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The Politics of Marginalization: Assessing the Influence of Inter-Party Marginalization on Women's Political Empowerment in Balochistan, Pakistan

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Abstract: This research paper delves into the dynamics of marginalization in politics by examining the impact of inter-party marginalization on the political empowerment of women in Balochistan, Pakistan. Given that women make up half of the population, their involvement in various spheres, particularly political development, holds significant importance. The study specifically focuses on women who are active in the political arena, representing eight political parties in Balochistan: ANP, BNP–Mengal, NP, HDP, PkMAP, PML–N, PPPP, and PTI. A sample of 400 respondents was carefully selected from these parties to gather insights into the political participation and empowerment of women in the region. The findings demonstrate a relationship between women's political affiliation with political parties in Balochistan and their marginalization within the realm of party politics. Furthermore, the study highlights the necessity for political parties to provide equal opportunities for women to participate in party politics and emphasizes the importance of fair and unrestricted political engagement. This research sheds light on the level of women's involvement in politics in Balochistan and underscores the potential for further advancements in empowering women through equal representation.

Introduction

This quantitative study analyzes the politics of marginalization: Assessing the influence of inter-party marginalization on women's political empowerment in Balochistan, Pakistan. It is a pertinent issue in the contemporary political landscape, as women's parliamentary representation remains low. In addition, gender-based marginalization in parties remains persistent. This study argues that women are marginalized in political parties in Baluchistan and are only given partial representation through women's quotas (Barrech & Din, 2022). They are discouraged from contesting elections. Furthermore, the study also assesses the impact of inter-party marginalization on women's

political empowerment and looks at strategies to improve female representation in politics (Alam, 2020).

Women in Balochistan, a province located in the southwestern region of Pakistan, have historically been marginalized and underrepresented in politics due to cultural and religious norms. However, in recent years, local organizations and activists have made efforts to increase women's participation in politics, with some progress made. Despite these efforts, women remain largely underrepresented in politics in the region, with only one woman elected to the Senate and very few female

members of the provincial assembly (Bashir, 2019). There are various reasons for the lack of political representation for women in Balochistan, including limited access to education and resources, fewer economic opportunities, and traditional attitudes that view women as subordinate. To address this issue, a concerted effort must be made to increase women's participation in the political process in Balochistan. One approach could be to introduce quotas to ensure women have equal representation in political positions as men. Additionally, investing in women's education, creating more job opportunities, and providing access to resources and support networks can empower women to participate more easily in politics (Afza & Amir Rashid, 2009).

Furthermore, the social and economic development of Balochistan is crucial in creating an environment where women are seen as equals and can participate in politics more freely. It is important to advocate for gender-sensitive policies and laws and encourage and support more women to participate in the political process. Eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination and providing access to quality healthcare and other essential services are also necessary steps toward creating lasting change (Azim, 2021). In addition, despite the challenging situation for women in Balochistan, there is still hope for progress. By making concerted efforts and initiatives, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equitable political system in Balochistan that ensures women are included and represented in decision-making. Raising awareness of gender inequality and encouraging dialogue around the issue are also essential in creating lasting change (Krook, 2017).

Women in Pakistan continue to face significant marginalization in politics and political parties at all levels. Even though women constitute more than half of the country's population, their representation in formal politics remains limited. At the local level, women are often excluded from the political

decision-making process, with only a few female representatives in the local government (Imran & Munir, 2018). Female candidates are often overlooked for election to local government bodies, and when they are selected, they face additional challenges, such as limited access to resources and a lack of political influence. Moreover, there is a lack of capacity-building initiatives for women, so they are unable to become effective leaders. At the provincial level, women are only able to access a few positions, such as those in the provincial assemblies (Dutoya, 2013). The provincial assemblies are often dominated by male candidates, and female politicians are rarely able to make their voices heard (Bari, 2010). Moreover, few women are represented in important decision-making positions, such as cabinet ministers. At the national level, the situation is even direr. Women are largely absent from the decision-making process in the Pakistani Parliament (Bhattacharya, 2014). The percentage of women in parliament dropped from 21% in 2013 to 19% in 2018. Furthermore, women occupy very few ministerial positions in the government, and there is a lack of gender-sensitive policies and legislation that would ensure gender equality and women's empowerment (Khan et al., 2021).

