DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN IN POLITICS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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A Dissertation
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This is certified that the contents and formats of the thesis titled **"Discursive Analysis of Women in Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan"** Submitted by **Mr. Muhammad Bilal Registration No. 45-FSS/PHDSOC/F18** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology have been evaluated and approved by the examiners and viva-voce Committee after successful Public Defiance on **02-02-2023.**
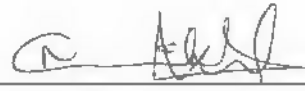
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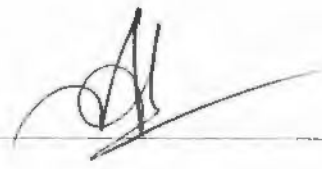Dr. Nasim Khan Mahsud
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STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I, Muhammad Bilal Reg. No: 45-FSS/PHDSOC/F18, student of PhD Sociology, Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad hereby declare that the thesis entitled, "Discursive Analysis of Women in Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan" submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirement of PhD degree is my original work, and has not been submitted for any other degree in a national or international institution. Moreover, all the sources I have indicated are acknowledged through complete reference.

Date _____

Signature _____
Muhammad Bilal

DEDICATED TO

My family, parents, brothers and sister

Whose support, sacrifices, and prayers resulted in the shape of my PhD.

List of Abbreviations

ANP	Awami National Party
BA	Bachelor of Arts
B.ed	Bachelor of Education
HSSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
MMAP	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LLB	Legal Law Bachelors
MA	Master of Arts
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicines and Bachelor of Surgery
MNA	Member of the National Assembly
MPA	Member of the Provincial Assembly
MSC	Master of Science
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PPPP	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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Abstract

This research explores the intersection of social class and women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The research further explores the intersectionality of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation. Feminist epistemology guides the methodology of this study. The study draws upon intersectional feminism/intersectionality, feminist political perspectives, and Marxist feminism. From intersectional feminism, Crenshaw's 'structural and political intersectionality' and Collins' concepts of 'intersectionality and matrices of domination' were used for informed analysis of primary data. Kantola and Lombardo's (feminist political theorists) concepts of 'women and political analysis' and 'gender and analysis' were taken into account for data analysis. From Marxist feminism, Bebels' 'human emancipation and women's social independence' and hooks' 'feminist educational movements' were used to analyze the data.

Through purposive sampling, twenty-nine in-depth interviews were conducted. The qualitative thematic analysis helped in the data analysis. The study found an intersection of social class with women's political participation. Elite women held positions in the party hierarchy and governments, including quota seats, because they were political donors and utilized other resources such as cars, money, and big *Hujra* (drawing room) for party activities. However, this was a dream for women of humble backgrounds. The research finding further revealed the role of education and political experience in women's political participation. Educated and politically experienced women were good in informal and formal political activities, such as arranging corner meetings, participating in party meetings, mobilizing women for political activities, and discussing legislative bills related to women's empowerment. Women's mobility in the party

hierarchy, reserved seats, political candidacy, and voting campaigns also aligned with women's education and political experience. The study also found an intersection of *Pakhtun* culture, social networking, family support, and religion with women's political participation, such as with women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and women's voting campaigns. However, ethnicity was not intersecting with women's informal and formal political participation in KP. The study recommends extended research on social networks and their potential for women's political mobility.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

This dissertation examines women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The country, in general, and the province in particular, are men-dominated, where women are deprived of many legal rights, including political participation. Women's political participation intersects with society's deep-rooted socioeconomic, educational, religious, and cultural structures. These socioeconomic and cultural structures, along with the schooling system, are men dominated, which has kept women in a subordinated position (Ullah & Ali, 2012). Due to complex intersectionalities like social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity, women face challenges to their political participation in informal and formal ways. For instance, these intersectionalities influence women's party politics, political candidacy, self-confidence, political resilience, women's mobility in the party hierarchy, nomination on reserved seats, women's selection on party portfolios, and their legislative business (see chapters 4, 5, and 6 for detailed discussion). Similarly, women in Pakistan have been given a very nominal representation in formal politics like 17. 5 percent of seats in the national parliament (national assembly and senate) and 17 percent in all four provincial assemblies of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan (Khattak & Hussain, 2013).

However, women's actual political representation in the current government of 2018-23 in Pakistan's parliament and provincial assemblies is very dismaying as 4.3 percent of women of total general seats were elected to the national assembly, though only ten women were elected to the Senate of Pakistan in the senate election 2021 (Pakvoters, 2021). In the provincial assembly

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of Punjab, 5.5 percent of women of the total general seats were elected, 2 percent of women of the total general seats were elected to the Sind provincial assembly, and no single woman was elected to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan assemblies. It is pertinent to mention that this discrimination in women's political representation exists even though women constitute almost half of the country's population.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Women's political participation is one of the core areas of research in the sociology of gender and political sociology. The complex intersectionalities like race, ethnicity, religion, social class, education, culture, and gender in women's political participation have been extensively researched in academic scholarship across several countries (Conway, 2001; Collins, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nash, 2008). However, the nature of these intersectionalities in women's political participation differs across developed, developing, and most Muslim countries. For instance, in Western industrialized countries like Canada, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Japan, Austria, and Spain, the intersection of race and ethnicity with gender is common in women's political participation (Clift & Brazaitis, 2003). Nevertheless, in developing countries such as Thailand, India, Turkey, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, the intersection of social class, education, and gender is common in women's political participation. In the majority of Muslim countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Jordon, Morroco, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, and Bangladesh, the intersection of religion and culture with gender is found in women's political participation (Adib & Guerrier, 2003). Although intersectionality in women's political participation is paramount in Pakistan, researchers do not seriously focus on it. This issue needed proper academic attention; therefore, the study attempted to explore the

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intersectionalities in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The main focus of this study was an analysis of the intersection of social class, education, and gender in women's political participation in the province. This study also highlighted the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.3   Women's Political Participation

Generally, women's political participation is understood as woman's involvement in political activities. However, it can be divided into formal and informal participation (Lwanaga, 2008). Women's formal political participation is understood as women's engagements in the government and legislative business (Hasunuma, 2019). While informal political participation is considered women's involvement in party politics and other civic engagements (Ekman & Amna, 2012). Moreover, there are also different dimensions of women's political participation. For instance, women's party politics is an essential aspect of their political participation, which includes party meetings, party protests, and corner meetings arranged by the party (Rover, 2019). Women's political candidacy is also one of the primary forms of political participation, which aims at women's nomination for different portfolios in the parties and government (Hinojosa, 2012). It is further noted that political resilience is essential to women's political participation (Smyth & Sweetman, 2015).

Women's political participation has also been conceptualized in other ways. For instance, woman's reserved seats mean women's quota in politics, and women's voting campaign aims at how women approach their voters (Bauer, 2008). Women's participation in legislative bodies is considered one of the most important aspects of formal political participation (Yoon, 2004).

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Likewise, women's political participation has some conventional and unconventional aspects (Ekman & Amna, 2012). Women's traditional political participation means voting campaigns, arranging corner meetings, attending party meetings, and election campaigning. However, unconventional women's political participation is political strikes, demonstrations, attacking police officials, and burning of public and private properties (Stromsne, 2009).

In this study, my definition of women's political participation is informal and formal ways of women's politics. For instance, women's party politics, womans' upward political mobility in the party, political candidacy, self-confidence, political resilience, women's reserved seats, party portfolios, voting campaigns, women's legislative business, and their participation in local, provincial, and national governments.

How different intersectionalities influence women's political participation in the province of KP is the primary concern of this study. Keeping in view the findings of the study (see chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 for detailed discussion) and the growing importance of the intersectional theory in the sociology of politics and sociology of gender issues, this study considered social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity as the key concepts that intersect women's political participation in the province. The following lines discuss how these concepts are used in this study as the core intersectional factors behind women's political participation.

1.4 Social Class

As a debatable concept, social class has always been a center of discussion in the academic debates of social sciences and sociology. Conflict theorists, for instance, Karl Marx, 2019; Max

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Weber, 1978; Pierre Bourdieu, 2005; and Patricia Hill Collins, 2019, also focus on the issue of social class. How social class is debated among these theorists is discussed below.

Karl Marx understands class in terms of three intertwined aspects of production: the means or actual production process, production-based social relationships, and the product, which is the result of the production process (Allan, 2013). These interconnected aspects of production form the system of classes in a capitalist society, and the struggle among these classes is identified as human history (Holt, 2014). Marx's division of classes includes feudal nobility, bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie, the proletariat, sub-proletariat, and peasantry (Denison, 2008). However, two, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, are the major classes in society that control the rest of the classes (Marx, 2019). In Marxian thoughts, these two are defined in a conflicting relationship regarding the means of production as the bourgeoisie thinks of the exploitation of the proletariat working in their factories (Allan, 2007). However, the proletariat struggles to sell their labor power because they are compelled to survive (Crossley, 2004).

Max Weber's (1978) conception of the class differs from that of Karl Marx (Katz, 1993). He understands social class as a situation where people control, buy, and sell goods and services through their abilities. Weber understands that when someone is trying to find inner satisfaction, wants to gain a social position, and obtains goods making the probability of a class situation, yet makes Weberian division of class a complicated one (Gane, 2005). As cited by Gane, Weber talks about two classes. Still, these are constituted around a different issue than the process of production and production-based relationships between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Weber recognizes class as a situation divided into positively privileged, negatively privileged, and middle-class positions (Saunders, 2006). Positively privileged are those who own the property,

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and negatively are those who do not. However, middle-class people are servicemen who do not have property but are good enough economically (Girth & Mills, 1946).

Pierre Bourdieu (2005) takes class into the discussion of capital and capitalism. He argued that class comprises four types of capital such as economic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Like Marx, he considers economic capital as fundamental and more robust than any other capital as it influences the other capitals of a person's life (Savage, Warde, & Devine, 2005). In Bourdieu's (2018) scheme, social capital is recognized as social networking in which individuals know each other. He has connected the distribution of social capital to class. Symbolic capital is related to applying symbols and how they create physical and social realities (Moore, 2014). The fourth type of capital is cultural capital, the language style, informal social skills, and habits connected to one's economic condition (Matějů, 2002). Bourdieu further classified cultural capital into objectified, institutionalized, and embodied cultural capital (Allan, 2013). This capital is invested in class production (Allan, 2007).

Patricia Hill Collins (2019) understands social location/class from an intersectional point of view. She presents social class/location in a complicated way while viewing it in terms of crisscrossing systems of inequalities (Collins, 2000). Collins (2002) claims that social class is constituted by the complex intersectionalities such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nation that influence peoples' experiences. Collins (2020) states these intersectionalities work within the matrices of domination, which is the overall organization of power in a society. This power organization is maintained in society by four domains such as structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal (Dhamoon, 2011).

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Hence, this study uses class as a core term to explore the intersection of social class and women's political participation. As the intersection of social class and women's political participation is one of this study's main objectives, I understand there are three types of social classes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that intersect with gender and influence women's political participation. These are upper/elite class women (in Marxian language bourgeoisie), working middle-class women, and lower-class women. Upper/elite-class women have sufficient economic resources in terms of land, property, industry, and business. The working middle-class women do not have enough economic resources like the upper class, but they are highly educated and professional. The third class is those women who belong to the lower class as they neither have sufficient resources nor are highly educated or professional, and they are motivated to make sacrifices for their political careers.

This research presents (see 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 in chapter 4 for detailed discussion) that women from the upper/elite class in KP enjoy high political positions in party politics and government. Elite-class women hold positions in party portfolios, such as the party's president, vice president, and provincial coordinator. In the government, women from the elite class come through quota seats and enjoy the positions of ministers, ministers of state, and advisors. However, elite women always use working middle-class and lower-class women in KP to meet their political interests. It is pertinent to mention that working-middle-class women are highly educated and professional and know how to make their political career. Still, they do not have the resources such as property, money, and car to donate to party funds or invest in political activities like arranging corner or party meetings (see 4.3, 4.4, and 4.8 in chapter 4). Lower-class women face an almost similar situation. This research reveals that these lower-class women are motivated and struggle hard to make their political careers. Still, they often didn't succeed as they

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did not have property and money invested in party politics. It is also important to mention that elite women in the province do not give space to the working-middle and lower-class women because their political survival is at risk. Elite women know that if women from the working-middle and lower class are given the opportunity, they will also hold the party politics and government because they have the political capabilities.

1.5 Education

Generically speaking, education is meant for mental training and the physical ability of people to prepare them for survival in society (Trow, 2007). However, philosophically and more specifically, in the sociology of education, it appears very differently. In Bourdieu's (2005) capital scheme, education is known as institutionalized cultural capital, where peoples' knowledge, abilities, and skills are recognized through formal certification. He also talked about informal social skills and training of people, which he places under the broader umbrella of cultural capital (Allan, 2007). Immanuel Kant viewed education differently and divided it into physical and moral types of education (Hunter, 2013). Through training, physical education cultivates knowledge, emotions, and intellect in an individual's personality (Mangal, 2002). At the same time, moral education builds people's character and enables them to reason about what is morally good and evil (Aggarwal, 2010). To Kant, education ultimately aims to make human nature perfect (Kant, 1899).

For Robert K. Merton (1996), education carries a different meaning than Bourdieu and Kant, as he states education cannot always be taken as a means of constructing and developing human society. Education's intended consequence is teaching people life skills and developing human society. However, the unintended consequence of education creates conflict between the two

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generations (Hargreaves, 2012). The link between the modern education of offspring and the traditional mindset of the ancestors creates a conflicting situation between the two generations, which is one of the significant unintended consequences of education (Loy & Booth, 2004).

My approach to education in this study differs from the above discussion. The intersection of education with women's political participation is one of the main objectives of this study. Education in its formal and informal ways is a core concept in this study (see chapter 5). Formal education is considered a certificated education, and informal education is meant for women's political experience. Moreover, I have also attempted to unearth the role of political experiences in women's political participation. The study revealed (see 5.10 in chapter 5 for detailed discussion) that women's formal and informal (experience in politics) education influenced their political participation. Education and experience intersect with women's informal and formal political participation. Women's education and experience influenced their informal political participation, such as corner and party meetings, mobilization for political activities, and voting campaigns. This study further revealed (see 5.10 in chapter 5 for more details) that educated and experienced women were good in formal/legislative politics, such as discussing legislation related to women empowerment in the assembly.

1.6   Culture

Culture is one of the complex and contested realities that shapes and reshapes human experiences in many ways, and women's political participation is no exception in this regard (Narayan, 3013). It is believed that the culture of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is rigid and closed regarding women's political participation (Jamal, 2014). The concept of *purdah* (veil), shame and stigma, patriarchal norms, stereotyping, and misogynous attitudes are the major cultural factors that

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influence women's political participation in the province (Ullah, 2018; Saeed, Ullah, & Alam, 2019). *Pakhtunwali*, the local tradition of *Pakhtuns*, patriarchy, and feudalism are among the socio-cultural forces that do not allow women to engage in political participation (Bhattacharya, 2014). Women's restricted roles in their families in a traditional *Pakhtun* society influenced their participation in the public sphere, including their political participation (Ullah, 2018). Women are still expected to perform domestic roles such as homemakers, cleaning the house, caring for the children, and cooking meals (Hussain, Naz, Khan, Daraz, & Khan, 2015). Women's domestic roles in *Pakhtun* society are among the significant challenges to their political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ali, Bibi, & Sardar, 2021).

This study explores the intersection of Pakhtun culture with women's political participation (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion). I understand that *Pakhtun* culture and traditions influence women's formal and informal political participation (see 6.2 for further details). Patriarchal norms, misogynous attitudes, *purdah* (veil), shame and stigma, and stereotyping restrict women from participating in politics, which ultimately influences their self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaign (see chapter 6). Moreover, the stated socio-cultural barriers affect women's formal political participation, such as their participation in the local, provincial, and national governments.

1.7   Social Networking

Perrie Bourdieu (2005) sees social networking as one of the effective forms of social capital. He refers to social capital as the social network in which people interact. Ihlen (2005) believes that social networking gives a location to an individual in which s/he sits. According to Allan (2007), what one knows does not matter, but who one knows matters greatly. Social networking is

essential for women's empowerment, including political participation (Heger & Hoffmann, 2021). Unfortunately, social networking among women in the province of KP is weak, affecting their political participation in both formal and informal ways (Bilal & Ahmad, 2021). They further argued that social networking, reciprocity, and trust in women's social circles are weak, influencing their political participation in the province. One of the main reasons behind weak feminine social networking is *Pakhtun wali* which does not allow women to be socially exposed and create social networking (Bilal, Ahmad, & Zed, 2017). Women's restricted role minimizes the chances of increasing social networking, influencing their exposure to the public domain, including political participation (Khayyam & Tahir 2019). The traditional mindset of the people in the province does not allow women to be socially and culturally exposed, which decreases women's social networking (Qaisrani, Liaquat, & Khokhar, 2016). The decrease in women's social networking is directly linked to their survival in the public sphere and affects women's political participation (Saeed, Ullah, & Alam, 2019).

This study (see chapter 6) used social networking as an essential intersectional factor influencing women's political participation in many formal and informal ways. For instance, weak social networking affects women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaigns (see 6.3). Besides, weak social networking influences women's political participation in other informal ways, such as corner meetings, party meetings, and political demonstrations.

1.8 Family Support

Family support is one of the essential factors in women's political participation (Conway, 2001). With family support, women's active engagement is seen in informal and formal political participation (Chhibber, 2002). Family support and background are essential in the party and

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representative politics (Main, 2014). Women with family support feel confident being political candidates and perform well during the election process (Cheng & Tavits, 2011). Blay and Soeiro (2019) argued that family support improves womans' self-confidence, enhancing their political participation. Khan *et al.* l. (2018) also found that family support plays a significant role in women's political participation in many ways in women's political candidacy and political resilience. However, in a patriarchal and traditional society such as Pakistan, families often do not support women in political activities, although it is one of the prerequisites for women's political participation (Anwar & Ahmad, 2017). Women in the province of KP also face a similar situation of the lack of family support in their political participation (Bilal & Ahmad, 2021). Considering the discussion and findings of this study (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion), I believe that women political activists need strong support from their families to engage in informal and formal political participation effectively. My research reveals (see 6.4) that family support influences women's political participation, such as womans' self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, party politics, and their voting campaign. It is also important to mention that very few women were supported by their families and were good at party politics, arranging corner meetings, political candidacy, and political resilience (see 6.4 in chapter 6).

1.9 Religion

The intersection of religion and gender roles is very common in women's political participation (Cassese & Holman, 2016). Religion is often interpreted in cultural and patriarchal contexts, which affect women's informal and representative politics (Amusan, Saka, & Ahmad, 2017). In patriarchal societies, men explain religion in their interests to keep women in a subordinated position in public and private spheres, including politics (O'Neil *et al.*, 2015). Men-dominated

religious restrictions influence women's opinion in their political participation (Banerjee, 2003). Religion intersects with women's representative politics, influencing their participation in government and party politics (O'Neil, 2009). According to Art (2010), men have always explained religion, and women's roles as political candidates have disappeared. He also revealed that women must revisit their religious history to determine their political participation roles. To see women's political participation in religious contexts, Emmenegger and Manow (2014) stated that men use religion against women to keep their political voice in a subordinated position, ultimately influencing women's political participation in formal and informal ways. The intersection of religion and women's political participation is also researched by Cassese and Holman (2016), that religion affects women's agency in their political participation. Prihatini (2020) explored the link between religion and the political candidacy of women that prevails in party politics and influences women's nominations for public offices.

In light of the above discussion, my intention in this study (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion) is to show how religion intersects with women's political participation in KP province. My research reveals (see 6.5 in chapter 6) that Religion and men-dominated religious interpretations influence women's self-confidence, political candidacy, allocation of party portfolios, political resilience, voting campaign, and women's nomination for reserved seats. My study also shows that religious explanations are often confused with culture, such as women should not leave home alone for political activities, which affects women's self-confidence and political resilience.

1.10 Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a socio-culturally produced identity that makes people and groups dissimilar based on language and cultural heritage (Erikson, 2012). Ethnicity comes from the Greek word "ethos," which means people or collectivity of humans living together (Rapport, 2012). In this sense, ethnicity is a collective meaning known as culture (Amin, 2004). Ethnicity as a human identification can be internalized, externalized, and even produced and reproduced in ongoing human interaction (Jimenes, 2009). Ethnicity as social identity is considered an essential factor in women's political participation (Harnois, 2015). Women with subordinated identities, such as racial and ethnic, have different political experiences from those who belong to dominant social identities (Brown, 2014). They have different political mobilization and participatory styles (Ennaji, 2016). The intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, and women's politics reveals that political parties do not treat women of different ethnic groups equally (Sampugnaro & Montemagno, 2020). They prioritize women of white color when it comes to party politics (Moraga & Anzaldua, 2021). Women of black color face barriers in holding party portfolios because they have not been provided the essential training to do so (Mlambo & Meissner, 2019). Discussing the intersection of ethnicity with gender in women's political participation, Gillborn (2015) found that ethnic identities influence women's representative politics. Women's ethnic identity matters in their nomination for party portfolios and reserved seats in the government (Bird, 2014). Besides, women's ethnic identity influences their party politics because women of ethnic minority groups are often ignored during the allocation of party portfolios (Hardy, 2013). Ethnic minority groups of women also face barriers to their upward political mobility in the party (Kulich & Iacoviello, 2017).

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My research found three types of ethnic identities/groups in the province of KP (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion). These ethnic groups are *Pakhtuns, Hazara, and Chitral. Pakhtuns* are thought to have migrated from Afghanistan and live across the KP province. However, most of them are located in the provincial capital of KP, known as *Peshawar* (Borthakur, 2017). The *Hazara* ethnic group mostly lives in the *Hazara* division, the northeastern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Bhattacharya, 2015). People with *Chitral* ethnic identity are located in the district of *Chitral,* the northern side of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Jan, 2010).

Literature review in the Western world (Gillborn, 2015; Rapport, 2012; Brown, 2014; Jimenes, 2009) revealed that race and ethnicity influence women's political participation. However, my research exposed no intersection of ethnic identities with women's political participation in KP province (see chapter 6). The ethnic identity of *Pakhtuns, Hazaras, and Chitralis* is not reflected in women's political participation. These ethnic groups do not influence women's formal and informal political participation, such as women's political candidacy, political resilience, party politics, self-confidence, voting campaign, legislative business, and quota women (see 6.6 in chapter 6).

1.11 The Study Objectives

The study is carried out with the following objectives

- To explore the intersection of class and education in women's political participation
- To uncover the intersectionality (culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity) in women's political participation
- To unpack how women see their political participation

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1.12 Research Questions

- How do class and gender intersect when it comes to women's politics?

- How does education intersect with women's political participation?

- What is the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation?

- What is the opinion of women about their participation in politics?

1.13 Significance of the Study

This study explores the intersection of social class and education in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study also analyzes the intersection of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in KP. The findings of this research contribute new practical and theoretical insights into the fields of gender, politics, and political sociology (see chapter 7 for details).

Theoretically, this study opens up new avenues of knowledge about women's political participation in the context of KP, Pakistan. This research shares new insights about the role of education and shows how education plays a crucial role in women's political participation in different ways. For instance, education enhances women's participation in government and legislative business. Moreover, education strengthens women's party politics, political candidacy, voting campaigns, self-confidence, and political resilience. Sociologists, feminist scholars, political scientists, and feminist political theorists (see 2.11 in chapter 2 for more details) are keenly interested in studying the intersection of social class and education in women's political participation. The contribution of this study remains valuable to intersectional feminism, feminist political theory, and Marxist feminism (see chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 for detailed discussion) on

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women's political participation. This study provides new concepts and empirical data to the academic debates that improve the existing knowledge on the role of social class in women's political participation.

Practically, the findings of my study (see chapter 7 for more details) provide baseline foundations for the government, political parties, political leaders, policymakers, political activists, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the social welfare and women's development department, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the status of women to improve women's literacy and give equal political opportunities to women across the different social classes to enhance women's political participation in the province and across the country. The findings of this study are specifically helpful for political parties to understand and improve women's social networking because it enhances their political participation in government and party politics. Moreover, the findings of this research are significant in making the political parties understand and revisit the culture-religion dichotomy that influences women's political participation in the province.

1.14   Organization of the Study

The study is organized into seven chapters to engage the readers properly by maintaining coherence in my study. The following paragraphs present each chapter with different themes and outlines of the study.

Chapter two deals with a comprehensive review of the literature on the intersection of social class, education, culture, religion, ethnicity, race, social networking, and gender in women's political participation. This chapter thoroughly reviews studies from articles, books, newspapers, and journals. The review encompasses three stages A) empirical review, B) theoretical review, and C) theoretical framework. The empirical review presents studies on the complex

intersectionalities such as class, education, ethnicity, race, and culture in women's political participation across developed, developing, and majority Muslim countries. The discussion on the issue is wrapped up in the context of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This chapter also collects some theoretical concepts from the sociology of gender and political sociology. It starts the argumentation from intersectional feminism, engages the philosophy of Kimberle Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, and Dorothy Smith, and links these with women's political participation. The chapter also discusses feminist political theory. The philosophical work of Kantola and Lombardo included five different approaches is presented. These approaches are women and political analysis, gender and political analysis, deconstruction and political analysis, intersectionality and political analysis, and post-deconstruction and political analysis. The work of Marxist feminists like Bebel (2012), Kollonai (2014), hooks (2000), and Peterson (1996) on women's political participation is also part of this chapter. The theoretical review of my study further enabled me to develop a theoretical framework for data analysis. With the help of a feminist theoretical framework, I analyzed the data on the intersection of social class, education, and gender in women's political participation and concluded my study.

