

Institutional Structures Shaping Female Representation in Politics in Pakistan

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Abstract : This paper is a study of how institutional structures shape the policy-making activities of female legislators. The literature on this area indicates that if there is an institution created by men to secure elite interests, women will face constraints in legislative activities. This paper will analyze the institutional setting in Pakistan and document the conditions women face that both restrict or enable them from representing the general interests of other women. The main experimental design depends on the variation of international scrutiny that Pakistan faces in two different time periods that will be classified as high international scrutiny and low international scrutiny. A high international scrutiny period is one where Pakistan comes under the international lens because of a domestic event that has international ramifications, for example, in terms of gender equality. The argument is that women parliamentarians receive different treatment in periods of high international scrutiny. As Pakistan comes under scrutiny, women will be more active in their legislative activities than in low international scrutiny, as male parliamentarians will be less likely to influence or restrain women's activities. Using this variation, the trends in memberships and support functions given to women in these two time periods will be studied. The second variation will comprise the analysis of male and female assignments, training, and funding on general seats across time, which will require data collection over this time of 12-15 years, including the years during the war when Pakistan was under high international scrutiny.

Keywords : female representation, gender equality, democratic institutions, quota seats

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