

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Gender Influence on Public Administration Quality and Civil Legislation Modernization in Kazakhstan

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EJEBS**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of institutional factors on women's participation in civil law and public administration, and to identify areas for modernizing civil legislation to reduce gender inequality. The analysis covers the period from 2012 to 2023 and is based on official statistical data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan and institutional indicators from the Worldwide Governance Indicators. Correlation analysis, dual comparative assessment, and structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) were employed to examine the relationships between gender-disaggregated labor market outcomes and institutional quality. The results confirm that democratic indicators are predominantly shaped by male employment and income ($\beta = 0.910$, $p < 0.01$), while the impact of women on democracy remains marginal ($\beta = -0.044$). In contrast, governance indicators demonstrate a strong association with women's participation in the labor market and managerial positions ($\beta = 1.096$, $p < 0.01$), underscoring their role in enhancing transparency and accountability. The persistence of the gender wage gap and unstable female employment reflects structural barriers that are insufficiently addressed by institutional reforms. The findings suggest that modernizing civil legislation requires introducing gender audits, expanding women's access to decision-making, and institutionalizing gender diversity in state structures. This research contributes to the literature on governance and legal modernization by providing empirical evidence of institutional determinants of gender inequality and offering policy recommendations for strengthening equality in public administration.

KEYWORDS: Civil Law, Public Governance, Gender Equality, Rule Of Law, Corruption, Employment, Wage Gap

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1. INTRODUCTION

The protection of civil rights is defined by both legislative guarantees and the real conditions of their implementation. The quality of law and order and civil justice institutions determine the effectiveness of rights protection and the level of social participation, including gender equality. In modern times, the issue of implementing civil rights is particularly acute in the context of gender. Despite formal equality, women are still hindered by institutional and cultural barriers that limit their participation in civil law and governance processes (Mollica et al., 2022).

Globally, the leading positions in levels of judicial independence, corruption, and guaranteed access to fair justice, as measured by the Rule of Law Index, are occupied by Denmark (0.90), Norway (0.89), Finland (0.88), Sweden (0.87), and Germany (0.86) in 2024 (WGI, 2024). Moreover, women are widely represented in government bodies, influence the drafting of legislation, and participate in the development of civil society institutions in Scandinavian countries and Western Europe.

In contrast, Kazakhstan ranked 65th out of 142 countries in the 2024 Rule of Law Index, with a score of 0.24. The level of representation of women in politics, although it meets the 25% quota, does not ensure the proper implementation of the set goals for gender equality.

Women's economic empowerment has a direct impact on global economic growth, as it reduces poverty, increases household incomes, and promotes social protection. Despite this economic potential, normative and cultural constraints limit the opportunities for women: in holding managing positions, lower labor force participation rates, a gender pay gap, and a high burden of unpaid household labor (Bertrand, 2021).

The adoption of international norms and legal equality does not provide actual equality, as discrimination and cultural barriers persisted. Modernization in politics must include expanding the "life chances" of all

citizens, and a key part of this is the social inclusion of women.

This study aims to examine the impact of institutional factors on women's participation in civil law and public administration, and to identify areas for modernizing civil legislation to reduce gender inequality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role and contribution of women in public administration are of particular interest. In particular, the impact of women in government on corruption and liberal democracy. Sung (2012) showed that women's participation in government structures promotes institutional transparency and accountability. Jin (2016) noted that even when controlling for institutional factors (legal structure, press, and economic freedom), women's participation has a significant effect. Women have influence. DiRienzo (2018) noted two types of influence, direct and indirect. Women in government are more likely than men to focus on public and social needs, including healthcare, education, social security, and care for children and the elderly (Carmel, 2019). This reduces social tensions, as the basic needs of society are met (Slyusarevsky et al., 2021).