Chapter three offers a detailed account of the methodologies and techniques used in this study. The study is conducted under a qualitative research process using the qualitative thematic analysis technique to draw the results. It discusses the choice for my research methodology in line with the available literature on women's politics. The chapter further explains the data collection tools, sample size, sampling procedure, the participants' nature, and the data analysis technique.

Chapter four examines the intersection of social class and gender in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It focuses on how social class influences

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women's political participation differently. For instance, how class matters in women's selection for reserved seats, women as political donors, and the role of class in the expensive political activities held by women. The chapter further includes themes of district government as poor women's destination, family background in women's political participation, and party portfolios as the birthright of elite women. This chapter concludes with the argument that social class influences women's political participation in different formal and informal ways in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Chapter five explains the role of education in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, in line with the empirical and theoretical literature. This chapter confirms that education and womans' experience in politics plays a vital role in their political participation. The chapter concludes that education enhances women's formal and informal political participation. The chapter improves women's participation in government and legislative business. Moreover, the chapter presents that education and experience enhance women's self-confidence, political resilience, and voting behavior.

Chapter six analyzes participants' opinions on the role of culture, social networking, familial support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This chapter answers the questions related to the influence of culture on women's political candidacy, political resilience, women's self-confidence, and voting campaign. How these aspects of women's political participation are affected by womans' social networking also remains part of the discussion in this chapter. It further discusses the intersection of women's familial support and their political participation. The chapter also presents how the religious orientation of women plays a role in their informal and formal political participation. At the end of the chapter, the role of women's ethnic background in their political participation is explained.

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The chapter concludes that the above complex intersectionalities influence different aspects of women's political participation, such as women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaign) in different ways.

Chapter seven summarizes the study with a discussion and an informed analysis of the primary data. The study's findings on women's political participation have presented in line with the philosophical and theoretical knowledge available in the field of gender and politics. Based on the study findings, this chapter gives some suggestions and recommendations on the issue of women's political participation. This chapter opens vistas of knowledge for future researchers on the problem of women's political participation, especially in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews the published empirical and theoretical scholarship on women's political participation. The review mainly encompasses discussion on the intersection of social class, education, gender, culture, race, and ethnicity. The first part of this chapter presents an empirical review of the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, and education in women's political participation in developed and developing countries. The discussion then offers empirical evidence on the issue from most Muslim countries. I understand that the nature of the intersectionality behind women's political participation does not remain the same across the developed, developing, and majority of Muslim countries, which is why this order of reviewing the literature is followed. In Western industrialized countries, the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender with women's political participation is well-researched (Brown, 2016). However, in developing countries, the intersectionality behind women's political participation becomes more complicated because of social class, education, culture, and social networking (Hughes, 2011). In the context of Muslim countries, religion, and culture remain the dominant intersecting factors with women's political participation (Mutluer, 2019).

Part two of this chapter reviews theoretical scholarship on gender and politics. Most of the theoretical contributions to the intersection of gender and politics are reviewed from the sociology of gender and political sociology. The intersection of gender/women and politics is debated through intersectionality/intersectional feminism, feminist political perspectives, and Marxist feminism. It is essential to mention that most of my review's theoretical insights come

from the work of well-known intersectional feminists like Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins. From feminist political theorists, the review found the contribution of Kantola and Lombardo (2017) very enterprising. My theoretical review on gender and politics further focused on the work of prominent Marxist feminists, for instance, Dorothy Smith, 2001; Bebel, 2012; Kollonai, 2014); hooks, 2000; Peterson, 1996. I understand that these theoretical perspectives are more relevant and essential for my study than the other socio-biological, cultural, and psychological theories on gender because intersectional feminist theories and feminist political perspectives approach to gender and politics through feminist critical realism (epistemology).

2.2   Review of Published Empirical Studies on Intersectionality

It is widely reported that the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, culture, religion, education, and gender influences women's political participation (Cassese & Holman, 2016; Brown, 2014; Nash, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Collins, 2002). However, these intersectionalities appear differently across the countries. For instance, in the United States of America, women's racial and ethnic identities are among the significant factors in their political participation (Evans, 2016). The intersection of gender and ethnicity in women's political participation is also reported in the United Kingdom (Hughes & Dubrow, 2018). Similarly, in Canada, Germany, and Japan, women of ethnic minority groups face barriers to their political participation (Paxton, Hughes, & Barnes, 2020). Compared to these countries where women's ethnic and racial identities affect their political participation, social class and education are dominant factors influencing women's political participation in some other countries. For instance, In Turkey, Sener (2014) reported that women's social status matters in their political participation. The case of India is not different. Fadia (2014) found that social class and education are among the dominant intersecting factors in women's political participation. Similarly, Gudhlanga (2013) stated that women of

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lower social class in Zimbabwe face challenges in reaching out to government offices. In Thailand, Iwanaga (2008) claimed that intersectionalities such as social status, education, and gender come together and affect women's formal political participation. (Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008). In contrast to the developed and developing countries, İnce (2022) reported that the intersection of religion and culture is very common in women's political participation in most Muslim countries such as Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Aran, and the United Arab Emirates. How diverse intersectionalities across the countries influence different formal and informal aspects of women's political participation is part of the discussion in the following sections.

2.3 Women's Participation in National Governments

Scholarship has indicated that women's participation across the national governments has not been influenced by the same intersectionalities (Holman & Schneider, 2018). These intersectionalities vary in women's participation in national governments across developed, developing, and majority Muslim countries (Hughes & Dubrow, 2018). In many developed countries, women's racial and ethnic identities influence their participation in the national governments. For instance, in the United States of America, Brown (2016) claimed that women of ethnic and racial minority groups face challenges to their participation in the national government. This study indicated that women of color are underrepresented in the national government. The findings of this study suggested that women of ethnic and racial minorities should be given equal opportunities to make efforts for their political empowerment. Similarly, Evan (2016) stated that women of ethnic minority groups in the USA are not given equal space in national politics, adversely affecting their political careers. She revealed that the underrepresentation of women of color in the national government is one of the significant

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reasons that creates challenges for the political participation of minority women. She suggested that women's representation in national politics cannot be ensured until women of color are given equal opportunities in the national government.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Eckert *et al.* (2017) claimed that the black-and-white dichotomy influences women of color's participation in the national government. They mentioned that women's racial identities matter in their politics, and women's participation in the national government is no exception. In the same context, Krook and Nugent (2016) stated that though women of ethnic minorities received growing attention in the political parties, they still face challenges in the national government. They suggested women of ethnic minorities devise strategies to improve their national government representation. Tariq and Syed (2017) also revealed that ethnic minority women face challenges in reaching out to the top political leadership. They suggested policymakers consider intersectionality to ensure the inclusion of minority women in the national government.

Weber (2015), based on his study, found that women's political participation in Germany has been affected by their racial and ethnic identities. This study asserted that women of ethnic minority groups have often been excluded from different committees in the national government. He concluded that the inclusion of ethnic minority women in the important committees of the national government would undoubtedly improve the political representation of women of color. One of the studies reported that women's quota is increased in the national government of Germany. Still, women of ethnic minorities have not been given equal opportunities to improve their participation in the government (Alexander, Bolzendahl, & Jalalzai, 2016).

In Ireland, Hinds (2018) found that women of ethnic minority groups face barriers to political participation on the local and national levels. Women of minority groups have been struggling to

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enter the national government, but they failed. Shaw (2013) also presented almost the same picture that women of color are under-representation in parliamentary politics (Shaw, 2013). He claimed that women of ethnic and racial minorities could not get leading positions in the national government. Based on his findings, he suggested that women of ethnic minority groups need to make sure of their inclusion in national politics by getting more seats in the national government. The intersection of ethnic and racial identities with women's political participation has been reported in Italy. Belluati, Piccio, and Sampugnaro (2020) asserted that women of color face formal and informal barriers to their representation in the national government. They claimed that women of ethnic minority groups could not get into higher positions in the government. Formato (2014) also revealed that women of color are often ignored in selecting top government positions. This study indicated that women of ethnic minority groups are trying to enter the national government but face structural barriers. The same study recommended that women of color in Italy must be active in getting into the national government and include themselves in the policy-making process in the government.

The question of race and ethnicity with women's participation in the national government is no exception in most Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. For instance, in Denmark, Mouritsen and Olsen (2013) stated that women of racial minorities face barriers to their representation in the national government, especially in their selection for high official positions. Likewise, in Sweden, Freidenvall (2016) revealed that the number of women parliamentarians has increased, but women of color face difficulties getting into the national parliament. This finding conforms with Sheykina and Umarkanova's (2021) study conducted in Norway. They claimed that women of white racial identity groups are getting more seats in parliament than women of color. The role of ethnic and racial identities in women's

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parliamentary participation has also been reported in Finland. Vasiljevic (2008) found that women of color are often ignored in selecting leading positions in the national government. The same study suggested that women of ethnic and racial minority groups must raise their voices to get equal seats in the national government.

Murray (2016) presented a different situation in France regarding ethnicity, gender, and women's participation in the national government. He found a complex relationship between gender and ethnicity that influences women's parliamentary politics. He claimed that women of ethnic minority groups have fewer chances to be nominated as members of the committees constituted by the parliament. The case of Belgium is not different in this context. East-Daas *et al.* (2020) concluded that women of religious and ethnic minorities are not given the opportunities in the national government to be part of the foreign policy process. In line with the context of Belgium, Barberá (2021) in Spain exposed that racial and ethnic identities are considered in women's appointments to important positions in the national government. This study further elaborated that women of white ethnic groups enjoy high positions in parliament. Women's ethnic and racial affiliations also matter in the Austrian national government. One of the studies revealed that women of ethnic minorities are often ignored in their selection for essential portfolios in the parliament (Ahrens *et.*, al, 2020). In Japan, Spary (2009) claimed that many factors influence woman's participation in the national government but racism and ethnicity had a vital role in this regard.

In many developing countries, however, the nature of intersectionality behind women's participation in the national government is different and more complex than in developed countries (Panday, 2013). Social class, education, culture, and gender are the dominant factors that affect women's participation in the national governments of many developing countries

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(Paxton, Hughes, & Barnes, 2020). For instance, in Turkey, Kasapoglu and Özerkmen (2011) claimed several barriers to women's political representation in national politics. Still, their social position is a dominant factor influencing women's political participation in the national government. They suggested that women's participation in the national government can be enhanced by giving them quality education and improving their social status. Fiig (2010) also indicated that most Turkish national government women come from the elite class. Women of lower social class have minimal chances to enter the national government. Based on his study findings, he recommended that women's political participation in Turkey cannot be improved until women from across the classes get equal representation in the national government.

The intersection of class and gender in women's political participation has also been reported in India. Dhaske (2018) claimed that structural inequalities such as social class and gender influence women's representation in national politics. This study revealed that complex intersectionalities such as cast, class, and gender are needed to be understood to frame policies for equitable women's political participation across classes and casts. He further suggested that women's equal participation in *Rajya Sabha* and *Lok Sabha* can be possible by improving their socioeconomic status. The influence of social class and caste on women's political participation has also been reported by Clots-Figueras (2011). He indicated that women of the lower cast have minimal representation in the national legislative bodies. Most women come to the national government from the elite class, and they cannot produce legislation that gives equal opportunities to women from across the cast and classes.

Similarly, in Thailand, Bowie (2010) asserted that social status and education are considered critical factors in women's national politics. This study stated that women from across the classes have no equitable representation in the national government of Thailand. The study also

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recommended that women's political participation in the national government can be improved by giving women high education and political training. Mee-Udon and Donombao (2015) claimed that women tried to enhance their participation in the national government. Still, women's class and education differences are significant barriers to equal representation in national politics. Concluding their findings, they suggested that through a uniform policy, women from across the classes needed to be given equal opportunities in national government.

Likewise, in Kenya, Sanya and Lutomia (2016) found that there are educated women in the national government of Kenya. Still, their socioeconomic background is a barrier to getting them to higher positions in the national government. They further indicated that improving women's socioeconomic position can give them adequate representation in national politics. Despite the global increase in women's political participation, their representation in the Kenyan national government still has not improved (Kivoi, 2014). He concluded that women's social status is one of the major hurdles behind this. He suggested that women's education and political consciousness can also be essential instruments in increasing women's participation in national government.

Nevertheless, religion and culture are reported as dominant factors that influence women's participation in national governments across many Muslim countries (World Bank, 2013; Sadiqi, 2016; Lima, 2013). For instance, in Iran, Moinifar (2011) reported that religious and cultural restrictions influenced women's participation in the Majles (parliament). This study suggested that women's say in the decision-making forums at the national government *(Majles)* cannot be improved until religious and cultural influence is reduced. Esmaeili (2021) also claimed that religious influence is still present in women's political participation, especially in women's participation in national government. He recommended that the country's national politics be

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reformed, and women should be given more space in national politics to overcome religious and cultural influence.

In Bangladesh, Prodip (2022) claimed that although the national government increased women's quotas, they still face religious and cultural restrictions to their participation in the national government. The influence of religious and cultural orientations has also been reported by Parvin (2016). She asserted that women's political participation is increased at local and national levels, but religion is one of the core factors influencing this process. She also stated that 90.4 percent of the country's population is constituted by Muslims, in which women of religious minorities face barriers to their participation in national politics.

The role of religion and culture in women's participation in national government is also debated in most Arab-speaking countries, such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman (Kao & Benstead, 2021). Due to the religious and cultural restrictions, women's participation in most of the national governments of these countries is very dismaying (Henderson et al., 2015). They stated that the religious and cultural orientations of women in these countries had restricted women's roles in national politics. Women got a very weak political socialization due to religious restrictions that influenced their participation in the national governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In the Indonesian context, White and Aspinall (2019) affirmed that different cultural and religious factors affect women's participation in different committees of the national government. They further indicated that women's participation in the national government could not be increased until religious and cultural influences were overcome. Similarly, Suraiya (2022) stated that men-dominated religious teachings affect women's participation in local and national politics. She claimed that gender inequality appears in cultural values restricting women's

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political leadership roles. These inequalities subsequently influence women's participation in the national government.

Ennaji (2016) claimed that women of religious minority groups in Morroco had not been given equal opportunities to select high positions in the national government. This study suggested that in the presence of religious and cultural restrictions, women's representation in the national government of Morroco cannot be improved. According to Dwyer (2013), the masculine image of religion influences women's political agency, affecting their participation in national politics. He claimed that women's roles in religious interpretations had been restricted to the home, which restricted women's image as political leaders.

In Jordan, Fathi (2018) claimed that religious and cultural constraints are among the dominant factors that influence women's representation in the national government. Ng (2012) reported a similar situation in Malaysia in that religious and cultural intersectionalities affected women's political representation in the national government. The case of Nigeria is not different. Dim and Asomah (2019) found that religious education and cultural ideologies specifically intersect with and affect women's participation in the national assembly of the federal republic of Nigeria.

2.4   Women's Representation in Local Governments

The intersection of race and ethnicity in women's representation in local governments is widely debated across many developed countries (Hicks, 2011). For instance, In the United States of America, Holman (2017) claimed that women of color are under-represented in different positions in local government. He identified a gap between the participation of women of color and white identity people in the local counties and cities. Based on his findings, he suggested that we need to expand our knowledge about women's racial identities to promote their participation in the local council's governance. Women's ethnic and racial identities matter in their local

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government participation. Brown and Gershon (2016) indicated that women of ethnic minorities are not visible in local government participation. Women of color have been ignored and marginalized in the local councils. They suggested equality of women's political participation across ethnic and racial minority groups. Racial and ethnic disparities have been widespread in women's political participation. McBride and Parry (2016) claimed that women of color are marginalized in local government. Identity crises influenced their appointment to key positions in the local government bodies.

In the United Kingdom, Pini and McDonald (2011) found an association between women's ethnic identities and their participation in local government. They suggested that women of multi-ethnic groups need to be facilitated in the local councils to eliminate discrimination across ethnic minority groups of women. The intersectionality of race and ethnicity in women's political participation is expected in the United Kingdom. Reingold, Haynie, and Widner (2020) asserted that women of color face challenges in their local government participation. They claimed that women of ethnic minorities are under-represented in appointment to key positions in the local councils. They recommended that women of color be equally represented in the local government bodies.

The role of racial and ethnic identities in women's participation in local government has also been noted in Canada. Hughes and Dubrow (2018) indicated that women of ethnic minorities didn't reach high positions in local governance. They also claimed that women of the white race are given priority in appointing leading positions compared to women of color. Wekerle (2013) also found that women of ethnic minority groups have been under-represented in city management. He asserted that racial inequalities influence women's participation in city councils.

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He also suggested that women's political participation in city management cannot be effective until women of color are given the same rights in the councils as white women have.

Similarly, in Germany, Eder *et*., al, (2016) exposed that the number of ethnic minority women in the district assemblies was very nominal, which showed how racial and ethnic identities count in women's representation in the local government. They highlighted that very few numbers of women of color got a chance for appointment to key positions in local governance. Otherwise, women of the white race are given more chances in such appointments. Maguire (2018) also confided that women of color are not equally represented in German local governance. He argued that women's ethnic and racial identities matter in their selection for a seat in local governance.

Women of color face similar discrimination in the Italian local government. Women (2021) of the united nations indicated that women's participation in local municipalities generally increased, but women of color are not getting sufficient opportunities. This study further revealed that a very nominal number of women from ethnic minority groups are present in the local deliberative bodies of the local councils. The intersectionality of racial and ethnic identities in women's local government participation has also been found by Di Leonardo (2018). He asserted that women of color were often ignored in appointing leading positions in the local municipalities. Based on his study findings, he suggested that women of ethnic minorities should be given equal representation in various bodies of the local councils.

Many Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, experience the same intersectionalities in women's local government participation. For instance, in Denmark, women of ethnic minority groups are under-represented in municipal politics (Dahl & Nyrup, 2021). They further highlighted that women of ethnic and racial identity groups face barriers to getting

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into key positions in local government. The case of Norway is not dissimilar in this context. Segaard and Saglie (2021) concluded that local political parties consider women's ethnic and racial affiliation while recruiting for the local municipalities. They indicated that women of white racial identities are preferred in their appointment to superior positions in local governing bodies. Women of ethnic minorities in Sweden also faced the same situation. Hedlund (2013) claimed that women of color faced challenges in their local government participation in Sweden. This study highlighted that women's racial and ethnic affiliation is an essential factor in the political process of the local municipalities.

In France, Eggers (2011) revealed that ethnic and racial identities influence women's representation in the local government. He identified the intersection of ethnic and racial identities with women's recruitment to key positions in the local municipalities. The number of women in local and national politics is increased in the last two decades. Still, their participation is associated with many factors in which women's racial and ethnic identities are the dominant factors that influence their participation in local governance (Akirav, 2021). He further asserted that a very nominal number of ethnic minority women get the position of mayor in the local councils.

Women's ethnic and racial identities have also been associated with their local government participation in Belgium. Jacobs et al. (2004) revealed that women of color faced hurdles to participation in Belgium's local councils. They confided that women of ethnic minorities didn't receive equal consideration in the local council business compared to white women. Meier and Verlet (2013) also found a connection between racial identities and women's local government participation. They highlighted that women of ethnic minorities have been under-represented in

local party politics and governance. They further indicated that women of color have a very minimal chance of getting into a higher position in local governance.

In many developing countries, however, the intersectionality behind women's participation in the local government varies from those of developed countries. For instance, in India, Ahmed (2016) claimed that socioeconomic inequalities are among the essential factors that cause women's inadequate participation in rural development and local government. He further suggested that women of humble backgrounds should be given opportunities to participate in local government and play their role in rural development. Singh (2014) claimed that socioeconomic inequalities affected women's participation in the local government. He stated that the social position of women is one of the most vital indicators of women's appointment to key positions in the local governing bodies. The intersection of education with women's local government participation has also been found by Bhat (2015). He concluded that education influences women's participation in local councils. He affirmed that educated women are good at discussing the local council's business.

Sahle (2018) found a similar situation in Kenya: social class matters in women's participation in district governments. This study indicated that women from lower social status face challenges to their participation in the local government bodies. The role of education in women's participation in local government has also been researched. Otieno (2015) claimed that education influenced women's participation in local councils. He further highlighted that women's social status is also associated with their local government participation. Women from humble backgrounds face barriers to getting important positions in different committees of the local government.

The case of Thailand has been reported in the same way. Nawarat (2010) concluded that the intersection of class, education, and gender influenced women's participation in local

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governance. She reported that the role of highly educated women is influential in discussing the local council business compared to less educated or uneducated women. She further exposed that women of poor social status have often been ignored in appointments to the leading positions of local government. In line with this, Suksawas and Mayer (2016) in their study claimed that women's social position and education in Thailand seriously matter in their local government representation. They asserted that political parties prefer to recruit those women to the local government with sound socioeconomic status. They also revealed that education is considered one of the influential factors in women's performance in local government institutions.

The importance of women's social position in their representation in local government has also been observed in Zimbabwe. Mudege and Kwangwar (2013) found that socioeconomic inequalities have influenced women's representation in the district government, namely *Goromonzi.*

Compared to developed and developing countries, women's local government participation in many Muslim countries has been influenced by slightly different factors. The intersection of religion, culture, and gender has been reported in women's participation in local government (Lima, 2013). For instance, in Iran, Tajali (2015) reported that religious and cultural structures strongly affected women's participation in the local government. He further claimed that women of religious minority groups are underrepresented in the local councils. He indicated that cultural restrictions affected women's political confidence and candidacy in local governance. Povey (2016) also claimed that women's religious and cultural orientation influenced their self-confidence and political candidacy in the local governing bodies. He suggested that women's participation in the local government could be increased by eliminating religious restrictions and giving political emancipation to Iranian women.

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Unlike other Muslim countries, in Bangladesh, Islam and Islam (2012) confirmed the intersection of religious and cultural obligations in women's representation in the local government. They revealed that religious restrictions affected women's self-confidence, making them politically non-resistant. This situation influenced women's political leadership in local governance. Jahan (2016) found similar findings that religious teachings, mostly men-dominated, have influenced women's participation in local councils. He stated that men interpret religion in their interest, keeping women in subordinated positions in various public and private domains, including local government. He further suggested that women's local government representatives can be improved by giving them equal status in religious orientation.

Many Muslim-Arab countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman, face a similar situation. Bogdan (2021) claimed that women had been oppressed in Muslim-Arab countries, living like slaves to their husbands. He further stated that this oppression is directly linked to religion, which has seriously influenced women's political participation. He concluded that religious and traditional measures in Muslim-Arab countries do not actively allow women to engage in politics, including local government. The case of the United Arab Emirates is very known in this context. Alibeli (2015) claimed that traditionally, men are considered natural leaders, and women are not considered suitable for politics on the local and national levels. He indicated that men are presented as superior in religious teachings compared to women, which made women inferior in society's social and political fabric. This phenomenon directly affected women's political leadership in local and national governments.

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, Tailassane (2019) revealed that men are religious and political elites and do not give space to women in politics, including in local governance. He stressed that women's participation in local councils could be increased by presenting them as political leaders

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in religious and cultural training. These findings align with the research conducted by Al-Ahmadi (2011). He asserted that women leaders in Saudi Arabia face structural barriers to their participation in the local government, such as men-dominated religious education and solid cultural obligations. He further highlighted that women of religious minority groups also need to be considered in local government participation. The case of Qatar is not different in this context. Almal (2017) confided that religious barriers influence women's political awareness, hindering them in local councils' politics. He stated that cultural traditions and religious orientation affected women's self-confidence and confidence, influencing their political candidacy in local and national governments. Likewise, women in Oman face religious and cultural restrictions on their political participation. Al Talei (2021) found that due to strong religious and cultural influence, women cannot advance their representation in local and national governments. He concluded that women's political engagements could be improved by giving them freedom from tribalism and cultural and religious holds.

In Indonesia, Blackburn (2008) claimed that religious teachings affect women's participation in the local councils. He argued that due to religious obligations, political parties feel hesitant while giving a pivotal role to women in local government institutions. Suhardono, Baroroh, and Aji (2016) also indicated that religious and cultural barriers, especially patriarchy, influenced women's political careers in the national and local governments. They revealed that patriarchal culture had been rooted in the district government that does not allow women's engagement in the local councils. They further highlighted that women could not effectively hold positions in the district government because of traditional solid and patriarchal dominance.

In the context of Jordon Koburtay, Abuhussein, and Sidani (2022) claimed that religious forces and cultural myths strongly influence women's political participation in local government

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institutions. They revealed that women understand that religion does not stop them from being political leaders, but the patriarchal explanations of religion affect women's political leadership in the district governments. They also found that due to traditional and patriarchal religious thoughts, women's political agencies are not appropriately developed during socialization, ultimately affecting their participation in the local government system. In Malaysia, one of the studies found that religious teachings and cultural constraints influenced women's participation in local councils (True et al., 2012). The case of Nigeria was also not different in this context. Oni and Agbude (2011) claimed that through patriarchal practices, men misinterpreted the religious teachings against women, which affected their contributions to the public sphere, including women's participation in the local communities' governance.

2.5   Women's Legislative Business

Intersectionality and women's participation in legislative business has been an academic concern for almost two decades (Conway, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nash, 2008). However, research indicated that intersectionality behind women's legislative business appeared differently across the countries (Michener, Dilts, & Cohen, 2012. To present a clear picture of the intersectionalities in women's legislative participation, the following discussion turns into a debate based on empirical evidence from across developed, developing, and Majority Muslim countries.