The marginalization of women in politics and political parties in developing countries is an issue that is often overlooked but one that needs to be addressed (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015). Despite the progress that has been made in recent years, women in the developing world are still severely underrepresented in political and party roles. This lack of representation is reflected in the governance of these countries, with women being excluded from decision-making processes and their views and opinions not taken into consideration (Barnes & Beaulieu, 2019). The reasons for this gender disparity are varied and complex. Societal norms and cultural beliefs can be a significant factor, with women not seen as suitable for leadership roles (Ledwith, 2012). Furthermore, the lack of education and limited access to resources can be a barrier, with women

having limited access to the same opportunities as men in these regions (Gouws, 2008).

Women have long been marginalized in the realm of global politics. Political parties often fail to recognize the importance of female representation and leadership, and as a result, women are often excluded from managerial positions (Paxton et al., 2020). This is a major problem in our society, as women are just as capable of leading a political party as any man. Several factors contribute to women's marginalization in global politics (Fukuda-Parr, 2016). A lack of resources and opportunities is one of the most prominent factors. Women are often limited in terms of access to education, resources, and career advancement. This means that even if they are qualified, they are often unable to rise to prominent positions (Morley, 2014). Additionally, culturally-held gender stereotypes can be a significant barrier to female participation in politics and political parties. Women are often seen as subordinate to men and are not taken as seriously as their male counterparts. This can lead to women not being taken seriously in political debates and discussions and not being given the same opportunities as men (O'Brien & Rickne, 2016).

Research Methodology

This study investigates the correlation between women's political party affiliation and their marginalization within the political parties of Balochistan. The research was conducted in Balochistan, with a specific focus on women

political workers from eight political parties: Awami National Party (ANP), Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal), National Party (NP), Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party Parliamentary (PPPP), and Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf (PTI). The sample consisted of 400 respondents, selected through a combination of proportionate random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule that encompassed various aspects of women's political affiliation and its implications for their marginalization in Balochistan politics. The interview questions explored their positions within the party hierarchy, opportunities to contest elections, the presence of meritocracy within the party, and perceived impacts on their empowerment. The collected data were analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as their levels of political affiliation and marginalization. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square analysis, were used to examine the relationship between women's political party affiliation and their marginalization both within and outside the party politics. The findings were tabulated and interpreted using SPSS. The study adhered to ethical considerations throughout its execution, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of their responses.

Results and Discussions

Table 1

Frequency distribution of the respondents regarding their party affiliation and position in the party portfolio

Political party affiliation and position in the party portfolio of the respondents									
ANP		BNP	HDP	NP	PkMAP	PML(N)	PPPP	PTI	Total
President	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5
General Secretary	1	0	0	0	5	2	0	2	10
Vice President	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2

None	52	60	18	68	76	50	41	18	383
Total	54	60	18	68	81	55	43	21	400

The table displays the frequency distribution of respondents based on their party affiliation and position in the party portfolio. It presents information on the number of individuals belonging to different political parties and holding specific positions within those parties. Looking at the party affiliation column, it is shown that several political parties are listed, including ANP, BNP, HDP, NP, PkMAP, PML (N), PPPP, and PTI. The row below represents the positions within the party portfolio, such as President, General Secretary, Vice President, and None. The table explains that under the ANP column, there is one respondent who holds the position of President. The BNP, HDP, NP, and PTI columns all have zeros in every position, indicating that no respondents from these parties hold any specific positions mentioned. The PkMAP column shows that five respondents are General Secretaries and two are Vice Presidents.