At the same time, the likelihood of conflict and social tension decreases, and trust in institutions increases. Therefore, the direct impact is that women politicians bring issues to the agenda that promote long-term stability and social cohesion, which ultimately strengthens peace. Women are less tolerant of corruption and more inclined toward transparency and accountability. When the proportion of women in parliament or government is higher, the level of corruption in a country tends to decrease. Since corruption is recognized as a root cause of instability, it undermines trust, exacerbates inequality, and hinders development. Women influence change by changing the quality of institutions and the level of corruption. Women break traditional chains of corruption. Women's participation in decision-making and consensus-based governance is a necessary

element of sustainable development and governance reform (Dar & Shairgojri, 2022). Women's inclusion is also an additional resource for institutions (Chanda, 2024). Their participation increases attention to social spending, which creates long-term conditions for growth. Furthermore, women's active participation through NGOs serves as a mediator in the dialogue between authorities and society. Therefore, NGOs achieve greater inclusiveness and participation of women in decision-making (Rusfiana & Kurniasih, 2024). Particularly through anti-corruption and human rights advocacy, they contribute to strengthening the rule of law.

Research shows that democratic indices, including liberal and electoral democracy, the rule of law, and constraints on executive power, have historically been shaped predominantly by men's participation in politics and public administration. Men traditionally occupy key positions in parliaments, governments, and executive bodies, and their employment and income have the most significant impact on democratic indicators (Mastracci, 2017; Esarey & Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Particularly, such practice is characteristic of countries where women are limited by institutional barriers (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Moreover, democratic indices largely reflect men's priorities and attitudes, as men are more associated with the institutional dimensions of democracy. At the same time, women are more likely to focus on inclusiveness and the social dimension (Hansen & Goenaga, 2021). Democracy is significantly correlated with male political participation (Nchofoung et al., 2023; Mechkova et al., 2024).

There is a growing number of studies that state that women are in a disadvantaged position due to cultural norms. First of all, cultural habits often lead to patriarchal practices and the strengthening of positions of religious standards over legal acts. In terms of economic development, the patriarchal system restricts women's access to politics, education, economic resources, and, more importantly, the judicial system for the protection of their rights (Bako & Syed, 2018; Lwamba et al., 2022).

Therefore, women's representation in politics is either limited or bears only a formal nature and provides no support for lobbying the interests of minorities, including women. Cultural and religious perceptions of existing international norms and standards for gender equality are stronger, which has led to the implementation of gender quotas of 30% in parliament (Firdaus & Wulandari, 2023; Suryani & Wardana, 2024). Thus, despite receiving global support, women are still excluded from the legal system and often miss opportunities for education (Begum, 2023). The following hypotheses are posed in this work:

H1. Democratic indicators (D) are formed predominantly through men (M), reflecting the dominance of men in public administration and political participation.

H2. Women (W) have a limited impact on democratic indices, confirming women's marginalized participation in the formation of civil rights.

H3. Governance (G) is more strongly associated with the women's bloc (W), indicating that women's inclusion in the labor market and in managerial positions increases the transparency and accountability of government structures.

H4. Men (M) have a moderate impact on Governance (G), but their role in ensuring transparency and oversight is weaker than that of women.

3. METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology relies on quantitative analysis based on official statistical data and institutional indicators. The Jamovi and SmartPLS software packages were used to process and interpret the results, allowing for a combination of classical descriptive statistics and regression analysis methods with elements of structural modeling. Based on a literature review, indicators reflecting gender inequality in the labor market and institutional characteristics of public administration quality were identified.

The first group includes indicators of wages, employment, unemployment, and the

representation of women and men in management positions. corruption practices, and public administration effectiveness.

The second group comprises indices of democracy, rule of law, civil liberties, anti- Table 1 presents all variables used in the empirical analysis.

TABLE 1. Indicators for the analysis of gender inequality and institutional quality

Indicator	Code	Measurement
Average monthly wage of women	W1	KZT
Share of women among managers and public servants	W2	%
Employment rate of women	W3	%
Unemployment rate of women	W4	%
Average monthly wage of men	M1	KZT
Share of men among managers and public servants	M2	%
Employment rate of men	M3	%
Unemployment rate of men	M4	%
Liberal democracy index	D1	%
Electoral democracy index	D2	%
Legislative constraints on the executive	D3	%
Judicial constraints on the executive	D4	%
Rule of Law index	D5	%
Private civil liberties index	D6	%
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)	G1	%
Voice and Accountability	G2	%
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	G3	%
Government Effectiveness	G4	%
Regulatory Quality	G5	%
Control of Corruption	G6	%

Note: compiled by authors based on the Bureau of National Statistics (2024), Worldwide Governance Indicators (2024)

Based on the identified variables, four hypotheses were formulated to reflect the relationship between the quality of public administration and indicators of gender inequality. To test the hypotheses, the analysis was conducted in stages.

