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- Lancaster Index to Defence & International Security Literature
- Peace Palace Library
- Research Papers in Economics (RePEc)
- Social Sciences Information Space (SOCIONET)
- Ulrich's Periodicals Directory

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

133

Great Power Politics over the Natural Resources in Afghanistan

By Babur Rahmani

153

In Search of an African Theory of Democracy: Utilizing the Tiv Cultural Philosophy of Ya-Na-Angbian

By Ayaka Simon Silas & Yusufu Ahmed Audu

165

Portuguese Neutrality during World War II - A Case Study of Portuguese Foreign Policy Analysis

By João Tavares

181

It is Time to Reconsider the Hereditary Succession of Politicians and Medical Practitioners in Japan: Reform Ideas to Overcome the Adverse Effects

By Yukio Sakurai

194

Enhancing Disaster Resilience through Gender-Sensitive Policy Frameworks: A Case Study of Pakistan

By Nialish Khan

208

Women Leaders and the Concept of Women Empowerment: Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher

By Betül Türyaki

223

Mind the Gap! Small State Influence within the EU during the Brexit Process: The Case of Slovakia

By Sedanur Yıldız & Özgür Tüfekçi

238

Relations Between Russia and Türkiye in The Context of The Syrian Conflict: From Edge of the War to Strategic Cooperation

By Cenk Özatici & Polat Üründül



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Women Leaders and the Concept of Women Empowerment: Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is a significant concept in gender equality. Political empowerment is particularly critical because they need to be active in the decision-making process (Rasul, 2014). However, women's experience shows various difficulties while trying to reach high positions, especially in politics. The situation raises an important question about how women who have experienced holding authority use it for the benefit of other women. So, the research aim is to investigate how two women leaders in different countries with different development levels contribute to women's empowerment. Therefore, Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher are the two cases of this research. Benazir Bhutto was Pakistan's first Muslim female prime minister, an underdeveloped country from 1988 to 1990 and from 1993 to 1996 (Jangbar, 2021). On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher was the first woman prime minister of the United Kingdom, a developed country from 1979-1990 (Özdikmen and Kartın, 2021). A woman leader in a developed country is expected to contribute more to women's empowerment than a woman leader in an underdeveloped country.

Yet, while Benazir Bhutto is shown to have made significant strides in empowering women in Pakistan, Margaret Thatcher's use of power did not align with supporting women. She was known to criticise women's rights, which had already been gained. This unexpected contrast challenges the notion that the development level of countries influences the work of women leaders as expected. The findings suggest that women leaders in underdeveloped countries may hold more significance in the context of women's empowerment.

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Introduction

Women's empowerment is a critical issue for many countries because it is significant in terms of not only gender equality but also economic growth, politics, education, peace, and security (Yıldırım and Gül, 2021). Many countries give importance to empowering women. Therefore, the countries try to provide equality between men and women by giving women economic, social, and political rights (Reshi and Sudha, 2022). Political empowerment is one of the first areas where women fight for their rights. For instance, the first wave of feminism focused on women's voting rights (Reshi and Sudha, 2022; Hashiru and Tufekci, 2021). Women's political participation has a critical role in equality and

democracy. The Beijing Platform for Action states, “Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making... is needed to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.” (Moghadam, 2010). However, even if the countries give importance to empowering women in politics and women gain political participation and voting rights early, they have a low women’s political representation rate in many countries. Also, even if women participate in political movements, they generally stay behind the male leaders. Women politicians cannot participate actively in the decision-making process. Although the table does not seem to benefit women, there are women political leaders in different countries. These women leaders immensely attract attention to the existing situation.

There is much research about women leaders, their work, and the obstacles they encounter in literature. One of the research projects examined the background of women leaders in terms of their educational level, family bond, and political career. It analysed the diversity of women leaders in politics (Jalalzai, 2008). In another research, Benazir Bhutto and Thailand’s Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra compared and examined the empowerment of women under the women leaders’ policies in the same political systems. According to the research, both encountered obstacles in their countries as women leaders, but their work empowered women in Asia (Ahmed and Bajwa, 2016). Another comparative study was about Benazir Bhutto and Hillary Clinton. It evaluated the position of women in politics and their rise in political participation. It also examined the effect of gender norms on politics (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010). Although there are many obstacles that women encounter during their political careers, the significant thing that increases their participation rate is gender quotas in politics. Still, it should be remembered that the representation of women in a cabinet is insufficient for gender equality. Women’s political leaders need to be actively in charge of the decision-making process to prepare policies aimed at women. For example, in the research conducted in New Zealand, women political leaders had a significant impact on gaining women’s rights in some areas (Curtin, 2008). Also, some different studies compared women leaders in various cultures. For instance, one cultural study compares women leaders in Indonesia and Greece. The study compared affirmative action regulations and the cultural barriers women encounter in politics. The results demonstrated a difference between the two cultures of women leaders in terms of numbers, position, regulation, and cultural barriers. Still, the stereotyping and subordination of women are mutual in both cultures (Kyveloukokkaliari and Nurhaeni, 2017). Women’s political participation takes attention, especially their political leadership. As examples show, women’s political leadership was examined in various aspects. However, most of the research focuses on the count of women in politics or the barriers that women encounter. Comparative research compared the cultural differences or the effect of women leaders in similar political construction. It can be understood that women leaders have a crucial impact on women in society as role models. Nevertheless, whether their effect was limited only to being role models or whether they did great work to empower women is essential. Another significant point is whether the development level of countries changes women leaders’ approach. All these questions constitute the basis of this research.