Brown and Gershon (2016) claimed that in the United States of America, women of ethnic minorities face barriers to their participation in the legislative process. They asserted that the voice of ethnic and racial minority groups of women was not getting the same value as those in the majority. Addressing these structural inequalities, they revealed that ethnic and racial identities do not allow women of color to be succeeded in the legislative process. To eliminate

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the crises of women's ethnic and racial identities, they suggested that women of color should be treated equally in the legislative process as white women. The intersection of women's ethnic and racial affiliation with legislative participation has also been discussed by McBride and Parry (2016). They asserted that women of ethnic minorities face barriers in participating in the legislative process. People of majority groups are not giving them equal space. They concluded their study with the suggestion that women of color still need to get more space in the legislative forums to reduce injustice faced by ethnic minority groups.

In the United Kingdom, the same intersectionality has been observed in women's legislative participation. Ashe (2017) indicated the underrepresentation of ethnic minority women in the national legislative forums. This study claimed that no established democracy has achieved to provide equal opportunities to minority groups in the national legislation. This study further highlighted that democracy could not be established until women of minority groups are given equal representation in the legislative business. Showunmi, Atewologun, and Bebbington (2016) also confided that women's ethnic and racial identities make a difference in their legislative participation. They revealed that women of color face difficulties in the legislative process due to their inappropriate representation in national legislation. The findings of their study concluded that women of ethnic minority groups need to mobilize their community to get more quotas in the legislative bodies.

Similarly, in Canada, one of the studies found that women's ethnic identity matters in their legislative participation (Hankivsky & Mussell, 2018). They confirmed the importance of women's ethnic and racial affiliations in the legislative process. Their study found that women of color are often ignored in the legislative business. According to Thomas (2013), women in Canada are facing different barriers to their political and legislative participation. However,

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women of minority racial identities are facing more challenges as compared to the majority ones. He further suggested that women of color should be given equal legislative participation opportunities.

An almost similar situation is presented in Germany. Abels and Woods (2015) claimed that women's racial and ethnic affiliations influence their participation in the legislative process. They concluded that women of color are underrepresented in the local government legislative process. In line with this, Reuter (2017) indicated that women of ethnic minorities are often discriminated against in the legislative process. He argued that new policy frameworks must be introduced to accommodate ethnic minority women in the national legislation. This study further suggested that the socioeconomic status of women of racial identities should be improved to make them suitable for legislative participation.

In most Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, Norway, and Finland, racial and ethnic affiliation is associated with women's legislative participation. For example, in Denmark, Brix (2012) reported that women of ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in the legislative process. This study claimed that women of color could not be politically empowered until they, in the majority, entered the national legislation. In the Norwegian context, Norris (2013) highlighted that women of ethnic minorities are facing problems in their legislative business because white race people do not support them in making laws for the welfare of people of color. The role of racism and ethnicity in women's legislative participation has also been noted in Finland. Pogodin (2013) articulated that women of ethnic minorities are underrepresented in law-making bodies. He further revealed that equal representation for women of color would be an effective strategy that could strengthen their political empowerment.

In developing countries, women's legislative participation is slightly different than in the above-discussed developed countries. Social class and education are the dominant factors that intersect women's participation in the legislative process (Krook & Sanín, 2020). For instance, in India, Rao (2017) claimed that the socioeconomic position of women is among the significant obstacles that influence women's legislative participation. He further asserted that education is an essential factor that increases women's participation in the legislative process. He indicated that highly educated and experienced women effectively discuss women empowerment-related legislation. Chary (2012) revealed that women of lower socioeconomic backgrounds face challenges in their legislative participation. They often found a lack of self-confidence in discussing bills. He further suggested that education can be a good indicator of enhancing women's legislative participation.

The case of Turkey is not different in this regard. Bozkurt, Çok, and Şener (2014) found that the role of education is undeniable in women's participation in the legislative process. In their finding, they concluded that educated women effectively discuss women empowerment issues in policymaking. They also asserted that women's social position influenced their legislative participation. Women from poor socioeconomic backgrounds were found to lack self-confidence when they were supposed to show political resilience in the legislative process.   The role of education and social status in women's legislative business is also found in Kenya. Foulds (2014) confided that women's education is vital for their contribution to the legislative process. He revealed that educated and politically experienced women were good at discussing women's empowerment-related legislative bills. In the context of Thailand, Suksawas (2016) recognized that women from lower social status had a very nominal representation in the law-making process in the Thailand national government. This study further exposed that women's minimal

legislative participation in Thailand influenced their political empowerment. The same situation has been reported in Zimbabwe. Rau (2012) claimed that socioeconomic inequalities not only influence women's participation in informal politics but also affect women's participation in the legislative process. He claimed that women from humble backgrounds often didn't show political resilience when needed during the legislative process sessions.

In many Muslim countries, the intersectionality of religion, culture, and gender is found in women's legislative business. For instance, in Iran, Baghery, Hosseinzadeh, and Shojaei (2020) reported that women's religious and cultural orientation affected their legislative participation at the Islamic Consultative Assembly. They claimed that religious and cultural traditions are very rigid regarding women's political participation, including their participation in the legislative process. They suggested that women's participation in the legislative process can be enhanced by giving them freedom from strict religious and cultural traditions. Koolaee and Abedi (2016) argued that the religious training of women is a dominant factor that influences women's role in the law-making process. They confided that cultural traditions had influenced women's legislative participation in different legislative assemblies. Due to these discriminatory treatments, women's role is ineffective in discussing women-related issues in the legislative bodies.

Similarly, in Bangladesh, Jahan (2015) addressed the under-representation of religious minority women in the legislative bodies. He confirmed that Hindu minorities are not supported in increasing their legislative participation in the parliament. His findings suggested that women of the Hindu minority group need to mobilize people to enhance their representation in the legislative process. The relationship between women's religious and cultural orientation and their legislative participation has also been researched by Akter (2019). He concluded that women's

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religious identity mattered in their participation in Bangladesh's supreme legislative body (Jatiya Sangsad). He further revealed that women of ethnic minorities have minimal chances of being included in different state legislative committees.

In Arab-speaking countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, the intersection of religion, culture, and gender has been reported. Shalaby (2015) indicated that women's religious and cultural orientation influenced their legislative participation. In the United Arab Emirates, Kemp, Madsen, and El-Saidi (2013) stated that women are under-represented in the legislative bodies. They claimed that religious and cultural traditions had not supported women's participation in the legislative forums. An almost similar situation is reported in Qatar. Satterfield (2015) revealed that religious training significantly influenced women's participation in the law-making process. Religious orientation restricts women's roles as political leaders. In Oman, Dauletova, Hassan, and Zainab (2022) found that religion matters in women's participation in legislative bodies. They confided that religious minorities are often ignored in constituting committees for the legislative process. The case of Saudi Arabia is trendy in this context. Khelghat-Doost and Sibly (2020) concluded that religious explanations were primarily patriarchal, restricting women's political and legislative participation. They suggested that women need to get freedom from religious and cultural traditions to enhance their participation in the legislative process.

In Indonesia, Abdurrachmana, Majestyab, and Riyanti (2020) found that women of religious minority groups are under-represented in the legislative assemblies. They further claimed that cultural and religious orientation made women unsuitable for sound participation in law-making. In Malaysia, Azmi (2020) asserted that women's presence at the decision level is missing because they are culturally and religiously restricted. He claimed that women of religious

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minorities were also ignored in the legislative process. Al Zuraikat (2013) has presented an almost similar situation in Jordon. He claimed that religious and cultural obligations influenced women's self-confidence, which further affected women's participation in national legislation.

2.6   Women's Party Politics: Allocation of Party Portfolios and Reserved Seats

Intersectionality behind women's party politics differs across countries. In many developed countries, women's ethnic and racial identities intersected with their participation in party politics (Paxton, Hughes, & Barnes, 2020). For instance, in the United States of America, Bos and Schneider (2016) stated that women's ethnic and racial identities matter in their participation in party politics. They claimed that women of color had not been equally treated in the allocation of party portfolios. They suggested equal distribution of party portfolios among women of different racial groups. Findings from another study indicated that most of the political parties in the United States of America ignored women of color in the distribution of party portfolios (Silva & Skulley, 2019). They concluded that women of color face challenges in party politics. They also revealed that women's political participation could not be improved until women of color received equal representation in party portfolios.

The importance of women's racial and ethnic affiliations in their party politics has also been reported in the United Kingdom. Kenny and Verge (2013) revealed that women of color faced challenges in reaching high-level portfolios in the political parties. They claimed that women of ethnic minorities had not received equal attention compared to women of other ethnic identities. They further explained that these are the deep-rooted challenges influencing women of color's participation in party politics. Holman and Schneider's (2018) study also confirmed that women's racial and ethnic identities intersect with their involvement in party politics. They indicated that ethnic minority women are often ignored in distributing the key portfolios in the

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party hierarchy. They suggested that women of color's political participation in the government could be increased by giving them equal representation in party politics.

Likewise, In Germany, the association between women's ethnic identities and their party politics has been reported by Abels (2016). He asserted that women of ethnic minorities faced challenges getting party tickets for the election. He concluded his study with the argument that leaders of political parties always prefers white women for a party portfolio. Back and Solomos (2013) also confided that women's selection for a party portfolio had been connected to their ethnic identities. They claimed that women of ethnic minority groups had not been given equal opportunities in the senior leadership of political parties.

Women's ethnic and racial identities have also been connected with their party politics in Irland. Buckely (2013) stated that the Irish parliament tried to improve women's political representation. However, the situation for women of color is still dismaying because the political parties do not give them equal opportunities. He concluded that women of color's participation in the parliament could be improved by giving them equal opportunities within the political parties.

In Italy, women of ethnic minorities face challenges in party politics. Sampugnaro and Montemagno (2020) assert that political parties do not provide equal opportunities to women across ethnic groups. They revealed that women of ethnic minorities could not reach out to the top leadership in the party hierarchy because of ethnic discrimination.

Women in Scandinavian countries have also experienced ethnic and racial crises in party politics. For instance, in Denmark, Mlambo and Meissner (2019) found that women of color are not provided with the opportunity to get basic training on how to hold a party portfolio and control party affairs effectively. They suggested that political parties give equal representation in the party hierarchy and quota seats. Similarly, Matthews (2019) confirmed that women of color were

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not suitable for holding a high position in a party portfolio. In Sweden, Mulinari and Neergaard (2014) mentioned that ethnic minority women still face challenges in going up in the party hierarchy after so many efforts. They reported that women of ethnic minorities have very little chance of being selected as head of the political party. A recent study by Misra (2020) affirmed that political parties do not encourage ethnic minority women to be appointed as heads of the political party.

In Norway, Holman and Schneider (2018) asserted that although Norway is one of the pioneer countries in northern Europe that has given the right of suffrage to women but still women's ethnic and racial identity matters in their selection for the party portfolios. In the same context, Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes (2020) revealed that women of color are not appropriately trained to hold positions in the party hierarchy. They further asserted that equal representation of women of color in the political parties could lead them to sound political participation in the government.

The importance of racial and ethnic identities in women's party politics has been reported in France. Oeser and Fanny (2012) asserted that women with racial and ethnic minorities have fewer opportunities to be selected on a party portfolio than women of majority groups. They stated that ethnic minority women are under-represented in the senior leadership of the political parties. They suggested political mobilization among women of color to ensure their presence in party leadership. Similarly, Bird (2014) reported racial and ethnic disparities in women's party politics. He argued that the political career of women of color had been affected by their ethnic identity, and they are under-represented in party politics and government.

Women's position in the party hierarchy has been connected to their ethnic identity in Spain. Kenny and Verge (2013) expressed that in the decentralization process of Spanish democracy, women of white color are preferred by political parties for different political portfolios instead of

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women of color. They concluded that racial and ethnic disparities mattered in women's party hierarchy and government representation. Similarly, Verge (2010) recognized the role of women's ethnic affiliation in their party politics. He stated that women of ethnic minorities have very few chances to be selected as party heads.

The nature of intersectionality in women's party politics has been different in many developing countries (Panday, 2013). Social class and education have dominated women's participation in party politics (Haqe, 2013). In Turkey, Polatdemira (2015) reported that women's socioeconomic position and education status influenced their participation in party politics and selection for party portfolios. This study concluded that educated and economically sound women are preferred for party portfolios with the logic that they will represent the party better than uneducated and poor women. Karaman (2021) also revealed that women's social status matters in party politics. Women's sound socioeconomic status makes them suitable for appointment on the key portfolios in the party. He further stated that education also affects women's party politics and their selection on party portfolios.

In India, social class, education, and culture are essential factors in women's party politics. Haqe (2013) stated that women's education and socioeconomic status are considered in their selection for the reserved seats and party portfolios. He suggested that women must be strong economically and educationally if they want to be appointed to the party's key positions. Another study by Saigal (2009) also indicated that women's social networking and economic position are counted in their party politics and selecting women for a party portfolio. The study further claimed that political parties preferred educated and experienced women for leading positions in the party.

In Kenya, Takayanagi (2016) argued that women's social and educational status matters in the distribution of party portfolios. He claimed that political parties prefer economically sound and educated women for important positions in the party hierarchy. He further revealed that politically experienced women are encouraged to go up in the party hierarchy. The role of social status and education has also been recognized by Nyakwaka and Mokua (2020). They asserted that women from the elite class quickly get good positions in party organizations compared to lower-class women. They claimed that women of poor social positions have minimal chances of being selected for key positions in political parties. They further indicated that education and political experience also matter in women's party politics and quota seats.

In the Thai context, the intersection of class and education with women's party politics has been revealed (Wonghaisuwan & Tamronglak, 2008). He stressed that women's social position influenced their participation in party politics. Women of humble backgrounds face challenges in reaching the party's top leadership. He further recognized the role of education in women's quota seats allocated by the party. Findings from another study indicated that women's social and educational status are among the significant factors that affect the allocation of party portfolios among women politicians (Seibel, 2010). The study further claimed that political parties prioritize women of the elite class because they contribute to party funds.

The importance of women's socioeconomic status in their party politics has also been reported in Zimbabwe (Kurebwa, 2016). He asserted that political parties preferred women of sound socioeconomic status for top leadership positions. He further revealed that education is also vital in women's allocation on party portfolios. Bhatasara and Chiweshe (2021) argue that political parties prefer women of sound economic background for leading positions in the party hierarchy. They claimed that political donations to the party funds matter for women in the party hierarchy.

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Conversely, in most Muslim countries, religion and culture play a significant role in women's party politics. For instance, women's religious and cultural orientation in Iran affected their political representation, and their party politics is no exception (Moinifar, 2012). He argued that women of religious minorities faced barriers to their representation in reaching the top leadership of the political parties. Ansari and Martin (2014) have also recognized the role of religion and culture in women's party politics. They indicated that women's religious and cultural orientation restricted their roles to be political leaders. They further revealed that women are often ignored in party politics and critical positions in party hierarchy due to religious and cultural barriers.

Panday (2013) found that religious and cultural restrictions influenced women's party politics and quota seats in Bangladesh. He claimed that religious and cultural orientations affected women's self-confidence and suitability for important positions in the party hierarchy. He suggested that women need freedom from religious and cultural restrictions to upgrade their self-confidence and political resilience to make them suitable for party leadership. According to a recent Samad (2021) study, women's exclusion from party politics is often caused by their religious training. He affirmed that religious teachings restrict women's roles as political leaders that influence their participation in party politics.

The intersection of religion and culture in women's political participation and party politics has also been reported in Oman. Al-Azri (2012) confided that women of religious minorities face challenges in their party politics. He stated that religious minority women are excluded from key positions in the party organization. He further explained that religious minority women rarely reached the top political leadership in party politics.

To summarize the above discussion, it is asserted that women's party politics, including women's selection for party portfolios and quota seats, are influenced by different

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intersectionalities across the countries. Race and ethnicity are the dominant factors that affect women's party politics in most developed countries. The nature of intersectionality behind women's party politics in developing countries is complicated because social class, education, culture, and social networking are the major intersecting factors. However, in most Muslim countries, religious and cultural restrictions are essential factors that influence women's party politics.

2.7   Women's Electoral Candidacy and Political Campaigns

Electoral candidacy and political campaigns are essential aspects of women's political participation. The nature of intersectionalities behind women's electoral candidacy and political campaigns differs across countries. Women's racial and ethnic identities intersect their electoral candidacy and campaigns in western industrialized countries (Ford, 2018). For instance, in the United States of America, political parties often ignore women of color for electoral candidacy (Hennings & Urbatsch, 2015). They revealed that women of color faced challenges in their political campaigns. They further claimed that the voice of white color women in electoral campaigns is more appealing to the people as compared to women of color. This situation is not new. Weaver (2012) has also indicated that women's ethnic and racial identities influenced their electoral candidacy. He claimed that women of color faced barriers in getting tickets for being election contestants. He affirmed that women of color encountered barriers to their political and electoral campaigns.

In the context of the United Kingdom, Stokes (2017) found an association between women's racial identities and their electoral candidacy. He claimed that women's ethnic and racial identities matter in their selection for an electoral candidate. He also highlighted that women of ethnic minorities have different experiences in political campaigns than ethnic majority women.

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The intersection of women's ethnicities and electoral candidacies has a history in the United Kingdom. Leyenaar (2008) found that women's racial and ethnic identities were the dominant factors that influenced their nomination for elections. He asserted that women of white ethnicities preferred electoral candidacy compared to women of color. He also indicated that political parties preferred white women for election campaigns because they were considered suitable.

The role of ethnicity and race in women's electoral candidacy and campaigns was also reported in Canada. Cross (2011) concluded that traditional political parties considered women's ethnic affiliation in the nomination process for elections. He found that women of color were not considered suitable for the contest of elections compared to white women. He further claimed that women of color faced challenges to their political campaigns. The relationship between women's ethnic identity and political candidacy has also been indicated by Celis *et. al.* (2014). They reported that women's ethnic and racial affiliations influenced their contest election selection. They further highlighted that women of color faced barriers to their political and election campaigns.

In Germany, Reuter (2017) claimed that ethnic minority women were not treated equally in the election contest. They were often ignored being electoral candidates. He also indicated that political parties did not equally recognize the role of women of color in the electoral and political campaigns. The intersection of ethnic and racial identities with women's electoral candidacy is not recent. Reynolds (2006) asserted that the political parties have neglected women of color during the ticket distribution for elections. He also stated that political parties had not treated ethnic minority women equally during the political campaign.

The association between women's ethnic identities and electoral candidacy has also been reported in Russia. Avdeyeva and Matland (2021) claimed that women's ethnic identities influenced their electoral candidacy. They indicated that ethnic minority women were often ignored in the distribution of tickets for contesting the election. They further revealed that ethnic minority women faced challenges in political campaigns. They argued that people had not treated them equally during the electoral and political campaigns. The intersection of race, gender, and women's electoral candidacy in the Russian context has also been previously reported. Moser (2008) also stated that women's ethnic affiliation mattered in their electoral candidacy. He asserted that women ethnic minority women had not received equal attention in the distribution of tickets for election.

Carey and Lizotte (2017) found the intersection of race and gender in women's electoral candidacy in Ireland. They confided that women of ethnic minority groups faced barriers to their electoral participation. They further revealed that the electoral process discriminates against women of color. They indicated that women of color also faced challenges in political campaigns. Similarly, Frasure-Yokley (2018) concluded that women's racial identities are counted in their electoral candidacy. He stressed that women of ethnic minorities are often ignored in the distribution of tickets for contesting the election. Women of color also faced barriers to their political and electoral campaigns.

In Scandinavian countries, McGinn and Oh (2017) claimed that women of color were not equally treated in the nomination for election and were also discriminated against in political campaigns. For instance, in Denmark, Sauer and Siim (2020) asserted women's racial identities affected their electoral nomination. They indicated that women of ethnic minorities rarely got a nomination to contest the election. They also highlighted that women's racial identities were

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counted in electoral campaigns. Likewise, Dinesen, Dahl, and Schiøler (2021) found the influence of ethnic affiliation on women's electoral candidacy. They stressed that women of ethnic minorities are often ignored in the electoral nomination. They argued that ethnic minority women faced challenges in getting tickets for contesting the election.

Similarly, in Sweden, Kokkonen and Wängnerud (2017) claimed that women's racial and ethnic identities matter in their electoral candidacy. They revealed that ethnic minority women are often ignored in the distribution of seats for election. They further indicated that political parties prefer women of white racial identities for political campaigns. Folke, Rickne, and Smith (2021) reported a similar situation. They affirmed that women of color face challenges in selecting electoral candidates. Political parties do not treat women of color equally in the selection for election. They further explained that women of color face barriers in political and electoral campaigns.

The intersection of race and gender in women's electoral candidacy has also been found in Norway. Valdini (2013) found that women of color have been ignored in the electoral candidacy process. He indicated that women of white ethnic identities had prioritized electoral candidacy over women of color. He also highlighted that women of ethnic minority groups faced barriers in their political campaigns. In another study, Valdini (2012) concluded that women's ethnic and racial identities intersected in their political participation in which electoral candidacy of women is no exception. He revealed that women of ethnic minorities had not been equally treated in political campaigns that influenced their electoral candidacies.

The association between women's ethnic identities and their electoral candidacy has also been reported in Spain. Uhlaner and Scola (2016) asserted that party leadership often nominated women of white ethnicities for election. They indicated that this discriminatory electoral

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treatment negatively impacted the electoral participation of women of color. They further highlighted that women of racial minority groups faced challenges in their political campaigns. The effect of racial identities on women's electoral candidacy is also reported by Field (2021). He indicated that women's electoral candidate selection is determined in line with their ethnic and racial identities. Women of white ethnicities are often given priority in electoral candidacy and political campaigns.

In contrast to western industrialized countries, women's electoral candidacy in most developing countries is influenced by the intersection of social class, education, and gender (Rosen, 2017; Spark, Cox, & Corbett, 2019). For instance, in Turkey, Saktanber (2013) asserted that the intersection of education and class position in women's electoral candidacy is undeniable. Women of the elite class have often been given priority in selecting an electoral candidate. He further revealed that educated and politically experienced women had given importance to political and electoral campaigns.

In China, Du, Q. (2018) highlighted women's education and income are considered in determining their electoral candidacy. He asserted that rich women are prioritized to be electoral candidates because they have the resources to be invested in political campaigns. He also indicated the role of education and political experiences in women's political and electoral campaigns. Similarly, Ford (2018) confirmed the role of social position in women's electoral candidacy. He highlighted that women's social status is an essential determinant in women's electoral candidacy. He further indicated the role of education in women's political campaigns, especially election campaigns.

In the Indian context, Rai (2011) found the intersection of women's socioeconomic status with electoral candidacy. He claimed that women's socioeconomic status determined their nomination

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for contesting elections. He also stated that education is undeniable in women's political and electoral campaigns. In their study, Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras, and Iyer (2018) revealed that political parties ignore women from humble backgrounds for electoral candidacy because they don't have the resources to be invested in the election. They further indicated that political parties educated women were preferred for political and electoral campaigns because they could quickly raise the vote bank of the parties.

The intersection of socioeconomic position and education in women's electoral candidacy has also been found in Kenya. Kivoi (2014) confirmed that the political parties preferred women of the elite class to contest elections. He stated that political parties think that election is an expensive process that the elite women can contest. He also revealed the role of education in women's political campaigns.

In Thailand, Joshi and Och (2014) asserted that working-class women had been ignored in the nomination for elections. They indicated that women of poor socioeconomic backgrounds could not invest resources in the electoral process, so they were not considered for candidacy. The study also highlighted that educated and politically experienced woman were preferred for electoral and political campaigns. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Mudege and Kwangwari (2013) found that the social status of women has been associated with their electoral candidacy. They indicated that political parties had nominated women of rich socioeconomic backgrounds for election because they could invest their resources in electoral and political campaigns. They further reported that this situation has prevailed in the electoral process. Women of poor socioeconomic backgrounds have been ignored in other political activities, such as political campaigns and mobilization.

Park (2011) reported the role of social status and education in women's electoral candidacy in North Korea. He claimed that educated and financially sound women were preferred for electoral candidacy. He further revealed that political parties preferred educated and politically experienced women for political campaigns. Lee and Shin (2016) also stated women's social status influenced their candidacy for the election contest. They asserted that financially sound women donate to part funds and support political activities, which is why they are preferred for electoral candidacy. They also reported the role of education and experience in women's political and electoral campaigns.

In most Muslim countries, women's religious and cultural orientation plays an essential role in political representation, including in determining their election candidacy (Cherif, 2010; Del, 2013; Khatib, 2012). For example, in Iran, Hoodfar and Sadr (2010) concluded that religious restrictions on women have influenced their participation in the election of candidates. Kian (2012) further highlighted that religious obligation in Iran do not allow women to be independent in contesting elections. An almost similar situation appears in Bangladesh. Ahmed (2008) found that due to religious and cultural restrictions, women cannot independently contest elections and political parties are also discriminated against in the nomination process. In most Arab-speaking countries like United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, religious and cultural restrictions influence different aspects of women's political representation, especially their candidacy for political leadership (Mustafa, 2005). According to the fourth wave of feminism, women's religious and cultural orientation strongly influences their nomination as political leaders (Tazi & Oumlil, 2020). Likewise, in the Indonesian context, Graham (2005) argued that a decline in the ratio of women's election candidacies had been continuously observed in the last decade, mainly caused by religious misconceptions and normative obligations against women.

