

# Determinants of Women's Descriptive Representation on the City Boards of the Czech Statutory Cities after the Local Elections of 2014<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on question why is descriptive (or numerical) representation of women as local political leaders higher in some cities than in others? The paper focuses on the analysis of the determinants of women's political representation on city boards of the Czech statutory cities after the last local elections of 2014. We test some hypothesis, concerning two groups of factors that can potentially affect the success of women (socioeconomic and demographic, and political contextual), thus aiming to expand theoretical and empirical research which is in the case of determinants of women's representation at the local level underdeveloped. Overall, the analysis reveals that regression models explaining presence of women on the city boards were not generally too successful, with slightly better performance of the model using socioeconomic and demographic factors. Specifically, Moravia and municipality size proved as very strong predictors of presence of women on the city boards in negative, or positive direction, respectively (although in full model municipality size variable lost its significance), supplementing by the proportion of female councillors in same elections, which increased successfulness of women as well. In contrast, the share of women in local councils and on city boards in the previous electoral term was not proven as statistical significant, similarly as party affiliations' of city boards.

**Keywords:** Czech Republic; statutory cities; local elections; women's representation; local councils; city boards; political parties; parliamentary parties; local parties

## INTRODUCTION

The question of women's political representation and leadership has been receiving a lot of attention just a few decades ago. However, most of the studies concerning this topic examine women's issue on the national level of a political system (e.g., Lovenduski, 1997; Lott and Kenny, 1999; Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 2001; Gelb and Palley, 2008; Moghadam, 2010), especially those analyzing effects of various factors on women's descriptive representation (e.g., Norris, 1987; Paxton, 1997; Matland, 1998). In contrast, there is a much less attention

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to the search for factors influencing women's political representation at the sub-national levels of government both at the local (e.g., Bullock and MacManus, 1991; Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012; Magin, 2013) or regional levels of the government (e.g., Vengroff, Nyiri and Fugiero, 2003; Orbals, Rinckery and Montoya, 2011).

Concerning the state of research in the post-communist area of Central and Eastern Europe (including the Czech Republic), the previous statements are valid even more, as none of the several impressive publications on women's political representation in the Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Funk and Müller, 1993; Reuschmeyer, 1998; Jaquette and Wolchik, 1999; Janhert et al., 2001; Matland and Montgomery, 2003; Jüptner et al., 2014) explains how various factors account for differences in women's representation. Research on women's political representation in the Czech academic environment is rather marginal, outside mainstream attention, even if a few authors are engaged in this topic (e.g., Vráblíková, 2007; Sztwiertina and Hellová, 2012; Kouba, Nálepová and Filipec, 2013; Kovář and Kovář 2014). However, most of existing studies are rather partial, and especially descriptive in nature (e.g., Šprincová, 2014; Šprincová and Adamusová, 2014), without systematic effort to analyze factors that could explain the reasons for the different women's representation at, or between, various levels of the Czech political system.

Similarly, in case of political leadership at the sub-national levels of government (local as well as regional) the research concerning women's issue is rather limited and far from systematic in terms of empirical scope and theoretical development, although many authors deal with this research area. For instance Ryšavý and Šaradín (2010) analyzed the composition of the Czech municipal assemblies with regard to party (non)affiliation of local councillors; Kostelecký, Čermák and Vobecká (2006), or Ryšavý (2007), analyzed regional political elites, and Ryšavý (2006a, 2006b) local political elites as well; and some authors dealt with the analysis of personal changes and stability (i.e., the phenomenon of party switching) of local (Kyloušek, 2008; Pink et al., 2012) or regional councillors (Pink et al., 2011).

This article thus seeks to address the existing gap in scholarly inquiry by examining women's political leadership at the local level, and answer a question like what are the determinants of different extent of women's descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967) as members of the municipals executive boards of the Czech statutory cities after the last local elections of 2014.<sup>3</sup> The importance of