The PML (N) column displays one respondent as President, two as General Secretaries, and two as Vice Presidents. The PPPP column has two respondents as Presidents and one respondent as Vice presidents. The "None" row provides a count of respondents who do not hold any particular position. It shows that there are 52 respondents from ANP, 60 from BNP, 18 from HDP, 68 from NP, 76 from PkMAP, 50 from PML (N), 41 from PPPP, and 18 from PTI who do not hold any specific position. The Total row summarizes the overall counts. It indicates that there are a total of 54 respondents from ANP, 60 from BNP, 18 from HDP, 68 from NP, 81 from PkMAP, 55 from PML (N), 43 from PPPP, and 21 from PTI across all positions. In a nutshell, this table provides an overview of the distribution of respondents based on their party affiliation and the positions they hold within their respective political parties.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of the respondents regarding party affiliation and type of election contested

Political party affiliation and their selection of women quota of the respondents									
ANP	BNP	HDP	NP	PkMAP	PML(N)	PPPP	PTI	Total	
Local	18	22	3	20	26	16	12	2	119
Provincial	2	3	0	4	3	2	1	2	17
National	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
None	34	34	15	43	51	37	30	17	261
Total	54	60	18	68	81	55	43	21	400

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of respondents based on their party affiliation and the type of election they contested, specifically focusing on the women's quota. It provides information about the number of individuals from different political parties who participated in various types of elections. The table shows in its first row lists the political parties, namely ANP, BNP, HDP, NP, PkMAP, PML (N), PPPP, and PTI. The second row represents the type of election contested, categorized as Local,

Provincial, and National. The subsequent rows present the frequency counts for each combination of party affiliation and the type of election. The last row, labeled "Total," shows the overall sum of respondents for each party and the election type column.

The table further explains that under the ANP column, 18 respondents contested in Local elections, 2 respondents in Provincial elections, and none in National elections. In the BNP column, 22 respondents participated in Local

elections, 3 in Provincial elections, and 1 in National elections. The HDP column shows 3 respondents in Local elections and no respondents in Provincial or National elections. The NP column indicates 20 respondents in Local elections, 4 in Provincial elections, and 1 in National elections. In the PkMAP column, 26 respondents contested in Local elections, 3 in Provincial elections, and 1 in National elections. The PML (N) column displays 16 respondents in Local elections, 2 in Provincial elections, and none in National elections. The PPPP column shows 12 respondents in Local elections, 1 in Provincial elections, and none in National elections. Lastly, the PTI column presents 2 respondents in Local elections, 2 in Provincial elections, and none in National elections. The "None" row represents the count of respondents

who did not contest any specific election. It shows that 34 respondents from ANP, 34 from BNP, 15 from HDP, 43 from NP, 51 from PkMAP, 37 from PML (N), 30 from PPPP, and 17 from PTI did not participate in any election. In summary, this table highlights the distribution of respondents based on their party affiliation and the type of election they contested, specifically focusing on the women's quota. It provides insights into the number of individuals from different political parties who participated in Local, Provincial, and National elections, as well as those who did not contest any election.

There is an association between party affiliation and distribution of the party tickets for contesting election without discrimination

Table 3

Association between party affiliation and ticket distribution without discrimination

Political party affiliation	Tickets distribution without discrimination		
	Yes	NO	Total
ANP	23	31	54
BNP	14	46	60
HDP	1	17	18
NP	11	57	68
PMAP	8	73	81
PML(N)	13	42	55
PPPP	8	35	43
PTI	0	21	21
Total	78	322	400

Pearson Chi-Square Value= 32.102

df= 7

Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000

Table 3 describes the association between the party affiliation of the respondents and the distribution of the party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination. The chi-square (32.102) and highly significant value P-Value of .000 favoured the acceptance of the hypothesis that there is an association between party affiliation and distribution of the party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination. The activists affiliated with political parties have more experience of discrimination in receiving

party tickets for contesting elections at local, provincial, and national levels than the independent candidates. It can be concluded that the more women are affiliated with male dominant political parties results, in more chances of discrimination in the distribution of tickets for contesting elections at the political party level.

