party magnitude' of the pro-government party, continued to exert expectedly positive effects; yet these effects were offset by the decreased competitiveness in majority districts. As a result, political regime transformation did not lead to a significant increase in the number of female deputies.

Keywords: women's representation; electoral authoritarianism; elections; legislatures; electoral reform

Introduction

One of the salient trends in contemporary politics is the rapid increase in the number of women in representative assemblies throughout the world. In the beginning of the 2000s, the average share of women in national parliaments was 11.7%; as of July 2013, it was 20.9% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013). This trend is generally believed to be important for promoting women's interests and gender equality. While it is certainly true that per se, the increased representation of women does not necessarily lead to the promotion of women-friendly policies, there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that there is a causal link between the descriptive and substantive representation of women, which 'roughly corresponds with whether the focus is on the number of women elected or on the effects of women's presence in parliament' (Wängnerud 2009, 52). The simple argument

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that female politicians are best equipped to represent the interests of women (Phillips 1995) is very intuitively plausible. Many scholars believe that a greater presence of women in institutions that have traditionally been controlled by men can facilitate the attention to issues that affect women (Dodson and Carroll 1991). Sophisticated formal models of political representation also suggest that the identity of the legislator matters for policy determination (Osborne and Slivinski 1996; Besley and Coate 1997), as a result of which influence on policy increases as there is increasing political representation of a group.

Current scholarship on women's representation identifies three groups of factors that account for the increased number of female legislators. First, there are institutional arrangements that are conducive to higher levels of women's representation, such as gender quotas (Tripp and Kang 2008; Krook 2010a) and proportional electoral systems (Norris 1985; Rule 1987; Matland 1998; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; McAllister and Studlar 2002). Second, women's representation tends to be positively affected by certain political factors, such as the ideological orientations of the leading political parties (Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Opello 2006), their size (Matland and Taylor 1997), and candidate nomination strategies (Krook 2010b). Third, there is an increased recognition that political culture explains significant variations among the national patterns of women's representation (Jalalzai 2004).

While many of the causal relationships outlined above have been tested empirically and proved quite significant, this is not the case with one variable of paramount importance in research on contemporary politics: political regime. Paxton (1997) hypothesized that the degree to which a country is democratic may be positively related to women's political representation. Yet so far this theory has not received a convincing empirical confirmation, even though it does seem that in the long run, as democracy matures over decades, the extension of civil liberties contributes to the increase in the number of female legislators (Paxton and Kunovich 2003). At the same time, it has been established that some varieties of authoritarianism are associated with unusually high levels of women's representation. *Prima facie*, this concerns the communist regimes. Stockemer (2013), while finding that the impact of the longevity of democracy on women's representation is only marginally statistically important, identifies communist regimes as one of the strongest predictors. Other important examples of authoritarian regimes that achieved rather high levels of women's legislative representation in less than favorable cultural environments include Egypt under Nasser (Hatem 1992) and Syria under Hafez and Bashar al-Assad (Chen 2010). Thus there are strong empirical grounds for believing that one-party dictatorships, or at least those that pursue social-transformation agendas, travel quite well with women's representation.

Does this apply to a variety of dictatorial rule that is most widespread in the contemporary world, electoral authoritarianism? The notion of electoral authoritarianism refers to a distinct political regime that, while remaining dictatorial in the basic patterns of power distribution and reproduction, at the same time permits certain institutions normally associated with democracy, such as

partially competitive elections, legislatures, and political parties (Schedler 2006; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Cameron and Orenstein 2012; Gill 2012). There are certain empirical reasons to believe that electoral authoritarianism can be good for women's representation. For instance, a recent study of women's representation in Africa, where the vast majority of authoritarian regimes belong to this category, has demonstrated that they have larger shares of female members in their parliaments than do democracies (Stockemer 2011). The case of one African authoritarian regime, Rwanda, is outstanding, in that, over a short period of time, it succeeded in creating a parliament that is composed 56.3% of women (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013), which is the largest share in the contemporary world. While it may well be that the stunning success of Rwanda, praised by many feminist scholars (Burnet 2011), can be attributed to the mechanical effects of institutional factors, such as gender quotas (Baldez 2006) in combination with proportional representation (Stroha 2010), it cannot be denied that the case of Rwanda calls for an assessment of the relationship between electoral authoritarianism and women's representation.