The study aims to examine two women leaders in countries that have different development levels and their works about women empowerment: Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher. It is thought that the development level of countries can affect the works of women leaders. Therefore, the main aim of the research is to analyse how women leaders’ work differentiates from each other in countries that are at different levels of development. Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher were chosen among women leaders because they were women leaders in countries at various development levels. Benazir Bhutto was the first prime minister in a Muslim country, and Margaret was the prime minister of the United Kingdom, which is entirely different from Pakistan in terms of development level and culture. The difference in development level is of attention in the two countries, specifically when these women were Prime Ministers. The study will compare the political careers and studies of women empowerment of Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher. So, it will analyse the role and effect of women leaders in countries with different development levels.

The study will compare the works of women empowerment of Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher. It will benefit from the other research conducted about two leaders as a source of academic research, books, interviews vs. Also, it will analyse the countries' data about women's rights, equality, education, and employment of women which get from international reports.

The study differentiates from other research about women leaders in terms of analysing their works on women empowerment. It focuses not on the election process of women or the barriers they encounter but on what they did for the women after being prime minister. Also, it is thought that the development level of countries influences their action, and it is expected that the two women leaders' action ultimately differentiates from each other. The study is also different from other research in this angle. The development level of countries is taken as a significant variable. It is expected that Margaret Thatcher gave women more political participation rights while Benazir Bhutto studied the educational rights of women. Due to the differences in the development level of countries, women leaders could focus on different areas of gender equality. The expectation is that female leaders, having personally experienced gender discrimination, would actively engage in and initiate concrete efforts for the empowerment of women. Additionally, it is anticipated that these efforts will be more effective and progressive in developed countries. The approach of women leaders toward women's empowerment will be comparatively examined.

In line with the mentioned objectives, the study's research question is: To what extent do women political leaders' work on gender and women's empowerment differ from each other in countries with different development levels? In the study, it is expected that the development level of countries has a significant impact on women leaders' work, and their women empowerment studies were utterly different from each other. To answer the question, the development levels of the countries will first be examined. Then, the political lives of Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher and their work to empower women in their countries will be analysed, respectively. Finally, in the discussion section, the results of the work of the two leaders will be analysed. It will be evaluated to what extent women leaders' studies differ and whether they have similar points.

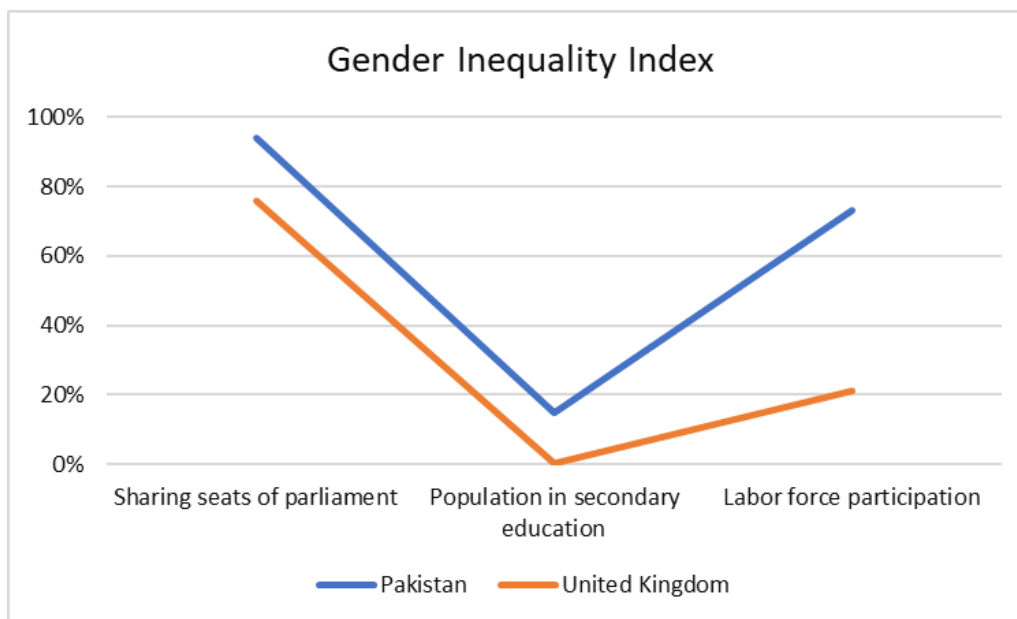
Development Level and Women Empowerment

The development levels of countries are critical for citizens because the development level changes according to a high per capita income, a diverse industrial mix, a developed financial system, people having a longer life expectancy at birth, and a well-developed educational system (Gender Inequality Index, 2023). High-value countries, in terms of these metrics, are categorised as developed countries. Citizens who are living in these countries naturally have more privileged living conditions. The development level of countries is expressed with different definitions in different sources. World Bank classifies countries according to income level, and that is accepted as one of the signs of development. According to World Bank data, Pakistan was a low-income country in the period in which Benazir Bhutto was president. However, The United Kingdom always belongs to high-income country groups (Hamadeh, et al., 2023). Also, the difference between the two countries in income level has always been remarkably high.

