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PORTFOLIO ALLOCATION OF SLOVAK MINISTERS FROM THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Silvia Hudáčková – Darina Malová*

ABSTRACT

Research on gender in executives has been intensified in recent years. However, in Slovakia, there was a research gap in this topic. This paper is a longitudinal case study, where we tested existing theories and empirical findings about women's representation in the cabinet. More specifically, we examined women's portfolio allocation on the party level. Our findings are based on an original dataset covering 33 parties in 9 governments. Consistent with theoretical expectations, our findings show that career paths leading to executive nomination of Slovak ministers differ based on gender. Women in Slovakia are systematically denied the opportunity to become cabinet ministers. Women's ministerial careers are limited by the gendered identity of Slovak portfolios – based on an expert survey conducted for the purpose of this study we found that 10 out of 16 Slovak portfolios are masculine and women had a lower chance than men to receive an appointment there. The left-right ideology of political parties played an important role in ministerial representation of women in Slovakia – leftist parties nominated women more often. However, leftist parties might nominate women more often not only from ideological reasons but also because their governments were less fragmented. Surprisingly, we have found that Slovak female ministers do not hold less salient portfolios than male ministers, the contrary. Their frequent nomination to neutral portfolios with relatively high salience – Justice Ministry and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family – causes this unexpected outcome that contradicts findings in the CEE region, Europe, and even worldwide.

Key words: gender, descriptive representation, government, political parties, portfolio allocation

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Introduction

The governmental cabinet is an institution that historically excluded women and except a handful of temporary cases, women have not reached parity there - male-dominated cabinets remain a reality worldwide (Franceschet – Thomas, 2015). The feminine and masculine characteristics associated with biological sex create power inequalities within political institutions and the ministerial cabinet is no exception (e.g., Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor – Robinson 2009). The rulers and selectors commonly believe that the ideal minister should have masculine characteristics such as decisiveness or toughness (O'Brien and Reyes Housholder, 2020, pp. 252; Sjoberg, 2014) and, therefore, without understanding of the role gender plays in government one cannot fully grasp the functioning of this institution.

Scholarship on the female representation in government has been quickly growing in the recent years and it is becoming a mainstream research area that combines feminist and governmental knowledge. The representation of women in the government is worthy of scholarly attention also because ministers wield the biggest chunk of political power in parliamentary democracies. The government sets the political agenda, directs policy-making, and decides on the use of a large portion of the state budget. Ministers are not mere agents of their parties who “execute”, they can and do personally influence the ministerial agenda and policy results of the portfolio (Andeweg et al., 2020, pp. 13). Moreover, the remit of portfolios is gendered, too, enabling and disabling certain ministerial nominations based on gender (Arriola – Johnson, 2014).

In this article we acknowledge that women have been unfairly excluded from the executive position to their detriment and to the detriment of society because of gender biases and stereotypes. Their underrepresentation has normative, pragmatic, and political implications. Firstly, women have the same amount of political and intellectual qualities and talent as men (Phillips, 1995). Therefore, their systematic underrepresentation means that the society is not governed on the basis of merit and there are costs in lost talent. Secondly, women's underrepresentation reaches beyond descriptive representation alone. Women's underrepresentation in the cabinet sends a powerful signal to the society and women that governing is a men's business. As the natural experiment in Uruguay of Hinojosa et al. (2020) shows, sudden significant improvement in women's representation leads, at least temporarily, to higher participation of women in politics, trust in the political system, and strengthening

of democracy.

Even though the surge in women's ministerial representation in Slovakia in recent years might seem optimistic to many, it has been far from linear. The number of female executives remains volatile - between 2015 and 2021 the share of female ministers has been varying from 0 %, a record low, to 30.77 %, a record high. The more pessimistic overview is that five years ago Slovakia had a government without women and they have never gained parity in any Slovak cabinet. However, on a more optimistic note, CEE countries along with Latin American ones have been defying the usual way of women entering cabinets first through elections to legislatures, hacking the Putnam's "law of increasing disproportion"¹ (Putnam, 1976). Women have been directly entering the government in the CEE, which caught the interest of scholars like Bego (2014) and Goddard et al. (2014). Outnumbering the share of female Parliamentarians by the share of female ministers has also occurred in Slovakia in recent years (See Figure 1 in Annex). This phenomenon implies that area and case studies on women's representation in government is justified as there are some unexplained specifications.

It is important to understand the conditions of when and why women are selected to ministerial posts and to their portfolio respectively, and what is the role of gender in portfolio allocation matrix in Slovakia. There are still significant gaps in our understanding of both individual and institutional factors that result in women's nomination as ministers to the Slovak government. Slovak scientists, practitioners or the general public who want to contribute to change in representation of women in executives lack an updated analysis of the factors that influence ministerial portfolio allocation. This study represents systematic, longitudinal and up-to-date effort to examine underlying conditions for gendered portfolio allocation in Slovakia. **We aim to assess conditions under which male and female ministers are allocated to a certain type of portfolio and, possibly, improve theoretical understanding of portfolio allocation in Slovakia.** We propose 3 hypotheses to examine factors on the party level using the dataset which includes 33 cases of parties in 9 governments. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for research of women's representation in Slovak cabinets and the larger CEE region.