There is an association between the political party affiliation of the respondents and their position in the party portfolio

Table 4

Association between political party affiliation and position in party portfolio

Political party affiliation	Position in party portfolio				
	President	General Secretary	Vice President	None	Total
ANP	1	1	0	52	54
BNP	0	0	0	60	60
HDP	0	0	0	18	18
NP	0	0	0	68	68
PMAP	0	5	0	76	81
PML(N)	1	2	2	50	55
PPPP	2	0	0	41	43
PTI	1	2	0	18	21
Total	5	10	2	383	400
Pearson Chi-Square Value= 36.012 df= 21 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .022					

Table 4 pronounces the association between the political party affiliation of the respondents and their position in the party portfolio. The chi-square (36.012) and significant value P-Value of .022 favoured the acceptance of the hypothesis that there is an association between party affiliation and their position in the party portfolio. The activists affiliated with political parties have more experience with less number of women representatives in the political party portfolio positions. It can be concluded that the

more women are affiliated with male dominant political parties results in, the fewer women are represented in the political party portfolio positions as president, general secretary, vice president, and other positions.

There is an association between the number of elections contested from the platform of the political party and the distribution of the party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination

Table 5

Association between numbers of election contested and ticket distribution without discrimination

Number of elections contested	Tickets distribution without discrimination		
	Yes	NO	Total
Never	35	281	316
One	18	23	41
Two	19	13	32
Three	5	5	10
More than three	1	0	1
Total	78	322	400
Pearson Chi-Square Value= 72.306 df= 4 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000			

Table 5 reveals the association between the number of elections contested from the platform of the political party and the distribution of the party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination. The chi-square (72.306) and highly significant P-Value of .000 favoured the

acceptance of the hypothesis that there is an association between the number of elections contested from the platform of the political party and the distribution of the party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination. The activists affiliated with political parties have

more experience of inequality in receiving party tickets for contesting elections at local, provincial, and national levels than the independent candidates. It can be concluded that the more women are affiliated with male dominant political parties results, in more chances of inequality in receiving the chances of contesting elections because women are more often selected based on women's quota and are not given a chance to contest general elections.

Discussions

Political parties in Balochistan are largely male-dominated, with female voices rarely heard or represented. This is even though the province has the second-highest female population in Pakistan, according to the 2017 census. Women in Balochistan are traditionally viewed as second-class citizens, with many cultural and social limitations being placed on their rights and freedoms. As a result, it is not surprising that the political parties in the province are skewed towards men. Many traditional tribal leaders have expressed deep-seated skepticism towards women participating in politics, citing cultural and religious beliefs. As a result, there is often a lack of female candidates and elected officials in Balochistan. This has had a major impact on the decisions made by the provincial government, as women are not adequately represented in the political discourse. The current situation in Balochistan is a stark contrast to the rest of Pakistan, where women-led political parties are gaining ground and advocating for greater inclusion. The same level of progress must be made in Balochistan so that the voices of the female population can be heard and taken into account in the political process. This can be achieved through greater education and awareness of the importance of gender equality, as well as through increased support for women-led initiatives and campaigns. Only then will the voices of women in Balochistan be truly heard.

Political party affiliation and discrimination in the distribution of party tickets for contesting