Another essential sign of development is gender inequality. The concept of gender inequality, especially when it comes to women's empowerment and political leadership, is a concept that attracts attention and is related to the development level of countries. The Gender Inequality Index measures gender inequality in terms of sharing seats in parliament, the population in secondary education, and the labour market. According to the data in 1990, Pakistan's point of gender inequality was 0.81. The gender gap was 94% in sharing seats of parliament, 15% in the population in secondary education, and 73% in labour force participation in 1990 (Gender Inequality Index, 1990). The United Kingdom's point of gender inequality was 0.255 in 1990. The gender gap was 76% in sharing seats of parliament, 0.1% in the population in secondary education, and 21% in labour force

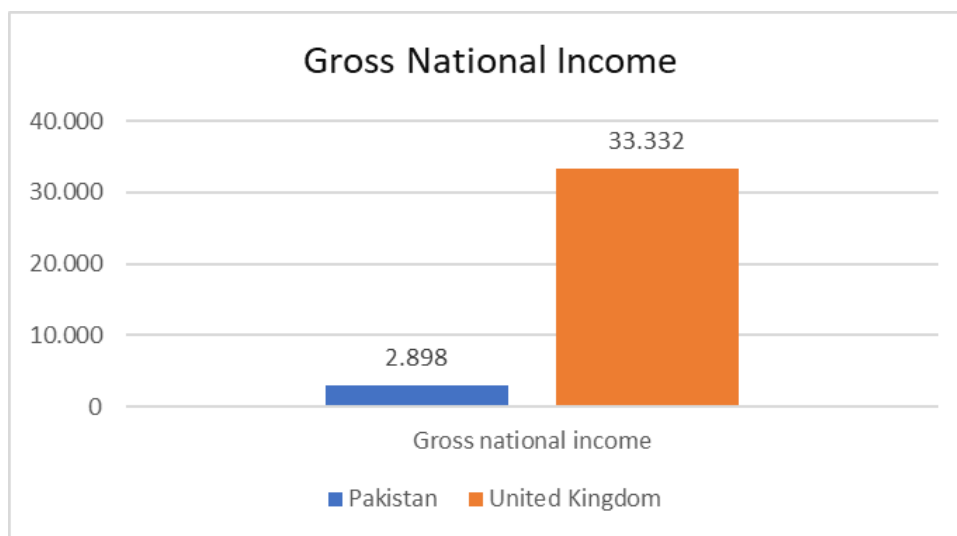
participation (Gender Inequality Index, 1990). The differences between countries can also be observed in Table 1 comparatively. So, there is a parallel relationship between being a developed country and gender equality. Their development level and gender equality differences are apparent. Accordingly, it can be expected that women who live in developed countries have extended rights and encounter less gender inequality.

Table 1: Gender Inequality Index



Source: *Gender Inequality Index 1990*

The other significant sign of countries’ development is human development. Human development is measured by the life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. According to Human Development Reports, The United Kingdom’s point was 0.804, and Pakistan’s point was 0.400 in 1990 (Human Development Index, 1990) Gross national income per capita was 33.332\$ in the United Kingdom, and it was 2.898\$ in Pakistan in 1990 (Human Development Index, 1990). The difference between the gross national income of the two countries is demonstrated in Table 2. The life expectancy at birth was 75.5 in the United Kingdom and 60.1 in Pakistan. The expected number of years of schooling was 13.7 in the United Kingdom, but it was 4.6 in Pakistan (Human Development Index, 1990). The difference between human living standards for the two countries was significantly high during both women’s political leader’s terms.

Table 2: Gross National Income

Source: *Human Development Index 1990*

It is observed that the development level of a country influences the life of citizens in a wide range. Women have more rights and equal life in education, life expectancy at birth, health, political participation, and gender equality in developed countries. The development level of countries demonstrates a critical role in women's lives. Therefore, it is expected that they also be more active in politics in developed countries as women citizens. However, developed and underdeveloped countries also have some women political leaders, and they are as active as their colleagues who live in developed countries. One example of an underdeveloped country is Pakistan, especially in 1990 when Benazir Bhutto was president of the country. Therefore, when it comes to the effect of the development level of countries, it can be expected that Benazir Bhutto and Margaret Thatcher took completely distinctive actions for women's empowerment.

Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto was the first woman prime minister of Pakistan. She had gotten paid attention in the political and international areas because not only was she the woman president of the country, but also, she was the first in a Muslim country. She conducted the presidency of Pakistan in two different periods, 1988-1990 and 1993-1996. Also, she was 35 when she was elected prime minister (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013). Therefore, it is not a surprise that she got attention as a young female prime minister in a Muslim country. Also, it is not a surprise that she was active in politics. Her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was the first prime minister to be elected in a civil and democratic way in Pakistan. To understand the policies and political attempts of Benazir Bhutto, one first needs to understand Pakistan's situation and the perspective of Zulfikar Bhutto.