¹ The representation of women is expected to be lower at higher political positions (Putnam, 1976).

1. The state of the art

In recent years, political scientists and gender scholars have been focusing heavily on the role of gender in executive nominations, mostly to Prime Ministers, Presidents and Ministers which is also the result of increased female representation in executives (e.g., Bauer – Tremblay, 2011; Jalalzai, 2013; Krook – O'Brien, 2012).

A growing number of studies has been dedicated to women's nomination and portfolio allocation in the CEE region (Bego, 2014; Goddard, 2019a, 2019b) where Slovakia was one of the examined countries. It is a logical selection of countries, however, as Bego (2014, pp. 348) acknowledges, this group has high variability, e.g., in the importance of portfolios that tend to be allocated to women, political system or the EU membership.

Representation of women in Slovak governments remains under-researched, except few studies that included descriptive statistics of women at ministerial positions touching this topic (see Bitušiková, 2005, 2011; Filadelfiová – Puliš – Radičová, 2000; Holubová, 2010). Worth mentioning is a scientific work of sociologists Filadelfiová, Radičová, and Puliš (2000), who included detailed statistics of women descriptive representation at all levels of Slovak executive, including government and bureaucracy at Ministries. They have also interviewed women and other political actors from all levels of political life to explain their underrepresentation revealing that the underrepresentation at the pinnacle of political power is manifested also at lower levels of ministries and at the civil service.

2. Theory and hypotheses

All political careers can be divided into three periods – before the appointment (selection to office), during appointment (duration in office) and after appointment (exit from office). In this study we will focus on the first period of ministerial careers – selection procedures and determinants that include portfolio allocation. Studies on selection into office usually employ a concept that divides factors in two streams and systemizes them into “actor-oriented” and “context-oriented” (Bakema, 1991, pp. 71; Müller-Rommel, Kroeber, Vercesi, 2020, pp. 229 – 230). Personal career determinants such as ambition, education, political socialization, and political experience are actor-oriented. Context-oriented is the role of factors such as the political system, party factors, and other institutional settings that is enabling and disabling executive careers.

Our study will focus on the second type of factors – context-oriented.

This article as a case study of Slovakia that focuses on factors that come into play at the period of time when party leaders negotiate about the personal nominations to the particular portfolios of the new cabinet, or when they need to fill a vacant seat.

Cross-national studies need to take into account varying political system institutions on the country level. Our aim is to focus entirely on the Slovak case which allows us to examine nominations to the Slovak executive on more than one level and also longitudinally. It also allows us to hold constant institutional factors such as the electoral system, or societal factors which creates an opportunity to examine political party factors that are usually omitted or superficial when entered into statistical analysis with a number of other countries.

Studies on women's representation in executives that included mass-level factors so often relevant to the legislative representation such as the role of religion in the society, economic development, women's education levels, generate mixed results (see e.g., Arriola – Johnson, 2014; Bego, 2014; Krook – O'Brien, 2012; Reynolds, 1999; Stockemer – Sundström, 2017). Krook and O'Brien (2012) have found that *„what matters most, in other words, is women's status among political elites—not institutional factors or their broader status in society as a whole“*.

According to O'Brien and Reyes Housholder (2020) who reviewed the existing literature, scholars conclude that cultural and development factors have only indirect impact on the number of women appointed to the government, including the pools of eligible male and female candidates, and in this way they can influence the higher representation of women in governments.

2.1 Gender Identity of Slovak portfolios

Blondel and Thiébault (1991) looked into portfolio allocation data in Europe after the Second World War until the 1990s and found that women were most commonly assigned the ministry of environment (20.7%), ministry of social issues and health (15%) and education (7.5%). Davis (1997) has found a similar pattern on data from 15 Western European democracies from 1968-1992. Out of 371 female ministers, the most were nominated to the department of social welfare (46), health (45), family or youth (38), and education (38). According to the study of Goddard (2019b) who examined 7005 cabinet nominations across 29 European countries, women were less likely to be nominated to masculine

portfolios.

According to the IPU (2020), the top five most commonly assigned ministers to women globally are: Family / Children / Youth / Elderly / Disabled; Social Affairs; Environment / Natural Resources / Energy; Employment / Labour / Vocational Training; Women's Affairs / Gender, Equality, and Culture.

The gendered nature of the ministerial post itself can influence whether a woman will be nominated to it. Krook and O'Brien (2012) asserted that female cabinet ministers are more likely to occupy feminine portfolios that usually – but not necessarily - have also lower salience. They have introduced a general categorization of portfolios, recognizing universal masculine, neutral and feminine remits. They acknowledge that in specific countries, gender identity of a portfolio can differ. We emphasize that feminine portfolios have in general lower salience but this can differ case by case, country by county.

H1: Slovak female ministers are more often appointed to feminine and neutral portfolios.

2.2 Saliency of Ministry Assigned According to Gender

Negotiations about portfolio distribution and personal appointments of ministers are of utmost importance to the political life because ministerial portfolios do not have the same value. In coalition negotiations, political leaders bargain over how many and which portfolios they will gain. When studying descriptive representation of women, not only the number of women in a government is important, but also the distribution of power between men and women within the government. With some exceptions (e.g., Claveria, 2014), these two outcomes tend to be studied separately in the political science and feminist literature, however, portfolio allocation and the nomination to the cabinet are both part of the same process of cabinet formation and can simultaneously influence the outcome of particular nomination.