<sup>3</sup> The municipal board is the executive body of the municipal (local) council. While representatives (councillors) of local councils are directly elected, members of municipal boards (the mayor, the deputy mayor(s) and other members of municipal board) are elected by the council from among its members. Membership of municipality boards ranging from five to eleven persons according

sub-national (local) perspective in research of women's descriptive representation then lies in many areas. First, although women's political representation at the local level is significantly higher than at the regional or national levels in the Czech Republic, this situation is far from satisfactory, as women in local politics are far from reaching the so-called "critical mass" of 30%, which some authors identified as the crucial cut-off point for women to have a higher impact on politics (Childs and Krook, 2008). Second, there are still significant stereotypes and prejudices in these societies, as women seeking political offices in Central and Eastern Europe countries clearly face individual, cultural and systematic obstacles, even at the local level (Sloat, 2004). Third, local politics and local elections are important as many political careers begin at the local level, the composition of local assemblies impacts upon the recruitment of candidates for other sub-national (regional) and national parliaments, and holding a local office is perhaps more logistically feasible for women (Magin, 2013).<sup>4</sup>

## 1 THEORY AND METHODS

### 1.1 Determinants of women's representation at the local level

Although there is a well-established and growing research on the effects of various factors on the representation of women at the national level (e.g., Norris, 1987; Rule, 1987; Matland, 1998), there is, at the same time, a paucity of research on factors influencing women's political representation at the local level (e.g., Bullock and MacManus, 1991; Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012; Magin, 2013). For those reasons, it is necessary to take into consideration also other relevant theories, including ones which explain the success of female candidates at the national level, or ones devoted to the so-called 'gender gap' (e.g., Ingelhart and Norris, 2000; Abendschön and Steinmetz, 2014).

According to some authors, it is possible to define three groups of variables which explain cross-national variation in the number of women elected to national parliaments, namely: socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, and political and institutional factors (Norris, 1987; Krook, 2010). This article will focus on all these areas as we believe that determinants of women's political representation at the national level can be crucial at the local level, too.

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to municipality size.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, also regional (meso) level of government may provide attractive opportunities and easier access for women. For instance Lovenduski (1986, quoted in Vengroff, Nyiri and Fugiero, 2003, p. 163) argued that meso legislative bodies offer seats that are usually less competitive, require less expensive campaigns, and are less likely to require relocation away from family, all conditions which have traditionally inhibited women's involvement in politics.

The population size has been considered as one of the key variables affecting the form of local politics for a very long time (Dahl and Tufte, 1973; Newton, 1982; Anckar, 2000). Similarly, most studies in the Czech Republic confirmed that municipality size has a significant influence, for instance, on voter turnout as one of the indicators of citizen participation in local politics (Kostelecký, 2005; Ryšavý and Bernard, 2013). In spite of the existence of contrary results by Magin (2013), the assumption that larger municipalities are more promising to women's representation was confirmed by most of the few studies analysing local elections (Welch and Karnig, 1979; Bullock and MacManus, 1991; Trounstone and Valdini, 2008; Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012). Similarly, positive effect on women's representation is usually associated with the role of education and employment. According to Norris (2002), people with higher education participate more in politics because higher education enables an individual to give more importance to politics.

Another important factor which may shape women's representation at the local level is age. For instance, Ingelhart and Norris (2000), who examined the traditional and modern gender gap, confirmed that gender differences in electoral behaviour had been realigning, with women moving to the left of men throughout advanced industrial societies (though not in post-communist societies or developing countries). At the same time, Ingelhart and Norris (2000) demonstrated that the modern gender gap in post-industrial societies was strongest among younger people, while the traditional gender gap was evident among the elderly. Whereas the left-wing parties traditionally tend to nominate more women (Matland and Studlar, 1996), we can assume the positive relationship between younger age groups and women's representation.

Among factors which may influence women's presence as local leaders, Catholicism is studied with regard to its preference of traditional gender roles and a conservative positioning of women in society (Giger, 2009, p. 481). The more predominant Catholicism is in a culture, the more women tend to support right-wing parties, and vice versa (Abendschön and Steinmetz, 2014, p. 340). As in the Czech Republic Catholic population is concentrated primarily in Moravia (mainly in the area of southern Moravia) it may be assumed that women's presence on Moravian statutory cities' boards will be much smaller than in Bohemian statutory cities.

If we move to determinants, which can potentially influence women's political representation, referring as political context factors, some authors claim that voting for women the first time is 'innovative political behaviour, but successful innovations become routinized and diffused.' (Ondercin and Welch, 2009, p. 599) Share of previous women's officeholders thus can have a positive impact

on the future representation of women, as confirmed Ondercin and Welch (2009, p. 604–606), or Smith, Reingold and Owens (2012, p. 321–324). The presence of women officeholders thus may indicate a more women-friendly electorate, thus encouraging other women to run for office and possibly increase their likelihood of success (Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012).