Pakistan was established in 1947 by separating from India. The country was established by Muslim people who live in India. Therefore, the country experienced many religious, ethnic, and political conflicts with India. Pakistan experienced internal conflicts since the governmental structure was not yet established. The country experienced military interventions, political instability, and internal conflicts for years (Doherty and Doherty, 1990). Zulfikar Bhutto was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan in the first elections among the internal conflicts. He was wealthy and Western-educated.

Zulfikar Bhutto tried to create policies to increase the literacy rate, eliminate gender inequality, and improve the position of people with low incomes (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013). Despite his favourable attempts in Pakistan, Zulfikar Bhutto was taken from his mission by military intervention, and he was hanged in 1979 (Doherty and Doherty, 1990). Benazir Bhutto was raised as the daughter of such a father in such a political environment.

Benazir Bhutto was born in 1953 in Pakistan as the firstborn child of Zulfikar Bhutto and Nusrat Ispahani. She had three siblings, two of them boy and one girl. She had a wealthy and privileged family in Pakistan. She and her family were Sunni Muslims, as are most of Pakistan's population. However, the lives of her family and their views were unlike most people in Pakistan, even though they share the same religion (Doherty and Doherty, 1990). Benazir Bhutto benefited from the privilege of her family, and she grew up differently from other girls in Pakistan. She did not confront any pressure that many Muslim women experienced. For instance, she was not forced to wear the burqa, the traditional clothes generally worn by Muslim women. She was also exclusive among family members. She claimed that she was her father's favourite child (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013). The relationship between Zulfikar and Benazir as a father and daughter can be proof of Benazir's claim. He did not mourn having a girl as a first child, unlike the other people in Pakistan. He was proud that Benazir looked like just him. Benazir also admired her father (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013). They were committed to each other not only for emotional reasons but also for careers. Therefore, it can be understood why Zulfikar's other children did not follow his career path.

Zulfikar Bhutto gave importance to gender equality, education, and women's political participation in society. So, he raised his children with this understanding (Azeem, 2020). Benazir Bhutto had the same opportunities as her brothers, and there was no discrimination between girls and boys in the Bhutto family. Benazir Bhutto grew up a well-educated person. She passed the "O - level" exam at the age of 15, 3 years earlier than her father. Zulfikar Bhutto said that she could become president one day at this rate. When she was 16, she started studying at Radcliffe College. Then, she studied law at St Catherine's College at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. She took her master's degree again from Lady Margaret Hall College at the University of Oxford (Azeem, 2020).

Benazir Bhutto mingled with politics during her childhood because of her father's position, and her relationship with politics increased further during her university life. When she was at university, she started to accompany her father to political conferences and meetings, so she began to learn the political arena (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013). After her graduation, she returned to Pakistan, and the same year Zulfikar Bhutto was arrested. Although her brothers left the country because of political conflict, she remained with her mother and continued to contact her father when the authorities gave permission. Benazir was the person who witnessed her father's experiences most closely. The situation played a massive role in shaping her future. It can be understood that personally in her words. She said that when her father was murdered, she understood that her life was to be in Pakistan (Azeem, 2020).

It can be understood that Benazir was directed to politics due to her father's impact, looking at her short background. Even though the education he received and his father's attitude towards him were in this direction, some social structures also confronted her. Her brother Murtaza claimed that his sons were the successor of Zulfikar Bhutto. Benazir Bhutto rejected his claims and underlined gender equality. Even the steps she takes within the family for her career can be shown as an exemplary movement towards women's empowerment in Pakistan. Also, while being a single woman in the political scene led to problems for Benazir. Benazir Bhutto tried to eliminate this disadvantage by making an arranged marriage. She then had to hide her pregnancy during the election process so that her rivals would not use it against her. As a woman, Benazir faced many disadvantages independent of education on her way to political leadership in a Muslim country (Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013).

Margaret Thatcher

Margaret Thatcher was elected the first woman Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1979. She had taken attention not only as the first woman Prime Minister and was also the longest-serving Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Unlike Benazir Bhutto, she did not have a family life or history intertwined with politics. She was born in 1925 in Grantham as Margaret Hilda Roberts. Her father was a grocery, and her mother was a tailor. Margaret Thatcher had no wealthy family (Özdikmen and Kartın, 2021). However, she had grown up as a versatile person. She learned literacy before going to school, played the piano, read poetry in front of the crowd, and worked in family groceries. She was always supported by her father in expressing her views and encouraged to follow her interests (Steinberg, 2008). Also, she was a brilliant student. Margaret Thatcher started university at 17 ages, unlike her peers. She started university at Oxford in chemical in 1943. While in her first semester, she attended the Oxford Union Conservative Association and was elected its president in 4th year (Özdikmen and Kartın, 2021). When she graduated from university, she recognised her interest in law and politics, so she decided on a completely different future for herself.

Margaret Thatcher gave her first political fight in the election of 1950-1951. The Labour Party nominated her for Dartford city. 26 candidates were male, and they were older than her. However, the party was convinced after listening to her speech and chose her as a candidate. She lost the election, but she started to show herself in the political area. She was elected as a member of parliament in 1959, was assigned to the shadow cabinet, and took charge as a Minister of Education between 1970-1974. After these duties, Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 (Özdikmen and Kartın, 2021).