Data standardization. All indicators were z-scored to ensure comparability of disparate variables and eliminate the influence of measurement scales.

Correlation analysis. A matrix correlation was conducted between the gender inequality indicators (W1–W4, M1–M4) and institutional indicators (D1–D6, G1–G6). Primary relationships were identified.

Dual comparative analysis. For greater clarity, two correlation matrices were constructed: (1) a matrix of relationships between women's indicators (W1–W4) and institutional indices (D1–D6, G1–G6); (2) a

matrix of relationships between men's indicators (M1–M4) and the same institutional indices.

Based on the dual approach, gender-specific differences were identified, enabling a clearer understanding of the institutional determinants of gender inequality.

Model construction. The next step involved regression and structural modeling analysis (SmartPLS), which tested four hypotheses. The model was constructed according to the formula (1):

$$GAP_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 D_{j,t} + \beta_2 G_{k,t} + \varepsilon_t \tag{1}$$

where:

$GAP_{i,t}$ – the gender inequality index at time t (e.g., the wage gap: W1–M1W1 - M1W1–M1, or the employment gap: W3–M3W3 - M3W3–M3);

$D_{j,t}$ – the institutional indices of democracy and rule of law (D1–D6);

$G_{k,t}$ – the indicators of public administration quality and anti-corruption (G1–G6);

β_1, β_2 – the influence coefficients;

ε_t – the stochastic error.

The next stage of the study involves analyzing the current situation based on the selected indicators in four categories. The analysis will enable the explanation of the results obtained from the PLS-SEM model. Based on the findings, recommendations will be developed to modernize regulatory mechanisms and expand opportunities for women's inclusion in public and legal processes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of this section is to present and interpret the results obtained. First, the key correlations between women's participation in civil law and institutional indicators will be identified. Next, the results of the regression model and the testing of the hypotheses are presented. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the dynamics of the indicators by gender. Next, based on the results obtained, recommendations are formulated to reduce institutionalized barriers and expand opportunities for women's participation in civil law and public administration. Correlation matrix is presented in Figure 1.

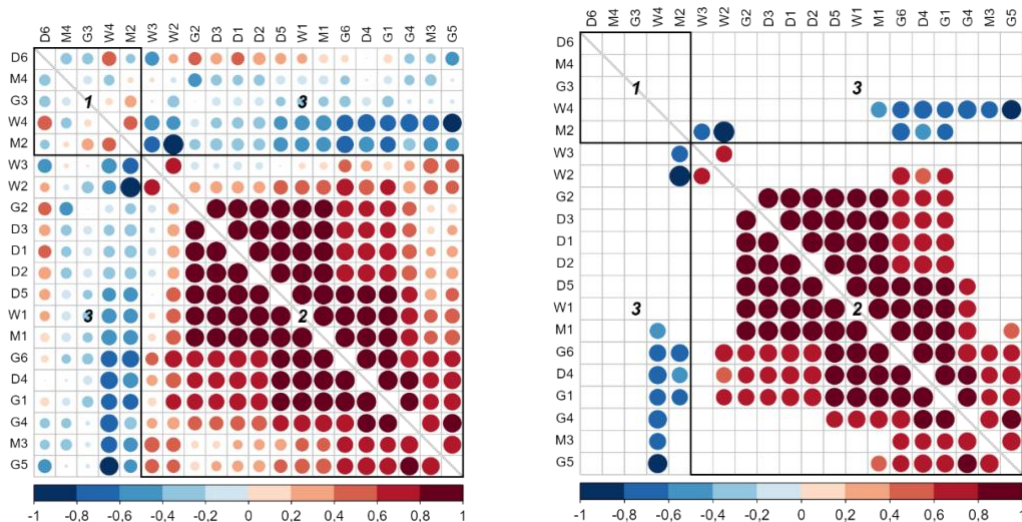


FIGURE 1. Significant correlation patterns

An analysis of the correlation matrix revealed that the institutional indices (D and G) demonstrate a high interrelationship with each other, indicating multicollinearity. In the context of PLS modeling, such a structure poses a risk of model overload; therefore, it is advisable to consider them in an aggregated form through two enlarged latent blocks, Democracy and Governance. The response of the male block of indicators (M) to institutional factors is generally positive: an increase in the indices of democracy and the quality of public administration is accompanied by an increase