For instance, Rose (1987) has categorized the prestige of British ministries based on media and parliamentary attention. Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) categorized Latin American ministries using indicators of budget size and national policy prestige. Blondel and Thiébault (1991) claim that Finance, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defence and Justice are usually the “core” ministries – the most important ones. Dogan (1989) conceptualized the hierarchy of ministers in the cabinet as an inner and outer circle. This distinction is only rarely explicit or codified. Inner circle is composed of four to eight most trusted and powerful ministers – advisers to the Prime Minister, who run

powerful departments such as the Ministry of Interior or Foreign Affairs.

Druckman and Roberts (2008) emphasize that portfolio saliency in the CEE region has high variance across borders. To test whether Slovak female ministers are appointed to portfolios with lower salience, firstly we need to define the salience of portfolios in Slovakia. We have chosen not to specify what defines importance of a portfolio because the arbitrariness would lessen the relevance of our results and we decided to leave the decision to experts, similarly as Druckman and Roberts (2008) who in 2002 conducted an expert survey in the 14 CEE countries that entailed Slovakia. They measured salience of portfolios between 1990 – 2002 and we decided to use their expert survey design and use it for our analysis.

Many scholars have studied allocation of ministries according to gender. All have concluded in their studies at various geographical locations that women are less likely to be nominated to ministries imbued with higher prestige, budget and power (see e.g., Claveria, 2014; Escobar-Lemmon – Taylor-Robinson, 2005; Krook – O'Brien, 2012; Jacob – Adams – Scherpereel, 2014; Studlar – Moncrief, 1999). Therefore, we expect that in Slovakia we will find the same pattern.

H2: Slovak female ministers were appointed to less salient portfolios than male nominees.

2.3 Gender Balance within the Political Party

The number of female ministers who were previously parliamentarians is only 15 % in the CEE contrary to the Western Europe, where parliamentary seats are the main springboard to become a minister (De Winter, 1991). In the Western Europe, Krook and O'Brien (2012), Davis (1997), and Siaroff (2000) have found that a strong predictor of women's appointment by a political party is the presence of women among parliamentarians.

Therefore, we use the number of women who entered parliament before the cabinet formation as the indicator of the number of eligible women in the political party who create an important pool of potential ministers. We expect parties that nominate more women to the electable positions on the voting list to also have a larger pool of women to nominate to the ministerial seat. It also indicates that parties with a higher share of female MPs pursue gender balance in the party ranks more actively.

H3: Parties with more elected female MPs will appoint more female executives in the subsequent cabinet.

2.4 Party ideology

Gender equality in representation originated in leftist parties of the Western Europe and the feminist views had been since then adopted by many political parties with various ideological background. Throughout the history, leftist governments in the Western Europe have nominated more women to cabinets (Claveria, 2014; Davis, 1997; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2005; Goddard, 2019a, 2019b; Norris, 1985; Reynolds, 1999). It is therefore expected that leftist parties would be also appointing more female ministers in Slovakia. However, some scholars have found no support for this hypothesis on the worldwide scale (Reynolds, 1999, Siaroff, 2000, Krook and O'Brien, 2012).

H4: Women are more likely to be appointed ministers by leftist political parties.

2.5 Size of the party in the government

Logically, if a party gains a better result in parliamentary elections and is eligible for more seats in the cabinet, it should be more probable that a woman will be appointed to one of the ministerial seats because the leaders of the party – usually men – will be accommodated first a vice versa: If a political party receives only a few cabinet seats, the top echelon of the party would be accommodated first and women who usually are not present in the leadership would be turned away (Davis, 1997).

However, the findings of Matland and Studlar (1996) in Canada show that small leftist parties in the party system challenge larger ones by appointing women and thus create a contagion effect prompting the larger party to appoint women in order to answer the challenge. We expect that if the contagion effect mentioned by the two researchers translates into the governmental negotiations, it will be overridden by the effect of having more vacant seats. Therefore, in our fifth hypothesis we propose that the more seats the party will fill, the higher chance there will be for women to become ministers.

H5: Parties who have larger share of ministerial seats will be more likely to appoint women.

3. Data collection, variables and methods

To assess factors influencing women's representation in Slovak governments, our hypotheses need to be tested on two different sets of data.

The unit of analysis of the first two hypotheses is one ministerial nomination

beginning with nomination (month and year) and ending – either called off the office, deceased or stepped down. If one nominee became minister more than once, we counted each nomination as a separate case. If the government was just reconstructed with the same prime minister, we counted the ongoing ministerial appointment as one. If the minister did not have an assigned portfolio, we have excluded them from the dataset. We decided to exclude also interim ministers² as their nomination is motivated by different purposes and expectations. On the individual level, we have collected data about 24 female and 169 male ministers, 193 cases total between 1.6. 1992 and 21.3. 2021.

Table 1: Variables used to test hypotheses 1 and 2.

Dependent variable	Type of variable	Source
Gender	Binary	Public sources, media outlets
Independent variable		
Portfolio salience	Scale	Own expert survey – using Druckman and Roberts (2008) expert survey design.
Gender identity of portfolio	Nominal (Feminine/Masculine/Neutral)	Krook & O'Brien (2012) typology

Source: Authors.