At the time Margaret was elected, the United Kingdom had economic difficulties. The unions were on strike because of high inflation, unemployment, and stagnant economic growth. The financial collapse reflected on social life as well. There were some changes in personal freedom, tolerance, and social norms. The Conservative Party was formed in this controversial environment, and Margaret Thatcher attended the political scene with this new view (Steinberg, 2008). In 1979, the Conservative Party won the election under her leadership, and Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister of The United Kingdom. Margaret Thatcher's policies were called 'Thatcherism'. It was a term that referred to her personal qualities, prime ministerial power, economic and political strategies, and neo-liberal economic policies in the United Kingdom (Jessop, 2015).

Benazir Bhutto vs Margaret Thatcher on Women's Empowerment

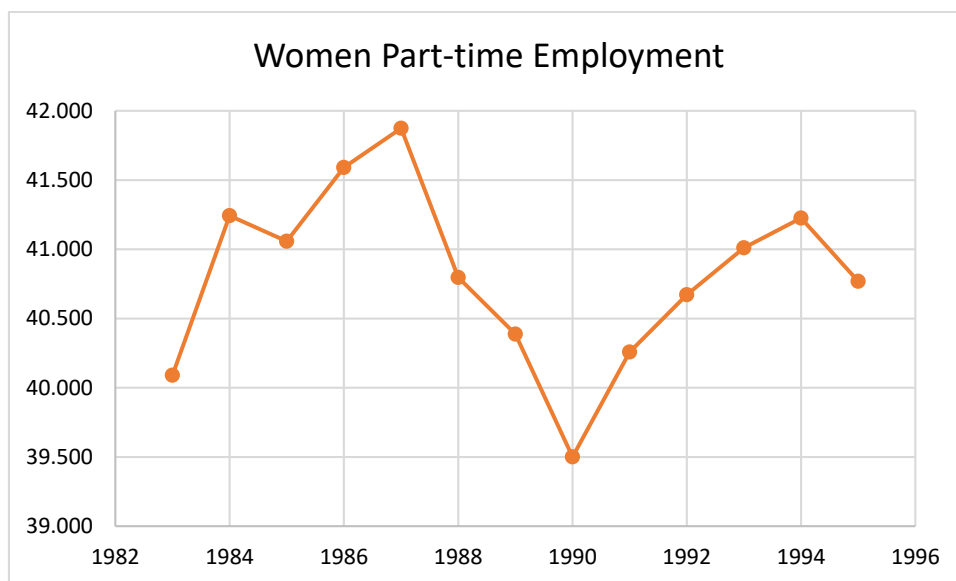
Benazir Bhutto encountered many obstacles during her political career because of anti-democratic forces in the country and her gender. Therefore, she gave importance to strengthening democracy and the empowerment of women (Azeem, 2020). The most significant work of Benazir Bhutto was overcoming obstacles and being a Muslim women leader because Benazir's existence in Pakistan's politics enhanced women's participation in politics from the election process (Azeem, 2020). Benazir Bhutto took the first step by demonstrating to Pakistani women that overcoming obstacles is possible. Because she became president of an Islamic and underdeveloped country, the most crucial thing about her leadership was changing the perceptions of women leadership of Muslim people in Pakistan. On the other hand, When Margaret Thatcher was elected as the first president of the United Kingdom, it created excitement among British women because she was a role model and gave women hope. In the interviews held with British women on this subject, it was seen that they evaluated the incident as follows: "You know, women are thinking, if she can do this, if she can get to the top, like, then so can we, like." (Pilcher,1995). British women thought that it was a significant step toward gender equality. "Well, she is a woman, and she has gotten that job over men. It's unusual because it has always been a man, hasn't it, and she has achieved that" (Pilcher, 1995). It can be understood that the election of two female leaders, regardless of the level of development, has a wide

repercussion among women in their countries. However, British women had more expectations from the women leader than Pakistani women. It seems that the development level of countries could have an impact on women's awareness.

When Benazir Bhutto was elected Prime Minister, the women's position was not brilliant in Pakistan. Pakistani women needed to be amplified in many different areas. They had restricted possibilities in terms of education, labour force, and politics. Before the Benazir was elected, General Zia governed the country under the Shariah and Islamic law. The conditions were particularly difficult for Pakistani women. According to the law, women could not work outside the home, and all their social rights were restricted (Doherty and Doherty, 1990). A few women had some rights, such as going to university, attaining politics, and selecting their husbands. These belonged to elite families in Pakistan. Most of the women were deprived of these rights (Weiss, 1990). Benazir endeavoured to change this situation of women during her leadership. She focused on improving the social status of women. Therefore, she established the Ministry of Women's Development (Weiss, 1990). The Ministry aimed to provide gender equality in education, health, and social life. Ministry also focused on the economic freedom of women which led to the establishment of the first Women Bank in Pakistan (Weiss, 1990). The bank aimed to give women economic opportunities, especially those who started their businesses. In the labour force, Benazir Bhutto desired equality of opportunity, so she got women's quota rules in jobs. Benazir appointed Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan as a governor of Sindh, Ashraf Abbasi as a deputy speaker of the National Assembly, and Kaniz Fatima Yusuf as a vice-chancellor of Islamabad University so women could take charge in administrative positions. These were the essential positions in the country, and it was the first time women had reached them (Shafqat, 1996). Also, the first woman pilot in Pakistan International Airlines was assigned in her period. She gave importance to raising women's financial situation, so she prepared programs that increased women's occupational ability.