As we mentioned above, some studies carried out at the national level show that leftist parties tend to nominate more female candidates (Matland and Studlar, 1996). Similarly, Smith, Reingold and Owens (2012) confirmed the role of local community's political ideology, as municipalities with a more liberal electorate have a larger representation of women in local councils. Hence, it is expected that the proportion of female members of city boards will be larger in municipalities with a more leftist electorate.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, we assume that share of seats (again in both local councils and on city boards) of independent local lists will be positively associated with the women's presence as local leaders, as some studies showed that running as an independent is the usual way how women are obtaining representation in Czech local politics (Ryšavý and Šaradín, 2010, p. 727–730).<sup>6</sup> Finally, as Czech politics experienced two electoral 'earthquakes' in parliamentary elections of 2010 and 2013 (cf. Stegmaier and Vlachová, 2011; Stegmaier and Linek, 2014), we added share of seats in city councils holding by new parliamentary parties (the ANO2011, the Dawn of Direct Democracy of Tomio Okamura) as an independent variable controlling for the possible different effects between new party's success rate (contrary to parties with long-term parliamentary presence) and women's representation.

Most studies in the Czech Republic confirmed that municipality size has a significant influence on voter turnout. Furthermore, Ryšavý and Bernard (2013, p. 839) argue that it cannot be ruled out that voter turnout, as well as competitiveness, are common manifestations of local political participation relating to the overall climate in the municipality and the level of its civic development. Similarly, Jančák et al. (2008) argue that voter turnout is (in local elections) a fundamental indicator of social capital, and when working with aggregated data at the local level, it is one of a few such indicators available. It may therefore be assumed that the higher voter turnout will increase presence of women as local leaders.

The competitiveness is possible to consider as one of the other manifestations

5 As there are de facto only two relevant leftist parties in the Czech politics (the Czech Social Democratic Party [ČSSD] and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia [KSČM]), we use share of seats of the ČSSD and the KSČM (in local councils as well as on city boards) as independent variable measuring local community's political ideology.

6 In general, in local elections in larger municipalities an institutionalised independent local lists are more successful than non-institutionalised lists of independents. For instance Jüptner (cf. 2008, p. 27–30) classifies the parties acting at the local level into three types: a) local municipal parties; b) general municipal parties; c) regional parties.

of local political participation.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Pande and Ford (2011, p. 7) argue that women's preference for non-competitive environments may limit their drive to run in an electoral race. In addition, Gneezy et al. (2003) confirmed that with increasing competitiveness, there is a significant increase in performance for men, but not for women, resulting in a significant gender gap. Similarly, Niederle and Vesterlund (2007) show that women prefer competitive engagements much less than men of similar ability (cf. Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007, p. 1077–1100). In considering these findings we suggest that the proportion of women on city boards will be smaller in municipalities with larger electoral competitiveness.

## 1.2 Data

The submitted analysis works with the election outcomes in 26 Czech statutory cities. The choice of such municipalities as basic analytical units takes into account a considerably fragmented structure of settlement in the Czech Republic and character of political competition in Czech local politics. First, the structure of settlement in the Czech Republic is characterized by a large number of small unintegrated municipalities, resulting in an extreme fragmentation of settlement system, reproduced in the equally fragmented structure of the local system of government (cf. Illner, 2003; Ryšavý and Bernard, 2013, p. 834–836). Second, while Czech local elections in smaller (and partly in medium-sized) municipalities are dominated by the phenomenon of independent candidates, with increasing municipal size, the role of political parties proportionally increases, and it manifests itself most clearly just in the case of statutory cities where political parties dominate the electoral contest (cf. Krutílek, 2003, p. 56–62; Balík, 2009, p. 141–159).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in municipalities where the local council has fewer than 15 members, the municipality board is not elected and the mayor takes its functions. Finally, although on one hand 26 Czech statutory cities (including Prague which has, as a capital city, a specific status) include only 0.42% of all the Bohemian and Moravian municipalities,<sup>9</sup> on the other hand they contain all the municipalities numbering more than 40,000 inhabitants and one third (33.70%) of all inhabitants reside in them.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Positive correlation between competitiveness and voter turnout in Czech municipalities was also found, although it was neither linear nor too strong (Ryšavý and Bernard, 2013, p. 838–841).