in men's employment and a rise in their wages. Despite a general rise in institutional indices, the level of female unemployment remains unchanged, and the gender wage gap persists, reflecting the limited effects of modernization.

In the correlation structure, the most obvious and statistically significant relationships are found in several areas. First, the institutional indices grouped into the Governance block (government effectiveness, regulatory quality, control of corruption) have a pronounced positive relationship with male

indicators—an increase in these indicators is accompanied by an increase in male employment and wages. Liberal and electoral democracy are positively correlated with male income and employment levels. Thus, institutional improvements primarily impact men's position in the labor market.

The second relationship illustrates the connection between women's indicators and men's: increases in men's wages and employment are associated with similar changes in women's indicators. However, the effect is weaker and does not eliminate the gender gap. The share of women among managers and civil servants increases more slowly than that of men, despite institutional improvements, and the female unemployment rate remains higher, even with positive trends in institutional indices.

Direct institutional relationships influencing female indicators include the rule of law and civil liberties, which demonstrate a weak and limited relationship with female unemployment. Overall, three significant areas can be identified: the positive impact of institutional indices on male employment and income; the indirect effect of male indicators on female indicators; and the limited and contradictory impact of individual democratic indicators on female employment and unemployment rates.

After analyzing the correlation structure, which allowed us to identify the directions of significant relationships between institutional and gender indicators, the results of testing the proposed hypotheses within the framework of the structural relationships model are presented below (Figure 2).

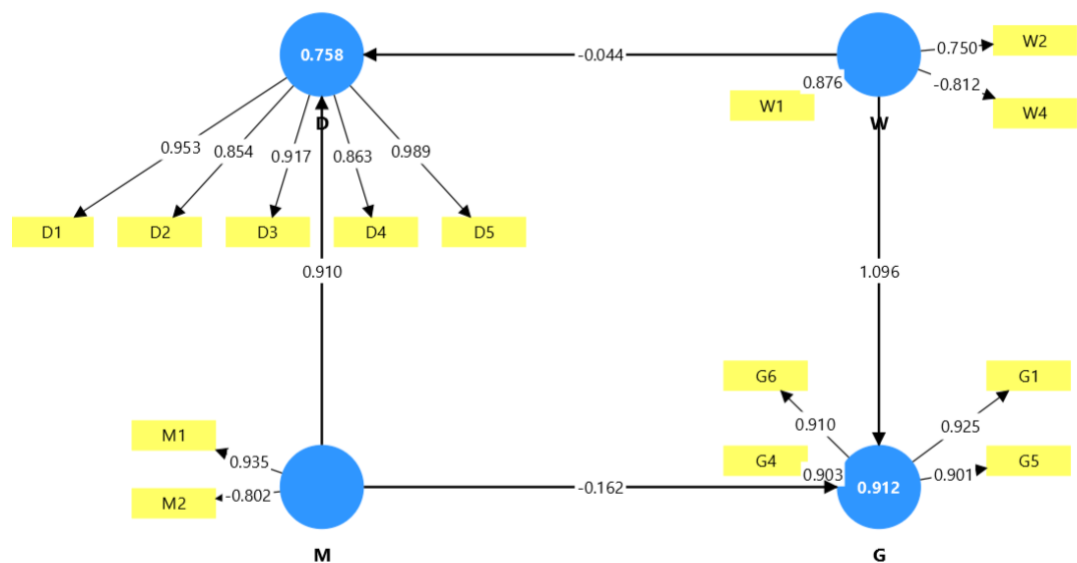


FIGURE 2. Structural model of institutional indicators and gendered labor market outcomes in Kazakhstan

During the model specification, all indicators with factor loadings below 0.7 were excluded as statistically weak and unstable. M3 (male employment rate) and M4 (male unemployment rate) were removed from the male block, W3 (female employment rate) from the female block, and D6 (civil liberties) from the democracy block. Only the variables that demonstrated factor loadings above the

threshold were retained in the final model: M1 (0.935), M2 (-0.802), W1 (0.876), W2 (0.750), W4 (-0.812), D1–D5 (0.854–0.989), G1 (0.925), G4 (0.903), G5 (0.901), G6 (0.910).