Benazir Bhutto tried to make Pakistani women equal to men in all areas of life. During the Benazir Bhutto period, women were more visible in society. Women participated in trade unions, and they were visible in the media by removing the media's censorship (Weiss, 1990). Benazir created various opportunities to empower women. While Benazir Bhutto gave extended rights to women in work life, Margaret Thatcher put the work life of women in the second plan. Even if Margaret Thatcher generally talked about women in her speeches, she supported their employment but primarily saw them as wives and mothers. According to her, the primary responsibility of women was taking care of their children and family. Therefore, while British women participated extensively in the labour force, it did not apply supportive politics in terms of work-life balance in Margaret Thatcher's period. Feminist circles criticised Margaret in terms of insufficient policies about childcare, kindergarten, and child benefits. Many women tended to part-time jobs. The part-time jobs rate had increased by 0.5 million between 1981 and 1986 in total, and 86% of them were women (Mohan, 1989). Also, in Table 3, it can be observed how women's part-time rate changed over the years during Margaret Thatcher's era. During that time, women did not have a regular working life circle. The part-time rate of women had the highest value in these years (Anon., 2023). Although women expected that the president could have expanded women's rights in Margaret's period, they encountered the opposite. The United Kingdom had a brutal economic crisis, and Margaret Thatcher sacrificed women's empowerment first. She applied a new tax reform, and she removed the special incentive for two-earner couples (Mohan, 1989). The application meant that married women stayed at home and not working. Also, Margaret Thatcher's government did not give governmental support for caring services. She said caring for other people who are part of the family is a significant value of society, and people care for their children, disabled people, and older adults. She thought that if the governments take caring responsibility, people are devoid of essential ingredients of humanity (Mohan, 1989).

Table 3: Women’s Part-time Employment in the United Kingdom



Source: OECD

On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher was the president of a developed country. Therefore, women already had some rights, as can be seen in Table 1. However, it didn’t imply that there was no need for intervention in women’s rights or that women didn’t need empowerment. It was still that women had trouble participating in the decision-making process and labour force participation. Women’s empowerment is also required to be a significant part of Margaret Thatcher’s politics. Women need to be empowered by the government not only in underdeveloped countries but also in developed countries. Notably, in a developed country, a female leader is expected to be very active in women’s empowerment when she has the opportunity. Unlike Benazir Bhutto, there was no legal obstacle such as sharia in front of her. However, when it was looked at in the work of Margaret Thatcher, it was observed that women’s empowerment was not a priority for her.

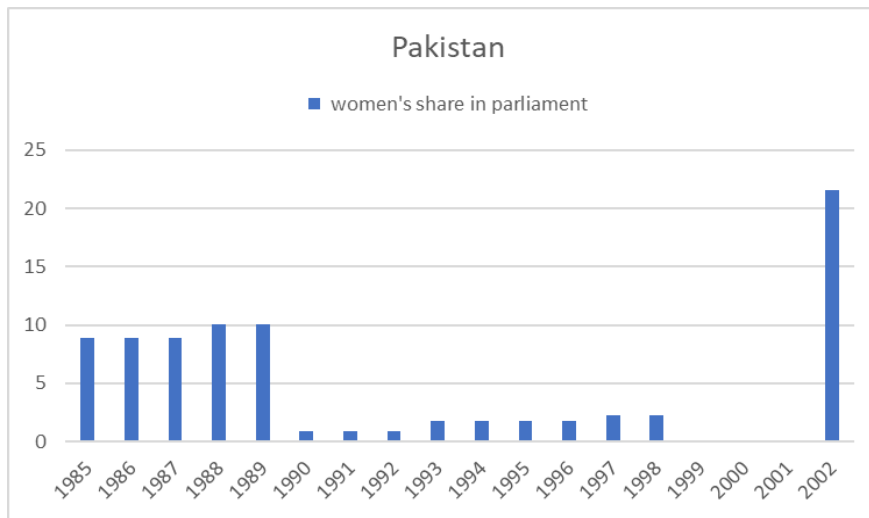
Contrary to Benazir Bhutto’s works on women’s empowerment in an underdeveloped country, Margaret Thatcher had an utterly distinctive perspective on women’s empowerment. Margaret Thatcher opposed the equal rights motion when she was still a minister. She was not pro-abortion. She did not support the feminist movement and ignored them because, according to her, feminists were women who tried to gain some rights without working. She thought she succeeded without special treatment in politics, and the other women could do this as well. She believed that gaining something was possible with ability, not gender (Steinberg, 2008; Pilcher, 1995). After she was elected leader of the Conservative Party, it had asked her whether she saw it as a victory for women. Her answer was, "It is not a victory for women; it is a victory for someone in politics." (Webster, 1990, as cited in Pilcher, 1995). She gave the same answer when she was elected as the first female Prime Minister in the United Kingdom. She said, "I don’t think of myself as the first woman Prime Minister" (Webster, 1990, as cited in Picher, 1995). She struggled with selection committees because she was a wife and mother and did not seem proper for being an MP. She encountered discrimination because of her gender. It could be understood that these struggles did not change her idea about the feminist movement (Steinberg, 2008). Both women leaders encounter various obstacles because of their gender. However, after they overcame obstacles, their manner differentiated from each other in discrimination. Margaret Thatcher prioritised personal effort rather than social movement. She had a controversial manner about women’s empowerment because, in another speech, Margaret Thatcher said that women were appropriate to management positions naturally because creating a