<sup>8</sup>However, even at this level the success of various non-parliamentary parties is not uncommon (cf. Šaradín, 2004a, p. 112–117).

<sup>9</sup>For a full account of local authorities in the Czech Republic and the basic features of their autonomy, see Pomahač (2013).

<sup>10</sup>As the new Act on Municipalities was enacted in 1990, 13 municipalities were promulgated as statutory cities by the law (Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Liberec, Olomouc, Ústí and Labem, České Budějovice, Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Zlín, Havířov, Opava, Karlovy Vary). Then in 2000 other

At the same time, the outcomes of the researches held earlier demonstrated that it is the very size of municipalities which determines degree of politicization of local political systems and determines a functional model of local politics (Jüptner, 2008, p. 32). This finding previously verified the amount of work that analyzed the relation between the municipality size and, for example: a) voter turnout (Šaradín, 2004b; Kostelecký, 2005; Kostelecký and Krivý, 2015); b) the success of an association of independent candidates and theirs coalitions (Jüptner, 2008); c) local party system nationalisation (Maškarinec, 2015); d) the emergence of and form of municipal coalitions (Jüptner, 2004); or, e) the overall shape of local political systems (Hudák et al., 2003). For this reason it is meaningless to work with the smallest categories of municipalities lacking some aspects of classic political systems and with no classic theories of political partisanship and political race functioning there (cf. Jüptner, 2004, p. 84–90).

Dependent variable employed in our work represents the share of women's members of municipal board in given statutory city (i.e. Lord Mayor and other members of city board),<sup>11</sup> which were matched to other independent variables selected in line with the theoretical framework presented above.<sup>12</sup>

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three statutory cities were created (Kladno, Most, Jihlava), following three cities in 2003 (Karviná, Teplice, Mladá Boleslav), four cities in 2006 (Frydek-Místek, Děčín, Chomutov, Přerov) and finally two cities in 2012 (Jablonec nad Nisou, Prostějov).

<sup>11</sup>While 'ordinary' municipality is governed by the municipal council and other municipal bodies are the municipal board, the mayor, the municipal office, and special municipal bodies, a statutory city is governed by the city council and other bodies of a statutory city are the city board, the Lord Mayor, the city office, and special bodies. However, for text fluency, we will use the terms municipal board and city board as synonym.

<sup>12</sup>The data were obtained from the Czech Statistical Office's Election Server (VOLBY.CZ, 2016), the Czech Statistical Office's Public Database (CZSO, 2016), the decennial population census of 2011 (SLDB, 2011) and Fórum 50%' databases (2016) which were supplemented with data from municipalities which were not statutory cities in previous elections.



**Table 1:** List of independent variables and descriptive statistics

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean (standard deviation)</b>
Municipality size (log)	The logarithm to the number of inhabitants	4.93 (0.34)
Higher education	Share of college graduates in the population aged 15+	13.58 (4.50)
Self-employment	Number of self-employed persons per 1,000 inhabitants	90.62 (18.65)
Unemployment	So-called registered unemployment rate (proportion of the number of job seekers and the number of economically active population)	9.72 (2.88)
Retirement	Share of persons aged 65+ in the population	18.42 (1.37)
Catholicism	Share of the Roman Catholics in the population	7.37 (3.96)
Moravia	Dummy variable which equals 0 for Bohemia and 1 for Moravia or Silesia	0.42 (0.50)
Women board members (2010)	Share of women as members of city board after local election of 2010	18.37 (10.93)
Women councillors (2010)	Share of women as members of city council after local election of 2010	25.82 (16.29)
Women councillors (2014)	Share of women as members of city council after local election of 2014	23.05 (5.50)
Left seats (council)	Share of seats in city council holding by left parties	31.25 (12.34)
Left seats (board)	Share of seats on city board holding by left parties	23.21 (25.49)
Local list seats (council)	Share of seats in city council holding by independent local lists	24.28 (17.12)
Local list seats (board)	Share of seats on city board holding by independent local lists	25.96 (22.87)
New parties seats (council)	Share of seats in city council holding by new parliamentary parties	22.89 (6.26)
Turnout	Share of voters and registered voters	33.52 (3.39)
Competitiveness	Share of the number of candidates to the number of seats	13.27 (3.80)

Sources: CZSO, 2016; SLDB, 2011; own calculations.