The dependent variable of gender is binary. Variable “gender identity” of portfolio is nominal and to examine its effect on the dependent variable, we will use Chi-Squared Test of Independence. The portfolio salience variable is a scale variable and therefore we will perform a binary logistic regression.

In order to test the second hypothesis on portfolio salience, we must first obtain an up-to-date expert survey on Slovak portfolios in 9 governments between June 1st 1992 and March 21st 2021 as some new portfolios emerged and some had been terminated. Using the design of Druckman and Roberts (2008) we asked 15 political scientists from Slovakia out of which 11 replied. They were asked to provide ratings of the relative value of ministerial portfolios – the value 1 being a normal “average” portfolio, 1.1 would be awarded to portfolio that is 10 % more important and 0.5 would be attributed to a portfolio

² Interim ministers are ministers who are appointed temporarily to lead a ministry when the “regular” minister leaves or is not appointed in order to make sure there is always someone in charge of the portfolio. In almost every case, the interim minister is some who is already member of the cabinet and is minister in a different portfolio. The interim period is usually relatively short and copies the time when the government negotiates about a new candidate.

with half of the importance of the average portfolio (See the results in Table 6 in the annex).

On the party level, we collected original data on 33 cases of governmental parties that nominated ministers in 9 governments and will test hypotheses 3, 4 and 5. The unit of analysis is a political party that has joined a government and has or has not nominated women for cabinet in their assigned portfolio (see variables in Table 2 below).

For evaluating the position of the political party in terms of its ideological stance on we used secondary data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. We have used the interval variable LRECON where 0 indicates that a party is at the extreme left of the ideological spectrum, 10 indicates that it is at the extreme right, and 5 means that it is at the centre. Chapel Hill survey has been published irregularly and to attribute the score to each governing party, we used the one closest score that came after governmental formation. In this way we were able to notice evolution in ideological stances of Slovak political parties. However, the data goes back into 1999 but not earlier. Therefore, some parties from earlier years were assigned by the earliest single later score of their successors. We have used expert evaluations of the same parties also for their earlier predecessors if the parties emerged from them. This was e.g. the case of NDS that has originated from SNS.

Not all parties had the same chance to nominate a female minister. The portion of their portfolios as well as number of cabinet reshuffles differs. Therefore, we have collected a number of nominations that the particular party has made to the cabinet during the respective governmental term and controlled for it in the logistic regression model. Number of ministries had also been changing over time - during the examined period, the number of ministries had been varying from 15 to 12.³ To test hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 influencing women's

³ Ministry for Privatization of National Property was abolished in May 1st 2003, Ministry of Environment was abolished in July 1st 2010 and its agenda was integrated into Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Regional Development. It was restored as Ministry of Environment by new Radičová's government in couple of months – in October 1st 2010. Ministry of Construction and Regional Development was also abolished in July 1st 2010 and its agenda was divided among remaining ministries. Ministry of Construction and Public Works Development has been renamed to the Ministry of Transportation, Post and Telecommunication. In November 1st 2010, it merged with Ministry of Construction and Regional Development and became the Ministry of Transportation, Construction, and Regional Development. It was again renamed in January 1st 2017 to Ministry of Transportation and Construction. In July 1st 2020 a new ministry was created - the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Digitalization. (vlada.gov.sk, 2020)

nomination to the government we will use logistic regression.

TABLE 2: Variables used to test hypotheses 3, 4 and 5.

Data	Type of the variable	Source
Dependent variables		
Women appointed by the party to the cabinet	Binary (yes/no)	Media sources, vlada.gov.sk.
Independent variables		
Party Ideology (Left-Right Scale)	Interval (0-10)	Chapel Hill Expert Survey (1999-2019)
Share of women elected to the Parliament	%; Interval	Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2021)
Number of nominations by the party in the government	Interval	www.vlada.gov.sk

Source: Authors

4. Analysis

According to Krook and O'Brien's classification, Slovakia had been having three feminine portfolios – Education, Culture, and Healthcare. We have also identified three neutral portfolios – Environment, Justice, and also Labour. Labour is regarded as male in the Krook and O'Brien's classification but Family and Social Affairs are female. Because in Slovakia these feminine and masculine remits are combined at one ministry, we decided to list it as a neutral portfolio.

TABLE 3: Gender Categorization of Slovak Portfolios

	Gender categorization of portfolios by Krook & O'Brien (2012)
Ministry of International Relations (1992 -1992); Ministry of International Matters (1992-2012); Ministry of International and European Relations (2012-2021)	Masculine
Slovak Commission for the Environment (1992-1992); Ministry of Environment (1992-2010); Ministry of Environment (2010-2021)	Neutral

Ministry of Education (1992- 2010); Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sports (2010-2021)	Feminine
Ministry of Investment, Regional Development, and Informatization (2020-2021)	Masculine
Ministry of Healthcare (1992-2021)	Feminine
Ministry for Coordination and Privatisation of National Property (1992-2003)	Masculine
Ministry of Culture (1992-2021)	Feminine
Ministry of Justice (1992-2021)	Neutral
Ministry of Interior (1992 - 2021)	Masculine
Ministry of Finance (1992 - 2021)	Masculine
Ministry of Labour and Social Matters (1992-1994); Ministry of Labour, Social Matters, and Family (1994-2021)	Neutral
Ministry of Agriculture and Nutrition (1992-1994); Ministry of Agriculture and Countryside Development (1994-2010); Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Regional Development (2010-2010); Ministry of Agriculture and Countryside Development (2010-2021).	Masculine
Ministry of Transportation, Connection and Public Works (1992-1995); Ministry of Transportation, Post and Telecommunication (1995-2010); Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Regional Development (2010-2017); Ministry of Transportation and Construction (2017-2021)	Masculine
Ministry of Construction and Public Works (1994-1998); Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (1998-2010).	Masculine
Ministry of Economy (1992-2021)	Masculine
Ministry of Defence (1992-2021)	Masculine

Source: Classification by Krook and O'Brien (2012).