home needed solving complex problems and management qualities (Pilcher, 1995). Based on this statement, it can be claimed that Margaret Thatcher was fed from her gender. Nevertheless, it cannot be asserted that she nourished her gender equally. Her controversial manner could be interpreted as Margaret Thatcher's complicated ideas about women, or that could be her political strategy for the election.

Benazir Bhutto also created opportunities for women in the legal area. Women's rights were restricted in the constitution, especially in an Islamic country. The Pakistani women who protested the Islamization laws trusted Benazir Bhutto to change the constitution. She tried to change the constitution to reduce discrimination against women. Even if she had made some attempts to change the laws, she had limited chances because of religious groups and opposition (Shafqat, 1996). She desired to reduce the obstacles against women so she could improve the status of women in politics in Pakistan because she had encountered many obstacles while she tried to be active in politics. She faced discrimination in the political area, such as the Ulema disapproving of her leadership because of her gender (Azeem, 2020). While Benazir Bhutto constituted the cabinet after the election in 1988, she gave women 5 ministries out of 43 were women. That was a significant step in making women more active in politics (Shafqat, 1996). Benazir's appointment of 5 female ministers in her cabinet was a significant political movement at that time. Also, the rate of women's sharing in parliament increased during Benazir's prime minister. In Table 4, the participation rates of women in parliament during Benazir's tenure are observed. When Benazir Bhutto's presidency was interrupted between 1990-1993, women sharing in parliament decreased. When compared with the periods before and after, a slight increase in the participation rates of women can be noticed during Benazir's era (Table 4). Considering the abovementioned circumstances, even this slight increase can be crucial for Pakistani women. Even accomplishing this was undoubtedly challenging for Benazir. Democracy movements had not yet been fully internalised in Pakistan. It was not even acceptable for a woman to rule the country. Its importance becomes more apparent, especially when compared to the United Kingdom, a country where democracy is much more established.

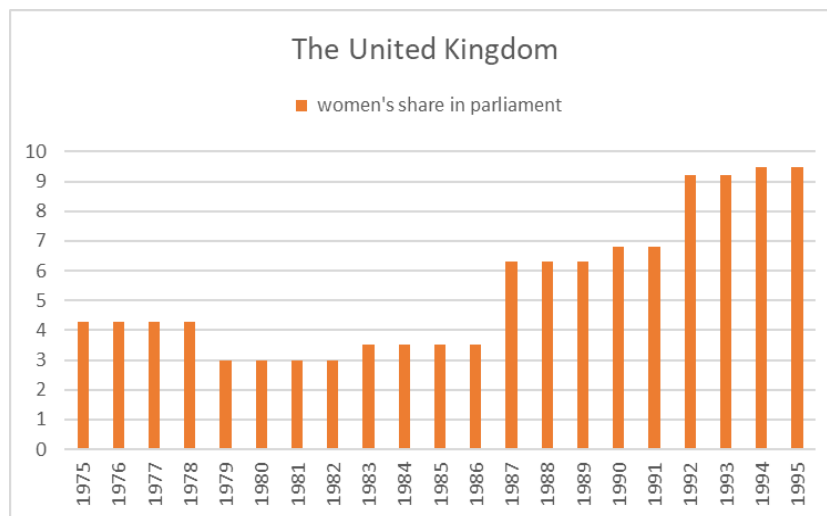
Even if Margaret Thatcher argued that women could have equal rights in the cabinet, she did not give a mission to any women in her cabinet (Steinberg, 2008). Margaret Thatcher was a head of state who experienced similar discrimination as Benazir Bhutto but had many more opportunities. However, in response to Benazir's vital political move, Margaret did not choose to take charge of any women in her cabinet. Benazir Bhutto should have fought to give women some rights because, as mentioned, the constitution was problematic in terms of women's rights. On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher did not have any constitutional obstacles. She could extend women's rights in politics more easily than Benazir Bhutto. However, As seen in Table 5, Women's participation rate in parliament decreased in the first years of Margaret Thatcher's prime minister era. There was a rise in recent years, but it was below expectations when compared with Pakistan. After Margaret Thatcher, women's sharing in parliament increased more.