The effects of the above mentioned indicators were analysed using the classic ordinary least squares method (multiple linear regression). The results of each regression model are indicated by two basic parameters, namely unstandardized regression coefficients (B; measuring the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable when controlled for all other variables), and adjusted coefficient of determination (adjusted *R*-squared; measuring the overall performance of the model in explaining variance in the dependent variable).<sup>13</sup> Model 1 tests the effects of socioeconomic and demographic factors, Model 2 tests the effects of political context factors, and Model 3 combines the variables from both these models to test their results for robustness.

## 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

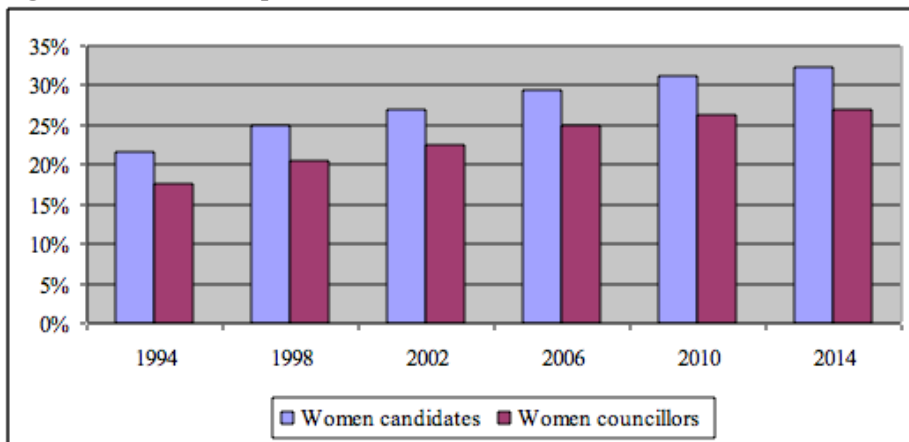
### 2.1 Descriptive women's representation as local leaders

First interesting information, concerning women as local political leaders, provides insight into the development of women's descriptive representation at the local level in the Czech Republic (Figure 1). There has been a continual linear positive trend, not only in the numbers of women candidates, but especially towards increasing political representation of women since 17.70% in 1994 to 27.07% in 2014 (in all Czech 6250 municipalities). The same is true for overall number of female mayors. For instance, there has been a continual increase in number of female mayors in the so-called municipalities with extended powers and the capital city of Prague from 4.37% in 1994 to 13.59% in 2006 (Balík, 2008, p. 292–293).

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<sup>13</sup>The Enter method of linear regression was implemented. Test of multicollinearity between independent variables was performed for each regression model. To avoid problems with multicollinearity, we excluded from the analysis variables with high levels of correlation. The higher education variable was strongly associated with the variables: municipality size, self-employment, turnout, competitiveness; self-employment variable with the variables: higher education, unemployment, left seats (council), turnout, competitiveness; Catholicism with the Moravia variable; left seats (council) variable with the variables: self-employment, turnout; local list seats (council) variable with local list seats (board) variable; turnout variable with the variables: higher education, self-employment, unemployment, left seats (council); competitiveness variable with the variables: municipality size, higher education, self-employment. Subsequently, multicollinearity in the regression model was tested using the tolerance statistic and the variance inflation factor (VIF). Multicollinearity between independent variables thus in the final dataset does not exceed a value of 0.600.