Are women nominated more into feminine or neutral portfolios? Chi-Squared Test of Independence revealed that female ministers were indeed significantly more often nominated to portfolios that are gendered feminine and

neutral than male ministers, even though the relationship is weak.

TABLE 4: Relationship between Portfolio Gender Identity and Gender of Ministers

Source: Authors. Notes: *Significant at $p < .05$ ** Significant at $p < .01$

N=193	χ^2	df	Significance	Cramer's V
Portfolio gender identity	11.041	2	.004**	0.239
Distribution		Masculine	Neutral	Feminine
Men		104 (97.20) [0.48]	28 (33.27) [0.84]	37 (38.53) [0.06]
Women		7 (13.80) [3.35]	10 (4.73) [5.89]	7 (5.47) [0.43]

Source: Authors. Note: Expected cell totals are in () brackets and the Chi-square statistic for each cell is in [] brackets.

The opportunity for women is narrower given the smaller number of portfolios where they are more likely to be nominated as the majority of Slovak portfolios – 10 out of 16 – are gendered masculine.

4.1 Relationship between Portfolio Saliency and Gender

Before we examined the effect of portfolio saliency on the gender of nominees, we had conducted the aforementioned expert survey results of which you can find in Table I in the Annex. There is a number of interesting findings – feminine portfolios do not necessarily have a low saliency – Healthcare is above the average which could have been influenced by the time when the expert survey took place – during the world COVID-19 pandemics. However, on the average, three feminine portfolios have lower average saliency of 0.88. Experts evaluated masculine portfolios in Slovakia with average 1.22 points. It is important to note that the majority of Slovak portfolios (10) are regarded to be masculine according to the Krook and O'Brien's classification. Three gender neutral portfolios (Labour, Justice, and Environment) where most of the Slovak female ministers were nominated, have average saliency 1.07 points which is slightly above the average of a normal portfolio according to experts. Interestingly, The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is surprisingly salient – 1.21 points which is unusual compared to other countries in the CEE region. Even experts in the 2002 expert survey of Druckman and Roberts (2008) have evaluated it as the 6th most salient Ministry, the same place as in our expert survey that is up to date. We argue that in post-Communist countries, Labour, Social Affairs and Family portfolio has a more important role

than in Western Europe because during and after the transition period from the Socialist regime, high unemployment required large transfers of unemployment benefits. The redistributive function of this portfolio is more important in countries with lower income.

In Druckman and Roberts's expert survey (2008), the Ministry of Justice ended up as the third most salient portfolio whereas in the expert survey, it ended up 7th. This change might have been caused by the different problems Slovakia is facing now and in 2002 after the period of Mečiarism when the rule of law was not guaranteed. This Ministry is exceptional, because it had the highest number of female ministers from among Slovak ministries a female minister had been leading the portfolio 6 times. This is exceptional also in comparison with the Western Europe and the World where Justice is not even among the most frequent portfolios where women tend to be nominated.

Strong position of women in the field of justice is not just an idiosyncrasy of Slovakia. In the study of Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005), this pattern has been found also in Latin American countries that are newly formed democracies like Slovakia. It was a masculine portfolio according to their classification yet female ministers were not underrepresented there. We encourage researchers to look into this matter also in the case of the Czech Republic as we had shared a common state before the year 1993.

We claim that the neutral Justice portfolio has been frequently led by female leaders in Slovakia for three reasons. First factor is the historical legacy of the Communist regime that has left a large pool of highly-qualified candidates for the Justice portfolio compared to the Western Europe. Women before the Velvet revolution gravitated their careers towards the judiciary as being a judge was not a particularly prestigious position and it offered a possibility to combine family life with a career (Láštic and Spáč, 2017). Feminization of the judiciary lasts until now – female judges constitute 63 % of the judicial body and women keep their dominance in the ranks of newly appointed judges (Via Iuris, 2016). Apparently, women are not recruited to government only from the judiciary, but they seem to be well represented also in other roles in the Slovak law (see Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family, 2019, pp. 83 -84).⁴

⁴ In 2014, the share of female judges at the Supreme Court was 53.6 %. Even at the Constitutional court, the share of female judges is about one third and oftentimes, women led these institutions. Similarly, a woman became chief of the Judiciary Council. At the regional courts, women also have a strong presence. (See more in the Report on the Gender Equality in Slovakia, 2019, pp. 83 -84.)