An indifferent situation also appears in Jordan. El Kharouf and Hussain (2014) concluded that women's number as election candidates has always been low compared to men because of the religious and cultural constraints on women. They have suggested that to improve women's political representation; we must give them more opportunities for contesting elections.

In Malaysia, women have fewer chances to be elected on the party's ticket because of their weak social position and religious and cultural restrictions that affect their election candidacy (Lim, 2013). He has also suggested that the top leadership of the political parties must stop playing with women in the name of religion and culture and give them opportunities for contesting elections. The role of religion and culture has also been found in women's nominations as election candidates in Nigeria. Dim & Asomah (2019) found that religious education and cultural ideologies intersect with women's political candidacy. They suggested that cultural ideologies and religious teachings be revisited and understood in favor of women to improve their number as political candidates. In the case of Turkey, it is believed that although Turkey officially claimed the increase in women's political leadership, women's ratio in elections is still lesser, mainly caused by religious and cultural restrictions on women (Sumbas, 2020).

2.8   Women's Political Participation in Pakistan

The above discussion revealed that women's political participation across the developed, developing, and the majority of Muslim countries have been influenced by different and complex intersectionalities like race, class, ethnicity, education, culture, and religion. In Pakistan, a small-scale body of empirical evidence reveals the intersection of social class, education, and gender in women's political participation (Cheema et al., 2019; Sajid, 2014; Jabeen & Jadoon, 2009). However, the issue still needs to be investigated further as the nature of the intersectionality behind women's political participation may be more complex than in the rest of the developed,

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developing, and majority of the Muslim countries. For instance, a study carried out by Syed and Dar (2017) stated that in addition to social class and education, some other factors like family political background, religious orientation, party politics, social networking, and familial support also matter in women's political participation in the Pakistani context. Similarly, Bano (2009) claimed that patriarchy, the non-cooperative approach of parents, and social relations also count in womans' political participation. She argued that family background is essential in women's political participation because most women come into Pakistani politics from politically strong families.

Similarly, Awan (2016) asserted that understanding the intersectionality behind women's political participation in Pakistan is complicated. For instance, he claimed that a woman could not be a national or provincial assembly member until she was affiliated with one of the mainstream political parties. Similarly, Bilal, Rehman, and Ahmad (2018) found that women's social networking is an indispensable factor in women's political participation in Pakistan. They also claimed that most of the women parliamentarians in Pakistan are from those elite families with an influential role in the country's politics. The importance of women's social networking in their political participation is also reported by Mushtaq and Adnan (2022). Ullah (2012) shared an interesting finding that women's schooling, specifically curriculum, ideologically represent elite women as a politician, and women from the working class are presented as school teachers. Likewise, in the Punjab province of Pakistan, Chaudhry and Nosheen (2009) indicated that women's level of political awareness is one of the significant factors influencing their political participation. Khayyam & Tahir (2019) concluded that men's dominant mindset does not tolerate women's presence in the public domain, including their political representation. Malik and Courtney (2011) further asserted that religious orientation, cultural ideology, and womans' social

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status are the determinants of their political participation. Weiss (2012) also reported that women's political experience and party affiliation matter in their presence in the government.

To summarize the discussion, I believe that women's political participation does not appear in the exact nature across the developed, developing, and majority of Muslim countries. For instance, in most of the developed countries, such as the USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Russia, Italy, Vietnam, Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Spain, and Japan, the intersection of ethnicity, race, and gender is common that affects womans' political participation. However, in developing countries like China, India, Kenya, Turkey, Kenya, Thailand, Zimbabwe, North Korea, etc., social class and education are dominant factors that influence women's political participation. In contrast to the developed and developing countries, women's political participation in the majority of Muslim countries, such as Iran, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Indonesia, Morrocco, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Turkey, is influenced by womans' religious and cultural orientation. Keeping the above discussion in view, this study asserts that intersectionality behind women's political participation appears more complicated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa than in other countries due to culture, social networking, family support, religious support orientation, and familial background. Thus, this study is one of the sociological attempts to explore the complex intersectionalities in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

2.9   Theorizing Gender and Politics

Gender and politics are widely discussed concepts in social sciences. However, the complex nature of intersectionalities is extensively debated by political sociologists and feminist scholars (Crenshaw, 1998; Collins, 1998; Collins, 2012; Kantola & Lombardo, 2002). The term "intersectionality" in gender discourse and women's oppression was coined by Kimberle

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Crenshaw, an American feminist, and legal scholar. She argued that "the intersection of gender, race, and class inequalities has serious consequences on people's opportunities in life" (Crenshaw, 1998: 153). Nevertheless, Collins views intersectionality as "a particular way of understanding social location in terms of crisscrossing systems of oppression" (Collins, 2002: 510). They both (Crenshaw & Collins), as proponents of intersectional feminism, believe that gender construction takes place under complex intersectionalities such as class, education, race, sexuality, and ethnicity, which cause women's oppression in different domains of life, including politics (Crenshaw, 1998; Collins, 2002).

Similarly, feminist political thinkers address the linkages between women's politics and complex intersections of gender, class, education, culture, and other sources of inequalities (Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012). Nevertheless, feminist critical realists argue that power relations and social class have produced gendered norms which discriminate against women as they suggest equality between the genders by linking theory to practice (Kantola and Lombardo, 2017). These power-fueled gendered norms discriminate against women in different public and private domains of life, including politics. Feminist political scholars suggest that women must understand and deconstruct these power-fueled intersectionalities and start activism to reconstruct a system based on gendered neutral power relations (Ferree & Tripp, 2006). It becomes understood here that gender is produced by unequal and interlocked systems of oppression, such as race, class, education, culture, ethnicity, and sexuality, which affect different aspects of women's lives, including their political participation (Anthias, 2014). However, published scholarship in the field of gender and politics indicates that the intersection of social class and education in women's politics remains a widespread academic discourse (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013).

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The intersection of gender/women and politics has been a theoretical concern for gender specialists, feminist sociologists, political sociologists, and political scientists (Lindsey, 2020; Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007; Baehr, 2004; Lindsey, 2015). Intersectional feminism, feminist political theory, and Marxist feminism are more relevant paradigms to understand/analyze the intersection of gender and politics, especially the intersection of gender, class, education, and women's political participation (Crenshaw, 1990; Collins, 2012; Cooper, 2015; Smith, 1997; Kantola & Lombardo, 2017; West, 1990). These theoretical paradigms/frameworks dominantly believe that gender is constructed under the complex social, cultural, economic, political, ethnic, racial, power, and class-based intersectionalities and inequalities that shape and reshape women's social experiences in all spheres of life, including their political participation. The following section presents a detailed discussion of the intersectionalities and women's political participation in the light of intersectional feminism, feminist political theory, and Marxist feminism.

2.9.1   Intersectional Feminism and Gender and Women in Politics

It would be an academic injustice to present intersectional theory in a simple definition and fix its social lenses to a few dynamics of women's oppression (Nash, 2008). Instead, intersectionality can be understood as a multiple, complex, and pluralistic way of social inquiry about the crisscrossed systems of women's oppression (Garry, 2011). Looking into the diversity of intersectional feminist theory, the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity, education, and race, in the context of women's political participation cannot simply be understood (Ackerly and True, 2010). Therefore, intersectionality can be established as an empirical method and normative theory to visualize women's lived political experiences (Hancock, 2007). How women's lived

political experiences are influenced by the intersection of class, education, gender, culture, ethnicity, and race remains the centre of discussion in the following theoretical debate.

Kimberle Crenshaw, a black feminist and an American legal scholar, coined the word "intersectionality" in her academic paper published in 1989. Initially, she, as the 'mother' of the concept of intersectionality, defined it as a lens or way of analysis that looks for the intersection of class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality which affect black women's experiences and their identity on the public and private domains of life (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw understood intersectionality in two forms structural and political intersectionality. By structural intersectionality, she meant the intersection of different factors that directly influence people, especially black women's experiences. Besides, political intersectionality comes up with political strategies which create privileges and marginalization (Crenshaw, 1991).

Moreover, with the passage of academic debates, intersectionality was reshaped with intersectional feminism, which was generalized to the analysis of the identity of all oppressed women (Berger & Guidroz, 2010). Interestingly, the current debate on the concept of intersectionality has three interpretations. The one goes to the academics like Crenshaw, who interpreted the term to explore how gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other systems of oppression intersect each other and shape and reshape the experiences of women (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). Another explanation of the term intersectionality is done by the activists who use the term to vanish the disparities between the two genders (Gordon, 2016). The third aspect of intersectionality is used by some conservatives who see how the term is taken by activists (Coaston, 2019).

Similarly, Patricia Hill Collins, a proponent of the intersectional theory, is best known for her work on intersectionality and matrices of domination. She argues that "intersectionality is a

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particular way of understanding social location in terms of crisscrossing systems of oppression" (Collins, 2002: 510). Collins is specifically interested in the discourse of intersectionality to analyze the social class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and age systems that create social organizations' features. Collins understands that intersectionality works within the matrices of domination. By matrices of domination, she meant the overall organization of power in a society (Collins, 2012). The matrices of domination have four domains that organize power in society and make an oppressive system for women. These domains of power are structural (consists of economy, law, religion, and polity), disciplinary (comprises bureaucratic organizations), hegemonic (includes the cultural sphere of influence), and interpersonal domain of power, which consists of daily interactions (Collins, 2002). Collins's main concern was to know how these intersectionalities work within the matrices of domination and create social realities that ultimately influence women's experiences in public and private forums.

Conceivably, Collins gives more credit to the matrices of domination and its four domains (structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal) of power relations which are organized around the intersection of gender, class, race, ethnicity, education, and cause a crisscrossing system of women's oppression (Collins, 2007). The structural domain of power comprises social structures, polity, law, economics, and religion. This domain constitutes the power relations in a particular way that sets the parameters of the overall organization of power, which affects black women's experiences, even their voting behavior. The disciplinary domain of power is the combination of the bureaucratic organization(s) aimed to organize human behavior. Collins has drawn this idea from Max Weber and Michel Foucault (Allan, 2007). She understands that the matrices of domination and women's oppression are maintained here through the organizational protocol. The third domain of power, known as hegemonic, legitimizes women's oppression

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through authority, ideology, consciousness, and cultural sphere (Collins, 2002). The interpersonal domain of power contributes to women's oppression and maintains the matrices of domination through personal relationships and interactions (Allan, 2007).

Likewise, Dorothy Smith's (2017) passionate curiosity was embedded in the intersection of text, power, and women's experiences. As a feminist sociologist, Smith understands that power in contemporary society is exercised through text that oppresses women and affects their experiences in all spheres of life (Allan, 2007). Smith believes in the conceptual practices of power through the men-dominated text, which ultimately keeps women's lived experiences in an oppressed system. She argued that on one side, we have discursive knowledge in the discourse of social sciences, and on the other, we have actual or lived experiences of women, both antagonistic to each other (Smith, 1996). Suppose we want to know women's actual position. In that case, we need to know women's actual or lived experiences rather than depending on the abstract knowledge expressed through discursive practices dominantly in the discourse of social sciences, which maintain a text-mediated power and keep women in a subordinated position (Smith, 2001).

In contrast to Marx's materialism, Smith proposes new materialism. Marx's materialism believed in the relationship between one's class interest and knowledge (White, 1996). However, Smith's new materialism argues about facts and text, where power is mediated through text and facts instead of commodities and money (Smith, 2004). Smith's theoretical concern is to distinguish between the abstract knowledge (or text) about women and their lived experiences by proposing the theory of women's standpoint (Allan, 2007). From the standpoint of women, smith speaks that women's knowledge as an oppressive group expresses their actual position or lived experiences because knowledge of the oppressed always remains more accurate than the elite or

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ruling people (Sidanius and Pratto, 2001). From Smith's discussion about women's standpoint, it can be assumed that women's lived experiences as an oppressed group must be sensed instead of going for abstract knowledge about them to know the actual oppression of women in all spheres of life, including their political experiences.

In the same discussion, Britney Cooper, an American professor and black feminist, also contributed to the theory of intersectionality. She believed that the interlocking systems of women's oppression and power are deep-rooted in history and should not be considered an individual identity; instead, men-dominated practices of power produce these (Cooper, 2016). Cooper also challenged some other feminist scholars like Robyn Wiegman and Jennifer Nash because of their reservations on the theory of intersectionality, who claimed that this theory only advocates for black women's identity. Cooper argued that intersectionality is a general inquiry paradigm for all women suffering from identity crises and discrimination because of the intersectionality of gender and power politics (Cooper, 2015).

Carastathis, another advocate of the intersectional theory, argues that one of the academic mishaps with the theory of intersectionality is that it travels within the different academic fields with various meanings and explanations rather than what it was meant for by its originator Kimberle Crenshaw (Carastathis, 2014). However, the commonality among all these interpretations is they talk about women's oppression caused by the intersection of gender, class, education, race, ethnicity, and other factors of domination. Carastathis further added that these intersectional phenomenons influence women's experiences in the public domain, and the discourse of their political participation is no exception (Carastathis, 2008).

Similarly, Sirma Bilge, an intersectional feminist, argues that although we cannot use the concept of intersectionality in a context-free and non-differential way to promote any knowledge

that explores the ways of women's oppression still can use it to expedite different intersectionalities of discrimination in a particular social location (Bilge, 2013). She suggested applying the theory of intersectionality with particular attention to the context of oppression in a specific social location. Bilge also asserted that racial factors could not be ignored in the intersectional analysis because it discriminates against women of color. She claims that to avoid internal conflicts in the intersectional theory, we must look into the historical, cultural, and structural interpretations of power that influence women's oppression in a particular social context (Bilge, 2010).

Along the same line, Nina Lykke, a Sweedish professor and gender studies specialist, argues that intersectionality can be understood as a theoretical and methodological framework to explore power relations and their historical specificity and sociocultural configurations, which are based on discursive, institutional, and structural practices that produce gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and other crisscrossed factors that influence women's oppression (Lykke, 2010). Lykke claims that these intersectional phenomena create societal equalities and an unjust gender system that always affects women's lived experiences in different domains of life, including their experiences in the public domain (Lykke, 2006). Additionally, intersectionality can be understood as a tool to analyze power relations and their different types embedded in the political discourse of the society that influences women's social and political socialization (Lykke, 2010).

Kathy Davis, another intersectional theorist from the University of Utrecht Netherlands, claims that intersectionality has become a buzzword in the modern feminist discourse. However, it's still very effective in assessing women's oppression caused by different intersectional factors (Davis, 2020). She argued that intersectionality is not a new concept, but it brought two new

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strands to the debates on gender and women's studies. The first strand guides us to understand how the intersection of social class, gender, race, and education affects women's experiences and their identities in different forums. It is specifically concerned with the position of poor women and women of color. This strand also stressed how adding a new inequality factor increases women's vulnerability, subordination, and marginalization (Davis, 2014). The strand further shows us how the intersection of gender and race constitutes social class and how gender relations are affected by class and race. The second strand of Davis's intersectionality is to express how this theory is travelled and transformed as a project of politics to know the crisscrossing of class, race, gender, and women's politics in the modern political discourse (Davis, 2020).

2.9.2. Feminist Political Theory and Gender and Women in Politics

Feminist political analysis, as a newly emerged perspective, is best known for the analysis of power relations. The notion of political analysis is borrowed from the French political scientist Colin Hay who meant developing different analytical strategies to understand 'the political' (Hay, 2002). He added that political analysis focuses on power relations and the consequences, distribution, and exercise of power in society. The feminist political perspective is also inspired by post-structuralist theory, especially by the work of Michel Foucault, because both of these perspectives overlap in the philosophical understanding of power and its omnipresence in human lives (Peters & Burbules, 2004). Foucault argues that power is present in human relations everywhere through discursive construction, and 'the political' is fueled by power discourses (Foucault, 1990).

Kantola and Lombardo, pioneers of the feminist political theory, understand that the feminist political perspective is an attempt to maintain the link between theory and practice where the

theory of equality between the sexes should be brought into practice (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). They argue that the complex intersectionalities among class, gender, race, and other social inequalities can be deconstructed and reconstructed with an equal gender-based system. Feminist political theory suggests five approaches for doing feminist political analysis. These approaches are 1) women and political analysis, 2) gender and political analysis, 3) deconstruction and political analysis, 4) intersectionality and political analysis, and 5) post-deconstruction and political analysis (Kantola & Lombardo, 2009).

The women and political analysis approach under-takes women as objects compared to men and trusts a positivist epistemology (Kantola & Lombardo, 2021). This approach seeks to treat women's and men's lives as an objective reality. The main concern of this approach is to address the question of how women and men are represented in the political institution based on their economic position. The stated approach contributes data on women's political underrepresentation and shares statistics about the different sources of gender inequalities (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). Besides, the second approach of feminist political analysis, known as gender and political analysis, looks for gender relations as socially structured and takes a critical realist stance. Through this approach, Kantola and Lombardo question how gender is socially constructed, how gender roles and institutional norms are structured, and why gender is mainstreamed into politics. The gender and political analysis approach contributes to understanding how gender is constructed under unequal normative structures, challenges biological determinism, and questions the patriarchal authorities (Kantola & Lombardo, 2009). As the third approach, deconstruction and political analysis takes gender into account in contested discourse and believe in a constructivist epistemology. It questions how gender reality is constructed through discursive practices, what meaning gender gives in conceptual disputes,

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and how the discourse of gender affects societies. The theoretical contributions of this approach are to expose the contextual meanings expressed through discursive practices, destabilize the essentialist view f gender, and highlight hegemonic masculinity maintained through discursive practices. The fourth approach is intersectionality, and political analysis looks for the intersection of gender with other social inequalities, and it depends on multiple epistemologies (Kantola & Lombardo, 2016). The main concern of this approach is to question the interaction of gender with other social inequalities and how the politics of gender affect the intersection of different people. It contributes to exposing the system of women's oppression legalized through the intersection of gender, class, race, education, and other systems of domination. Post-deconstruction and political analysis, the fifth and last approach of the feminist political perspective, see for socioeconomic, emotional, and bodily material of the gender reality and rely on material realism or new materialism. This approach questions how power inequalities in society are affected by the social organization of emotions in which women are used as moving objects and how the racialized and sexualized political power is mobilized through the emotions of gender or women. It contributes to shifting the understanding of social inequalities from cultural to material discourse, conceptualizing the role of emotions in the power structure, and trying to research gender and politics (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017).

2.9.3. Marxist Feminism and Gender and Women's Politics

Although Karl Marx was not a feminist scholar, his ideas about social progress based on the proper position of both sexes are indispensable to feminist philosophy (Mill, 1982). Indeed, recent feminist scholars have linked their feminist thoughts with the Marxian understanding of human history and society (Cooley, 1993). So, as of now, we can claim that Marxist feminism is a philosophical extraction from Marx-Engels' understanding of the capitalist society where they

link women's suppression with the intersection of the patriarchal family and class-based capitalism in the industrial society (Lindsey, 2015). It argues that the leading cause behind the inferior position of women in capitalist society is the alignment between sexism and capitalism. Women's unpaid domestic labor strengthens patriarchal capitalism because of womans' economic insecurity and dependence on men. Marxist theory also focuses on private property and the economic condition of women, which causes men to dominate over women in public and private domains of life (Barrett, 2014). Although Marxist and socialist feminism is different (Marxist feminism focuses on building an ideology based on economic condition and property while socialist feminism talks about gender and sexuality), they still appeal to working-class women to urge and start activism for equal rights. How Marxist feminists consider gender political reality and women's politics remains the concern of the following theoretical debate (Hartmann, 2010).

Bebel agreed with Engels' notion that class society has produced the suppression of women, which could be vanished by a proletarian revolution and ensure women's economic independence. However, being a Marxist feminist, he went far from Engel in different ways and reached a philosophical climax on the issue of women's oppression. First, Bebel argued that socialism could not be practical until the active participation of women accompanies it, and there can be no human emancipation without the social independence of women (Bebel, 1998). Secondly, Bebel thought of some non-economic bases for women's oppression, like sexual morality and its double standard, which enabled him to argue that all women have some common interests and need to start a class struggle and form groups to serve their interests. Bebel also stressed that proletarian women should start a common struggle with proletarian men against capitalism to get social and economic independence (Bebel, 1998).

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Alexandra Kollontai, a Russian Marxist feminist, is best known for her 'glass of water theory', which meant that understanding sex and gender should be easy, just like drinking a glass of water (Kollontai, 1977). Kollontai believed that women's oppression is caused by the capitalist structure of the economy, which leads to patriarchal sexism, and she suggests socialist reforms to treat this oppression. By socialist reforms, she meant providing social services to women that would free them from everyday domestic services and create a new kind of human understanding between the two sexes (Lokaneeta, 2001). Kollontai claimed that politically active women should be relieved of domestic responsibilities like child rearing, cooking, and house cleaning. So they can effectively serve other women in the realm of politics. More specifically, Kolontai stressed developing socialist intelligence in Russian women by giving them a quality education. Sharing her personal experience between public and private life, Kollonta expressed that her domestic education has made her shy and unfit for working in the public sphere because she could not speak in public. Kollontai also believed in the politics of socialist democracy for women (Sypnowich, 1993).

bell hooks agreed with the Marxian understanding of capitalist discourse and patriarchal family power behind gender construction. However, he stresses more on empowering feminist movements through feminist education and knowledge (Hooks, 2000). Hooks argued that a mass-based feminist educational movement could help women of all classes to ask about their political rights. Delivering feminist education can ensure women's empowerment in all spheres of life, including political empowerment (Hooks, 2000). He suggested the establishment of schools on feminist principles to create feminist consciousness among the masses, which could effectively channel women's political activism.

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V. Spike Peterson argues that it is unfortunate in the feminist theory that the authors always talk about 'gender as difference,' meaning women and femininity and men and masculinity (Peterson, 2010). However, the other side of this story, 'gender as power,' is always ignored, which is paramount for theorizing feminism. Peter highlights that gender is being produced as a power under the discourse of power relations (Peterson, 2012). These power relations are fueled by the socio-economic positions of men and women, where men are sound economically. This notion maintains the slogan of 'gender as power,' which influences women's experiences in public and private domains of life (Peterson, 2012).

2.10   Theoretical Framework

This section includes some theoretical insights borrowed from intersectional feminism, feminist political theory, and Marxist feminism that enabled me to analyze data (see chapters 4, 5, and 6 for detailed discussion) on women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. For instance, from intersectional theory, my discussion is centered on Kimberely Crenshaws' concepts of 'structural intersectionality' and 'political intersectionality.' These concepts guide my analysis in chapter 5 on the role of social class in women's political participation in KP. Crenshaw (1991) argues that structural intersectionality, such as the intersection of class, gender, and education, directly influences women's experiences in the public sphere. She argued that political intersectionality creates privileges and marginalization that affect women's experiences in the public domain, including their political participation.

I used the term *structural intersectionality* to narrate how the intersection of social class, education, and gender influences women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Structural intersectionality* enabled me to analyze the data on how different classes of women, such as upper/elite, working middle, and lower class, intersect with women's political

participation. I also used Crenshaws' concept of *political intersectionality* to analyze how the working class and lower-class women have been marginalized in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa politics. This study further used Collins' concepts of "intersectionality" and "matrices of domination" to analyze the intersection of social class, culture, social networking, familial support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in the province. Intersectionality is a particular way of understanding social location in terms of crisscrossing systems of oppression (Collins, 2002). She understands that intersectionality works within matrices of domination. By matrices of domination, Collin means the overall power organization maintained through different power domains. Collins is specifically interested in the structural domain of power comprised of social structures, polity, law, economics, and religion that maintain power relations along with the overall organization of power and affect women's experiences and political participation (Collins, 2007). The concept of *matrices of domination*, mainly *structural and interpersonal domains of power*, is used to analyze how social, economic, and religious structures influence womans' political participation in the KP province. I used the term *structural domain of power* to examine how upper/elite class women maintain the overall organization of power who hold informal and formal politics in the province. Collin's concept of the *interpersonal domain of power* is used to understand how women's social networking in KP influences their political participation.

Smith's passionate curiosity was embedded in the intersection of text, power, and women's experiences, including political participation (Allan, 2007). I used Smith's concept of "text-mediated power" to analyze the role of education in women's political participation in KP. Smith argued that there are three sources of text-mediated power verbal, written, and pictorial, and all of these are used to keep women in a subordinated position (Smith, 1996). I used Smith's

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concept of *text-mediated power* in verbal discourses, which are used as an informal education against women to keep them in a politically subordinated position in the province. The best example of these verbal discourses in the *Pashtu* language is "*Khazo da para koor day ao ya goor*" which means women are either made for home or graveyard. This kind of verbal discourse maintains a *text-mediated power* in the province that influences women's political participation.