Hypothesis 1. Democratic indicators are formed predominantly through the male bloc. Confirmed.

The correlation between democracy and male indicators was high (0.910), with the

factor loadings of indicators M1 (0.935) and M2 (-0.802) demonstrating statistically significant effects. The dynamics of democratic indices largely reflect men's employment and wage levels. Democratic processes rely on male participation in the economy. Women's indicators, however, do not form significant relationships.

Hypothesis 2. The women's bloc has a limited impact on democratic indices. Confirmed.

The direct relationship between women's indicators and democratic indices is statistically insignificant (-0.044). Women's participation in public administration and civil law remains marginalized. Legislative and institutional decisions are predominantly concentrated among men.

Hypothesis 3. Governance is more strongly associated with women's participation. Confirmed.

The relationship between women's participation and Governance was high (1.096), and the factor loadings of the W1, W2, and W4 indicators remained stable. This suggests that women's increased inclusion in the labor market and managerial positions is associated with greater transparency and accountability in government structures.

Hypothesis 4. The male bloc has a moderate impact on governance. Not confirmed.

The coefficient for the male bloc's impact on governance is -0.162, reflecting a weak and negative relationship. The impact of men on governance effectiveness, regulatory quality, and corruption control indicators is minimal.

Figure 3 further illustrates the dynamics of women's indicators, highlighting differences in wages, employment, and participation in managerial positions.

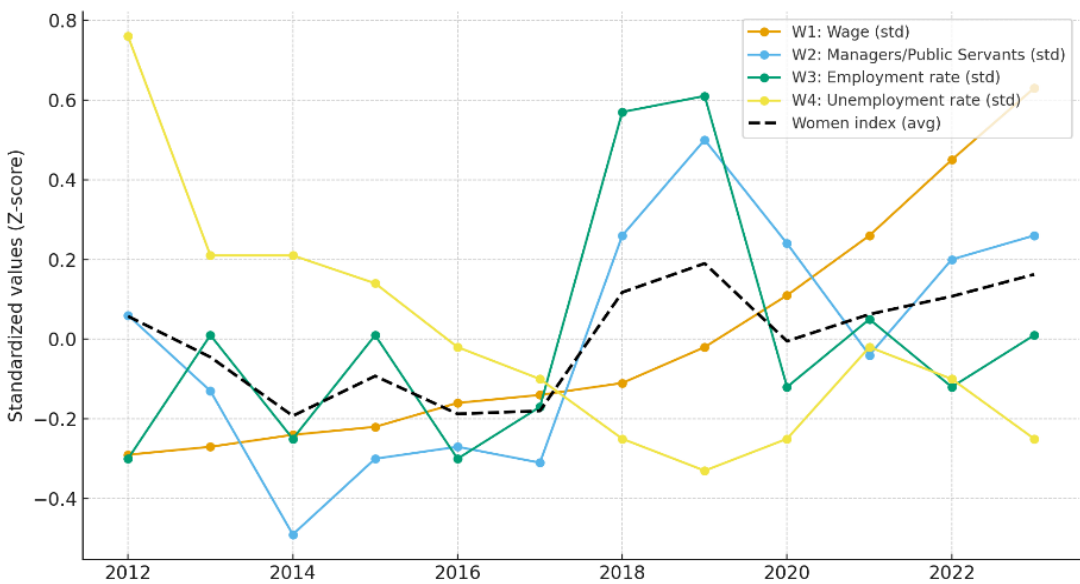


FIGURE 3. Dynamics of women's indicators (standardized, 2012-2023)

The overall trend in women's indicators from 2012 to 2023 showed a positive trend with some exceptions. Women's average wages (W1) showed a steady growth. The share of women among managers and civil servants (W2) increased steadily after a period of decline, reaching a peak in 2016. By 2019–

2023, the values for women's indicators recovered. The expansion of women's opportunities in managerial positions was accompanied by rising incomes and the consolidation of their economic contributions.