Table 4: Women’s Share in Parliament in Pakistan



Source: Steinberg, B. S. (2008). *Women in Power*. Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press

Table 5: Women’s Share in Parliament in the United Kingdom



Source: Steinberg, B. S. (2008). *Women in Power*. Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press

When two women leaders are evaluated in terms of their perspective on women empowerment, there are significant differences. The hypothesis of the research was there would be differences, yet it was assumed that Margaret Thatcher would become prominent with her applications to women’s empowerment. However, even though Margaret Thatcher was in a developed country, Benazir Bhutto overtook her in women’s empowerment. The most crucial part of the empowerment of women is giving women a role model in a specific area. It can be argued that inspiration and motivation is the first step. According to the research, the less women encounter stereotypes in society, the more they can aspire to different positions. One of the examples of exposed to fewer

stereotypes is seeing women leaders more. Research shows that if women see other women in their area of interest, they tend to be successful in that area (Hoyt and Simon, 2011). Encountering women leaders contributes to breaking the stereotype of male leadership. Observing women taking on roles in political leadership positions also encourages young women to engage in politics (Arvate, et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be indicated that the need for a role model was not only a problem for women in underdeveloped countries. British women also needed a role model because they were exposed to gender stereotypes. However, Margaret Thatcher did not care about being a role model for women. When she became both the leader of the conservative party and the first female prime minister, she said that she saw this not as a victory for a woman but as the success of a person in politics. She always ignored the importance of being a woman in her position (Pilcher, 1995). Margaret Thatcher thought that women's rights were not a controversial issue, and many of the rights had already been won (Mohan, 1989). The feminists criticised Margaret Thatcher and her government for these statements and her attitude toward women.

Considering Margaret Thatcher's statements, especially regarding women's working life, even in developed countries, women's position is sacrificed first in case of any crisis. On the other hand, Pakistan was also in a difficult economic situation. Nonetheless, in the critical period when the level of development needed to rise, Benazir Bhutto tried to enhance the positions of women despite many problems. However, it can be seen explicitly that Margaret Thatcher pushed women's rights into the background even though she had power and constitutional rights. Margaret Thatcher's manner cannot be explained by the economic difficulties in the United Kingdom. According to her explanations, there were no women's rights problems, and women did not need to have any particular empowerment policies. Another notable point is Margaret's contradictory statements on women's rights. She claims that women are suitable for leadership positions while also avoiding assigning tasks to women.

Queen Bees syndrome could have explained Margaret Thatcher's manner. Queen Bee syndrome is when women who are leaders or in top positions in male-dominated areas put distance from other women. Leader women ignore other women's problems and feed gender discrimination (Arvate, et al., 2018). It can be observed that the Queen Bee Syndrome tracks in Margaret Thatcher's women's policies. She encountered gender discrimination, and she managed the problem by herself. She had a dominant and masculine personality. She thought that women who desired to reach something could oversee it like her (Steinberg, 2008). However, Benazir Bhutto also passed almost the same process during her political life. So, why Benazir Bhutto did not have Queen Bee Syndrome as a women leader is a controversial issue. The country's development level influences women leaders' manner like this. Women who are leaders in underdeveloped countries focus on women's rights more because it is more prominent there is inequality between genders. In developed countries, inequality is more ambiguous between men and women. Women leaders can focus on issues that concern a more significant number of people, such as the economy, unemployment, and so on. In the end, it could be thought that women's rights are related to only women.

The research results indicate that female leadership in politics does not provide a clear advantage for women's empowerment. The attainment of executive positions by female leaders in a developed country does not necessarily contribute to more women reaching such positions. The personality of female leaders, the ideologies they were brought up in, and their individual goals influence their attitudes toward women and the policies they implement. In this regard, different studies could be conducted to understand the motivation behind the variations in efforts toward women's empowerment. In future research, the efforts of women leaders in underdeveloped countries towards women's empowerment can be examined. The works of female and male leaders within the same country can be discussed. This way, it becomes possible to discern under what conditions efforts toward women's progress and what characteristics of leaders or countries facilitate this.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women's political leadership is critical in terms of a sign of women's empowerment. Women's participation in the decision-making process is one of the highest positions that women target to reach. Therefore, it was assumed that the mere presence of women in executive positions automatically translates into enhanced empowerment for women. However, the study highlights the political leadership of women cannot be generalised that it will benefit all other women. Also, Margaret Thatcher and Benazir Bhutto's comparison demonstrates that women leaders' work on women empowerment is not related to the direct development of countries. The attainment of leadership roles by women in developed countries does not guarantee a proportional advancement for women in society. Contrary to the assumption, women political leaders in underdeveloped countries can conduct more comprehensive work on women's empowerment than in developed countries.

The results show that there is a complex relationship between women's empowerment and women's political leadership. It can be perceived that women's empowerment is influenced by various factors such as leaders' manners regarding gender equality and women's rights, individual personalities of female leaders, the ideologies shaping their perspectives, and their personal goals. These elements play a crucial role in shaping their attitudes toward women and the policies they enact. Consequently, understanding the motivations behind the variations in efforts toward women's empowerment requires further investigation.

Future research could delve into the efforts of women leaders in underdeveloped countries. They can offer a comparative analysis to identify potential works on women's empowerment. Additionally, examining the works of female and male leaders within the same country provides an opportunity to discern the conditions conducive to progress and the specific characteristics that facilitate or hinder women's empowerment efforts. By exploring these dimensions, researchers can contribute to women's empowerment. In future research, the comparison of women leaders' work in underdeveloped countries can be examined. Therefore, it can be analysed whether it is like Benazir or not.

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