The feminist political perspective enabled me to analyze the role of socioeconomic inequalities in women's political participation. I used Kantola and Lombardo's concept of *women and political analysis* to analyze how socioeconomic inequalities affect women's political participation. Kantola and Lombardo (2017) argued that women and men are represented in political institutions based on their economic position. *Women and political analysis* concept empowered me to understand how women's division into upper/elite, working middle, and lower class affect their formal and informal political participation in the province. This study further used Kantola and Lombardo's concept of *gender and political analysis* to analyze the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation. Kantola and Lombardo question how gender is socially constructed, gender roles and institutional norms are structured, and why gender is mainstreamed into politics (Kantola and Lombardo, 2009). I used gender and political analysis to examine how gender construction and institutional norms mainstream politics and influence women's political participation in KP. Marxist feminist theorists like Bebel and bell hook were engaged in analyzing the intersection of class, culture, family support, religion, ethnicity, and gender in women's political participation in KP. Bebel argued that socialism could not be practical until the active participation of women accompanies it, and there can be no human emancipation without the social independence of women (Bebel, 1998). Bebel also thought of some non-economic bases of women's oppression,

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such as sexual morality and double standard. By this, Bebel argued that all women should have some common interests that can lead them to start a class struggle and serve their interests. I used the concepts of *human emancipation and women's social independence* to analyze how *Pakhtun* culture (culture in KP province) and patriarchy restrict women's social independence and emancipation that influence their political participation.

bell hooks stressed the empowerment of feminist movements through feminist education and knowledge (Hooks, 2000). hooks argued that a mass-based feminist educational movement could help women of all classes to ask about their political rights. Feminist education can ensure women's political empowerment (hooks, 2000). I used hooks' concept of the *feminist educational movement* to examine how women's low education ratio affects their political participation and to analyze how feminist thoughts can be part of the schooling that can improve women's political participation in the province.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodology of the study. The study aimed at the discursive analysis of women in politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. I explored four questions in this study: 1) How do social class and gender intersect in politics? 2) How does education intersect with women's political participation? 3) What is the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation? 4) What is women's opinion about their political participation? I conducted this study under the interpretive research paradigm, which guides the qualitative methodology. The reason for selecting qualitative methods is to understand the complex intersectionalities like social class, education, and culture in women's political participation in the province. The interpretive research paradigm allows the view of the social world through the participants' experiences. Also, it allows the researcher to use those experiences to construct and interpret their understanding. This chapter begins with an explanation of why I selected this research area, followed by the research approach, sampling procedure, sample size, interviews, validity and reliability, data collection process, data translation and coding, significant themes, and ethical considerations.

3.2 The Study Universe

I have conducted this study in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. KP is one of the four provinces of Pakistan and was formerly known as North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). This province has an international border with Afghanistan known as Durand Line. The total

covered area of this province is 101,741 km^2, with a population of 35.53 million as per the census of 2017 (Rauf, et., al, 2019). This province is divided into four divisions and 27 districts. The province of KP is traditionally considered male-dominated, where women are deprived of many legal rights, including their political rights (Naz & Ahmad, 2012).

It is pertinent to mention here that there are six major political parties in the politics of KP. These political parties are Awami National Party (ANP), Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian (PPPP), Pakistan Muslim League (N), Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). PTI remained the ruling party in the current national government (2018-22) of Pakistan and the provincial government of the KP session (2018-23). I have recruited participants for data collection from different districts of KP. These districts are Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Swat, Bajur, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, Charsadda, Upper Dir, and Chitral.

3.3   Selection of Research Approach

Social research can be carried out under a positivist or interpretive paradigm and sometimes by combining both. These paradigms have their own ontological and epistemological prescriptions, which guide the nature of one's research being qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method. The determination of these approaches always depends upon the study objectives or research questions, research philosophy, researcher's previous orientation, research problem under consideration, and most importantly, the supervisor's research knowledge. For instance, Olsen (2004) stated that a good research approach is always determined in line with the study objectives, research questions, and philosophical foundations. How qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method researches differ from each other are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The theoretical foundations of qualitative research are rooted in the interpretive paradigm with ontological and epistemological prescriptions. Ontologically, it is embedded in social constructionism, which beliefs in reality's subjective and complex nature (Sarantakos, 2012). However, epistemologically, it is rooted in interpretivism, which approaches reality/truth through symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and feminism. Qualitative research strategies are guided by this constructionist ontology and interpretivism (epistemology), which determines a flexible research design (Sarantakos, 1998). Qualitative research explores descriptions, characteristics, meanings, definitions, and symbols of truth/reality and things (Neuman & Robson, 2014).

In contrast, quantitative research is guided by the positivist paradigm, which has ontological and epistemological assumptions. This paradigm comprises an objectivist/realist ontology and empiricist epistemology. These ontological and epistemological prescriptions (objectivism and empiricism) guide quantitative methodology, set a fixed research design, and produce quantitative methods (Ashley & Boyd, 2006). Therefore, quantitative research aims to count and measure things and reality/fact (Neuman and Robson, 2014).

Compared to qualitative and quantitative research, mixed-method research (MMR) design is mainly drawn from the components of both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 1999). Borrowing components from qualitative and quantitative research, mixed-method research seeks to make a good description and understanding of the research problem (Byrne and Humble, 2007). For instance, Malina et al. (2011) stated that mixed-method research could portray a problem more conceptual and explanatory than the rest of the research approaches.

Keeping my research questions and objectives in line with these research approaches, I understand that the reality of women's political participation is complex and pluralistic because

different intersectionalities like social class, education, religion, culture, family support, and social networking have produced it. Relying on social constructionism (ontology) and feminism (epistemology) as philosophical foundations, I have undertaken this study with a qualitative approach because the phenomenon of women's political participation in the province of KP is complex and subjective that needs an in-depth understanding.

3.4   Participants, Sampling, and Sample Size

I employed a purposive/judgemental sampling technique to recruit women political activists and contact them for data collection. Using the purposing/judgemental sampling technique, I recruited women political activists as they were relevant and could share experiences related to my objectives. It is pertinent to mention that purposive/judgemental sampling is a type of non-probability sampling used by qualitative researchers when they are confident in their knowledge about choosing the respondents who can meet the criteria for their research project (Sarantakos, 2012). The expertise and knowledge of the researchers in their field keep a vital role in the judgment of their sample units. I believe women political activists were suitable units for meeting my research objectives. By women political activists, I meant all women actively involved in politics. These women were MPAs (members of the provincial assembly-KP), MNAs (members of the national assembly), senators, district counsellors, tehsil counsellors, and all other women actively involved in politics.

I conducted twenty-nine in-depth interviews with women political activists. The saturation point determined the sample size of twenty-nine interviews. The saturation point is when no more factual information is needed or more participants are available (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). In my case, further respondents were available, but I collected the required factual information and experienced repetition in my participants' responses.

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3.5   Participants' Profile

Twenty-nine women political activists were interviewed. A suitable sample size in qualitative research answers the research questions (Boddy, 2016). The table of participants' socio-demographic characteristics, including name, age, education, party affiliation, position in the party, position in government, number of years in politics, and family background, is placed in the appendix (see appendix-ii). It is pertinent to mention that pseudonyms are used to ensure the confidentiality of the participants' information.

3.6   Interviews, Validity, and Reliability

I used an unstructured and flexible interview guide comprised of open-ended questions on the role of social class and education in women's political participation (see appendix 1). In qualitative and feminist research, an interview guide/unstructured questionnaire is a flexible guide of questions that accommodate respondents' views from different angles (Leavy, 2010). At the start of my interview guide, some questions related to the participants' sociodemographic backgrounds were included. The interview guide was composed of flexible questions related to the importance of social class and education in women's political participation. It is essential to mention that some supplementary questions, like the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation, were also raised during the discussion and remained part of the in-depth interviews. These interviews provided enough data on the intersection of social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Validity in qualitative research is considered to be the truthfulness of the data. It is the standard research tool that meets the criteria of the required information for the research in line with the project objectives (Golafshani, 2003). Qualitative researchers are more interested in obtaining

authenticity than achieving a single form of fact. Qualitative researchers focus on understanding peoples' lived experiences and inside views about how they perceive life events (Lawrence, 2014). To ensure the validity and truthfulness of data, qualitative researchers must adjust their data collection tool to reality instead of matching the facts to the abstract and fixed tool (Neuman, 2007). I designed an interview guide to safeguard the validity and kept it alive during the interview process. It is pertinent to mention here that this live interview guide enabled the researcher to ensure validity by adapting participants' views about how they perceive the intersection of social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in their political participation. More specifically, adding the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation as supplementary questions proves the validity of my interview guide that openly accommodated my participants' views. However, I initially designed only two questions on the role of social class and education in women's political participation.

Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers believe in data collection as an interactive and evolving process in which context directs the researcher to adopt unique techniques for measuring data that cannot be repetitive (Neuman, 2007). To ensure reliability, qualitative researchers do not lock themselves in a positivist passion for repetition. Instead, they adopt alternative measures depending on social and cultural contexts (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). To ensure the reliability of my data that meets my study objectives, I adopted multiple measurement techniques, looking into the role of class, education culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation. To make the tool reliable, I collected the data in an interactive and evolving process where context dictated me to use unique techniques for measuring women's political participation influenced by the previously mentioned

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complex intersectionalities. It is pertinent to mention that the intersection of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity emerged during the data collection, which ensured the reliability of the study tool.

3.7   The Researcher's Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher needs to expose the experiences of their participants, which always depend on the reciprocal relationship between the two stakeholders, i.e., the researcher and respondents (Corlett & Mavin, 2018). Thus, clarifying my positionality, I am a male, a permanent resident, and an academic in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I am very familiar with the culture and cultural restrictions in KP. I belong to a lower-middle-class family and have worked on women's politics in KP for the last seven years. I speak the *Pashtu* language, which is spoken in KP province. My social and cultural identity intersects with the interview process because most of the participants' features, such as culture, language, and ethnicity, closely resemble my identities. However, it is essential to recognize that my position as a male, *Pakhtun,* and socialized under a patriarchal set-up may have influenced the interview process.

Reflexivity is vital in feminist research because it creates self-awareness among feminist scholars on thinking and improving gender equality (Dowling, 2006). I approached the participants with a reciprocal relationship where my social and cultural settings reflexively played a crucial role in building up the confidence of the participants in the interview process. *Pakhtu* language, spoken by the researcher and participants, makes it easier to be more receptive to the participant's ideas, especially those that contradicted my theoretical position. My position as a *Pakhtun,* speaking the *Pakhtu* language, and belonging to a lower-middle class reflexively made it easier to interview the participants in a suitable and conducive environment. I tried to listen attentively to the participants' political experiences and their stories about their political participation.

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However, I recognize that a power differential still existed between me and some political representatives, such as MPAs, MNAs, and senators. This power differential may have influenced the reflexivity during the interviews.

3.8   Data Collection Process and Covid Experiences

Using an interview guide, I collected data through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The first respondent (a woman political activist) was purposively contacted through a colleague working as president of the school teachers association and has connections with women politicians. Using the snowball method, this woman political activist referred me to another participant working in the Awami National Party (ANP). This respondent referred me to other women politicians from different political parties, which is how I was involved in the data collection process. It is pertinent to mention that after interviewing almost seventeen to eighteen participants, the data collection process was stopped because of the Covid-19 third-wave outbreak. After twenty-seven days of disruption, I resumed data collection by conducting online interviews. I started contacting the participants telephonically and taking time for online interviews through zoom meetings. It was a unique experience for me as well as the participants. I enjoyed this experience because I had never done it before.

However, I faced some challenges during the online interviews. For instance, internet problems among the respondents, sometimes non-availability of the smartphone among the participants, and a lack of respondents' knowledge about online systems. I also faced some other challenges during the data collection process. For instance, it wasn't easy to contact women politicians and make an appointment for an interview. Sometimes, I used to wait for three to four hours because my participants were busy with political activities.

Moreover, it was an exciting experience for the researcher that some women politicians were not supposed to understand the questions. The researcher had to try repeatedly to make them understand the questions and collect the required data. I also experienced the interruption of some of the women politicians during the interview, which disturbed my flow of questions. For instance, Ayesha Bano, a member of the KP assembly, and Shahzia Aurangzeb, an ex-member of the provincial assembly, were supposed to deal with power relations and interrupt my questions during the interviews. I understand that some other participants tried not to reveal the facts because they didn't want to speak against their political parties. However, they were discriminated against during the nomination of quota seats.

3.9   Data Transcription, Management, and Coding

The researcher collected data in the *Pashtu* language. The language is spoken in the area. The researcher recorded interviews through an audio recorder and transcribed them into meaningful text. The researcher then repeatedly visited the data in the text to get familiar with it. Data were managed and coded manually, and sub and main themes were extracted. I grouped similar responses into sub-themes that further produced my major study themes. I have excluded the information that is not directly connected to my study objectives and kept them aside for future studies. In the process of transcription, screening, and coding of data, I remain focused on the intersection of social class, education, and gender that influence women's political participation. I have also coded some of the noteworthy quotes like *"Khazo da para kor day ya goor", "da khar pa thandi ke da meraab zay nasta"*, and *Khazay da bal da koor wi"*. It is pertinent to mention here that these quotes in the *Pashtu* language supported sub-themes and significant themes of my study.

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3.10   Major Themes

I tried in this study to explore the intersectionality of social class, education, culture, religion, ethnicity, familial support, and social networking in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. In response to my research question on the role of education in women's political participation, many themes emerged from the data. For instance, education and women's formal and informal political participation, women's upward political mobility in the party, women's nomination for the reserved seats, women's voting behavior, women's political candidacy, women's political resilience, and women's self-confidence. In connection to my study objective on the intersection of social class and gender in women's political participation, I have produced various themes from my data management like social class matters in women's nomination for the reserved seats, political donors: an untold truth, the expensiveness of women's political activities, district government: a political destination of poor women, family background: an undeniable political reality, party portfolios: the birthright of elite women, economic resources, and women's political participation. I produced many themes from the data about the role of culture, social networking, familial support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation. These are womans' political participation: culture matters, social networking of women, women's familial support, religion in women's political participation, and ethnicity in women's political participation.

3.11   Data Analysis

There are different types of qualitative data analysis, such as iterative qualitative analysis, fixed qualitative analysis, and subjectivist qualitative analysis (Sgier, 2012). However, I used a fixed qualitative analysis. This type of qualitative analysis is employed after the collection of data. It depends upon the nature of the data, the purpose of the analysis, and the research paradigm

(Sarantakos, 2012). The themes emerged from the data analyzed in line with the empirical and theoretical literature on gender and women's politics. It is pertinent to mention that major theoretical concepts for the data analysis come from intersectionality/intersectional feminism, feminist political analysis, and Marxist feminism (see theoretical underpinnings of the study for detail). I have divided the data analysis into three chapters, i.e., 4, 5, and 6. In chapter four, I presented the data analysis on the role of education in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. I have also discussed how the social class of women influences women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in chapter five of my study. In chapter six, I explained the data on the intersection of culture, social networking, familial support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation.

3.12   The Approach of Intersectionality in Data Analysis

Translating raw data into meaningful, original, and understandable text is one of the prime responsibilities of a researcher (Shields, 2008). I understand that intersectional analysis in qualitative research enables the researcher to be aware of the identities crisscrossing each other. These intersection identities like gender, race, sex, ethnicity, education, religion, and culture create complexity for feminist researchers in the data analysis. However, at the same time intersectionality approach creates new avenues for qualitative and feminist researchers to approach an issue of gender discrimination from different angles instead of one specific and biased position. The intersectionality approach in my data analysis enabled me to think critically about the intersection of social class, education, and *Pakhtuns* culture and analyze the primary data on women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

3.13   Ethical Consideration

After the approval of the research synopsis from the relevant bodies like the board of studies, the board of faculty, and the board of advanced studies and research, I developed an interview guide, and the researcher's supervisor approved it. I tried to collect accurate and authentic data for my project. The sense of accountability in my research enabled me to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and dignity of the research participants because they were the only women population, and there was cultural sensitivity involved in contacting and talking to the women political activists. Hence, I used pseudonyms for the participants in my research project. I focused on being honest and transparent with the respondents in the data collection process. I have also tried to convince the respondents that the data will be used only for academic purposes. I understand I am human and have all the cultural influences and sensitivities. However, being a researcher, I have tried to remain neutral in the analysis and presentation of my data. After all, if any such things would not intentional and they may be considered a common human error.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CLASS IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

4.1   Introduction

As discussed in chapter 2 (literature review) of this study, social class has contributed to the complex intersectionalities and influenced women's political participation in developing countries (Hughes, 2011; Brown, 2014; Cassese & Holman, 2016). It is also debated in the literature review that social class intersected with women's political participation in informal and formal ways (see literature review). The role of social class is undeniable in women's political participation. However, this has not received appropriate academic attention in the Pakistani context.   Therefore, this chapter analyzes the intersection of social class, gender, and women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Participants' views on the role of social class in women's political participation are examined in line with the empirical and theoretical review.   Key theoretical concepts for the data analysis in this chapter come from intersectionality/intersectional feminism, Marxist feminism, and feminist political perspective. The following sections present how social class influenced women's informal and formal political participation in KP.

4.2   Women's Selection on the Reserved Seats

The study responses suggest an undeniable role of social class in women's political participation and allocation of quota seats. Results show that socioeconomic status matters in women's selection of reserved government seats. As one interviewee said, *"I am working hard to make my political career, but I am discriminated against twice during the nomination for the reserved seat*

because I belong to a humble background" Anum. Another participant responded almost similarly: *"once I was on second on the list of reserved seats, only two seats were available. I was dropped, and a woman from the upper class got selected who was at the fourth number,"* Sara. The responses have roots in Collins's (2007) concept of intersectionality and matrices of domination, primarily the structural domain of power. She believes that the structural domain of power comprises social and economic structures that maintain the overall organization of power in society and influence women's political participation. Haque (2013) also found that social class is one of the influential factors in women's political participation, including women's quota seats. He concluded that the political parties prioritized women of the elite class in the allocation of reserved seats.

The research participants shared that political parties in KP deal with women of humble backgrounds in a discriminatory way. They (political parties) often ignore poor women in the distribution of quota seats. A common view among participants was that:

> *The political leadership has always ignored women of poor socioeconomic status in selecting reserved seats. This practice happens because women of rich socioeconomic backgrounds are influential in party politics, and leadership of the political parties prioritizes rich women.*

This view is in line with what Oyesomi, Salawu, and Olorunyomi (2017) argued in that the socioeconomic characteristics of women had an impact on their political participation. They revealed that women from elite families are given more importance in allocating quota seats than poor women. Discussing the role of women's social status in their nomination for reserved seats

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in the government, another participant from a lower-class position spoke, *"I have been working with one of the political parties since 2002. In the local government elections in 2013, I was not nominated for the reserved seat of the district government because I am from a humble economic background,"* Noor Jehan. Wang and Dai (2013) also reported that women's economic position affected their presence in the public and political sphere, including political participation through quota seats. A common sense of the study interviewees about the statement was that:

> *Women from lower socioeconomic positions have always facilitated/supported the political parties in many ways, for instance, by arranging different political meetings/activities. Still, they (poor women) were ignored in nomination for the reserved seats in the district council.*

Borrowing Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality for analysis, it can be argued here that dealing with women of humble backgrounds in a discriminatory way is one of the structural problems in political parties in KP. Similarly, Cin (2017) found that class position and culture influence women's political participation at the local and national levels, including the allocation of quota seats. One of the participants in this study stated that *"hard work is nothing in politics without financial support because belonging to a low-income family, my hard work didn't help me in the reserved seat from my party"* Anum. This statement of the research participant supports Pradhan's (2010) findings that women's social status plays a vital role in the allocation of reserved seats and overall women's political participation. Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that women's socioeconomic status has an undeniable role in their political participation, including quota seats.

4.3 Political Donors: An Untold Truth

The research participants revealed an untold truth that women need to have a financial donation to the party fund; otherwise, they would have no political career. They further stated that women from poor socio-economic backgrounds were incapable of doing so. These findings confirm that Heerwig and Gordon (2018) pointed out that political donors enjoy high-level political positions in the government while those who do not pay the party funds remain behind. A common view among the participants about the statement was that *women of poor social status were often not considered for high-level positions in the government, like the minister, advisor, and minister of state, because they could not donate funds to the party.* Similar findings were found by Ohman & Lintari (2015) that women's financial status is one of the vital indicators of their political representation because they have to arrange different political activities and even support the political party financially. Many women political activists shared a similar view to the comment below that:

> *Women with rich financial status enjoy good positions in the party and the government. We know some women members who contribute to the party funds and support party activities. They organize meetings and political activities. As a reward, they get good positions in the party and government.*

Women's hard work in politics is useless for making their political careers until it is supported by rich economic background. A woman participant said, *"If we want to contest elections by the party ticket, we have to pay Rs (200,000) to the party funds,"* Nabeela. It is a challenge for women from the lower class to get the party ticket for the election. These responses confirm

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Bornschier and Kriesi's (2012) findings that class orientation mattered in women's political participation, including the election. If a Marxist lens is applied here, women in KP's capitalist class will enjoy political positions. At the same time, there would be little space for poor women in the government and political parties. Sharing her personal experience, one of the participants highlighted that *"once I was on the top for the ticket for the provincial assembly, but I was ignored, and the ticket was given to another woman who belonged to a Nawab (elite) family of Mardan (one of the districts in KP) because her family supports political party financially"* Khana Karaman (2021) also found that women's political participation needs a strong socioeconomic background; otherwise, strong people would have exploited them.

Participants' views show the importance of political donations in women's successful political careers. One of the women political activists shared that *once, my party asked me to donate some money to the party for the arrangement of political activity. Still, I could not pay after they ignored me as a candidate to contest the election on the party ticket.* This response has roots in Lykke's (2010) intersectionality, arguing that the intersection of class, gender, and structural practices causes women's oppression, which further affects their experiences and political participation. Similarly, Wang (2013) revealed that the socioeconomic condition of women influenced their political participation at the party and government levels. Several studies have commonly addressed that women need to be economically empowered if we want them in the public and political sphere (Bergeron, 2001; Peterson, 2010).

4.4   Political Activities are Expensive

Like Marx, Bourdieu considers economic capital an essential tool that strongly influences other capitals of human life (Allan, 2007). In this study, I believe that women's economic position

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affected their political participation. Many respondents supported the view that *"arranging corner meetings, party meetings, and other political gatherings are the expensive activities which normally are out of the reach of working-class women."* How economic capital influences women's political experiences can best be understood from the participants' responses. Women's economic position does not allow them to arrange different expensive political activities, ultimately affecting their political representation in the party. Kassa's (2015) finding supports this assertion that women's poor economic status is one of the fundamental challenges to their political participation. Yoon and Okeke (2019) also reported that women's social and economic conditions matter in their political participation. Feminist political theorists, for instance, Kantola and Lombardo (2017), questioned women's economic status that influenced women's political participation. They argued that the deep societal structures impact women's economic life, further affecting their political participation (Kantola and Lombardo, 2021). Recognizing this argument, one of the ex-members of the district council revealed that *"arranging political activities carry an important role in making our political career. However, due to our poor economic background, most of my colleagues cannot excel in their political careers,"* Roonaq. Another participant stated, *once, the president of my party advised me to arrange an activity, but my pocket didn't allow me to do so, and he shouldered this responsibility to another wealthy woman colleague.* These responses indicated how socio-economic class plays a vital role in women's political participation.

Discussing the relationship between women's socioeconomic status and expensive political activities, Rosen (2017) women's socioeconomic status is associated with their political participation. He found that economically strong women are more capable of participating in politics than poor women. Attesting this claim, one of the woman participants in this study

highlighted that *I am trying to arrange different political activities to make my way into the party. Still, it is useless because I am from a low-income family and cannot afford it.* This response can be linked to Msangi's (2013) finding in the context of Indonesia that improving women's socioeconomic status is a prerequisite for enhancing their political participation. Many women political activists in this study agreed that *without arranging expensive political activities, women couldn't improve their party position.* This explanation supports the findings of Spark, Cox, and Corbett (2019) that working-class women's political participation is affected by their class status. Women's social status matters in the arrangement of expensive political activities. For instance, Saktanber (2013) concluded that women's economic status and political representation are indispensable in Turkey. He found that economically rich women have more resources to organize political activities than poor women. He further stated that rich women's strong social circle supports their political activities. Similarly, in this study, many participants from wealthy families shared similar views that rich women have no problems arranging party meetings and other political gatherings in their Hujra (drawing rooms), making *them strong in political parties and improving their political careers".* In contrast, many participants revealed similar views to the following statement:

> *Economically poor women always faced difficulties arranging corner meetings, party leadership meetings, and other political gatherings because they didn't have a big hujra (drawing room) or a place to manage these activities. The second option was public halls which were expensive to book, and they could not afford the expenses.*

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Considering the above discussion, it can be argued that arranging party meetings, corner meetings, party leadership meetings, and other activities were expensive political activities, and economically poor women could not arrange these activities.

4.5   District Government: A Political Destination of Poor Women

The study responses suggest that district government was the political destination for poor women. In contrast, economically strong women reached provincial and national governments. Views of most of the ex-members in the district government aligned with the statement that *We have been in the district government for two sessions through our struggle and public support. However, we couldn't manage the provincial or national assembly because of our class (lower class).* This statement could be connected to Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras, and Iyer's (2018) findings that women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not have the potential to participate in upper-level political structures. One of the participants spoke about the journey between her class position and membership in the district government:

> "I belong to a humble economic background. I started my political
>
> career in 2002. I have served my constituency effectively
>
> consecutively in the district government three times. I have tried
>
> the provincial nomination twice on the reserved seats but realized
>
> there was no space for women like me who belonged to a lower
>
> social class" Anum

Another participant has revealed an almost similar experience by saying *we cannot take a single example where a woman from a lower socioeconomic background is nominated for the national*

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assembly seat. This finding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is fascinating because participants couldn't see their political spaces in provincial/federal-level politics. A feminist theorist, Barrett (2014) argued that class position is a key to women's success in politics, especially in upper-level politics. In this study, an ex-member of the tehsil council shared her experience that *even after my recommendation by the initial scrutiny committee for the senate election, my candidature was rejected by the senior leadership of our party with the opinion that senate election is an expensive process and you belonged to a humble background.* This opinion exemplifies the assertion of Nikpour, Moeini, and Ahmadi (2012) that endorsed the importance of class in women's political careers. Nawarat (2010) also concluded that working-class women faced barriers in their careers at higher political levels.