At the same time, female employment (W3) and unemployment (W4) remained unstable

until 2017. Then, values for the unemployment rate began to decline, while employment values increased. Women had limited access to stable sectors of the economy in the first half of the observed period. Thus, income growth was driven more by specific industries and improvements in skills. Moreover, rising

wages and managerial participation have not led to a significant improvement in overall employment.

Figure 4 illustrates the dynamics of men's indicators, which characterize income, employment, and the distribution of managerial positions.

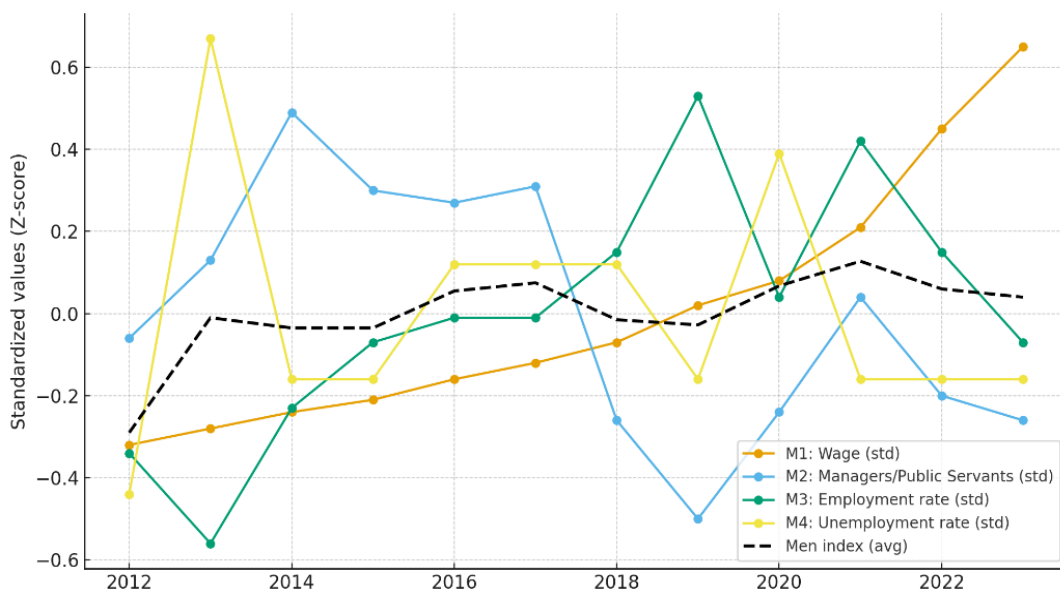


FIGURE 4. Dynamics of men's indicators (standardized, 2012–2023)

For men, the overall trend demonstrated more consistent growth and fewer discrepancies between indicators. Wages (M1) increased steadily and exceeded the female indicator, confirming the gender income gap. The share of men among managers and civil servants (M2) moved in the opposite direction to the female indicator: where female participation increased, the male indicator declined, reflecting a partial rotation of management positions in favor of women.

Employment (M3) and unemployment (M4) indicators were more stable for men than for women: even during periods of decline, they returned to positive values more quickly. Male participation in the economy was more stable. Unlike in the female segment, there is virtually no discrepancy between income and employment levels. Both indicators grew in parallel, which can be explained by the predominance of men in stable sectors of the

economy and in structures provided with state funding. Thus, the male block creates a more balanced picture, where income and employment growth are in the same direction.

Figure 5 illustrates the dynamics of various democratic indices, including liberal democracy, electoral democracy, limits on executive power, judicial independence, the rule of law, and civil liberties.

Democratic indices remained low and even recorded negative values until 2017. Then, the dynamics recovered for all indicators. Thus, institutional reforms have strengthened formal democratic mechanisms. Judicial constraints (D4) and the rule of law (D5) have also shown growth, albeit at a more gradual rate.

