



# Crossed my mind, but ruled it out: Political ambition and gender in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement 2007–2009

International Political Science Review  
2017, Vol. 38(3) 246–263  
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sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0192512116642219  
journals.sagepub.com/home/ips  


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## Abstract

Exploration of gender and political ambition is a crucial endeavor in liberal democracies like the United States and in electoral democracies with unstable political rights and civil liberties. We use a mixed-methods approach to conduct a political ambition survey of participants in the 2007–2009 Pakistani Lawyers' Movement. We tested eight hypotheses about gender and participation in the movement, whether participants considered running for office (nascent ambition), or have taken steps to run (expressive ambition). Contrary to US findings, among eligible males and females in Pakistan, our logit analysis shows that gender is not significant in explaining nascent ambition among men and women. Running for office has equally crossed women's minds because of female executive role models and women's reserved parliamentary seats. However, elite Pakistani women have lower levels of expressive ambition owing to higher costs women face when challenging informal norms about political participation.

## Keywords

Democratization, gender and politics, Pakistan, political ambition, role models

## Introduction

In societies around the world, informal norms and formal institutions shape the costs that individuals bear when running for political office. Formal electoral requirements and informal norms about

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**Table 1.** Data on interviews with members of the Pakistani Lawyer's Movement.\*

Lawyer's Movement Participants			
Sex of interviewee	Location	Language	Media
Female	United States	English	Skype
Female	Karachi	English/Urdu	Phone
Female	Islamabad	English/Urdu	Phone
Female	Islamabad	English	Phone
Female	Karachi	English	Phone
Female	Lahore	English	Phone
Female	Lahore	English	Phone
Male	Pakistan	English	Skype
Male	Karachi	English	Skype
Male	Karachi	English	Skype
Male	Cardiff	English	Skype
Male	Islamabad	Urdu	Phone
Male	Islamabad	English	Phone
Male	Islamabad	English/Urdu	Phone
Male	London	English	Phone
Male	Karachi	English	Phone

\*All interviews were anonymous.

who should run interact with individual's identities – their gender, class, race, ethnicity, family connections, and personality traits – to shape who runs for and wins political office. Women's political ambition is lower than men's in the established liberal democracy of the United States (see for example, Fox and Lawless, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Lawless and Fox, 2010). Does this finding also hold in electoral democracies such as Pakistan that follow procedures for competitive elections but 'fail to uphold the political and civil freedoms essential for liberal democracy'? (Schedler, 1998: 93). On one hand women's ambition may be higher in Pakistan, where formal institutions reserve 17% of national and provincial parliamentary seats for women (quotaproject.org). Women selected for these high political offices in Pakistan tend to be more educated and have more political or economic resources than the average woman in the population (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 7). On the other hand, informal norms allow social, sometimes violent sanctions against women who are active in politics, which may dampen their ambition.

In this paper, we demonstrate that running for office crosses the minds of Pakistani women who have education, and professional occupations associated with eligibility to run for political office. However, many of these educated professional women in Pakistan rule out running for office, because their presence still challenges many informal norms. These informal norms are that unaccompanied women should not travel and participate in public spaces without male relatives, that women should care for family members rather than devote themselves to public life, and that violence against women who challenge the previous two norms is acceptable. We advance the field by extending Fox and Lawless' Citizen Political Ambition Study (2004, 2005a, 2005b) to Pakistan and supplementing it with semi-structured interviews with eligibles (see Table 1). Fox and Lawless' innovative work identifies eligibles as people with the occupational profiles of those likely to run for office; they then study why these eligibles hold or do not hold political ambition. In a modified way but using the same principle, we use the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement to identify eligibles, people with the background, experience, skills, and interest that might lead them to hold political

ambition. The Pakistani Lawyers' Movement was a widespread movement for democracy from 2007 to 2009 that included lawyers, civil society activists, and people from all over Pakistan. Pakistani lawyers themselves range from middle-upper class elite to lower-middle class, from liberal to right wing. Overall the movement participants took part in a variety of activities to agitate for the independence of the judiciary from undue executive influence by General Pervez Musharraf. We also supplement our quantitative survey data with semi-structured interviews of eligibles in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement. Despite our small sample size, we cautiously compare the results between the US and Pakistan to identify where formal and informal institutions impose different costs on eligible women situated in particular political systems.