**Figure 1:** Women's representation in Czech local councils, 1994–2014

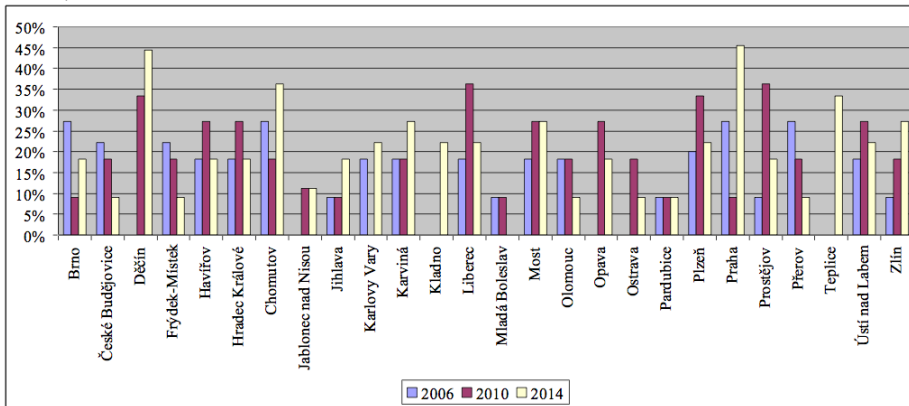


Source: VOLBY.CZ, 2016.

If we focus on the women's representation in the largest municipalities, one can find a high degree of variability in electoral success of female candidates. For instance, the average proportion of female councillors in the largest municipalities (so-called district municipalities; i.e. spatial units corresponding with the level of NUTS 4/LAU 1) was after two recent local elections 21.45% in 2010, or 21.08% in 2014, respectively (ranging from 9.52% to 48.15% in 2010, or 7.41% to 38.10% in 2014, respectively). Similarly, in statutory cities, the main area of our interest, women's representation reached 25.85% in 2010, or 23.01% in 2014, respectively (ranging from 10.26% to 37.14% in 2010, or 15.56% to 37.21% in 2014, respectively).

Finally, the last descriptive statistic shows women's descriptive representation as members of city boards in statutory cities (Figure 2), i.e. the highest executive body of Czech local councils, in last three local elections. Here, we can see significant changes in proportion of female members of city boards between elections, preventing from possibility to draw any long-term conclusion about the existence of cities with more or less friendly environment empowering women as local political leaders. Overall, as in case of women's representation in local councils, the share of women on city boards had a tendency to grow, too. While after local elections of 2006 only 14.50% of city board's members were women, in 2010 this figure increased to 18.48% and in the last elections of 2014 to one fifth (20.00%) (Šprincová, 2014; Fórum 50%, 2016).

**Figure 2:** Women’s representation as members of city boards in Czech statutory cities, 2006–2014



Source: Šprincová, 2014; Fórum 50%, 2016; VOLBY.CZ, 2016.

## 2.2 Determinants of women’s representation as members of city boards

If we move on to the regression models explaining differences in representation of women on statutory city’s boards (Table 2), we observe, above all, that regression models were not generally too successful. With regard to three presented models, the proportion of an explained variability reached in the best case 17% (Model 1, Model 3), while the performance of Model 2, which tested the effects of political context factors, was limited, with only 6% of total variance explained. At the same time, if we look at the position of individual independent variables, only some of them have proved as statistically significant.

If we focus on individual models, we can see that with regard to socioeconomic and demographic factors (Model 1), a growing size of municipalities leads to the strong and statistically significant rise of a number of female who received post on the city boards. From among three remaining socioeconomic and demographic variables also unemployment and Moravia variables proved to be statistically significant, contrary to the retirement variable with no significant effect on dependent variable. However, while an unemployment variable, as well as the municipality size, strengthens women’s presence as local political leaders, the Moravia variable had the opposite influence. Specifically, the effect of the Moravia variable was in the expected (negative) direction, as we hypothesized, that Moravian cities are characteristic with more presence of predominant Catholicism in a city’s political culture, compared to Bohemian cities, thus preferring more traditional gender roles and a conservative positioning of

women in society and hampering chances of women to obtain membership on city boards.

**Table 2:** Determinants of women's representation as members of city boards of the Czech statutory cities, 2014 (multiple regression models, OLS)

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Municipality size (log)	<b>10.604* (6.205)</b>		7.393 (6.387)
Retirement	0.746 (1.526)		1.558 (1.611)
Unemployment	<b>1.804* (0.787)</b>		<b>1.857* (0.879)</b>
Moravia	<b>-9.731** (4.290)</b>		<b>-8.943* (4.966)</b>
Women board members (2010)		-0.096 (0.221)	-0.079 (0.211)
Women councillors (2010)		-0.214 (0.160)	-0.216 (0.160)
Women councillors (2014)		<b>1.285** (0.507)</b>	<b>1.031* (0.509)</b>
Left seats (board)		-0.014 (0.096)	-0.037 (0.098)
Local list seats (board)		-0.026 (0.105)	-0.108 (0.109)
Constant	-59.089 (44.018)	-1.046 (9.751)	-72.172 (44.608)
N	26	26	26
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.173	0.062	0.173

Sources: CZSO, 2016; Fórum 50%, 2016; SLDB 2011; Šprincová, 2014; VOLBY.CZ, 2016; own calculations.