At the same time, the civil liberties index (D6) does not follow the general trend: its values fluctuated and remained low, suggesting persistent restrictions on the exercise of rights and freedoms at the individual level.

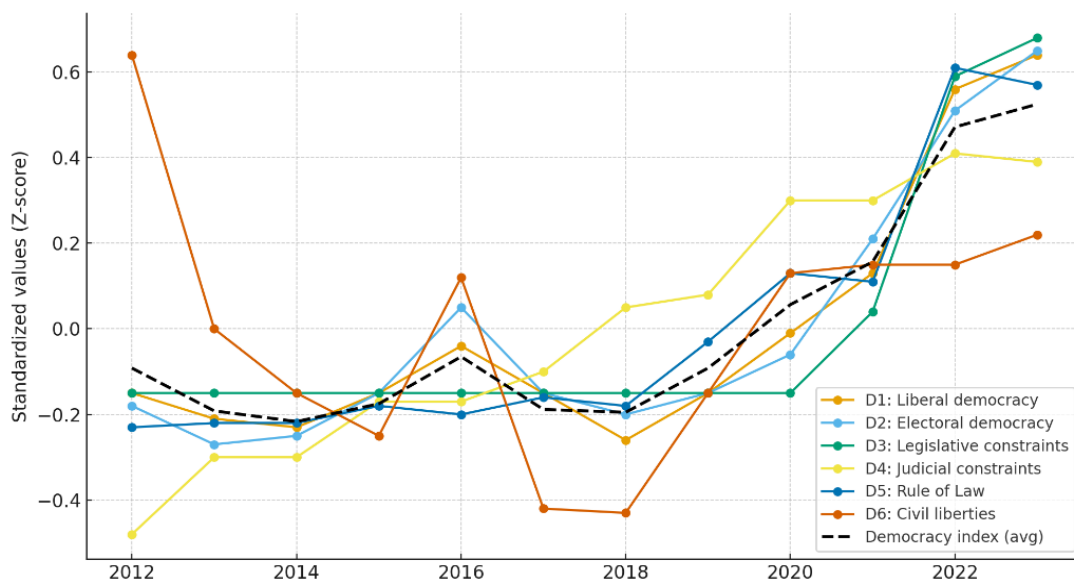


FIGURE 5. Dynamics of democracy indicators (standardized, 2012–2023)

Democratic reforms have had a greater impact on institutional frameworks. Modernization was formal in nature and primarily aimed at strengthening the political and legal framework.

Figure 6 presents the dynamics of governance indicators, covering perceptions of corruption, government accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption.

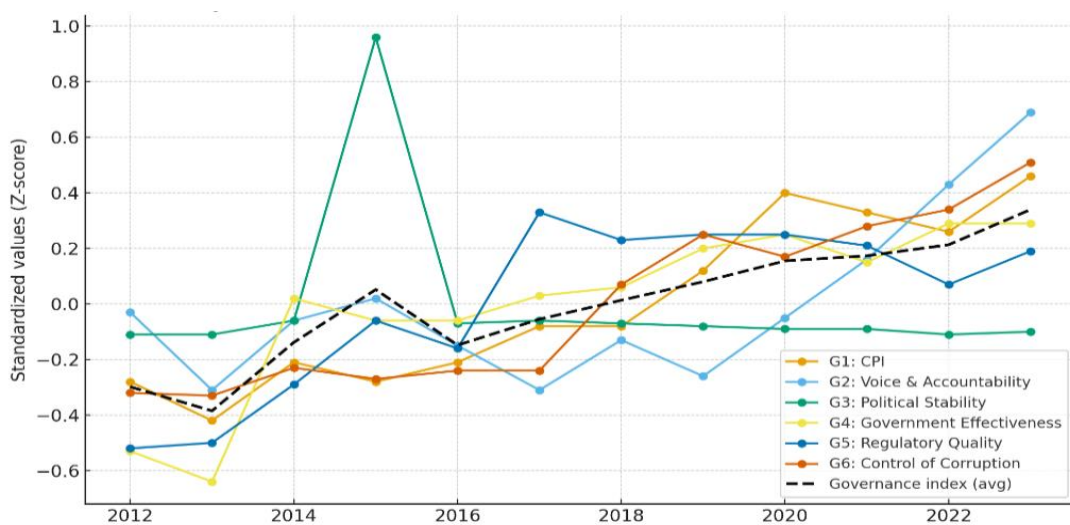


FIGURE 6. Dynamics of governance indicators (standardized, 2012–2023)