The heart of this paper consists of eight hypotheses that guide analysis of eligible women and men's political participation and ambition in Pakistan. We report results from fielding an online version of Fox and Lawless' survey questionnaire in Pakistan among movement participants and asking them about their movement participation, their nascent political ambition, and their expressive political ambition. We first examine quantitative and qualitative data on how gender affects women's and men's participation in the Lawyers' Movement (Hypothesis 1). After examining the respondents' modes of participation in the movement itself, we test the factors encouraging or inhibiting them from running for political office in the Muslim-majority electoral democracy of Pakistan. We estimate a logit model of the factors including gender that drive nascent ambition among movement participants (Hypotheses 2 through 7). Our results show that gender is insignificant in predicting nascent ambition in our Pakistani sample. Interestingly, we find that 72% of female and male eligibles in our survey have nascent political ambition. We attribute this important finding to formal institutions – the presence of reserved seats in Parliament for women (see Reyes, 2002) and the presence of a recent executive role model in Pakistani politics, twice-elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006). This finding also resonates with Stepan and Robertson (2003), who found that democracy gap in the Muslim world is an Arab, rather than the supposed Muslim, problem. Although women's participation in Arab countries may be low, it is not the case in all Muslim countries. In addition to Benazir Bhutto, who has been elected to the highest political office of Prime Minister, and Hina Rabbani Khar, who served as Foreign Minister, women have held high political office in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran and Turkey. Lastly, we examine the expressive ambition of movement participants, where gender depresses women's expressive ambition (Hypothesis 8). This means running for office has crossed their minds but that many elite Pakistani women rule it out. Nascent ambition is necessary but not sufficient for expressive ambition, a public decision to enter a specific political contest or race (Fox and Lawless, 2005b). Combining qualitative and quantitative analysis produces our key finding: eligible men and women in Pakistan who participated in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement have high nascent political ambition but not expressive ambition levels.

Pakistan provides a fascinating case study where strong hierarchies, religious background, education disparity, wealth inequality, and gender norms exist as factors that could deter political ambition. For example, the 2014 United Nations Human Development Report ranked Pakistan 123 out of 148 countries in terms of gender equality.<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1947, the Pakistani state granted full suffrage to women in 1956. The total adult literacy rate from 2008 to 2012 is 54.9% according to unicef.org. However, literacy levels for girls in Pakistan still range from 34% in Balochistan to 67% in Islamabad according to the Ministry of Education and Training (2013). Although Pakistani women were very active in the founding of the nation, women's groups in Pakistan remain on the fringes. As an electoral democracy, rather than a liberal democracy, Pakistan is ongoing in its democratic development. Corruption in Pakistan is high as are levels of political violence. The military holds great influence in a country that has been run predominantly by military dictators since 1947. Additionally, one tenth of all civilian jobs are reserved for officers (Freedom House,

2015). In many sectors, Pakistan remains dominated by the army, by feudal lords or *vaderas* empowered by the previous colonial regime, and by Islamists, all of whom are very hesitant to empower women or to increase freedoms and civil liberties in Pakistan. Pre-election violence notwithstanding, Pakistan had in May 2013 its first-ever civilian transfer of power after a full term in office. Pakistan stands at a critical democratization moment where a new generation of aspirants could emerge from outside the traditional political families and clientelistic parties.

## Hypotheses

In Pakistan, as in many countries around the world, scholarship on gender and participation often finds that women participate in politics less often than men (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987; Ziring, 2003). A new generation of gender and politics scholars have updated this assessment in two ways. First, they have revisited key assumptions of what constitute ‘political acts,’ as past research excluded participation realms frequented more often by women such as community organizing and democratization movements (Beckwith, 2010; Waylen, 2007). Second, comprehensive studies of gender and participation began to control for the time, resources, and civic skills of all potential participants (see Burns et al., 2001; Coffè and Dilli, 2015) showing that when women are structurally located in educated and employed groups, they participate at levels more comparable to men’s. Such findings highlight gender inequalities: when women have equal access to education and wealth, they tend to participate in politics at more equitable levels, if in different ways, than men. Herein, we present eight specific hypotheses and support each with literature on how gender affects participation in social movements, how social movement participation impacts ambition to run for office, and subsequently, how gender interacts with formal and informal institutions in ways that inhibit women’s expressive political ambition in electoral democracies.