One of the exceptional cases I have found in this study was that a woman from a lower social class was selected as a member of the KP assembly. The participant shared that:

> *I am a retired teacher from one of the colleges of the Pakistan Air Force, and I belong to a lower class. I was elected as a district counselor and then a provincial assembly member. The reason for my selection as a member of the KP provincial assembly as a quota woman was my friendship with the mother of a senior minister. The mother of this minister was in my school class fellow. After the general elections in 2018, she asked me to submit the nomination papers for the quota seat in the KP assembly. I submitted the nomination papers and was recommended as a member of the KP assembly for the quota seat.*

This was the only example in this study where a woman from the lower class was selected as MPA through the reserved seat. Otherwise, in this study, most women from the lower socioeconomic class have not been through membership in the provincial or national assemblies. Local or district government was the political destination of such women political activists. It is pertinent to mention that these women had the capabilities and were very active in their participation in the district government. Still, unfortunately, their socioeconomic position was not supportive, which could push them to higher political positions.

4.6   Family Political Background: An Undeniable Reality

Most of the responses in this study highlighted that family political background plays a paramount role in women's political participation. Families of quota women in the national and provincial governments had a stronghold in the political parties. Many participants confirmed that it is a common practice that quota women are from politically strong families. Regarding the role of familial background in women's political participation, one of the commonly revealed opinions from the analysis of this study is:

> *Yes, family background is significant in politics. Most women MPAs and*
> *MNAs in the province are from strong economic and political families,*
> *and the quota women are not exempt.*

Similarly, another woman political activist stated *I know many of my colleagues who are members of KP assembly because of their families.* These findings attest to Spark and Corbett's (2016) assertion that familial, political background is one of the most vital factors that enhance women's political participation. Similarly, Latif *et.*, al, (2020) confided that familial ties with a

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political party play an important role in women's politics, especially their nomination being quota women. Supporting the same argument, one of the senior women political activists stated that " *without strong familial background, there is no political career for women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.* " In contrast, one of the women members who was currently a member of the KP assembly (2018-23) argued that *there is no role for the familial position in women's political participation. It depends upon women's efforts and political struggle.* It is pertinent to mention that this MPA belonged to a family with strong political ties with one of the political parties. Lee and Shin (2016) also found that familial, political background, and socioeconomic position contributed to politics. This finding can be connected to the commonly expressed opinion of the participants of this study which is *women from political families can get the nomination on quota for provincial and national assemblies. However, it is a daydream for women other than political families.*

It confirms the influence of familial ties and roots of family in politics in KP. Many participants said that we always worked as political workers with those women politicians who belong to politically strong families. Bailey and DiPrete's (2016) research is relevant here, which concluded that familial background has a crucial role in women's political representation. They also found that family ties with political parties are associated with women's political participation. One of the ex-members of the district council shared an exciting experience:

> *"I am from a humble background. My father is serving as a driver with*
> *one of the politically strong families in the town. I was contesting elections*
> *for the district council as an independent candidate against the wife of a*
> *khan (elite) with whom my father was a driver. It was a tough situation for*

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me. My father came to me and told me that do not to contest elections. You

know I am serving that family as a driver. We don't deserve to contest

elections against them, " Muskan

This response also points out the individual resilience within the system and how one has to face the challenges when stepping out the social boundaries. Baturo and Gray's (2018) finding seemed relevant here in that in 2010, the number of women heads of the government reached 10 per cent, but the majority of them relied on their strong familial ties to politics.

It can be summed up that familial background matters in women's political participation in the KP province. Women with no family political background have little space in politics in KP. However, women with a family political legacy had bright chances in their political careers.

4.7 Party Portfolios: The Birth Right of Elite Women

As noted earlier, women without family political backgrounds had fewer chances in their political careers. Here it is claimed that most portfolios are allotted to women who belong to the elite class or have familial and political ties. Most participants agreed that *political parties give party positions to those women who belong to the elite class because of their strong financial position.* One of the participants shared that:

> *Women from the lower social class are struggling hard. They volunteer*
>
> *time, energy, resources, and lives to serve political parties. In rainy,*
>
> *extremely hot, and cold weather, they work for their political parties and*
>
> *arrange different political activities. St. Still, when it comes to the party*

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Appendix-i   Interview Guide

1. Name of the respondent _____

2. Age of the respondent _____

3. Gender   <u>Only women political representatives</u>

4. Affiliation of the respondent with local, provincial, or national level politics

   _____

5. How long have you been in politics?

6. Have you been elected to or currently have membership in the local, provincial or national government?

7. Are you affiliated with any political party?

8. Do you have any portfolios at your party?

9. How do you see the role of education in your political experiences?

10. What kind of difference do you see between the political participation of an educated and uneducated women political representative?

11. How can education enhance the political participation of women?

12. Do you see the role of social position in women's political participation?

13. How do the social positions of women affect their political experiences?

14. How do you see your political experiences connected to your education status?

15. How do you see your political participation in connection to your social class position?

Appendix-ii   Participants' Socio-demographic Profiles

Participant	Age	Education	Party Affiliation	Party Position	Government Position	Number of years in Politics	Religion	Family Background
iffat	41	MA	ANP	District President	_	13	Islam	Political background
izwana han	65	MA	ANP	_	_	9	Islam	No political background
irida aji	45	SSC	PPPP	_	_	11	Islam	No political background
oor han	53	HSSC	ANP	_	_	17	Islam	No political background
anwal han	45	BA	ANP	Vice president in the central cabinet	_	19	Islam	Political background
aeema ieed	51	MSC	ANP	Vice president	_	15	Islam	Political background
ideeqa	60	HSSC	ANP	_	MPA	17	Islam	Political background
ira Khan	41	HSSC	ANP	Women joint secretary	_	11	Islam	Political background
iagufta bi	45	8th class	ANP	_	_	14	Islam	No political background
isreen ian	53	MBBS	ANP	Women vice president	_	9	Islam	Political background
ha Ali	34	LLB	PML-N	_	_	12	Islam	No political background
iza ian	46	MSC	MMAP	_	MPA	10	Islam	Political background
iosha i	37	BA	PPPP	President chamber of commerce	_	16	Islam	No political background
feena	69	BSC and B.ed.	PTI	_	MPA	7	Islam	Political background
wa	27	LLB	PPPP	District vice president	_	18	Islam	Political background
iya	34	LLB	PTI	_	MPA	8	Islam	Political background
ionaq i	27	LLB	PML-N	Union council woman president	_	11	Islam	No political background
ibina ian	28	MA	ANP	District joint secretary	_	7	Islam	Political background
ibeela	60	HSSC	PTI	_	MPA	19	Islam	Political

Name	Age	Education	Party	Position	Title	No.	Religion	Background
hn								background
oreen asir	48	HSSC	PPPP	Union council general secretary	_	16	Islam	No political background
ajida sman	33	MA	MMAP	District information secretary	_	9	Islam	Political background
arzana	46	MA	MMAP	_	MPA	13	Islam	Political background
aila amad	41	BSC	PML-N	_	Senator	11	Islam	Political background
ishwar ultan	49	HSSC	Independent	_	_	7	Islam	Political background
hanam bi	32	BA	PTI	_	_	12	Islam	No political background
aima bi	51	MA	PTI	Senior vice president	_	9	Islam	Political background
oreen	46	MA	ANP	_	MPA	5	Islam	Political background
num	39	MA	PPPP	_	_	13	Islam	No political background
eema han	46	BA	ANP	_	Senator	6	Islam	Political background

Source: Data collected during the project.

portfolios, they select women from the elite class or families whose men

are already set with the central leadership of the political parties.

These responses have roots in Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality that the intersection of class and gender influenced women's participation in the public and political spheres. Participants' views revealed that socioeconomic inequalities influenced women's political participation as party portfolios in KP were often given to women who belonged to the elite class. Verge and Claveria (2018) found that party position is vital in strengthening one's political career. In most cases, these are held either by elite men or women. In Kenya, Kivoi (2014) also argued that women's selection on party portfolios could improve their overall political participation, but party positions were often given to women of the elite class. Likewise, one of the participants in this study claimed that *"I have been working in the party for the last 19 years, but recently I was ignored in the assigning of party portfolio; the portfolio was given to a junior but an elite woman in the party"* Noreen. A common view among the participants was that *high-level positions in the central leadership of the parties are always given to women from strong political families and or from the elite class.* It means women's socioeconomic status not only plays a role in their participation in the government but also affects the allocation process of party positions. In Pakistan, Cheema *et al.* (2019) also reported that women must have a sound socio-economic background to occupy a political party position.

A woman participant in this study reported that *I had given the presidentship of the district to one of the women belonging to a wealthy family because she had the resources.* She added that *women from humble economic backgrounds could not hold a party position effectively because they do not have resources like a car, money, or hujra (drawing room) to be utilized for the party*

activities". In contrast, another respondent from an elite/politically strong family shared that *there is no such concept in our political party. We select women for party positions on merit while looking into their performance.* She may be disguising the facts to avoid criticism because Dar (2017) found that class influenced women's political participation in the same context. He argued that women are successful in party politics and holding positions whose male family members are already present at the top level of political leadership. Likewise, a participant highlighted that *I am from a low-income family. I have been serving as an activist in one of the political parties in KP since 2002. The cabinet of our party has dissolved and reconstituted so many times, but I have never been selected for the party portfolio for a single time".* This shows that the importance of socioeconomic position/class can not be ignored in women's political participation, especially in the allocation of party portfolios in the KP province.

4.8   Economic Resources Matter More than Political Struggle

Research studies in different sociocultural contexts revealed that economic resources have more importance in women's political participation than political struggle (Shojaei *et al.* l, 2010). The findings of this study revealed that the struggle for a political career without financial resources is meaningless. A member of the tehsil council explained that *women need a car, a big hujra (drawing room), money, and other resources for promising political careers.* Another interviewee claimed that *we struggle hard to make political careers, but we are unsuccessful due to a lack of economic resources.* Conversely, another women politician from one of the *Nawab* (elite) families said, *I am enjoying my political career because I have all the resources needed for my political activities and a strong political background.* The participants' opinions clarified

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that having sufficient economic resources matter more than the political struggle in women's political careers.

The study findings revealed the exclusion of poor women from politics, although they struggled to make political careers. One of the participants explained that *I have been well educated and struggling hard in politics. However, I am still not a successful politician because I belong to a low-income family.* Kivoi (2014) reported similar findings in the Kenyan context that women could not participate well in politics due to poor socioeconomic status. One of the participants asserted *I have been working very hard in my political party since 2011. However, I can still not secure a position in the party and the government because of my poor economic status.* A common view among the respondents about the statement was:

> *Women worked with complete devotion from morning to evening and sometimes till late at night to arrange different political activities. However, these efforts were meaningless because of their poor economic position. Women's poorer social status compromised their position in the party and government.*

The above responses clarified that socioeconomic status carried more significant value than political struggle in women's political participation. These responses attest to Mayer's (2016) findings that poor women in Thailand faced challenges in their political careers. Similarly, Holman (2016) asserted that women's social status is key to getting portfolios in the government.

Collins' (2007) intersectionality concluded that the structural domain of power is organized through the social and economic structures influencing women's political experiences.

Borrowing collins' intersectionality for analysis, it can be argued that women's social status and political participation are indispensable to each other in KP. Many participants shared a similar view that wome*n with good economic positions can quickly grow in their political careers compared to poor women.* In the same context, Naz and Ahmad (2012) found poor socioeconomic positions badly affected women's political participation.

4.9   Women's Social Status in Comparison to Education

The study findings suggest tha social status is more important in women's political participation than education. Findings revealed that women with good social status got portfolios in the parties and government. However, educated women often could not secure these portfolios. Many participants showed a common view of the following statement:

> *Economic position matter more than education in women's political participation. Only the HSSC (higher secondary school certificate) level of education is required for membership in the provincial and national assemblies. However, when it comes to economic status, women need to be strong economically because they need to donate to party funds, submit election commission fees, run elections campaigns, and arrange political gatherings.*

Drawing on intersectional theorist Cooper's (2016) view, it can be argued that socioeconomic class and gender mutually influenced women's political participation. One of the women from the *Arbab* (elite) family stated that *politics is not the game of poor women because you all need to spend money, ride a car, conduct party meetings, and manage political activities.* Conversely,

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Haq (2013) pointed out that social position and education mutually enhanced women's political participation in India. He added that knowledge of politics and communication skills are essential for public and political speeches, which may improve women's political representation. One informant reported that *I am master qualified and have been working in my political party since 2009. I applied for the reserved seat in the provincial assembly but was ignored, and a rich woman was nominated.* Comparing social status and education in women's politics, another participant highlighted:

> *We know many women political activists who have been working for the last one and half decades in different political parties. They are highly educated women, and we have listened to them in the district council. They communicate their political interests very well. However, they have not been selected as members of the provincial assembly because of their poor social status.*

Borrowing Kantola and Lombardo's (2017) concept of women and political analysis, it can be argued that socioeconomic inequalities influenced women's political participation in KP. Msangi's (2013) findings also suggested that women's socioeconomic status is vital in their political participation, especially when contesting elections. Similarly, one of the respondents indicated that *I am an educated and experienced political activist. When I intended to contest elections, the party stopped me and nominated another rich woman.* To sum up the discussion, it can be argued that women's socioeconomic status has more importance than education in women's political participation in KP.

4.10 Conclusion

The chapter highlighted the role of social class in women's political participation in KP province. The chapter explored how women's socio-economic status influenced their political participation differently. For instance, women's socioeconomic status played an essential role in their nomination for reserved seats. Elite-class women were mainly selected for reserved seats in the provincial and national assemblies. However, women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were ignored, although they worked hard to make their political careers. The chapter further demonstrated that political donors enjoyed high-level positions in the party and government.

The findings revealed that most participants were economically poor and could not arrange expensive political activities like party meetings, corner meetings, demonstrations, and other political activities. The chapter revealed an exciting finding that district government was the political destination of poor women, and getting a nomination as a quota woman for the provincial and national assemblies was a daydream for poor women. The chapter further highlighted that familial and political background was a plus point in the nomination of quota women for the provincial and national assembly.

The role of struggle cannot be denied in women's political participation. However, the chapter concluded that economic resources like money, a car, and a big hujra (drawing room) occupy more essential roles than women's political struggle in women's successful political participation. The forthcoming chapter (see chapter 5) revealed that education is vital in women's political participation. However, this chapter disclosed that women's socioeconomic status is more important than education regarding women's political participation in KP.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

5.1   Introduction

Chapter 4 highlighted the role of social class in women's political participation in KP. The mentioned chapter explored how socioeconomic status influenced women's nomination for reserved seats and affected women's other political activities, such as party meetings, corner meetings, and demonstrations. Chapter 4 further found that women's social status was more important than education in women's political participation. As discussed in the literature review (see chapter 2), it is extensively recognized that education is an indispensable phenomenon in women's political representation (Herzog & Krauss, 2005; Polatdemira, 2015). This chapter (chapter 5) discussed how education intersected with women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). It is worth mentioning here that the role of formal education has been discussed, and women's political experience/training has been equated with their informal political education/experience. Theoretical frameworks included Collins' (2002; 2019) intersectionality and matrices of domination, Kantola and Lombardo's (2009; 2016; 2017; 2019) feminist political perspective, and Marxist feminist theory guiding the explanation presented in this chapter. How education and political experience intersect with women's political participation in different ways in KP is analyzed in the following sub-themes with the help of empirical and theoretical reviews.

5.2   Women's Informal Political Participation

The analysis in this study revealed that educated and politically experienced women were more successful in holding informal political activities than uneducated and inexperienced women. For instance, educated and politically experienced women arranged corner meetings, actively participated in party meetings, and mobilized women for other political activities. One of the women political activists reported:

> *"I am always disappointed during corner meetings and political*
>
> *campaigns because of my illiterate women colleagues. They cannot*
>
> *effectively speak and convince women like educated and experienced*
>
> *women do"* Safeena.

A woman politician responded almost similarly: *"I can feel the difference between the informal political activities of my educated and uneducated colleagues. People listen to educated women carefully and appeal more to the public during corner meetings"* Naeema. This statement is deeply rooted in Marxist-intersectional feminism (see chapter 2), which claims that the intersection of gender, class, and education creates social, cultural, and political inequalities and promotes women's oppression in various ways. For instance, hooks suggested that feminist thoughts can be part of schooling that could help women's political empowerment. The above response of the participant also comes in line with the assertion of Saigal (2009) that there is an apparent difference between the political experiences of educated and uneducated women. In this study, one of the participants shared that a woman member of the KP assembly (MPA) confided that:

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"I have seen educated and politically experienced women in my party participating actively in informal political activities. Whenever needed, they easily arrange community meetings, mobilize women for political gatherings, and communicate the party's policies to the workers. However, our illiterate and less-experienced colleagues are not successfully performing such activities" Asiya.

This study recognized the role of education and political experience in women's informal political participation. One of the woman political activists asserted that: *"education and political experience give us strength in corner meetings and political campaigns"* Robina. Similarly, another participant revealed, *"I know many of my colleagues doing well in arranging corner meetings and party politics because they are educated and politically experienced"* Nasreen. This response can be visualized through Crensahaw's (1991) structural intersectionality, where she argued that the intersection of class, education, and gender directly influences women's experiences in the public and political spheres.

Considering the above discussion, I argue that education and political experience have a key role in women's informal political participation, such as arranging corner meetings, political campaigns, and mobilization.

5.3   Women's Formal Political Participation/Business

In matrices of domination, Collins (2007) argues that the overall power organization in society is maintained through different power domains. However, she is specifically interested in the structural domain of power where structural inequalities such as education, polity, and

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economics dominantly influence women's experiences, including their political participation. In this study, some women politicians claimed that education and political experience are mandatory for legislative participation. However, socioeconomic and educational inequalities in KP have influenced women's formal political participation/business. Many women members of the KP assembly revealed:

"Low-qualified and politically inexperienced women in the house face problems reading and understanding important legislative bills. They attend assembly sessions regularly, but their contribution to the legislative process is minimal. Different non-governmental organizations are trying to train and make them understand the legislative process, but still, they cannot do so" Noreen, Farzana, Nabeela, Hadeeqa, and Faiza.

The above common assertion of the respondents supports Molnar's (2014) claim that education is one of the most vital indicators influencing women's formal political participation. Similarly, Rao (2017) concluded that education is key to women's legislative participation.

Participants in this study revealed that legislative bills related to budget and developmental schemes need to be discussed by educated and politically experienced women. Many respondents in this study claimed that:

"Budget-related bills are technical, and sometimes these relate to welfare activities, including women empowerment. They revealed that our uneducated and inexperienced women colleagues do not understand these bills, which ultimately affects women's empowerment" Laila, Anosha, Riffat, and Reema.

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In light of this claim, it can be argued that women's education and political experience only do not intersect with women's legislative participation. Instead, they influence women's overall empowerment through legislative participation. Sanya and Lutomia (2016) also revealed that the role of educated women could be very effective in the legislative process related to women's empowerment.

Kantola and Lombardo (2017) argued that social, political, and educational inequalities influence women's participation in the political sphere, including their legislative representation. This argument has roots in this study as one of the participants asserted that:

"Because of our low academic qualifications, we often face difficulties understanding developmental schemes, including fund allocations for women's welfare and empowerment. We have more than fifteen years of experience in politics, but due to our lack of education, we cannot properly understand the terminologies of financial facts and allocations" Safeena.

Similar findings have been reported by Liu (2017) that women's formal education and political experience could influence their decision-making process. Women's political experience alone cannot ensure their effective participation in the legislative process until supported by formal education. One of the women members of the KP assembly revealed, *"I have a long experience in politics, but I am qualified just up to the higher secondary school level; that is why I am unable to understand most of the legislative business in the house"* Hadeeqa. Drawing on Smith's (2001) women's lived experiences, I argue that women members in the KP assembly need proper training and formal schooling for successful legislative participation. Highlighting the role of

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education and political experience in women's formal political participation, a few well-educated participants suggested that:

> "We need to properly educate women through the school curriculum so they can learn some content about politics. They stressed an effective gender-neutral curriculum. They were also critical of male role models in politics presented in textbooks" Niha, Roonaq, Sajida, Nasreen, and Shaima.

I believe this suggestion has roots in Smith's (2007) concept of new materialism, where she, in contrast to Marx's materialism, argued that power is mediated through texts and facts instead of commodities and money. Criticizing the education system in KP, a woman politician claimed that *"the school curriculum in the province is inappropriate for women's schooling because of the absence of women's leadership"* Anum. This claim confirms Smith's (2001) argument of text-mediated power that women must be presented in the school curriculum as political role models to ensure women's political empowerment. Thus, it can be argued that education and political experience are the key elements in women's formal political and legislative participation.

5.4 Women's Mobility in Party Hierarchy

The study responses suggest that education and political experience are essential factors in women's mobility in the party hierarchy. A considerable number of the respondents revealed that *the senior leadership of the political parties prioritizes educated and experienced women for different portfolios in the parties. Senior leadership believes that educated and experienced women can improve their party representation.* Similar findings were found by Lykke (2010) that the intersection of education and gender influenced women's political socialization that has

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subsequently affected women's participation in party politics. Ocran's (2014) claim is also relevant here: education improves women's position in the party hierarchy.

According to Crenshaw's (1991) concept of structural intersectionality, the intersection of education, class, and gender directly influenced women's experiences, including their political participation. In line with this argument, one of the participants in this study stated that *"lack of education influences women's participation in party politics, including their nomination for the party portfolios"* Fareeda. This statement supports the finding of Bullough (2008) that women's education and experience enhanced their participation in party politics and improved women's upward mobility in the party organization. An intersectional feminist, Kathy Davis (2020), argued that the intersection of education, social class, and gender affects women's experiences in different informal domains of politics, including women's party politics.

In the intersectional approach of doing feminist political analysis, Kantola and Lombardo (2017) argued that social, educational, political, and other inequalities influence women's participation in public and political spheres. In this study, A senior woman politician responded, *" wherever we select a woman for the party portfolio, we assess three things. Her formal education, political experience, and other contributions to the party like loyalty and obedience to the party rules"* Farzana. Similar findings were found by Park (2011), claiming that women's formal education and political experiences are necessary for their influential role in the political parties. Chiroro (2005) also suggested that women's participation in representative and party politics could be improved by increasing their education and political experiences.

5.5 Women's Selection on the Reserved Seats

Participants' views suggest that women's nomination for reserved seats in the provincial and national governments is aligned with women's education and political experiences. Political parties intend to recruit educated and politically experienced women for the quota seats. However, lack of education and political experience are the key factors influencing women's nomination for quota seats in KP. Most of the participants asserted that:

> *Political parties in our province seek to select those women on the reserved seats for the provincial and national governments who are well educated and experienced in politics. This formula for selection aims to serve the interest of the party. However, this is a bit of bad luck for us because most of us do not have that much education and experience in politics.*

This assertion can be linked to Polatdemira's (2015) findings that women's education influenced their quota seat nomination. He concluded that education and political experience mattered in women's party politics and the allocation of reserved seats. Krauss's (2005) findings could also be engaged here, indicating that women's political participation in most developing countries is affected by their low level of education. He also claimed that women's political experience influenced their candidacy for reserved seats. Marxist feminists such as bell hook understand that capitalist patriarchy creates women's oppression in all fields of life, including politics. She suggested that education could be a key to women's empowerment, where they could ask for their political rights. In this study, a woman politician stated, *"I was not selected on the reserved seat for the national government because they told me you have just qualified up to higher secondary school level. I would have been nominated for the quota seat if I had been educated"*

Muskan. Ullah (2016) also found that equal educational opportunities are not available to both genders. He indicated that although the school curriculum is gender-biased in KP, that has not presented women's roles as political leaders. One of the ex-members of the district government articulated that: *"I was not nominated for a quota seat in the provincial government because I am qualified up to higher secondary school level"* Sara. This response conforms with Liu's (2017) finding that women's formal political participation in the people's republic of China has been supported mainly by their higher qualifications.

Considering the above discussion, I argue that education and political experience are the key factors in women's political participation, including women's nomination for quota seats.

5.6   Women's Political Candidacy

An intersectional feminist, Carastathis understands intersectionality in terms of crisscrossing systems (education, class, and gender) of women's oppression that influence their public and political experiences, including political candidacy (Carastathis, 2008). The study responses suggest that education and political experience influence women's political candidacy. Political parties nominate educated and politically experienced women for national and provincial governments. One of the participants commented that *political parties nominate educated and politically experienced women for the election contest.* Fox and Lawless (2011) also explained that women's education has a key role in holding a political office, which is why political parties selected educated women as political candidates. Krook's (2010) finding is relevant in that education and experience are the key elements in women's political candidacy.

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According to bell hooks, feminist education can enhance women's political participation (hooks, 2000). She argued that feminist education creates a sense of resilience among women and allows them to ask about their political rights. One of the participants in this study stated: *"most of our women candidates face problems in selection for election contests because of their low academic qualifications. They (uneducated women) cannot even ask political parties about their right to political candidacy,"* Fiza. This statement attests to Sanya and Lutomia's (2016) finding that educated and experienced women political activists fight for their political rights, including getting tickets to contest elections. Ocran (2014) also suggested that quality education and proper political training could enhance women's political candidacy.