While Russia has never succeeded in achieving a full-fledged liberal democratic order, its political regime of the 1990s and early 2000s can be characterized as a defective electoral democracy (Merkel 2004). In the mid-2000s, Russia experienced an authoritarian transformation, as a result of which the basic characteristics of the country's political regime, including elections and political parties, became quite typical of electoral authoritarianism at the national (White 2012) and sub-national (Gel'man and Ross 2010) levels. In the run-up to the 2007 national legislative elections, a mixed (parallel) electoral system was replaced with pure proportional representation. Thus over a short period of time, Russia brought into operation two factors that could have led to a marked increase in women's representation. Indeed, the percentage share of women in the lower chamber of the national parliament, the State Duma, increased from 9.6 in 2003 (Moser 2003) to 14.0 in 2007, and to 13.6 in 2011 (TsIK 2003–2013).

When built into a comparative perspective, such cases can be very illustrative by providing an insight into the specific constellations of factors that facilitate or discourage women's representation. A major methodological problem with this research agenda is that with the national-level data, there is no way to distinguish empirically the effects of the two factors that potentially contributed to the observed increase in women's representation. Indeed, electoral authoritarianism and pure proportional representation arrived almost simultaneously. As a remedy to this problem, I chose to use the data from Russia's regional legislative elections. In the vast majority of these elections, pure proportional representation was never implemented. Instead, they continued to use parallel systems. While in some countries, there is a gap between the levels of women's representation at the national and sub-national levels (Vengroff, Nyiri, and Fugiero 2003), this does not seem to be the case in Russia. Besides, the use of sub-national data entails a clear advantage of escaping a small-sample bias. Suffice it to say, in 1999–2011 Russia held four national legislative elections that returned 1800 representatives, while

the overall number of elections to single or lower chambers of regional legislatures was 226, with as many as 9553 representatives elected.

The purpose of this article is to assess the impact of electoral authoritarianism upon women's representation while taking into account the distinct effects of electoral reform. In the first section of this article, I describe the data and briefly illuminate the major characteristics and dynamics of Russia's regional electoral politics in 1999–2011. The second section reports preliminary findings and lays out my working hypotheses. The third section presents a detailed analysis and discusses the findings.

Data

The data for this analysis are derived from regional legislative elections held in Russia from December 1999, in which the regional races were concurrent with the national Duma campaign, to March 2011, when the most recent regional elections before the 2011 national Duma campaign were held. There are several reasons for selecting the 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011 national elections as natural thresholds for identifying the distinct sequences (cycles) of regional legislative elections. First, the composition of actors that were salient in regional electoral arenas throughout each of the cycles was largely determined by the political outcomes of the preceding national races. Second, and more importantly, the 2003 and 2007 national elections were accompanied by fundamental changes in legislation on elections and political parties. Third, the 2007 Duma elections opened the period of outright authoritarianism in Russia's electoral politics.

One of the most sweeping political reforms implemented during Vladimir Putin's first term in office was the transition to mixed electoral systems in regional legislative elections. Up to December 2003, the vast majority of Russia's 89 regional legislatures were elected by different varieties of majority rules, mostly by single-member plurality, but in some cases by multimember plurality, two-round majority, or single non-transferable vote (Golosov 2003a). In 2002, the law 'On the Basic Guarantees of Citizens' Electoral Rights and the Right to Vote in Referenda' was amended to provide for the election of no less than a half of the deputies in the regional legislature, or one of its chambers, by party-list proportional representation. Partly as a result of regional resistance (Golosov 2004, 263–266), the implementation of the new rules was delayed to December 2003. One of the immediate consequences of the reform was the arrival of political parties as principal competitors. Before 2003, the rates of participation and the levels of success of party-nominated candidates in regional legislative elections were not only negligibly low but also tended to decrease over time (Golosov 2003b; Hale 2006).