Note: Standard errors in parentheses, statistical significant values are in bold, level of significance: \*\*:  $p < 0.05$ , \*:  $p < 0.10$ .

In contrast to Model 1, performance of Model 2, which tested the effects of political context factors, was even more limited, with only less than half of total variance explained. At the same time, if we look at the position of individual independent variables, only women councillors (2014) variable has proved as statistically significant. As we expected, the higher representation of women on city boards after local elections of 2014 was strongly and positively associated with success rate of women as local councillors after same elections. By contrast, regarding the proportion of female councillors and female members of city boards in previous electoral term, results were not statistical significant, but also unexpected and ambiguous. However, especially negative effect of women board members (2010) variable was nearing to zero. Similarly, neither two remaining political context variables, describing composition of city boards regarding to the share of its members belonging to leftist parties or independent local lists, appears to influence women's descriptive representation on city boards; both variables with very small negative influence, which is contrary to expectations.

Outcomes of above mentioned models confirmed also Model 3, introducing

all independent variables (i.e., socioeconomic and demographic as well as political context factors), as the direction of influence of all independent variables remained the same as in the partial models. As we expected, we found a robust negative correlation between Moravia variable and proportion of women who stand as members of city boards after local elections of 2014, with Moravian statutory cities falling behind Bohemian statutory cities by an average margin of 8.94%. Again, as in Model 1, also in Model 3 the effect of unemployment variable was significant and positive. However, reason for this, to some extent, ambiguous result, will become much clearer when we look at the distribution of female members of city boards across statutory cities studying. Among the top ten cities with the highest presence of women on city boards, the half is located in north-western Bohemia regions of Karlovy Vary (Karlovy Vary) and Ústí (Děčín, Chomutov, Teplice, Most) which are characteristic with the highest levels of unemployment, and the same is true in case of city of Karviná in the Moravian-Silesian region. However, the main difference between Models 1 and 3 we can observe in case of municipality size. While, we found strong positive association with number of female members of city boards in both models, in Model 3 the obtained relation was not statistically significant.

By contrast, the obtained relation of political context variables in Model 3 showed the same direction as in Model 2, with only women councillors (2014) variable proved as statistically significant, and overall with very restricted changes in effects of independent variables as well. While a robust positive correlation between proportion of female councillors after local elections of 2014 and share of female members of city boards was in line with our expectations, the opposite is true for variables, which describe political culture (or context) of given cities, measuring as successfulness of women as local officeholders in terms of their previous representation in city councils and on city boards, as some studies showed a positive impact of current women's representation on the future representation of women in subsequent years.

However, as we showed above, the stability of women's representation on city boards was very low across the statutory cities between elections,<sup>14</sup> which could be a reason, although not the only one, explaining unexpected effects of these factors on our dependent variable. Similarly, we found unexpected and ambiguous results regarding the party affiliation's composition of city boards, with negative, although very low and non-significant, influence on female presence as local leaders. Here, we can hypothesize that while in Western Europe many leftist

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14 A detected correlation between proportion of female members of city boards after local elections of 2010 and 2014 was trivial ( $r = -0.089$ ). In contrast, an association between proportion of women's councillors after local elections of 2010 and subsequent local elections of 2014 was substantial ( $r = -0.555$ ).

parties use women's quotas, thus supporting not only representation of women in local councils, but in the next step automatically also on city boards, Czech left parties (the ČSSD and the KSČM, as only relevant Czech leftist parties) do not use mandatory women's quotas,<sup>15</sup> which together with the fact that these two Czech main left parties are representatives of the so-called 'old left' rather than 'new left' (in the perspective of the so-called 'two lefts' [see Lipset, 1981; Weakliem, 1991]) may explain results than contradict our expectations. Similarly, negative (also non-significant) influence of the share of independent local seats (board) variable may indicate rather 'rightist' orientations of many of these groups. However, this hypothesis is far from conclusive, requiring be subject to a further examination.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the presented paper was an attempt to analyse determinants of women's descriptive representation on the city boards of Czech statutory cities after the last local elections of 2014. Hypothesis were tested concerning two groups of factors that potentially affect the success of women: socioeconomic and demographic, and political contextual, thus aiming to expand theoretical and empirical research which is in case of determinants of women's representation at the local level underdeveloped. This question is particularly important in the post-communist area of Central and Eastern Europe where political representation of women is far from satisfactory, women still face significant stereotypes and prejudices in these societies, rising barriers and obstacles to higher presence of women as local political leaders.