*H1: Because informal and formal institutions impose higher costs on Pakistani women for violating traditional gender norms, Pakistani women will be less likely to participate in politics in traditional ways or to assume leadership roles in a mixed-gender social movement.*

Although women in Pakistan are not explicitly barred from participating in movements, gender norms often limit women’s political participation in public spaces. Thus, most women who have ventured into the political arena have belonged to wealthy and politically influential families. The female Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto, who is usually touted as a symbol of gender equity in Pakistan’s politics, belonged to a powerful feudal political family and her father was also a Prime Minister. Since women in ‘reserved’ seats are indirectly elected and there is no selection criterion for nominating women for these seats, party heads tend to nominate female relatives acting as proxies for their husbands or male relatives (see Krook, 2009). There are very few women (six in the National Assembly and 10 in four Provincial Assemblies out of which eight are in the Punjab) who contested elections and joined the National Assembly in general seats in the 2013 election.

The restrictions on women in politics mirror cultural attitudes toward women generally in Pakistani society. There are a number of laws that discriminate against women and prevent them from participating in public and political spheres. The most dreaded was the ‘Hudood Ordinance’ promulgated in 1979 that required four adult male witness to verify a charge of rape. In 2003 a report by the National Commission on the Status of Women estimated that 80% of women in jail were there because they had failed to prove rape charges and were consequently convicted of adultery. The Hudood Ordinance thus elevated elements of traditional justice to statutory law, encouraging out-of-court settlements in accordance with local customs that are discriminatory toward women.

Moreover, a number of cultural practices still haunt women in Pakistan and have severely limited their role in public sphere. Some examples are: ‘honor killing’ (where male relatives can murder a woman if they suspect her of committing adultery or fornication); ‘acid attacks’ and ‘stove burning’ (where wives are burnt for reasons such as not bringing enough dowry or not obeying the husband or mother-in-law); and other forms of domestic violence. As a result of these practices, a 2011 survey ranked Pakistan the third most dangerous country in the world for women (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2011).

Despite these formidable challenges, in recent years female activists and politicians in Pakistan have been able to achieve some successes (see Aziz and Abdullah, 2012). Female Members of the National Assembly elected through quotas have participated in traditional parties in Pakistan (see Ahmad and Khan, 2010; Jamal, 2013; Iqtidar, 2011). *Jamaat-e-Islami* women are ‘harnessing the forces of modernization and bringing them into conformity with Islam’ (Jamal, 2013: 13). Urban middle-class Pakistani women are ‘...inspired by Islamic revivalism,... seek[ing] a moderate way between ...overly restrictive cultural practices of many Muslim groups and ...the ultra-modern culture of the elite classes (Jamal, 2013: 4). The biggest success is reform of the Hudood Ordinance. In 2006, a *Women’s Protection Bill* was passed. Among other changes, the Bill made rape part of the country’s penal code. In addition, women formed the first-ever cross-party women’s caucus in parliament in 2008, led by the first female speaker of the National Assembly. Since then, the caucus has passed various bills in National Assembly including: the *Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Bill* that explicitly recognizes various cultural practices including ‘honor killings’ as criminal acts and affords protection to the victims; the *Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention (Amendment) Bill* that provides guidance on how the state should punish offenders and support victims of violent gender-based crimes; the *Protection Against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Bill* that provides increased punishment for harassment of women at workplaces; and the *Domestic Violence Protection Bill* that makes domestic violence a crime (when before it was considered a domestic affair). The National Commission on the Status of Women was also established in 2002, and made a statutory body in 2012. The Commission can investigate women’s rights violations more independently than before. All of these reforms have faced fierce resistance from male politicians and conservative groups who have asserted that they are ‘anti-Islamic’ and ‘would lead women astray’ (see Ebrahim, 2010; Gishkori, 2012; Khan, 2011; Shah, 2012). In this climate of resistance to legal changes to women’s rights in Pakistan, women may avoid participating in politics in traditional ways or assuming leadership roles in social movements.

*H2: Increased interest in politics increases nascent political ambition.*

Irrespective of other characteristics, some forms of political participation might beget other forms of political participation – even political ambition. If individuals read the paper, watch the news, vote, sign petitions, and protest regularly, we might also expect that running for office would cross their minds (Burns et al., 2001). In sum, greater interest and past political activity could make it more likely that movement participants will consider running for office.

*H3: Having connections with politicians increases nascent political ambition.*

As activists work to advance a cause within the system, they might connect with politicians (Bennett, 1975). Having connections with politicians can make movement participants believe that they too could run for office. This effect could be even larger in a clientelistic system like Pakistan.