The December 2007 national legislative elections were preceded by institutional and political changes of even greater magnitude. These were the first post-communist national elections held by purely proportional rules, which did not affect regional electoral legislation directly but certainly contributed to some of the regions' decision to follow the example of the federal center. But

much more importantly, in 2005–2006 the Russian authorities implemented a package of institutional reforms and political measures that led to the emergence and subsequent consolidation of electoral authoritarianism. In particular, this package included the abolition of direct gubernatorial elections (Goode 2007; Sharafutdinova 2010), a new version of the law on political parties that allowed for the elimination of the majority of political parties registered in the country in 2001–2005 (Golosov 2012), and the political reshuffling of the country's opposition by merging some of its most viable elements into a new 'center-left' party controlled by the authorities, A Just Russia (March 2009). One of the intended consequences of this process was a rapid rise of the 'party of power,' United Russia, to electoral and legislative monopoly, which allowed it to reach the commanding heights not only in national but also in regional politics (Reuter and Remington 2009). Thus the comparison of the 2007–2011 and the previous regional election cycles allows for identifying and assessing the effects of electoral authoritarianism.

Table 1 reports essential factual information about the 1999–2011 elections to the single or lower chambers of the regional legislative assemblies of Russia. Elections to the upper chambers were few, and they were excluded from my analysis in order to avoid bias in favor of regions with bicameral assemblies. The phases of staggered elections in those two regions that used them during the period under observation are counted separately. The gradual decline in the number of elections per cycle has its explanation in the fact that, starting with 1999, many regions changed the term limits of their legislatures from 4 to 5 years, while others further extended their terms to make regional elections concurrent with the federal elections. Variations of electoral systems are not explanatory variables in this study, which is why I do not report on these parameters in the table, but this is not to say that such variations were absent or inconsequential (Lyubarev 2011). The predominant form of majority electoral rules was single-member plurality, elections of party-list deputies were invariably held in single region-wide districts with the average magnitude of about 25, the largest

Table 1. The December 1999–March 2011 regional legislative elections in Russia: electoral systems and competitiveness.

	December 1999–May 2003	December 2003–April 2007	December 2007–May 2011
Majority systems	81	0	0
Proportional systems	2	6	11
Mixed systems	3	71	52
Total electoral systems	86	77	63
Average effective number of candidates in majority districts	3.02	3.03	2.55
ENP in proportional districts	5.98	3.82	2.48

Source: Compiled by the author from data provided by the Central Electoral Commission of Russia, TsIK (2003–2013).

remainders with the Hare quota and the Imperiali highest averages method were most common techniques of proportional seat allocation, and the thresholds of representation tended to be set at the 5% level in the beginning of the period, and at 7% later.

At the same time, [Table 1](#) reports information on the key empirical indicator of competitiveness in regional legislative elections in the form of the effective number of parties (ENP, Laakso and Taagepera 1979). The values of the ENP are calculated on the basis of candidate returns in majority elections, averaged across districts, and party-list returns in the proportional sections of elections. It has to be recognized that the numerical values of the Laakso-Taagepera measure do not adequately describe the situations of political monopoly (Golosov 2010), which is apparent from the fact that the average value of 2.48 is attributed to the less than competitive party-list elections of 2007–2011. This shortcoming, however, does not invalidate the index because it still allows for tracing the dynamics of party competition across the electoral cycles and does not affect the results of statistical analysis. The transition to electoral authoritarianism is quite clearly manifested in the decline of the party-list ENP by the factor of 1.5 from 2003–2007 to 2007–2011.

Preliminary findings and working hypotheses

[Table 2](#) reports the basic information on the shares of women among 50,520 candidates who contested regional legislative elections in 1999–2011, and among 9553 deputies who were elected throughout the period. According to a previous study, the share of women elected in 80 elections held in 1995–1998 was 11% (Golosov 2001), which means that the 1999–2003 electoral cycle brought about a marked decrease in women’s representation. With the arrival of party-list elections in 2003, the share of women went up quite significantly, even if more so among the candidates than among the elected deputies. The 2007–2011 electoral cycle, characterized by the advent of electoral authoritarianism, led to only marginal increases of the shares of women both among candidates and among the elected deputies.

In order to understand the observed phenomenon, it is important to reassess the theories of women’s representation briefly outlined in the introductory section of

Table 2. Women’s nomination and representation in Russia’s regional legislative assemblies, 1999–2011.