elections at local, provincial, and national levels is a widespread issue. Women, in particular, are often discriminated against and discouraged from participating in general elections. This is particularly true in Balochistan, where women are only selected under a women's quota. Discrimination in the allocation of party tickets for contesting elections has been observed across the political spectrum. In Balochistan, where women are underrepresented in the political landscape, this discrimination is even more pronounced. Women are often excluded from the selection process and are only chosen under special quotas. This form of discrimination is not only unfair and unjustified but also a violation of basic human rights. Discrimination in the distribution of party tickets for contesting elections is a major obstacle to women's participation in politics and can lead to a feeling of exclusion and alienation from the political process. This, in turn, can lead to a lack of trust in the political system and a reluctance to participate in the democratic process. To ensure that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process, political parties must take steps to ensure that there is no discrimination in the selection of candidates. Furthermore, political parties must ensure that all citizens, regardless of gender, have an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process. This can be done by encouraging more women to join political parties and ensuring that they are given equal opportunities to contest elections. It is also important to ensure that parties provide adequate resources and support to women candidates to enable them to participate in the elections. This will not only help to create a more inclusive and representative political system but will also lead to more effective and efficient governance.

In recent years, the issue of women's absence in political party leadership positions has become increasingly apparent. Women are underrepresented in the highest positions of party leadership, such as the President and General Secretary, despite their increasing

numbers in elected office and party membership. This lack of representation is particularly concerning, as women are an integral part of the political process and can bring a unique set of skills to the table. Women bring a diversity of thought and experience to the party, which can be beneficial in developing policy and programs. Furthermore, their presence in positions of power can have a positive impact on the public perception of the party and its legitimacy. However, despite the potential benefits of female leadership, political parties have yet to fully embrace it. This is due in part to a lack of awareness and understanding of the issues within the party. Too often, party leaders are unaware of the gender disparities in their internal structure or are unwilling to take the necessary steps to change it. To address this issue, political parties must first acknowledge the problem and commit to taking action to address it. This may include making changes to their internal structure to promote the selection of female leaders, such as creating quotas to ensure at least a certain percentage of female representation in leadership positions. Additionally, parties must make a real effort to create an inclusive culture in which women are supported and encouraged to pursue leadership roles. Ultimately, the political party leaders must take responsibility for addressing the issue of gender disparities in their internal structure and create an environment in which women can thrive. Doing so will not only promote greater equality within the party but also create more effective and successful policies and programs.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this quantitative study sheds light on the politics of marginalization and its impact on women's political empowerment in Balochistan, Pakistan. It highlights the persistent issue of women's underrepresentation in political parties and their marginalized status within party politics. The findings indicate that women in Balochistan are often given only partial representation through women's quotas and are

discouraged from contesting elections. The study emphasizes the need for strategies to improve female representation in politics and address gender-based marginalization in parties. The analysis of data reveals significant associations between party affiliation and the distribution of party tickets for contesting elections without discrimination. Activists affiliated with political parties experience more discrimination in receiving party tickets compared to independent candidates. Similarly, there is a link between party affiliation and women's positions in party portfolios, with fewer women representatives holding key positions in male-dominated political parties.

The study highlights the male-dominated nature of political parties in Balochistan and the resulting lack of female voices and representation. This situation is in contrast to the increasing presence of women-led political parties in the rest of Pakistan. To address this disparity, efforts should be made to promote gender equality, increase awareness, and provide support for women-led initiatives. Only by actively including and empowering women in the political process can their voices be truly heard and their perspectives considered in decision-making. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of eliminating discrimination in the distribution of party tickets for contesting elections at all levels. Discrimination undermines women's participation in politics and hampers the democratic process. Political parties must take steps to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of gender, and provide resources and support to women candidates. This will lead to a more inclusive and representative political system, ultimately resulting in more effective and efficient governance.

Furthermore, the underrepresentation of women in party leadership positions is a concerning issue that requires attention. Despite the increasing number of women in elected office and party membership, they are still underrepresented in top leadership positions.

Political parties need to recognize and address this disparity by implementing measures such as quotas and creating an inclusive culture that supports women in pursuing leadership roles. Promoting gender equality within party structures will not only enhance internal dynamics but also contribute to more successful policy development and program implementation. In addition, this study highlights the urgent need for reforms to address the marginalization of women in political parties in Balochistan. By ensuring equal representation, providing support, and promoting gender equality, political parties can create a more inclusive and empowering political landscape that benefits both women and the overall democratic process.

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