The second factor can be the perception of the Ministry of Justice by the selectors and the public. Barnes and O'Brien (2018) show that women can become acceptable as nominees to portfolios whose remit overcame the traditional beliefs about the masculinity of the position. And according to their research, if a woman had broken a glass ceiling at such a ministry, it is much more probable that other women will be nominated there again. It is noteworthy that the first Minister of Justice in the independent Slovak Republic was a woman – Katarína Tóthová. Thus, her first ministerial appointment might have been crucial for breaking the glass ceiling and reframing the gender identity of the portfolio at the beginning of the newly formed state in 1993.

And the third factor is that the large pool of eligible female candidates with experience from the civil service is present at the Ministry of Justice, but also at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family. Klaudia Šupáková (2020) has shown that portion of female at the highest managerial positions at the Ministry of Justice is the highest from among all Slovak Ministries.

Slovak female ministers are according to expectations nominated more to neutral and feminine portfolios, but Slovak case contradicts the findings of Goddard (2019a) from the whole Europe where women are less likely to be nominated to a neutral portfolio – in Slovakia, they are nominated here more often than men.

We have obtained surprising results also in regard of the saliency - logistic regression has found no significant effect of the portfolio salience on gender of nominees (see Table 5 below). The coefficient is negative which shows a trend that women were even appointed to more salient portfolios than male ministers, however, this trend is not significant. In this respect, Slovakia is also special compared to the rest of the world, where women tend to be nominated to less salient portfolios. We must disconfirm H2 and conclude that Slovak female ministers are appointed to similarly salient portfolios as male ministers are. This is largely caused by the fact that more than a half of all Slovak female ministers – 13 out of 24 – have been nominated to Justice, Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and Healthcare - portfolios that have relatively high saliency even though they are not masculine. This can be clearly seen in Table I in the Annex.

TABLE 5: Effect of the Portfolio Saliency on the Gender of Nominees

Variable	Coefficient	S.E.	pp-value	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Portfolio saliency	-0.229	0.706	0.745	0.795	(0.1990,3.1751) (0.1990,3.1751)

Source: Own analysis.

Slovak political party leaders limit their selection of women to the portfolios by traditionalist gender expectations of the portfolio – only 6 portfolios out of 16 were not masculine in the examined history of Slovak governments. Slovakia has never had a female minister in 4 masculine portfolios - Defence,⁵ Construction, Transportation, Economy, and, interestingly, in one neutral portfolio - the Environment, that is occupied by female nominees most often worldwide (IPU). Even though women significantly increased their representation in Slovak cabinets, the inroads they have made into the cabinet are still limited because of the masculine perceptions of many remits.

The women who were nominated to high-profile, high-saliency, masculine portfolios were surprisingly not nominated by the parties claiming to bring modernization or progressivism, but they were more often leftist or authoritative; Brigita Schmögnerová – Minister of Finance (Slovak Democratic Left) and Denisa Saková – Minister of Interior (Smer-SD) are both from leftist parties. Zdenka Kramplová – Minister of Foreign Affairs (HZDS) and Minister of Agriculture (HZDS), Gabriela Matečná – Minister of Agriculture (SNS) are from rightist authoritarian parties. Two exceptions are Veronika Remišová – Minister of Investment (Za ľudí), Regional Development and Informatization, and Mária Machová – Minister of Privatisation (SOP), both of which are from the smallest centrist party of the respective cabinet. This is in line with the findings of Goddard (2019a, 2019b) in the whole Europe where the leftist ideology reinforces nomination of women to masculine portfolios, but it does not explain the appointment of female ministers from centrist and authoritarian parties.

Regarding the party factors, we have found that Slovak right-wing parties nominate fewer women to ministerial portfolios. Contra intuitively, the Slovak rightist parties such as SDKÚ and SaS are regarded as those who bring modernism and liberalism in social matters and position themselves as more socially liberal. Yet, in the respect of the actual gender representation, they do

⁵ I. Radičová has been an interim Minister of Defense.

not deliver on par with the traditionalist parties of the old left and even authoritarian parties of the right. And they have also never nominated a woman to a masculine portfolio. We must confirm H4.

One significant intervening factor that needs to be considered here is the fragmentation of the parties on the right side of the ideological spectrum. The parties on the Slovak right were always more fragmented and so were their governments. The cabinets of SDK, SDKÚ and now OĽaNO have been composed out of 4 parties whereas HZDS and Smer had smaller governments composed of 1-3 parties. The only exception from this pattern was the government of Smer in 2016 that was composed of four parties, even though only temporarily, because one coalition partner has left shortly after elections. As Reynolds (1999) points out, it is always the leaders who need to be accommodated first and when the cabinet is composed from 4 parties, there will be fewer seats in the cabinet for women, because party leaders in Slovakia have always been men, except one recent case of the political party *Za ľudí*. This particular case only confirms that leaders come first - Veronika Remišová as the first female party leader in modern Slovak history that is a part of a coalition is the smallest party in the cabinet. *Za ľudí* gained two seats in the current cabinet of OĽaNO and to both of them they have nominated a female minister. We advise to always include this intervening variable, otherwise results of the ideology factor can turn inconclusive.

Our previous argument is connected with the control variable – number of party nominations to the coalition. Women have higher chances to become ministers in coalition parties that nominate more ministers. We confirm H5 as it is a statistically significant factor in our model (See the table 6 below).