	December 1999–May 2003	December 2003–April 2007	December 2007–May 2011
Share of women among candidates (%)	13.57	18.69	19.16
Share of men among candidates (%)	86.43	81.31	80.84
Total number of candidates	15,833	18,851	15,836
Share of women among deputies (%)	8.78	11.45	11.63
Share of men among deputies (%)	91.22	88.55	88.37
Total number of deputies	3337	3223	2993

Source: Same as for [Table 1](#).

this study. It is only natural to start with the factor that is undeniably salient in the political setting under observation, the electoral system. The essential reasoning beyond the theory according to which female candidates benefit from proportional representation is based on the notion that due to a constellation of political authority patterns in the contemporary societies, women tend to be relatively weak candidates. As a result, the levels of their electoral success tend to be greater under electoral provisions that create low thresholds of inclusion, conventionally defined as the minimum percentage of the vote that can earn a candidate a seat under the most favorable circumstances (Lijphart 1994, 25). In majority elections, the threshold of inclusion is very high. It is invariably lower under proportional election rules (Gallagher 1992). In comparison to men, women are indeed weak candidates in Russia's regional legislative elections. The respective percentage shares of winners among female and male candidates were 13.6 and 22.2 in the 1999–2003 elections, 10.5 and 18.6 in the 2003–2007 elections, and 11.5 and 20.7 in the 2007–2011 elections. Thus it is possible to formulate the first working hypothesis of this study: the increase in women's representation in the 2003–2007 electoral cycle stemmed from the lowering of the threshold of inclusion as a result of electoral reform.

It is important to take into account that under plurality rules, the threshold of inclusion is not a constant. It decreases as the number of candidates in competition increases. For example, in a plurality race with two candidates, it is impossible to win a seat with less than 50% of the vote, while with 10 candidates, slightly more than 10% of the vote can suffice. Hence the second hypothesis: under majority rules, more competitive elections lead to higher levels of women's representation.

The relationship between electoral competitiveness and women's representation under proportional rules is more complex. While the theoretical reasoning presented above clearly suggests that per se, any shift to proportional representation should be beneficial for women's representation, there is no reason to believe that greater shares of female candidates should be associated with highly competitive party-list elections. In fact, the reverse is true. The principal motivation for the so called 'ticket-balancing' in the well-established democracies of the West is the idea of mirror representation, with the party itself claiming to mirror its constituency (Matthews and Valen 1999). There is no reason to assume that such a claim makes no sense in Russia (Aivazova 2008). But a party should be reasonably confident of winning enough seats in order to perform as a 'mirror.' The mainstream literature on women's representation (Matland 1993; Matland and Taylor 1997) identifies 'party magnitude,' understood as the number of seats a party expects to win in a district, as an important explanatory variable. Hence the third hypothesis: under proportional rules, more competitive elections lead to lower levels of women's representation.

The above-stated hypotheses concerning the relationships between electoral rules and competitiveness allow for linking this inquiry to the problematic of electoral authoritarianism. Authoritarian elections are less competitive than democratic elections. This happens not only for the simple reason that the primary purpose of authoritarian elections is to sustain political monopoly, which is only

rarely and under very special conditions compatible with high party fragmentation, but also because such elections perform an important ‘signalling function’ (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009), sending a message of massive support to the regime and/or the lack of viable alternatives to the domestic and international publics. During the 2007–2011 electoral cycle, the Kremlin curators of United Russia widely employed the practice of instructing the governors of the regions on the shares of the vote; normally no less than 60%, that the ‘party of power’ was expected to win (Golosov 2011; see also Reuter 2013). Realistic or not, these targets were pursued by the appointed governors with understandable zeal.

By combining the three hypotheses formulated above, I arrive at an explanatory model that is to be empirically tested in this study. The model is thus: the 2003 electoral reform did facilitate women’s representation in regional legislative elections; after the advent of electoral authoritarianism, proportional rules, in combination with the increased ‘party magnitude’ of United Russia, continued to exert positive effects on women’s representation; yet these effects were offset by the decreased competitiveness in majority districts. As a result, political regime transformation did not lead to a significant increase in the number of female deputies.