The analysis itself of the links among the women's representation on the city boards and other independent variables did not bring completely definite conclusions. The main problem was generally not very high success rate of the models in the extent of an explained variability. Specifically, Moravia and municipality size proved as very strong predictors of presence of women on statutory city's boards in negative, or positive, direction, respectively; although in full model municipality size variable lost its significance. These two variables were supplemented by proportion of female councillors after last local elections which increased successfulness of women as well. These variables thus ran in expected direction as we hypothesize that female success rate will be higher in larger statutory cities, with more women as councillors, and lower in Moravian statutory cities with more predominant Catholic political culture.

Apart from these variables, remaining independent variables were not

15 However, the ČSSD congress, held in March 2015, approved the introduction of 40% women's quotas for parliamentary and regional, but not local, elections.

statistically significant and, at the same time, we identified the outcomes going against the expected logic of the model. First, contrary expectation and findings of many studies, we found negative (although non-significant) correlation between proportion of women on statutory city boards and share of women in local councils as well as on city boards in previous electoral term. Similarly, two remaining political context variables, describing composition of statutory city boards regarding to the share of its members belonging to leftist parties or independent local lists, showed the outcomes going against our expectations, although also in this case founded relations were not statistically significant. However, while non-expected findings related to the effects of variables describing women's success rate in previous electoral period is possible, at least partially, explain by low stability of female's presence as local leaders, especially on statutory city boards, in case of party affiliation's influence the interpretation is not quite easy and it will be necessary to do its further verification. Nevertheless, as a working hypothesis, the statements connected with the character of the Czech leftist parties (the ČSSD and the KSČM) which represent rather so-called 'old left' than 'new left' were expressed. Maybe contradictory positive (and significant) effect of an unemployment variable then we associated with the fact that large part of statutory cities with high success rate of women as local leaders is located in north-western Bohemia regions of Karlovy Vary and Ústí, supplemented by Karviná in the Moravian-Silesian region, which are characteristic with the highest levels of unemployment. However, the exact mechanism standing behind effect of this variable, as well as effect of other above mentioned variables, remains as the topic for further research.

In conclusion, we have to state that the hypothesis about the relation between the proportion of women on the city boards of Czech statutory cities and independent variables, describing their socioeconomic, demographic, and political contextual environment, was confirmed only in the case of some observed indicators. And also in their case it is necessary to emphasize that an explained variability of regression models was not very high. According to our results, the most promising for the future research is to focus on identification of other factors which might be potentially used for explanation of the women's successfulness as local leaders, as for instance Bernard (2012), in his individual-level analysis, showed the importance of the role of the women's personal characteristics, or theirs positioning on the list of candidates for elections to local councils. Another possibility, when trying to explain more adequately the extent of women's successfulness as members of city boards, is to look for different indicators than common socio-demographic variables, meaning the ones which can far better characterize a form of the local election competition in a specific



municipality. Those indicators can be connected with for example specific political culture of a particular municipality or with other indicators of the similar type, which can be left out only with some difficulties (or even not used at all) from the commonly available aggregated data. The use of those indicators thus would demand carrying out a specific research at the local level that would be able to identify similar indicators.

Finally, as we worked with limited sample of Czech municipalities (statutory cities), another possibility is to expand our research design to larger sample of Czech municipalities, for instance district municipalities, or municipalities with extended powers. Last but not least, one of the most important limits of our analysis is the fact that it is based on static data. From this perspective, it would be extremely useful if further analysis is based on series of time-data, since no factor is static. Thus including in to the analysis local elections since 1994, as just time-series data analysis, can provide interesting information about possible transformation of effects of various determinants of women's descriptive representation as local leaders.

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