Number of women the party got elected to the Parliament in recent elections is also a plausible factor when predicting future representation of women of the party in the cabinet. We argue this factor is an indicator of the conditions for women in a political party. If more women were elected on their list, they received better places on the list or support in general for their campaign or political activities as in Slovakia the placement on the list is crucial, candidates who are elected in preferential voting are scarce. This factor was also found to be significant in the study of Bego (2014) who examined the whole CEE.

Table 6: Party Determinants of the Appointment of Women to the Cabinet

Independent variables	Baseline	S.E.	Score	df	Significance	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Left-Right Ideology	-.561	.283	6.902	1	.048*	.571	.328	.994
Share of women in the Parliament	.118	.059	2.807	1	.046*	1.125	1.002	1.264
Number of nominations by party	.358	.183	6.003	1	.050*	1.430	.999	2.047
p-value of the Model: < .001 Model: Nagelkerke Pseudo R Squared: .535 Cox & Snell Pseudo R Squared: .401 Hosmer and Lemeshow test of significance: .989								

Source: Own analysis.

Notes: The unit of the analysis is the country, Number of observations = 33. p. < .05*

The logistic model is significant at < .05. The .989 value of a Hosmer Lemeshow test shows that the model significantly improves the fit and the Nagelkerke pseudo R squared explains 53.5 % of the variance in the dependent variable - gender - by our independent variables which is a moderate effect size.

Conclusion

In this article we have examined Slovak portfolio allocation using the gender lens and have substantially improved understanding of factors that influence appointment of women to Slovak cabinet and appointments to the cabinet in general. This is a longitudinal case study with focus on party factors which has been conducted for the first time in Slovakia, even though there are abovementioned studies that had included Slovak political parties and governments into broader CEE research. We contribute to Slovak political science as well as to the policy field by novel findings and some inspiration for further research.

Consistent with theoretical expectations, empirical findings show that institutional setting leading to executive appointment and portfolio allocation to Slovak ministers differ based on gender. Women in Slovakia are systematically

denied the opportunity to use their talents in all types of cabinet portfolios – women have significantly higher chance to become ministers in neutral and feminine portfolios. Masculine portfolios constitute the majority of Slovak portfolios - 10 out of 16 Slovak portfolios are masculine. Therefore, the effect of relative number of feminize/neutral/masculine portfolios can be also a variable with important effect on number of women in cabinets and it should be examined cross nationally. Establishing of more neutral and feminine ministries could also lead to increased representation of women in the Slovak cabinet.

Some of our findings are optimistic – Slovak female ministers were not on average appointed to less salient portfolios than men. This finding about saliency, even though it is not statistically significant, contradicts the theory and findings from other post-Communist countries (Bego, 2014; Goddard et al., 2019a) but they also contradict worldwide findings (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019) and findings from the industrialized democracies in the Western Europe (Claveria, 2014). Thus, it is necessary to conduct further research into the phenomenon in Slovakia to explain such anomaly. Policy wise, it could be interesting to see whether more portfolios with feminine or neutral gender identity would mean having higher share of women in the cabinet.

Moreover, we have confirmed that ideology matters in regard of the gender of appointed ministers. Leftist parties are more likely to appoint female ministers, however, this result could be also influenced by the fact that leftist parties are more consolidated in Slovakia and received more ministerial seats, leaving enough opportunities for personalities from lower party ranks. The number of seats available to the nominating political party matters to the gender equality in the cabinet, too.

We have shown that number of women elected in previous parliamentary elections is a good indicator and significant factor for predicting whether the political party supports women and would nominate women to ministerial position. We would recommend to focus on the factor of party system fragmentation and its effect on gender in further research in the wider region.

We claim that the case of neutral Justice portfolio that has been so frequently led by female leaders in Slovakia can be explained by 3 reasons – legacy of the first female Minister of Justice Katarína Tóthová who broke the glass ceiling; the historical legacy of the Communist regime that has left a large pool of highly-qualified candidates for the Justice portfolio; Ministry of Justice having the largest share of women in the top tier of civil servant management. Our research also shows that portfolios have variable identity cross-nationally.

Ministry of Environment has never had a female minister in Slovakia, whereas worldwide it is the one that is the most often led by a woman.

Slovak society loses ministerial talents because nominations are influenced by gender roles expected from the minister of the given portfolio. To change it we must first thoroughly understand it, this study being the first step on the ladder.

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ANNEX

TABLE 1: Salience of Slovak Portfolios

	N	AVG	SD	Druckman & Roberts (2008) N	Druckman & Roberts (2008) AVG	Druckman & Roberts (2008) SD
Ministry of International Relations (1992 -1992); Ministry of International Matters (1992-2012); Ministry of International and European Relations (2012-2021)	11	1.31	0.44	11	1.02	0.33