Analysis and discussion

In order to test this model empirically, it is essential to give more consideration to the patterns of candidate nomination and success in the 1999–2011 regional legislative elections. The analysis proceeds in two steps, corresponding to different levels of data aggregation. The results of the first step of my inquiry are reported in Table 3. The major analytical unit in this table is an electoral system, not a region, which naturally leads to some overrepresentation of regions with very large assemblies, very competitive elections, and/or very long party lists. On the one hand, this obvious shortcoming is not very consequential because of the massive size of the sample. Note, however, that the data on the 1999–2003 party list elections are not very indicative because such elections were few. On the other hand, region-level analysis is presented below as the second step of my inquiry.

As follows from the data, electoral reform did contribute quite substantially both to the nomination and to the election of female candidates. In 1999–2003, when the vast majority of candidates ran in majority districts, the share of women among them was 13.4%. This picture did not change in the majority elections of 2003–2011. In the proportional elections, however, the share of female candidates exceeded 20% already in the 2003–2007 cycle, and this level was sustained in 2007–2011. The share of women among the deputies elected under proportional rules was systematically higher than in the majority sections of elections. Most importantly, this upward dynamic was not interrupted in 2007, with the arrival of competitive authoritarianism. Quite consistent with my theoretical expectations, women’s representation in the proportional-representation sections of the assemblies increased not strongly but quite visibly, from 12.5% to 14%. However, these positive gains were offset by a downward trend in majority

Table 3. Women's nomination and representation in Russia's regional legislative assemblies by electoral system, 1999–2011.

		December 1999–May 2003	December 2003– April 2007	December 2007– May 2011
Majority district candidates	Women (%)	13.4	13.34	14.02
	Men (%)	86.6	86.66	85.98
	Total number of candidates	15,269	7401	5115
Party list candidates	Women (%)	17.41	20.92	20.48
	Men (%)	82.59	79.08	79.52
	Total number of candidates	672	13,758	12,669
Majority district deputies	Women (%)	8.62	10.2	8.48
	Men (%)	91.38	89.8	91.52
	Total number of deputies	3273	1451	1274
Party list deputies	Women (%)	17.19	12.47	13.96
	Men (%)	82.81	87.53	86.04
	Total number of deputies	64	1772	1719

Source: Same as for [Table 1](#).

elections, in which the share of elected female deputies decreased from 10.2% to 8.5%, the lowest level in the history of Russia's regional legislative elections. Thus the explanatory model presented in the previous section withstands the first empirical test.

In order to bring in the region as the principal unit of analysis and to reveal the causal links with a greater degree of robustness, the second step of my inquiry was designed to employ the standard statistical techniques of bivariate and multivariate analyses. These analyses are focused on the causal links between women's representation and the variable of major importance for this study, electoral competitiveness, the former being operationalized as the percentage share of women in the assembly, and the latter as the effective number of candidates or parties, averaged by district in case of majority elections. As previously, I treat the majority and proportional sections of elections as separate analytical units.

While bivariate analysis of this kind poses no major methodological problems, multivariate analysis naturally calls for control variables, the use of which is necessary for the proper assessment of the effects exerted by the variable of primary interest. In order to identify such variables, I experimented with a number of empirical indicators that feature prominently in cross-regional ecological analyses of Russian politics. Most such variables, including the composition of the population by gender, ethnicity, age, and education; the level of economic

development; the official status of the region within the Russian Federation; and the political characteristics of the regional executive, turned out to be unrelated to women's representation. The impact of one socio-economic variable, the share of rural population, proved to be quite visible: predominantly rural regions have smaller proportions of women in their assemblies. In multiple regression analysis, however, the effects of this variable were completely overshadowed by the effects of a political variable, the vote for the communist left in national legislative elections.

A close relationship between the share of rural population and the communist vote has been noticed already in the early ecological analyses of Russia's electoral politics (Petrov 1996). It is quite understandable why, as a closely related but explicitly political variable, the communist vote overshadows the impact of the rural population share upon women's representation. However, the substantive interpretation of this phenomenon is problematic. Comparative research has identified the traditional political left as one of the key promoters of gender equality (Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Opello 2006), which makes the case of Russia highly unusual, especially given that under the communist regime, the share of women in the Soviet quasi-representative institutions was high enough (Friedgut 1979). Two explanations of this idiosyncratic pattern are possible.