*H4: Having interacted with politicians as a part of one’s job increases nascent political ambition.*

As activists work to reach their goals, they may grow more comfortable contacting members of the media, writing press releases and speeches, organizing rallies, and meeting directly with politicians to advance their movements. Direct contact with politicians in an official capacity, as part of one's job, increases the likelihood that running for office crosses an activist's mind.

*H5: Family member encouragement to run for office increases nascent political ambition.*

Pakistan reserves parliamentary seats for women, and many of these seats have historically gone to daughters or wives of influential male politicians, though as Jalalzai and Krook (2010) note, women and men both benefit from family connections to politics (p. 13). Pakistani men and women not currently participating in elected office may additionally need the support of their families before expressing the desire to run. Therefore, we expect a movement participant to be more likely to consider running for office if a family member encourages him or her to do so.

*H6: Increased perception that one could win an election increases nascent political ambition.*

Rational individuals weigh the pros and cons associated with running for office (Schlesinger, 1966), so we expect that they will run if believe that they would be likely to win an election, and this should affect both females and males in Pakistan.

*H7: Being married, a woman, or a minority in Pakistan decreases nascent political ambition.*

Although men and women might participate in a movement, develop skills and connections, and interact indirectly or directly with politicians, gender can filter how similar experiences and inputs play out differently for women and men or for members of minority groups. Foundational work on gender and candidate selection shows that gender influences all steps on the way to becoming an elected official (Matland and Montgomery, 2006; Norris, 1996). So, on one hand, informal norms in Pakistan might discourage women or minorities from even thinking they should run for office.

On the other hand, Pakistan's formal institutions reserves 17% of seats for women in national and provincial parliaments. The steady presence of women in parliaments and leadership of past female Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto might create the societal expectation that at least some women will play a role in political decision-making. These role-model effects could lead female eligibles in Pakistan to consider running for office (and privately considering running for office is not costly) because they have seen other women hold office and know places are reserved for women. Still, based on work on gender and candidate selection and on findings from the US that women have lower nascent ambition than men, we expect female Pakistani movement participants will have lower nascent ambition than male Pakistani movement participants.

*H8: Being a woman in Pakistan decreases expressive political ambition.*

When it comes to taking concrete steps to declare an interest in running for election, including speaking to a political party leader, contacting a community leader, or asking for a campaign donation, few women eligibles may take these steps – perhaps only those with connections within the party that can gain them party support or ballot access to reserved seats. Moreover, as an electoral democracy, Pakistan is criticized by Freedom House, Amnesty International, and other Human

**Table 2.** Number of contacts in six email lists for Pakistani Lawyers' Movement.

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Student Action Committee- Lahore-223
Student Action Committee-Lahore (Lahore University Management School) LUMS-290
Volunteers-148
Student Action Committee -85
Martial Law -20
Emergency Executive Committee – around 10
<b>776 email addresses for Pakistani Lawyers' Movement Participants</b>

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Rights Organizations for failing to provide adequate protections for women and religious minorities who fear retribution for the visible action of political participation (outlined in Hypothesis 1). Therefore, running for office might cross women's minds, but fewer women may take concrete steps to run for office, displaying expressive political ambition.

### **Data and characteristics of Pakistani eligibles**

We used a mixed-methods approach to examine political ambition among men and women in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement. We compiled the web survey and semi-structured interview questions from the survey items contained in the Citizen Political Ambition Study (Fox and Lawless, 2005a, 2005b). The survey included 58 questions (Fox and Lawless, 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Lawless and Fox, 2010) and we added some additional questions specifically dealing with the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement.

We distributed the survey via email in a universe provided through an email list (see Table 2) kept by a noted leader of the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement who will remain anonymous. This individual had organized seven different email lists. The first list (not in Table 2) included 18,000 people who had signed up for notifications on changes in the movement. The second list contained all movement supporters in Lahore. The third list held all student movement supporters in Lahore specifically attending the Lahore University of Management Sciences. The fourth, fifth, and sixth lists contained Volunteer, Student Action, and Martial Law lists. The seventh list contained ten to 12 of the most important and active leaders of the movement. We did not contact the first list as these people expressed interest in email notifications, and these email addresses are often inaccurate and incomplete.<sup>2</sup> We received a total of 62 responses from 626 emails or a response rate of 10%, which is not atypical for online surveys (Deustkens et al., 2004). Although this response rate was smaller than we would like, we contribute original data from a critical country rarely studied empirically with a comparative framework. We perform t-tests on the difference of means between female and male respondents and note with asterisks and in bold those differences significant at the 0.05 level.