Crenshaw (1991) claimed that political intersectionality promotes privileges and marginalization that influence women's political experiences. Drawing on Crenshaw's concept of political intersectionality, one of the respondents in this study claimed that *"the education condition for political candidacy is good, but women's education should be improved because they (women) are marginalized in society.* This claim exemplifies Msangi's (2013) finding that unequal educational opportunities influenced women's political experiences, including their political candidacy. Msangi's finding is confirmed by one of the participants in this study: *"I know that education and political experience is mandatory for a woman candidate, but we have not been provided with the equal citizenship and socioeconomic opportunities to be highly educated"* Noor Jehan. Borrowing Collins' (2007) concept of matrices of domination, it is understood here that the overall organization of power in KP is held by men, influencing women's education and political experiences. The structural domains of power in KP, such as education, polity, law, and other social structures, oppress women's experiences, including their political candidacy.

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Bohn's (2007) argument is also valid here: socioeconomic inequalities affected women's education and political training, further influencing their political candidacy.

The study responses show that many of the women members in the ex-district government (district counselors and tehsil counselors) did not have the required education and experience for the provincial and national governments. Many women politicians claimed that:

"We have been members of the district government on the reserved seats. However, when we applied for the provincial assembly for reserved seats in the general elections of 2018, we were not selected. The party leadership told us they need highly educated and politically experienced women because the nature of business in the provincial assembly differs from that of the district government" Noreen, Muskan, Farida, and Khanam.

This claim closely complies with Carastathis's (2008) intersectionality, which argues that the crisscrossing systems (education, class, and gender) of women's oppression influence their public and political experiences, including political candidacy. Similarly, a woman from the ex-district government revealed that *I had worked hard since 2002 to make a political career. However, I am not considered suitable for the provincial government because of my low academic qualification.* This response supports Nash's (2008) study that the intersection of education and gender influences women's political participation in different ways, in which women's political candidacy is no exception.

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5.7 Women's Political Resilience

The study responses revealed that education enhances women's political resilience. One of the educated and experienced participants in this study claimed that *"in district government, the discussion is always dominated by men. One day, I tried time and time to speak, but they didn't allow me. At last, I snatched the mic from one of the male members and started speaking,"* Rizwana. This claim has roots in Marxist feminism. A Marxist feminist, bell hooks (2000), believed in women's emancipation with the help of feminist political activism. Another well-educated and experienced woman in this study revealed that:

> *"Once I was top on the merit list for the reserved seat of the provincial government, and another candidate got selected. I met with the district president and presented my reservations. He told me that he was helpless. Then I discussed the matter with the senior president of the party but in vain again. In the end, I protested against the central leadership, and they admitted the injustice they had done to me"* Ajwa.

Alexandra Kollontai (1977), a Marxist feminist, argued that women could be involved in socialist activism to learn about resilience in serving their political interests. Another established argument is that education enhances women's political resilience (Tian & Bush, 2020). The feminist political theory believes in the link between the theory of equality and practice. Kantola and Lombardo (2007) argued that complex intersectionalities of women's oppression could be deconstructed and reconstructed with the help of women's activism. They suggested that feminist critical realism could be part of women's education. Sharing her personal experiences, one of the women in the tehsil council expressed that *"without resistance and rebellion in the*

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council, male members do not allow us to talk about our rights" Fiza. Berinsky and Lenz (2011) also reported that education and political exposure could enhance women's political resilience and activism.

Radical feminism suggests using feminist education to deconstruct and reconstruct discriminatory gendered structures. For instance, Peterson (1996) argues that "gender as power" could be taught to women to be prepared to start activism and resilience for equal rights in the public and political sphere. In this study, one of the educated and politically experienced women shared:

> *"Once I applied for a reserved seat, which was my right, but the sister of one of the influential political figures of our party was successful. I protested many times with no response from the party's top leadership. I then resiliently left the party and contested the elections against the central president of that party,"* Robina.

Similar findings were reported by Conway (2001) that women without resilience in the political sphere could not get equal political rights. He suggested that women's capacity for resilience can be enhanced through education and proper political training. Herzog and Krauss (2005) also asserted that education and political exposure are essential variables in women's political resilience.

5.8   Women's Self-Confidence: Education and Experience Matter

According to Dorothy Smith, three sources of text-mediated power, such as verbal, written, and pictorial, keep women subordinated (Smith, 1996). She was interested in highlighting how schooling/education influences women's experiences in the public sphere, including their

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political participation. This understanding of Dorothy Smith enabled me to quote a participant's response: *"Educated and politically trained/experienced women speak very confidently on the informal and formal political forums"* Niha. This response attests to Wolak's (2020) finding that self-confidence is important in meeting women's political interests, which can be improved by education and political exposure. Brah and Phoenix (2004) also reported that women's proper education creates self-confidence, which helps them in building self-confidence. Some of the women members of the KP assembly shared that:

The educated and experienced women members of the provincial assembly (MPA) speak and participate very confidently in all activities on the assembly floor. They even very bluntly come cross-talk with the male members. They are very vocal on women's issues.

An almost similar view was given by an ex-woman member of the district government *"I always found educated women confidently participating in different activities in the house,"* Noreen. These findings attest to the findings of Suresh (2020) that education improves women's confidence in the public and political spheres. Bilal (2021) also found that women lack proper education and training in KP; otherwise, they would have been very confident and successful in politics (Bilal, 2021). Similarly, one of the participants in this study shared her experience *"I have been in the district government twice, but due to my low qualification and less political experience, I did not participate with full confidence in the district council sessions."* This response recognized the role of education and political experience in enhancing women's political confidence. Participants' views suggest a dire need for women's education and proper political training to improve their political confidence, as Syed and Dar (2017) suggested. In this

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study, one of the respondents who got an education from London, United Kingdom, asserted that *"due to education and political experience, I always hold my head high and can discuss various international political issues because you know the world is a global village now and one needs to be aware of each and everything in the politics"* Naeema. This assertion is closely related to the study of Rosen (2017) that women's self-confidence can be enhanced by improving their education and experience in politics.

5.9   Women's Political Participation: Some Other Aspects

Some participants linked education and political experience to other aspects of women's political participation. Such as advocacy for women's rights, including women's political rights. The (participants) indicated that the role of education and political experience is undeniable in women's advocacy for their political empowerment. This indication recognizes Shetty & Han's (2015) claim that education makes women think more rationally in advocating for women's empowerment. They concluded that education enables women to fight for their rights effectively.

Similarly, one of the KP assembly members stated, *"Educated and politically experienced women are advocating effectively for women's rights as compared to illiterate and inexperienced women"* Noreen. Presenting Smith's argument of text-mediated power, Luxton and Findlay (1989) asserted that knowledge of women being oppressed is more valuable than those of elite men. Smith believes that considering women's standpoints and their lived experiences is essential to consider and bring into practice women's political empowerment (Smith, 1987). A common view among interviewees about the statement was:

The struggle of educated and politically experienced colleagues for women's empowerment cannot be ignored. They (educated women) always fight for women-related legislation in the KP assembly. However, the uneducated women members remain helpless.

This view confirms Goetz's (2003) claim that education improves women's ability to fight for their rights. Conway (2001) also revealed that education and political experience enhance women's advocacy for getting political rights.

Women's political representation can be enhanced through legislation which needs women's strong advocacy in the legislative process. Iwanaga (2008) noted that education influenced women's contribution to the legislative process in developing countries. Many participants in this study shared that *we are less successful in women's empowerment-related legislation because of low qualifications and less political experience in law-making.* Bilge's (2010) intersectionality also believes that the historical, cultural, structural, and educational organization of power cannot be ignored in women's oppression that influences their participation in the public and political domains. One female member of the KP assembly stated, *"due to my low qualification and insufficient political experience, I am always disappointed with my role in those legislations which pertain to women empowerment"* Hadeeq. This statement supports Liu's (2017) suggestion that education enriches women's political experiences in law-making.

The study responses revealed that socio-culturally taught gendered order influences women's experiences in public institutions. As one interviewee said, *"male members are allotted front-row seats in the district council hall while women seats are behind them"* Rizwana. This view confirms Chappell and Waylen's (2013) argument that informal institutions shaped and reshaped

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women's socialization, influencing their experiences in public institutions. Another participant, when asked, shared that *male members in the district council do not tolerate women members.* Collins' (2007) argument of how men's dominance is maintained through different power domains is confirmed here. Men carry their dominant psychology (produced by the social structure domain of power) to the polity, such as the district council, where they do not tolerate women members.

The respondents shared a sense of the role of education and political experience in women's voting campaigns. The role of educated and politically experienced women is influential in running the voting campaign. Similarly, Rahmany (2017) found that women's education and political experience are the two important variables that help women in voting campaigns. Talking about this issue, an interviewee said:

> *"Women's education and political experience could not be denied in voting campaigns. Being educated and experienced, women can effectively run voting campaigns. Otherwise, uneducated women do not take an interest in our elections process, and normally they remain at home"* Sajida.

This response has roots in Bourdieu's (2018) institutionalized cultural capital (certificated and degree-based education), where he argues that this capital improves all other human capital. It means that education being institutionalized cultural capital influences women's political participation, including voting campaigns. Bebel (1998), being a Marxist feminist, stressed that any social or political system could not be practical until the active participation of women supports it, and there can be no political emancipation without the political independence of

women. Considering Bebel's argument, it is believed that women's voting campaigns could not be effective until they were trained by political emancipation.

Commenting on women's voting campaigns, one of the interviewees stated, " *I know some educated and politically experienced colleagues who run voting campaigns independently in the general elections of 2018*". The study findings are similar to those that Shah and Jameel (2016) identified in Pakistan, that women's education and experience influenced their voting campaigns. This finding is also rooted in the common response of many participants who revealed similar views as the following:

> *We have seen an improvement in women's voting campaigns in the 2018 general election because most women were educated and experienced in politics. Even this time, our women agents, who we recruited to help women voters on elections day, were satisfied with the women voting campaigns.*

Another participant said, *"I see a visible difference between the voting campaigns of educated and uneducated women"* Kishwar. These responses conform with Inglehart and Norris (2000) that women's education and political experience influence their approach to voting campaigns, further strengthening their political participation across developing countries. One of the KP assembly members articulated, *"I always observe the difference between the voting campaigns of educated and uneducated women colleagues. Educated women are smarter than uneducated in convincing the voters"* Farzana. This response comes in close conformity to the study of Yoon and Okeke (2019), where they found a difference between the voting campaign of educated and uneducated women because educated women convince voters easily as compared

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to uneducated women. In sum, the crux of the discussion is that educated and politically experienced women were good in voting campaigns compared to uneducated and inexperienced women.

5.10   Conclusion

This chapter explored the intersection of education and political experience in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Education and political experience play a key role in women's informal and formal political participation. For instance, educated and experienced women effectively arrange corner meetings, participate in party meetings, mobilize women for political activities, and arrange other informal political events. However, uneducated and inexperienced women were facing difficulties in performing these activities.

The chapter also found that education and political experience influence women's formal political/legislative business. For instance, educated and politically experienced women were good at discussing budget bills, developmental schemes, and other legislation related to women's empowerment. My findings come in conformity with the results of Foulds (2014) that education has a key role in women's political engagements in public and political forums.

The findings further show that education and experience are essential for women's party politics. However, education and political experience specifically influence women's mobility in the party hierarchy, as educated and experienced women go up quickly in the party hierarchy. The chapter found that women's nomination for the reserved seats aligns with their academic qualifications and political experience. Findings in this chapter further found that women's political candidacy is strongly linked to their academic qualifications and political experience. Educated and politically experienced women are effective candidates for different portfolios in

the government. The analysis in this chapter also argued that education and political experience enhance women's political resilience and self-confidence.

Based on respondents' opinions, findings show that academic qualification and political experience are essential in other aspects of women's political participation, like fighting for women's rights, including political rights, challenging the gendered order in politics, and voting campaigns. While the voting campaign is an essential aspect of women's political participation, the chapter found a difference between the voting campaign of educated and politically experienced women and uneducated and inexperienced women.

CHAPTER 6

THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURE, SOCIAL NETWORKING, FAMILY SUPPORT, RELIGION, AND ETHNICITY IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

6.1 Introduction

Intersectionality is a particular way of understanding women's location in terms of crisscrossing systems of oppression (Collins, 2002). These systems of social class, culture, social networking, religion, and ethnicity form the organization of power in society known as matrices of domination and influence women's oppression, including their political participation (Collins, 2007). This chapter analyzes the intersection of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The following themes discuss how these intersectionalities influence women's political participation in different ways, such as women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaigns.

6.2 Women's Political Participation: Culture Matters

Sociocultural practices influence women's experiences in society's public and political spheres. For instance, Norris (2013) found that the intersectionality of culture and gender influenced women's political participation in developing countries. In this study, participants' responses revealed that cultural practices (*Pakhtun culture*) affected women's political participation in KP. As one interviewee stated, *Pakhtun culture and traditions are still rigid. They do not support women's presence in the public domain, which affects women's self-confidence.* Another participant shared that *"cultural myths about women's restricted roles in housekeeping still exist,*

which influence women's self-confidence" Khanam. Many participants shared similar views about the statement:

> *Due to constrained roles, women do not have exposure to the outer*
> *public which has limited their self-confidence. Women have been*
> *through very bad experiences in the district government. They*
> *always feel distrust while attending sessions in the district council.*
> *Most of the time, women remained unable to speak in front of the*
> *male members of the district council.*

Borrowing Cooper's (2015) intersectionality for analyzing these responses, it can be argued that culturally interlocked systems of women's oppression in *Pakhtun's* society influenced women's self-confidence. Due to no self-confidence, women face challenges in speaking to the public in political spheres. A common view among the study participants was *parents do not allow us to participate in late-night political gatherings and corner meetings, which enhanced insecure feelings.* Family and parental restrictions on women affected women's participation in politics.

Unnecessary cultural restrictions on women in *Pakhtun* society influenced women's political candidacy. A woman political activist shared that *"men use culture as a tool against women to keep them in a politically subordinated position that influences women's political candidacy"* Sara. This response supports Dababneh's (2012) finding that culture has always been used as a powerful tool to locate women in an inferior position. Similarly, one of the participants shared an interesting view that people in *Pakhtun* society still believe that *"khazoo da para koor day ya goor"* Robina. It means that *"women are made either for home or grave."* Many women political activists revealed similar views about the statement:

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Due to cultural restrictions, two things are expected. First, whenever women want to participate in a political gathering, they must have to cover their faces. Second, women cannot go outside the home late at night because their families do not consider it reasonable for women to leave home alone at night.

The study responses suggest that people in *Pakhtun* society have not recognized women as political leaders. A participant indicated *we are discouraged from participating in the activities as a political candidate because people pass negative remarks against us in public gatherings.* In the same context, Ali, Bibi, and Sardar (2021) found that the socio-cultural context influenced women's candidacy in the local governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, One participant commented that *when she decided to join one of the political parties and contest elections, people said she would fail because there is no concept of women's politics in our culture.* This comment confirms Lim's (2013) finding that religious and cultural orientation influenced women's political candidacy in Malaysia.

The study findings suggest that women in *Pakhtun* society are considered obedient in public and political forums. The concept of women's obedience and veil influenced women's political resilience. One of the women district councilors shared her experience: *whenever I leave home for the district council session, my mother always insists on wearing the veil and does not cross-talk with men in the council.* Similarly, many participants expressed similar views to the following statement:

Our families allow us for political activities only with the condition that we will not argue with men in the political spheres because this is not

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good for women. They (our families) understand that women should not be

resilient in the family and political sphere because our culture teaches

about women's obedience, not resilience.

Drawing on Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality, it can be argued that expecting women to obedience to men is a structural norm in *Pakhtun* society that has affected women's self-confidence and political participation in KP. *Pakhtun* culture does not allow women for resilience in public and private spheres, influencing women's political participation. In the context of Khaleej countries, Alhamadi (2015) also reported that women need to speak in political forums from behind the veil and are expected to be submissive in their speech, not resilient. One informant reported that:

I requested our party's central president for funds to purchase sewing

machines for the poor women of my constituency but in vain. Then I

showed aggression, but other party members stood against me and told me

that women are not looking good with this aggressive approach.

This response confirmed that there is no space for women's resilience in their political participation because the normative structure expects them to be submissive and obedient. This finding attests to Jordan's (2019) finding also that patriarchal cultures in Asian countries do not allow women in the power structure by keeping their voices lower in the public and political spheres.

The study responses further revealed that *Pakhtun* culture influenced women's voting campaigns. A women member of the national assembly shared her experience; *we tried during*

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the election days to recruit more women for the campaign. Still, due to cultural restrictions, women did not leave their homes. Another woman politician indicated that *women activists feel shy in election campaigns.* These responses support the Bayyurt and Çaha (2020) study that religious ideologies and cultural practices influence women's voting campaigns in most Muslim countries. They suggested that women's voting campaigns cannot be effective until cultural restrictions are relaxed on women. The above discussion suggests that *Pakhtun* culture influenced different aspects of women's political participation, such as women's self-confidence, political resilience, and voting campaigns.

6.3   Women's Social Networking

The study findings reveal that women's social networking effectively contributes to women's political participation. Social networking enhances women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaigns. One of the women political activists commented; *we feel confident with other women and participate well in political activities.* Another participant stated; *I feel distrust when alone in the political spheres.* These responses confirmed Rice, Moffett, and Madupalli's (2013) conclusion that broader social networking played an important role in women's political participation and enhanced women's self-confidence in the election campaign. Likewise, a woman coordinator of one of the political parties revealed that:

> *Due to cultural restrictions, women alone cannot go outside the home. So their social networking with other women is vital for their political survival. We also try to improve women's social networking because it enhances their self-confidence, which is effective during election days.*

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Another woman political activist asserted; *at the start of my political career, I felt shy among the public. Over time, my social circle enhanced, and now I feel confident participating in political activities.*

Borrowing Bourdieu's (2005) concept of social capital, it can be argued that women's social networking enhanced their confidence, further strengthening their political participation in KP. One interviewee revealed that *women's social networking enhanced their self-confidence because I have personally experienced this.* In the same context, Bilal and Ahmad (2021) found women's social capital (social networking) as an effective element that enhanced women's self-confidence, improving their political participation. This points to the feminization of cultural and social capital and generates discussion though less visible. However, women-specific networks help to improve women's capacities and capabilities. It is believed that women's social networking can be increased in *Pakhtun* society by giving them freedom from the patriarchal culture. A woman politician stated that *women members in our party always claimed that patriarchal structures restricted their movements influencing their social networking.* Some women political activists linked social networking to their political candidacy. They shared that social networking can improve women's political candidacy, but unfortunately, women's social circles were not open because of religious and cultural restrictions. In this regard, many participants shared similar views to the statement:

> *Social networking plays an essential role in women's political candidacy, but due to religious and cultural orientations, social circles in Pakhtun society remained very closed, influencing*

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women's political participation. Women with broader social networking were successful in politics.

Drawing on Lindsey's (2020) liberal feminist view, it can be suggested that women political activists in *Pakhtun* society must work in the pluralistic system to create collective consciousness and widen their social circles to enhance political participation. Eckert (2014) shared an almost similar finding that social networking, especially online social networking, played a significant role in women's political candidacy, improving their political participation. A woman politician suggested a unique view; *women's social networking can be helpful in even the establishment of an independent women's political party while giving all the leadership positions to women.* This suggestion supports Sartori *et al.* (2017) finding that structural and situational barriers have created a gender gap in political portfolios that can be eliminated through women's social networking.

The study findings suggest that women's social networking could effectively increase women's political resilience. Due to cultural and religious restrictions, a woman alone cannot be politically resilient until others support her in political circles. An informant highlighted that *"women from lower social positions need to be socially networked because they couldn't show resilience in getting their rights in the political sphere"* Laila. Another woman political activist stated that *women with broad social and political circles were more resilient in fighting for their rights than those with limited social circles".* This response exemplifies the finding of Wen and George (2013) that social networking and political discussions were influential factors in making women politically resilient in China. A common view among the many participants about the following statement was:

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"A formal form of women's social networking is in the KP assembly, a women's parliamentary caucus. Because of this caucus, most women parliamentarians were confident and resilient in meeting their interests. Interestingly, all women members of the KP assembly from different political parties were by default members of this caucus" Farzana, Nabeela, Fiza, and Hadeeqa.

Another women member of the KP assembly revealed that the *women's caucus was one of the most vital sources of social networking. This made women resilient when their valid demands were ignored in the assembly business.*

In highlighting the role of social networking in women's political resilience, Valenzuela *et al.* (2012) indicated that women's social networking increased their political reasoning, discussion, and political resilience.

The analysis revealed a significant role of social networking in women's voting campaigns. A common view among participants was that *social networking strengthened their voting campaigns, and they could find a strong candidate who contested the elections.* Similarly, one of the women's elections contesting candidates shared that:

> *We always focused on broadening our social networking because it helped in two ways. First, it enhanced women's voting campaigns. Second, through social networking, we attracted voters from other political parties; even partisan voters moved to other political parties through social networking.*

Attesting this response, one of the participants claimed that *"in the last general elections of 2018, many of our partisan voters moved to another political party because of their strong social networking with other parties' political activists"* Niha.

These responses have roots in Bourdieu's (2005) scheme of structuring social capital (social networking). Bourdieu argued that social capital is a kind of networking in which an individual is located. This networking gives individual identity. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of social capital, it can be argued that women's social networking influenced voting campaigns in KP, and women changed their political party (location). Falck, Gold, and Heblich (2014) also concluded that social networking effectively improves women's voting campaigns. To summarize the discussion, it is argued that social networking enhanced women's political participation in KP by enhancing their self-confidence, political candidacy, and voting campaigns.

6.4   Family Support

Some of the participants attributed their political participation to family support. With family support, women were good at political participation. For instance, family support enhanced women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaigns. A women politician stated *women feel confident if their families support them. Without familial support, women feel insecure in public doing political activities.* Likewise, one of the ex-members of the district council expressed that *women political activists needed the confidence to travel to distant areas, which was impossible without family support.* These responses confirmed Blay and Soeiro's (2019) finding that familial support increased women's self-confidence and made them suitable for political office. Khan *et al.* (2018) also asserted that the role of family

support in women's political participation is undeniable because women alone in the political sphere cannot perform political activities effectively. The study responses suggest that elite women often performed political activities with self-confidence because of family support. An informant reported that

> *Women from the elite class always work with self-confidence in the*
>
> *political sphere because their families support them. However,*
>
> *when it comes to women of poor socioeconomic backgrounds, they*
>
> *don't have self-confidence in arranging political activities because*
>
> *their families mainly not support them*

Another respondent confided that *there are women confidently participating in different political activities because they have familial support.*

The study findings support Chhibber's (2012) conclusion that family support played a key role in women's political participation in the local councils because it increased women's self-confidence.

Participants' responses reveal that family support also enhances women's political participation in other ways. For instance, women's political candidacy can be promoted through family support. In *Pakhtun* society, women do not contest elections for political office without family support. One of the participants indicated that *I am a widower and working as a district councilor in local politics. My sons supported me in political activities. Without their support, I couldn't run political activities".* Similarly, a common view among some other participants was that *in Pakhtun society, being a woman holding a political position without family support is just*

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like a daydream". These views confirm De Alwis' (2018) finding that in Srilanka, familial support mattered greatly in women's political candidacy. One of the female members of the provincial assembly shared a unique experience:

> *"I had never been a political candidate. Just two weeks before the general elections of 2018, my husband, the contesting candidate for the provincial assembly, was killed in a blast. I had no intentions of contesting the elections, but my family wanted/pushed me, and I contested and won the elections,"* Noreen

Another woman member of the district council stated, *My parents supported me in the district council elections, and I won my seat.* Likewise, a woman member of the national assembly asserted: *Many of the women political activists in my party belong to those families whose parents do not allow them for late-night political activities. This practice affects their performance in politics.* These responses confirmed the importance of family support in women's political candidacy. Filler and Jennings (2015) also reported that familial support enhanced women's political participation in Bangladesh by supporting them in the elections.

Respondents' views confirmed that familial support enhanced women's political resilience. A women political activist claimed *that women with familial support fight for their political rights.* Similarly, a common view among the participants about the statement was *that when women have support from their families, they confidently perform any political activity and are resilient to get their rights.* One of the ex-women members of the district council shared a unique experience:

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Once I was trying to speak in the district council session, but members were not giving me the opportunity. I tried and requested time and again to the district Nazim but in vain. At last, I stood up, snatched the mic from a member, and started speaking. This was due to the support my family provided me.

In contrast to this experience, another respondent stated that I have been discriminated against many times during my career and *have to keep quiet because I knew no one to support (family)"*. These responses could be linked to Gerrard and Woodland's (2019) conclusion that women's political resilience could be improved by giving them full familial support. A similar finding was shared by Southwick *et.,* al, (2014) that women's political oppression could be eliminated by creating political resilience among women for which family support could be needed.

In light of the participants' responses, it can be argued that the non-cooperative behavior of families in *Pakhtun* society influenced women's voting campaigns. Many participants agreed with the statement that *generally, women do not take part in voting campaigns because their families do not support them"*. Another women political worker similarly responded that *during the election campaigns, women often share that they cannot promise to run voting campaigns because their families do not support them"*. It can be argued that in patriarchal societies like Pakistan, voting campaigns are influenced by family and male members. These responses attest to White and Aspinall's (2019) conclusion that family support affected women's political participation in Indonesia in multiple ways, such as election candidacy, voting campaigns, and women's suitability for holding a position in the government. Similarly, many participants

shared a similar view to the comment that *the non-supporting approach of families influences women's voting campaigns. Women's voting campaigns cannot be effective until their families fully support them.* It can be argued that families do not support women's voting campaigns because this is unacceptable in the larger context of *Pakhtun's* society. In connection with this argument, one of the women members of the KP assembly revealed that *we run an awareness campaign in our province (KP) on the importance of family support in women's voting campaigns.* So, it can be concluded that family support has paramount importance in women's voting campaigns in KP.