One is that in the process of ideological evolution after the fall of the communist regime, the parties of the Russian left, while adhering to the traditional statist economic policy agenda, markedly shifted to national-conservative stances on the issues of culture and identity (Vujačić 2004; Ishiyama 2009). Indeed, the ideology of the largest and most viable party of the Russian left, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), is sometimes characterized as a variety of contemporary right-wing radicalism (Beichelt 2009). Thus it can be argued that socially conservative voters, while supportive of the communists, are hostile to women's access to politics. Such an explanation, however straightforward and intuitively plausible, is not entirely consistent with the actual policies of the KPRF and is methodologically vulnerable to an ecological fallacy – which is an error of deduction that involves deriving conclusions about individuals solely on the basis of an analysis of aggregate data for a group. My preferred explanation is that while the massive left-wing vote in Russia is indeed indicative of the socially conservative orientations in the electorate, the link between this variable and low women's representation is provided not by party support per se but rather by the so called 'gender ideology,' a set of attitudes (Paxton and Kunovich 2003) and stereotypes (Fox and Oxley 2003) pertaining to the role of women in polity and society. From this perspective, low women's representation in those regions where the communists enjoy superior levels of support stems from the predominant cultural and ideological preferences of the electorate.

Table 4 reports the results of bivariate and multivariate analyses. When performing these analyses, I used the data at my disposal more selectively than in the previous empirical tests. In order to avoid the problem of heteroscedasticity, each of the regions enters each of the analyses only once, which in some cases made it necessary to eliminate redundant observations. I included most recent elections held in the given region in the course of the given electoral cycle.

Table 4. Women's representation, electoral competitiveness, and the left-wing vote: bivariate and multivariate patterns.

	Majority district elections				Party-list elections			
	December 1999–May 2003	December 2003–April 2007	December 2007–May 2011	December 2003–April 2007	December 2003–April 2007	December 2007–April 2007	December 2007–May 2011	December 2007–May 2011
Bivariate correlations, Pearson's r								
Women's representation/ ENP	0.31***	0.23*	0.08	–0.14	0.05	–0.14	0.05	0.05
Women's representation/ left-wing vote	–0.27**	–0.30**	–0.28**	–0.23*	–0.14	–0.23*	–0.14	–0.14
ENP/left-wing vote	–0.03	0.05	0.33**	0.29**	0.44***	0.29**	0.44***	0.44***
Multiple regression (dependent variable is women's representation), β -coefficients, standard errors in parentheses								
ENP	2.36*** (0.86)	2.95** (1.41)	2.65 (2.0)	–0.42 (0.67)	1.97 (2.12)	–0.42 (0.67)	1.97 (2.12)	1.97 (2.12)
Left-wing vote	–0.18** (0.08)	–0.52** (0.2)	–0.71** (0.3)	–0.32 (0.2)	–0.43 (0.32)	–0.32 (0.2)	–0.43 (0.32)	–0.43 (0.32)
Intercept	6.85* (3.59)	9.52* (5.28)	11.02** (5.27)	19.24*** (3.54)	13.92*** (4.98)	19.24*** (3.54)	13.92*** (4.98)	13.92*** (4.98)
R^2	0.16	0.16	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.03
N	73	62	50	66	60	66	60	60

Note: ***significant at 0.01; **significant at 0.05; *significant at 0.1.

Source: Same as for Table 1.

Following a convention that is well established in large- n comparative research, I excluded very small regions on the grounds that their patterns of electoral politics can be idiosyncratic. The 100,000 population size was used as a threshold of exclusion. Besides, I excluded the December 2003 elections in Ingushetia because of the untypically high (for that period) level of electoral fraud, which – quite uniquely – was recognized even by the chairman of Russia's Central Electoral Commission (Kynev 2009, 96).