Governance indicators have also shown a positive trend, particularly since 2017, but their dynamics are less uniform than those of democracy. The most pronounced increases were recorded for the Control of Corruption (G6), Government Accountability (G2), and

Corruption Perceptions (G1) indices. The overlap between these indicators suggests a link to anti-corruption initiatives and international transparency programs. However, political stability (G3) did not follow the general trajectory: a sharp spike was

observed in 2015, after which the values returned to harmful levels. This suggests instability in the domestic situation, despite overall improvements in governance indicators. The Government Effectiveness (G4) and Regulatory Quality (G5) indices gradually strengthened and became positive at the end of the period, which can be attributed to institutional reforms of the state apparatus. Increased transparency and effectiveness are

not always accompanied by sustainable political stability.

To conclude, women's indicators develop more inconsistently and do not demonstrate coherence with the growth of democratic indices. Second, the men's indicators correlate with democratic dynamics, while the women's block correlates more strongly with governance.

TABLE 2. Recommendations for addressing gender differences in institutional policy

Area	Key observation (based on analysis)	Recommendation
Democracy (D)	The dynamics of democratic indices are primarily shaped by male indicators (link 0.910). Female indicators show marginal influence.	Strengthen women's participation in decision-making through legally mandated quotas, gender audits of electoral procedures, and expanded access to judicial protection.
Governance (G)	The link between the female block and governance is stronger (1.096) than that of the male block (−0.162). Women's inclusion correlates with greater transparency and accountability.	Develop programs to promote women into leadership positions in state structures, implement transparency monitoring in personnel policy, and stimulate female leadership in public administration.
Employment and Income (W, M)	Male employment and income remain more stable, while female indicators are fragmented; the gender wage gap persists.	Introduce mandatory gender analysis in labor policy design, enforce equal pay for equal work, and subsidize retraining programs targeted at women.
Civil Law	Institutional reforms in democracy and law show weak connections with female indicators, reflecting women's exclusion from lawmaking processes.	Institutionalize the participation of women's NGOs in advisory councils under ministries, and ensure gender mainstreaming in legal expertise and law-drafting processes.

Note: compiled by the author

Today, the central challenge is that women's participation in governance remains largely formal and unstable rather than substantive and sustained. To address this, governments should: implement long-term programs beginning with girls' education and extending to talent-pipeline; promote women's leadership through targeted initiatives to appoint women to managerial and oversight roles; institutionalize gender diversity across decision-making and supervisory structures so that women's participation is not nominal but embedded, with measurable impact on governance quality.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of institutional factors on women's

participation in civil law and public administration, and to identify areas for modernizing civil legislation to reduce gender inequality.

Three hypotheses were confirmed (H1, H2, and H3). A stable relationship was revealed between democracy indices and women's employment and wage indicators. Improved law enforcement practices and judicial restrictions were found to be correlated with increased representation of women in managerial positions. It was confirmed that expanding civil liberties has a positive impact on women's institutionalized participation in government.

Hypothesis 4 was not confirmed. The results showed that indices of governance effectiveness and corruption control are

directly related to reduced differences between men and women in civil law.

Recommendations based on the findings include: strengthening the institutional framework of civil legislation, taking into account principles of equality; strengthening rule of law mechanisms to reduce hidden barriers to women's participation; developing systems for monitoring the quality of public administration, taking into account gender

indicators; implementing anti-corruption practices as an element of ensuring equal rights and opportunities; developing transparent procedures for appointment and promotion within management structures.

Future research should expand the set of indicators to include indices of gender equality, political participation, and educational factors.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Writing – Original Draft: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Conceptualization: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Formal Analysis and Investigation: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Funding Acquisition and Research Administration: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Development of Research Methodology: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Resources: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Software and Supervision: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Visualization: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

Writing – Review and Editing: Gaukhar Kenzhegulova.

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