6.5   Religion and Women's Political participation

This is one of the established arguments among intersectional feminists/theorists that religion intersects gender and women's political participation (Vogel, 2013). The intersection of religion and gender influences women's political participation in different ways, such as women's self-confidence, voting campaigns, political candidacy, party portfolio, political resilience, and women's quota seats. The findings of this study suggest that religious restrictions influenced women's confidence in their political participation. Many participants showed similar responses to the following quote:

> *Religion does not stop women from working in the public and political spheres. However, men use religion as a tool against women to keep women's political voices subordinate. Due to the men-dominated religious interpretations, many women remain at home, influencing women's self-confidence in the political sphere.*

Another participant shared a similar view that *religion talks only about women's veil, but men do politicize this"*.

Borrowing Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality for analyzing these responses, it can be argued that men-dominated religious interpretation is one of the structural problems in KP that intersect women's political participation influencing women's self-confidence. The study responses suggest that men-dominated religious teachings serve men's political interests and subordinate women's voices. This analysis confirms Cassese and Holman's (2016) findings that the intersection of religious and gender identities affected women's political participation in Malaysia, influencing women's self-confidence. The study responses revealed that religious interpretations have always been confused with *Pakhtuns* culture, keeping women in a politically subordinated position. A common among the respondents was that *religion, in its real essence, does not discriminate against women in public and private spheres. However, Pakhtun culture dominates religion influencing women's political rights.*

Similarly, many women politicians in the setting government (2018-23) shared a similar view to the statement that *religion has given women the right to share their opinion independently inside and outside the home. Still, men-dominated religious and cultural systems do not tolerate and accept this"*. Another participant shared an exciting view: *Once, I was contesting elections for the national assembly. A male politician who was my contester said in his speech that there is no concept of women's politics in Islam.* In the same context, Saka and Ahmed (2017) found that religious teachings explained through patriarchy impact women's political participation.

It can be determined through this study's evidence that religious restrictions influenced women's voting campaigns in KP. An informant revealed that *we are not allowed to leave home alone for*

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voting campaigns due to religious restrictions. Likewise, many women political activists shared a similar view to the comment below:

> *Women have been taught from childhood that religion does not allow women to leave home for political activities. They further shared that they cannot go outside the home and run voting campaigns during the elections.*

Drawing on Collins' (2007) intersectionality and matrices of domination, it can be argued that the patriarchally structured domain of power uses religion to influence women's political participation in KP, including women's voting campaigns. This has been evident from the study that the overall organization of power in KP is held by men using religious and cultural structures to keep women in a politically subordinated position. These analyses exemplified the findings of O'Neill *et al.* (2015) that religious restrictions affected women's opinions in the public sphere, including their voting campaigns. They further concluded that the *niqab* (veil) was a visible symbol of religion that caused women's oppression and influenced their voting campaigns.

There was no disagreement among the participants that religion influences women's political candidacy. For instance, a participant stated that *when she was contesting the elections, people said there was no concept of women's leadership in Islam.* Likewise, one woman district counselor shared that *religion is not a hurdle to women's political candidacy. It talks only about the veil. However, men do politicize this issue for their political interests.* These responses attest to Prihatini's (2020) findings that religious orientation affected women's political candidacy for government in India. The study responses conform to Prihatini's finding as the participants had a

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common view that *men always feared women being political candidates and using religion against them. They think that women being political candidates threatens their political hegemony, which is why they use religion as a tool against women.* These responses substantiate Cherif's (2010) findings that religious orientation influenced women's political candidacy in many Muslim countries, including Pakistan.

According to Tazi and Oumlil (2020) study, religion and culture were the most influential factors which affected women's political resilience in Muslim Arab countries. They concluded that religious teachings had been dominated by culturally structured religious institutions influencing women's political participation. The findings of Tazi and Oumlil show relevance to this study, as many participants expressed similar views about the statement that *religion has given women the right to participate in politics and fight for their rights. However, men explained religion taught women to remain at home, which is why most women could not show political resilience in the public and political spheres.* Another participant confided that *religious misconceptions about women's leadership do not allow women to fight for their rights and be politically resilient.* These analyses have roots in Kantola and Lombardo's (2007) feminist political analysis. In the intersectionality approach of feminist political analysis, they argued that the interaction among gender, class, religion, ethnicity and other systems produced women's oppression in the political sphere causing women's confidence and resilience.

6.6 Ethnicity in Women's Political Participation

The intersection of ethnicity and gender in women's political participation has been of primary concern for intersectional theorists. For instance, Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality substantially focused on ethnic-based discrimination that influenced women's experiences in the

public and political domains. Collins' (2007) intersectionality also focused on women's political oppression influenced by the intersections of gender and ethnicity. In contrast to Crenshaw's (1991) and Collins' (2007) intersectionality, it can be argued that ethnicity does not intersect with women's political participation in KP. Participants' opinions have not recognized the role of women's ethnic identities in their political participation. For instance, one of the members of the KP assembly stated that *women's ethnic identity does not count in their political participation in our political atmosphere.* Another participant from the district council revealed that:

> *In today's modern time, zat and paat (race and ethnicity) are not*
> *considered necessary in women's political participation. If a*
> *woman is educated and has financial resources, she can have an*
> *excellent political career. I know many women in the district*
> *council who are from barber and carpenter families.*

It is essential to mention here that there are three ethnic identity groups (Hazara, Pakhtuns, and Afghans) in KP. A woman member of the national assembly stated, *I have been nominated as a candidate for the national assembly, and I am from Hazara ethnic group.* Another participant similarly responded *I had been selected as a candidate for the provincial assembly through a reserved seat, but nobody had asked me about my ethnic identity.* These responses contrast much of the evidence cited in the literature see (literature review) showing the intersection of ethnicity, race, and gender in women's political participation in the Western world. For instance, Gillborn (2015) found that women's ethnic identity influenced their political participation in western industrialized countries. In the western context, Leyenaar (2008) also concluded that ethnicity influenced women's political candidacy.

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Conversely, participants' opinions in this study do not show the visible importance of women's ethnic identities in their political candidacy. A woman politician explained that *ethnic identity has nothing to do with women's political candidacy. She stated that she had been vice president of her party but had never felt discrimination because of her ethnic identity.*

The analysis of the participants' opinions does not reveal the connection between women's voting campaign and their ethnic identities. An informant said that *we had not seen any difference among the voting campaign of different ethnic women. She further shared that political parties consider all workers in the same way across different ethnicities.* Another woman political activist shared her experience that *I have never seen a woman in her political career who has been discriminated against in the voting campaigns because of her ethnic identity.* Drawing on Crenshaw's (1991) and Collins' (2007) intersectionality, it can be argued that the nature of intersectionality behind women's political participation is slightly different in KP than in the western world because ethnic identity has no role in women's voting campaign in KP.

The study responses do not show an association between ethnicity and women's selection for a party portfolio. Many women political workers similarly responded to the statement that *political parties do not count women's ethnic affiliation in the selection for party positions.* Women's ethnic identities do not influence their party politics. Another informant revealed similar views:

> *There is no concept of race and ethnicity in women's overall*
> *political participation, including their nomination for the party*
> *portfolios. I have not seen a single woman discriminated against in*
> *the selection for party portfolios because of her ethnic identity.*

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Another respondent claimed, *"I hold the position of district president in my party, and I have not been discriminated against because of my ethnic identity.*

It can be argued here that the nature of intersectionality is different in women's political participation in KP than in western countries. Race and ethnicity are the dominant factors in western intersectionality that influence women's political participation, including the allocation of party portfolios (Bhopal & Preston, 2012). However, this study found no association between ethnicity and the nomination of women for party portfolios. In the Western context, Kenny and Verge (2012) also concluded that race and ethnicity are among the dominant factors influencing women's party politics, including their selection for party positions.

Literature review revealed (see chapter 2) that in the Western world, women's ethnic and racial identities intersect with women's political participation, including women's political resilience (Miller & Wilford, 19). Nevertheless, the analysis in this study found no association between women's ethnic identity and political resilience. For instance, one of the women politicians claimed that *women from different ethnic groups could be politically active if they are educated and politically trained"*. Many participants shared a similar view about the following statement:

> *There is no concept of racism and ethnicity in women's political*
>
> *participation that can affect their political resilience. There are*
>
> *women from different ethnic groups who are resilient and fight for*
>
> *their rights on different political forums*

Similarly, one of the ex-women senators said, *I have seen many women senators who remained very resilient in the senate sessions fighting for their rights and were from different ethnic*

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groups. The study findings showed that women's ethnic identities had not influenced their political participation, including women's political resilience.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the complex nature of intersectionalities, such as culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity, in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. These intersectionalities (except ethnicity) influenced different aspects of women's political participation, such as women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and women's voting campaigns. The analysis concluded that *Pakhtun* culture influenced women's self-confidence by making women distrustful, shy, and insecure in the political sphere. *Pakhtun* culture also affected women's political candidacy. Women were not allowed to participate in late-night political activities such as political campaigns and meetings because people often passed negative remarks against them. This chapter also highlighted that cultural obligations influenced women's political resilience by making them obedient and respectful to their men cohorts.

The analysis further found the significance of social networking in women's political participation. The chapter found that women's social networking enhanced their self-confidence and made them suitable for the public and political spheres. Women's social networking was one of the most effective sources for promoting women's political candidacy. The analysis further concluded that social networking increased women's political resilience. The chapter also highlighted the positive impact of women's social networking on their voting campaigns by making women understand how and whom to reach for voting.

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Family support was one of the paramount factors in women's political participation. The analysis found that family support played an important role in women's self-confidence in holding political activities. Conversely, women without familial support were unable to do so. Women with family support were found politically resilient. The study findings revealed that all those women were politically resilient in getting their rights whose families supported them. The role of family support was also influential in women's voting campaigns. The study further found new insights about religion's role in women's political participation. Patriarchally interpreted religion as a powerful tool used to keep women politically subordinate. For instance, their religious orientation influenced women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and women's voting campaigns.

The chapter found an interesting difference between the nature of intersectionality in western countries and KP behind women's political participation. Unlike western countries where women's ethnic and racial identities affected their political participation, the study found no significant role of ethnic identities such as *Pakhtuns, Hazara, and Chitrali* in women's political participation in KP. The chapter explored no direct influence of ethnic identities on women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and women's voting campaigns.

CHAPTER 7

Summary/Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

7.1 Summarizing Argument

This study examined the issue of women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The study mainly focused on the intersection of social class, education, gender, and women's political participation. The intersection of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity was also part of the analysis in this study. The analysis unpacked the influence of social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, and religion on women's political participation. However, the study found no significant role of ethnic identities (*Pakhtuns, Hazaras, and Chitralis*) in women's political participation in the KP. It is essential to mention that ethnicity might matter in women's political participation in other regions of Pakistan but not in KP.

Chapter 4 unpacked (see 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9) that social class/socio-economic status played an important role in women's political participation in different ways. For instance, women's socioeconomic position influenced their nomination for reserved seats at the national and provincial assemblies. Most of the elite/upper-class women got selection for the reserved seats in the provincial and national assemblies. Chapter 4 further concluded that women from the elite women enjoyed high positions in the parties and government both because they were political donors. For example, they held the positions of vice president, provincial coordinator, senior president, and divisional president in the parties and minister, advisor, and minister of state in the government.

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Nonetheless, women from poor socioeconomic backgrounds could not get party portfolios such as president, senior vice president, provincial coordinator, divisional coordinator and minister, minister of state, and advisor in the government because they were not political donors. The chapter also found that most women from poor socioeconomic status faced difficulties arranging party meetings, corner meetings, and political demonstrations. They lacked resources like money, a car, and a big *hujra* (drawing room). It is pertinent to mention that the district government was the political destination for poor women. Compared to education, political experience, and political struggle, this chapter concluded that socioeconomic status played a key role in women's political participation. For instance, many educated and politically experienced women could not occupy party portfolios and reserved seats in provincial and national governments. They were not political donors and lacked the other required resources like a car, a big hujra (drawing room), and money to be invested in the party activities.

The intersection of education and gender could not be denied in women's political participation. Chapter 5 (see 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9) concluded that education and political experience influenced women's informal and formal political participation in KP. For instance, educated and politically experienced women were good at arranging corner meetings, party meetings, and mobilizing women for other political activities. Education and experience were essential factors in women's mobility in the party hierarchy and their nomination for reserved/quota seats. The chapter further found that education and political experience affected women's political candidacy, self-confidence, and political resilience. Moreover, chapter 5 examined that education and political experience were essential in women's parliamentary politics. For instance, educated and experienced women could discuss legislative matters related to women's empowerment in the assembly business.

In chapter 6 (see 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5), the data concluded that *Pakhtun* culture strongly influenced women's political participation in different ways, such as women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and women's voting campaigns. *Pakhtun's* cultural obligations made women distrustful, shy, and insecure in the political sphere affecting their self-confidence, political candidacy, and political resilience. The chapter further highlighted that the role of social networking was significant in women's political participation. Women's social networking enhanced their self-confidence and political resilience. Social networking also enhanced women's political candidacy and their voting campaigns. Family support was an undeniable reality in women's political participation. The chapter concluded that women with family support were confident, politically resilient, and actively involved in voting campaigns.

Chapter 6 further unpacked the role of religion in women's political participation. The chapter found that men used religion as a powerful tool against women, influencing women's self-confidence, political candidacy, political resilience, and voting campaigns. In contrast to the western countries where ethnic and racial orientations influenced women's political participation, the chapter found no significant role of women's ethnic identities in their political participation (see 6.6 of chapter 6). It is essential to mention that there were three major ethnic groups (*Pakhtuns, Hazara, and Chitrali*) in the province. However, the chapter found no significant association between these ethnic identities and women's political participation.

7.2 Literature, Theoretical Concepts, and Argument Conclusion

The literature review revealed that the nature of intersectionality behind women's political participation differs across developed, developing, and majority Muslim countries. The intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender with women's political participation is well-researched in western developed countries (Brown, 2014). However, in developing countries, the

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intersectionality behind women's political participation becomes more complicated because of social class, education, culture, and social networking (Hughes, 2011). In most Muslim countries, religion and culture remain the dominant factors influencing women's political participation (Muthuer, 2019). The data presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6 contain assertions that prove the complex nature of intersectionalities in women's political participation. For instance, social class, education, culture, social networking, family support, and religion influenced women's political participation in KP. However, it is pertinent to mention that ethnicity was not intersected with women's political participation in KP.

I borrowed some theoretical concepts from intersectional feminism/theory, feminist political perspective, and Marxist feminism to analyze data in chapters 4, 5, and 6. For instance, from intersectional feminism, I used Crenshaws' concepts of structural and political intersectionalities and Collins' concepts of intersectionality and matrices of domination. From a feminist political perspective, I engaged Kantola and Lombardo's ideas of women and political analysis and gender and political analysis. From Marxist feminism, I selected Bebel's concepts of human emancipation and women's social independence, hook's conception of the feminist educational movement, and Smith's concept of education and text-mediated power.

I draw on Crenshaws' concepts of structural intersectionality and political intersectionality to argue how the province's socio-cultural, patriarchal, and political structures influence women's political participation. In Crenshaws' language, structural intersectionality is the intersection of class, gender, and education that directly influences women's experiences in the public and political sphere. However, political intersectionality creates privileges and marginalization that affect women's experiences in the public domain, including their political participation

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(Crenshaw, 1991). My analysis in chapters 4 and 5 has many assertions about the intersection of social class and education in women's political participation in KP.

In chapter 5, I concluded that education and experience were vital in women's informal and formal political participation. For instance, educated and experienced women were effectively engaged in arranging corner meetings, participating in party meetings, mobilizing women for political activities, running voting campaigns, and running street politics. I also found that educated and experienced women were good in the mobility of party hierarchy, political candidacy, voting campaigns, political resilience, and self-confidence. However, uneducated and inexperienced women were facing difficulties in doing so. I also explored the role of education in women's formal political participation. For example, educated and politically experienced women were good at discussing legislation related to women's empowerment.

Chapter 4 of my dissertation is full of evidence that presents the intersection of social class and women's political participation. I applied Collins' concepts of "intersectionality" and "matrices of domination" that strengthen the findings of my study in chapters 4, 5, and 6. Collins views intersectionality as a way of understanding social location in terms of crisscrossing systems of oppression. This intersectionality works within matrices of domination. By matrices of domination, she meant the overall power organization maintained through different power domains. Collins is specifically interested in the structural domain of power comprised of social structures, polity, law, economics, and religion that affect women's experiences and political participation (Collins, 2007). Collins' concepts of intersectionality and matrices of domination, mainly structural and interpersonal domains of power, provided fertile landscaping to the findings of my study in chapters 4, 5, and 6. In these chapters, I found that the intersection of social class, education, social networking, culture, and religion influenced women's political

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participation differently. For instance, women's party politics, women's mobility in the party hierarchy, women's political candidacy, political resilience, and women's self-confidence are influenced by these intersectionalities. It is pertinent to mention that Pakhtun culture, especially the veil concept, made women shy and distrustful, affecting their self-confidence and political resilience. Moreover, *Pakhtun's* culture did not allow women to leave home alone, especially in the late hours, affecting women's social networking and party politics.

Kantola and Lombardos' concepts of "women and political analysis" and "gender and political analysis" were also rich and gave meaning to my study's findings. In women and political analysis, Kantola and Lombardo (2017) argued that women and men are represented in political institutions based on their economic position. Women and political analysis concept empowered me to understand and conclude the data in chapter 4 that how women's social status being upper/elite, working middle and lower-class women affect their informal and formal political participation in KP. For instance, I concluded in chapter 4 that women from the upper/elite class hold party positions like president, vice president, and coordinator. They also hold the positions of ministers, advisors, and ministers of state. However, getting these positions is a daydream for working-middle and lower-class women.

I also draw on Kantola and Lombardo's concept of "gender and political analysis" to conclude my analysis in chapter 6, which is written on the role of culture, social networking, family support, religion, and ethnicity in women's political participation. In the gender and political analysis approach, Kantola and Lombardo question how gender is socially constructed, how gender roles and institutional norms are structured, and why gender is mainstreamed into politics (Kantola & Lombardo, 2009). I applied this approach to conclude that gender is constructed under the *Pakhtun* culture and norms that affect women's political participation in Khyber

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Pakhtunkhwa. For instance, patriarchy, the concept of women's *veil*, and the compulsion on women not to leave home for late-night political activities are the essential norms that affect women's informal and formal political participation like party politics, political candidacy, self-confidence, political resilience, voting campaign, legislative, and assembly business.

The next concept I used to draw my findings in chapter 6 is "human emancipation and women's social independence." Bebel being a Marxist feminist, argues that socialism as a political system could not be practical until the active participation of women accompanies it, and there can be no human emancipation without the social and political independence of women (Bebel, 1998). Chapter 6 of my study is full of evidence that shows that women in the KP province are not socially, culturally, and religiously independent for instance, they are bound to religious and cultural obligations and veil concepts that influence their party politics, political resilience, women's self-confidence, political candidacy, party portfolios, and women's assembly and legislative business.

Hooks' concept of "feminist education" is fertile for the conclusion of my analysis in chapter 4, in which I wrote on the intersection of education and women's political participation and had much evidence about the influence of education on women's political participation in KP. Hooks stresses that a feminist education can help women of all classes to ask about their political rights that further ensure women's empowerment, including their political participation (Hooks, 2000). I applied Hooks' concept of feminist education to conclude my argument that women's education is not based on feminist thoughts, which affect women's participation in politics.

7.3   The Study Implications

The study used an interpretive approach and qualitative data to explore the intersectionality of social class, education, and gender in women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

Pakistan. The study also found an insight into the intersectionality of culture, social networking, family support, and religion in women's political participation.

The findings of my study have the potential to enhance women's political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by overcoming the challenges to women in politics. For instance, my study pointed out that education and experience are essential in women's political participation. Proper education and training can enhance women's formal and informal political participation. For instance, I found that educated and experienced women were good at party politics, had self-confidence, were politically resilient, and were good at arranging corner meetings. They also efficiently discussed legislative bills related to women's issues.

The study also has implications for improving women's social class/socioeconomic status because it plays an essential role in their political participation. For example, social class influenced women's political candidacy, party portfolios, quota seats, and women's legislative business in the government. A woman can be good at all these forums if she is a political donor. Otherwise, she would have no political career in the party and government.

Similarly, the findings of my study suggest that women's political participation can be enhanced if they get freedom from the area's culture. *Pakhtun* culture influenced women's self-confidence and political resilience because it made them shy, distrustful, and insecure in the public and political sphere. I found that women's political candidacy can be improved if they are released from the unnecessary Pakhtun cultural obligations, for instance, expecting women to be obedient and respectful to their male cohorts.

My study has the potential to suggest increasing women's social networking because it enhances women's political participation in both informal and formal political spheres. For instance, social networking makes women politically resilient, improves self-confidence, and enhances their

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political candidacy. Women's social networking expands their participation in the assembly and legislative participation. The best example is the prevalence of the women's caucus in the KP assembly.

Family support is an essential indicator of women's political participation. Women must be supported by their families to enhance their political participation. I found that family support enhances self-confidence and improves women's political candidacy. Women feel confident and secure while speaking at political parties and the government. My study suggests the importance of family support in increasing women's political resilience, especially for women who need to be resilient in the assembly to get their rights.

Finally, men-dominated religions or religious interpretations needed to be revisited. Men used religion as a powerful tool to keep women politically subordinate. This situation influenced women's self-confidence and political candidacy because they were not encouraged in the public and political spheres. I found that men used religion to keep women restricted at home, which affected their political participation in party politics, political resilience, corner meetings, and women's party portfolios.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This research found social networking as one of the essential intersectional factors in women's political participation. The study suggests comprehensive research on social networks and their potential for women's political mobility in the party hierarchy. The study further recommends research on the role of social networks in women's political resilience in party politics and government, especially in local government. The study also suggests future research on how women negotiate power who work in the local, provincial, and national governments.

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Appendix-i   Interview Guide

1. Name of the respondent _____

2. Age of the respondent _____

3. Gender   Only women political representatives

4. Affiliation of the respondent with local, provincial, or national level politics

   _____

5. How long have you been in politics?

6. Have you been elected to or currently have membership in the local, provincial or

   national government?

7. Are you affiliated with any political party?

8. Do you have any portfolios at your party?

9. How do you see the role of education in your political experiences?

10. What kind of difference do you see between the political participation of an educated and

    uneducated women political representative?

11. How can education enhance the political participation of women?

12. Do you see the role of social position in women's political participation?

13. How do the social positions of women affect their political experiences?

14. How do you see your political experiences connected to your education status?

15. How do you see your political participation in connection to your social class position?

Appendix-ii   Participants' Socio-demographic Profiles

Participant	Age	Education	Party Affiliation	Party Position	Government Position	Number of years in Politics	Religion	Family Background
iffat	41	MA	ANP	District President	_	13	Islam	Political background
izwana han	65	MA	ANP	_	_	9	Islam	No political background
irida aji	45	SSC	PPPP	_	_	11	Islam	No political background
oor han	53	HSSC	ANP	_	_	17	Islam	No political background
anwal han	45	BA	ANP	Vice president in the central cabinet	_	19	Islam	Political background
aeema teed	51	MSC	ANP	Vice president	_	15	Islam	Political background
adeeqa	60	HSSC	ANP	_	MPA	17	Islam	Political background
ira Khan	41	HSSC	ANP	Women joint secretary	_	11	Islam	Political background
ingufta bi	45	8th class	ANP	_	_	14	Islam	No political background
isreen ian	53	MBBS	ANP	Women vice president	_	9	Islam	Political background
ha Ali	34	LLB	PML-N	_	_	12	Islam	No political background
iza ian	46	MSC	MMAP	_	MPA	10	Islam	Political background
iosha i	37	BA	PPPP	President chamber of commerce	_	16	Islam	No political background
feena	69	BSC and B.ed.	PTI	_	MPA	7	Islam	Political background
wa	27	LLB	PPPP	District vice president	_	18	Islam	Political background
iya	34	LLB	PTI	_	MPA	8	Islam	Political background
ionaq i	27	LLB	PML-N	Union council woman president	_	11	Islam	No political background
ibina ian	28	MA	ANP	District joint secretary	_	7	Islam	Political background
ibeela	60	HSSC	PTI	_	MPA	19	Islam	Political

Name	Age	Education	Party	Position	Office	Years	Religion	Background
hn								background
oreen asir	48	HSSC	PPPP	Union council general secretary	_	16	Islam	No political background
ajida sman	33	MA	MMAP	District information secretary	_	9	Islam	Political background
arzana	46	MA	MMAP	_	MPA	13	Islam	Political background
aila amad	41	BSC	PML-N	_	Senator	11	Islam	Political background
ishwar ultan	49	HSSC	Independent	_	_	7	Islam	Political background
hanam bi	32	BA	PTI	_	_	12	Islam	No political background
aima bi	51	MA	PTI	Senior vice president	_	9	Islam	Political background
oreen	46	MA	ANP	_	MPA	5	Islam	Political background
num	39	MA	PPPP	_	_	13	Islam	No political background
eema han	46	BA	ANP	_	Senator	6	Islam	Political background

Source: Data collected during the project.