The operationalization of the women's representation and the ENP variables is explained above. Because the dependent variable in multiple regression analysis is expressed in percentages, which is potentially problematic, I experimented with the logit transformation of its values. This experimentation brought no substantively different findings but made it more difficult to interpret the coefficients, which is why I do not report the results. The left-wing vote variable was operationalized as the combined percentage share of the vote cast for the KPRF, the Communists and Workers of Russia for the Soviet Union, the Stalin Bloc for the USSR, the All-Russian Political Movement in Support of the Army, and the Party of Peace and Unity in the 1999 national legislative elections; the KPRF, the Russian Pensioners' Party–Party of Social Justice, and the Party of Peace and Unity in the 2003 national legislative elections; and the KPRF alone in the 2007 and 2011 national legislative elections.

As demonstrated by the analysis, in the 1999–2003 elections, held predominantly by majority systems, both electoral competitiveness and the left-wing vote were very strongly associated with women's representation in the directions predicted by my explanatory model. This pattern was sustained in the majority sections of the 2003–2007 elections, with both variables remaining highly significant in multiple regression analysis and the R^2 unchanged, even though the bivariate relationship between women's representation and the ENP is blurred. In the 2007–2011 elections, however, the positive association between these two variables fades away completely, while the negative association between women's representation and the left-wing vote remains strong. The explanation is apparent from the table: for the first time, the left-wing vote becomes strongly positively associated with the ENP, which is only natural given that the KPRF emerged as a primary agency of fragmentation in the electorate even at the level of majority districts. Thus the negative impact of the left-wing vote made the effects of electoral competitiveness insignificant.

In the party list elections, the strong positive association between the ENP and the left-wing vote was apparent already in 2003–2007, and it became even stronger in 2007–2011. Quite consistently with the 'party magnitude' theory, party list elections did not return large shares of women deputies in regions with relatively massive left-wing vote. Indeed, the party of the greatest magnitude in the electorate was United Russia, not the KPRF. At the same time, the role of the KPRF as the principal agency of fragmentation in the electorate was more pronounced in the proportional sections of elections than in majority districts. In the 2003–2007 elections, both the ENP and the left-wing vote were negatively associated with women's representation, even though the associations were

extremely weak and, in the former case, lacking any statistical significance. In the 2007–2011 elections, none of the independent variables exerted a significant impact on women's representation in party list elections. Consistent with the explanatory model and the previous findings, this suggests that the advent of electoral authoritarianism, while creating more favorable conditions for women's representation due to the increased magnitude of the leading party, at the same time eliminated the advantages entailed by higher levels of political competition.

Conclusion

Is electoral authoritarianism good for women's representation? The answer to this question derived from the analysis of the 1999–2011 regional legislative elections in Russia can be presented as a traditional mixture of good and bad news. The good news is that if the electoral system is purely proportional, and the magnitude of the dominant party is sufficient to make ticket-balancing a desirable strategy, which is normally the case, then women's representation under electoral authoritarianism is likely to increase. Putting the issue of gender quotas aside, the topical case of Rwanda perfectly fits into this description. The bad news is that in majority district elections, the decreased level of electoral competitiveness, which is also normal for electoral authoritarianism, impairs women's representation. Thus insofar as a majority system remains in place, women's representation is unlikely to progress at any significant pace. This is attested by the case of Russia's regional elections, in which the positive effects of proportional representation were offset by the decreased levels of competitiveness in majority districts.

When making a final assessment of the balance of positive and negative effects of electoral authoritarianism upon women's representation, it is important to take into account that, in fact, proportional representation does not travel well with authoritarianism. There is an influential stream of empirical research that directly relates proportional representation to democracy (Blais and Massicotte 1997; Hoffman 2005). This research demonstrates that, as a rule, authoritarian states that conduct general elections apply majority electoral systems, and not without reason. In situations when political monopoly is under threat, proportional systems pose a greater danger to the survival of the autocrats than majority systems (Norris 2009). In Russia, a fully proportional electoral system was introduced in national legislative elections at a time when the political executive was reasonably confident in its ability to secure massive success for the pro-government party at the polls. Yet once confidence was lost, pure proportional representation was hastily abolished to be replaced with a mixed electoral system (Golosov 2013). A similar tendency toward the abolition of purely proportional systems is visible in regional politics. This suggests that the upward trend of women's representation in Russia is likely to be over.

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