The survey group was urban, elite, and highly educated. Most respondents were more active politically or in their community than the general population in Pakistan. For example, 90% of the survey participants had at least a bachelor's degree and over 90% had attended English medium schools (which is a symbol of belonging to an elite class). More than 45% of respondents had written to newspapers about public issues and 64% had engaged in relief efforts around the 2005 earthquake. The discrepancy between the general population in Pakistan and female respondents was even greater. All female participants surveyed had at least a master's degree. Although respondents do not represent Pakistani citizens in general, we believe that the survey sample is representative of the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement. According to media accounts, the movement was heavily led and influenced by an educated sector of Pakistani society. Although people from all walks of life

supported the movement, it was, lawyers, students from different universities, academics, the media, civil society, and human rights activists who were the main protagonists.

Although in the beginning the movement was dominated by the secular urban class, later more conservative political actors (e.g. religious political parties and religious lawyers' groups) also joined (Berkman, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2007). However, women who participated in the Lawyers' Movement belonged to an elite secular section of the society; women from traditional families could not participate because of restrictions on appearing in public spaces and working with men. The distinction between groups who participated in the lawyers' movement and the general population in Pakistan also makes sense because 'eligibles' are not necessarily representative of the general population. It is also possible that web surveys are associated with an upper-class bias, contributing to a sample consisting mainly of elite participants in the movement. However, most movement participants used the same medium to communicate and coordinate the movement itself. Thus, we argue the online survey sample is fairly representative of Pakistani Lawyers' Movement participants, and therefore of our eligibility pool.

We supplemented the survey responses with qualitative interviews with movement participants. For our semi-structured interview sampling procedure, we started with a known list of movement participants and then used snowball sampling to contact more interviewees. We conducted a total of 16 interviews with movement participants consisting of seven women and nine men residing in Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We conducted interviews by phone and by Skype and informed people of their right not to participate, asking key questions from the Citizen Political Ambition Survey (Fox and Lawless, 2005a, 2005b).

## **Gender differences in movement participation (Hypothesis 1)**

First, through our sample, we looked within the Lawyers' Movement itself to see who participated, their backgrounds, and their prior levels of political interest. We found interesting similarities and differences between males and females. Male participants came from across the socio-economic spectrum, and female participants came from elite backgrounds. Female participants were involved in a broader range of political activities prior to the movement compared to their male counterparts (see Table 3 and Table 4). For example, women were significantly more likely to have solicited funds for an organization (51%) or to have observed or attended a provincial parliamentary session (27%). Although most Pakistani women in the Lawyers' Movement reported watching TV news or reading newspapers at least three times a week (88%), only 39% of female participants had voted in Parliamentary elections. In contrast, 60% of male movement participants had voted in parliamentary elections. A significantly higher percentage ( $p=0.05$ ) of male participants than females had worked or volunteered for a candidate (40%), interacted socially with a political candidate (57%), or attended political party meeting or conventions (78%). These findings on prior political activity of women in Pakistan are similar to Fox and Lawless' (2010) findings in the United States, where women participate more in social-community realms and men more in elective realms.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, gender affected the ways in which many men and women participated in the Lawyers' Movement (see Table 5). Women were found less frequently than men in the public parts of the movement; their participation was more common in coordination, information dissemination, working behind the scenes, and advocacy work. For example, a far higher percentage of men than women participated in the Long Marches of 2008 and 2009. In 2008, 74% of male respondents marched, and 81% marched in 2009, so more men got hurt in the movement. Nonetheless, some very notable and brave Pakistani women defied traditional gender norms that discourage young, single women from appearing in public places on their own without female or male family guardians present. These Pakistani women played visible and often crucial roles in the



**Table 3.** Political activity before 2007, Pakistani Lawyers' Movement online survey respondents.

Before your participation in the Lawyers' Movement in 2007, did you...?