Slovak Commission for the Environment (1992-1992); Ministry of Environment (1992-2010); Ministry of Environment (2010-2021)	11	0.85	0.24	11	0.55	0.20
Ministry of Education (1992-2010); Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sports (2010-2021)	11	0.98	0.27	11	0.87	0.24
Ministry of Investment, Regional Development, and Informatization (2020-2021)	11	0.81	0.36	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ministry of Healthcare (1992-2021)	11	1.09	0.23	11	0.83	0.24
Ministry for Coordination and Privatisation of National Property (1992-2003)	11	1.32	0.38	11	0.77	0.34
Ministry of Culture (1992-2021)	11	0.58	0.24	11	0.76	0.28
Ministry of Justice (1992-2021)	11	1.16	0.39	11	1.05	0.12
Ministry of Interior (1992 - 2021)	11	1.66	0.50	10	1.28	0.21
Ministry of Finance (1992 - 2021)	11	1.88	0.77	11	1.38	0.48
Ministry of Labour and Social Matters (1992-1994); Ministry of Labour, Social Matters, and Family (1994-2021)	11	1.21	0.17	11	1.00	0.29

Ministry of Agriculture and Nutrition (1992-1994); Ministry of Agriculture and Countryside Development (1994-2010); Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Regional Development (2010-2010); Ministry of Agriculture and Countryside Development (2010-2021).	11	0.94	0.20	11	0.82	0.25
Ministry of Transportation, Connection and Public Works (1992-1995); Ministry of Transportation, Post and Telecommunication (1995-2010); Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Regional Development (2010-2017); Ministry of Transportation and Construction (2017-2021)	11	1.31	0.30	11	0.78	0.29
Ministry of Construction and Public Works (1994-1998); Ministry of Construction and Regional Development (1998-2010).	11	0.89	0.52	10	0.59	0.19
Ministry of Economy (1992-2021)	11	1.01	0.19	11	1.02	0.29
Ministry of Defence (1992-2021)	11	1.06	0.14	11	0.94	0.20

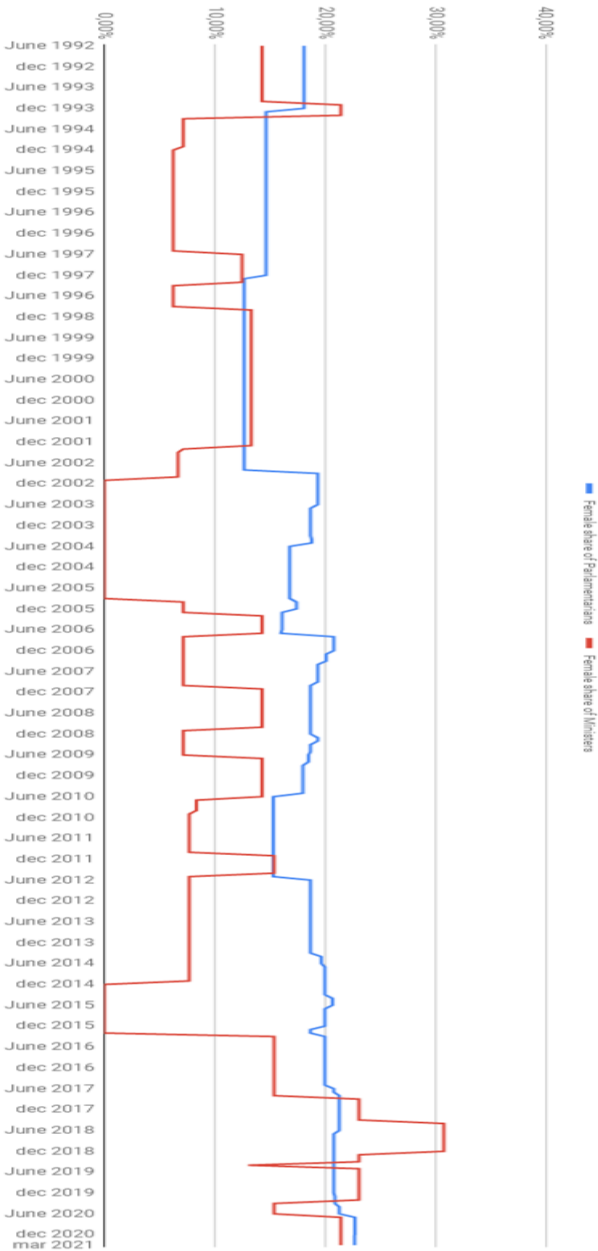
Source: Own analysis (Dataset of the expert survey is available at shorturl.at/dszJ9); Druckman and Roberts (2008).

TABLE II Portfolio Allocation according to Gender

	Salary	No. Of	Year																																	
			y	Women	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
Finance	1.88	1	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	f	f	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Interior	1.66	1	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Privatization	1.32	1	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	f	f	f	t																						
Foreign Affairs	1.31	1	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Transportation	1.31	0	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Labor	1.21	4	f	f	t	f	f	f	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	t	f	f	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Justice	1.16	6	f	f	t	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	t	m	m	t	f	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	f
Health	1.09	3	m	t	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	f	m	m
Defense	1.06	0	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Economy	1.01	0	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Education	0.98	2	m	m	t	f	f	f	f	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	f	f	t	m	m
Agriculture	0.94	2	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	t	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Construction	0.89	0																																		
Environment	0.85	0	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Investment	0.81	1																																f	f	
Culture	0.58	2	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	f	f	

Notes: M=Male, F=Female, T=Transient. Source: OMM analysis.

FIGURE 1: Percentage of Female Ministers in Slovak Governments (June 1ST 1992 – March 21ST 2021)



Source: www.vlada.gov.sk; Dataset available here: <https://bit.ly/3Z7T0K>