*Vote in Parliamentary elections*

	Number female/total female (%)	Number male/total male (%)
Yes	13/33 (39)	28/47 (60)
No	20/33 (61)	19/47 (40)
<i>Correspond with newspapers</i>		
Yes	16/31 (51)	20/47 (43)
No	15/31 (49)	27/47 (57)
<i>Read a newspaper or watch news on TV at least three times a week</i>		
Yes	29/33 (88)	42/47 (89)
No	4/33 (12)	5/47 (11)
<i>How closely do you follow national politics?</i>		
Very Closely	15/33 (45.5)	25/47 (53.2)
Closely	11/33 (33.3)	12/47 (25.5)
Somewhat Closely	6/33 (18.2)	8/47 (17.0)
Not Closely	1/33 (3.0)	2/47 (4.3)

protests and long marches. As one interviewee explained: '[t]he main stage usually had many women speaking and mobilizing support. Many meetings were convened by women. Many women activists were at the forefront and got arrested many times, Uzma Noorani, Samina Noman, Abira Ashfaq, Anis Haroon, et cetera, just to name a few.' In contrast, when it came to working behind the scenes or on the text message campaign, women outnumbered men.

Male interviewees suggested that women are generally not respected by their male colleagues in Pakistan when they come out in public and are therefore more likely to be victims of sexual harassment. Therefore, a sizeable segment of women tended to stay out of protests and long marches – the activities that could put them in harm's way or make them more visible in the movement. Some women were innovators, however. A male interviewee said that one female friend participated in the protests but always brought her mother along as a guardian from male harassment. Others noted that more men were in visible roles in the Lawyers' Movement, but that the few women who did serve in leadership roles received equal media coverage. An interviewee said '[w]omen were not among the main leaders, but some women lawyers played major roles and were well-respected' and noted that 'their part strengthened the Lawyers' Movement.' The quantitative and qualitative data together support Hypothesis 1 – that women will be less likely to participate in street activism or assume leadership roles in the movement.

### **Nascent political ambition and the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement (Hypotheses 2–7)**

In the US context, political interest, politicized upbringing, minority status, and stage in life can affect nascent ambition, and political opportunity structure plays a smaller role. Our sample of eligibles is composed of participants who took part in the Lawyers' Movement, so they would have had the urge to bring political and judicial change in Pakistan. The survey assesses the degree to which the participants have considered entering the political arena as candidates. Table 6 presents data on whether participants had ever considered running for office. Combining women and men,

**Table 4.** Political activity before 2007.

	Number female/	Number male/
	Total female and male (%)	Total female and male (%)
Engaged in public speaking	18/36 (50)	18/36 (50)
<b>Solicited funds for an organization*</b>	21/48 (44)	27/48 (56)
Conducted significant research on a public policy issue	16/30 (53)	14/30 (47)
Run an organization, business, or foundation	15/36 (42)	21/36 (58)
Organized an event for large group of people	20/46 (43)	26/46 (57)
	Female/Total Female (%)	Male/Total Male (%)
<b>Worked or volun. for a candidate throughout your life*</b>	6/28 (21)	19/48 (40)
Attended a city council or school board meeting	7/28 (25)	17/46 (37)
<b>Attended political party meeting, convention or event*</b>	15/30 (50)	37/47 (78)
<b>Observed or attended a provincial parliamentary session*</b>	8/29(27)	4/44 (9)
Interacted with political official as part of your job	10/28 (36)	16/45 (35)
Interacted with elected political official socially	16/31 (52)	26/46 (57)
Had an elected official as family or family friend	7/30 (23)	16/47 (34)
Served on the board of a non-profit or a foundation	15/29(48)	17/47(36)

\*t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 5.** How respondents participated in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement.

	Number female/	Number Male/
	Total female and male (%)	Total female and male (%)
Protests	17/55 (31)	38/55 (69)
Behind the scenes	21/48 (44)	27/48 (56)
Text message campaign	20/45 (44)	25/45 (56)
<b>Long March 2008*</b>	8/30 (26)	22/30 (74)
<b>Long March 2009*</b>	5/26 (19)	21/26 (81)
Advocacy	13/41(31)	28/41 (69)
Legal remedy	2/4 (50)	2/4 (50)
<b>Fundraising*</b>	1/1 (100)	0/1 (0)

\* t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

11 respondents (17%) had seriously considered running for office and 33 respondents (52%) said running had crossed their minds, for a grand total of 69% who had nascent political ambition. Only

**Table 6.** Nascent political ambition.*Have you considered running for office? (N=63)*

	Seriously considered it	Crossed my mind	Not thought about it
	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)
Female	1/22 (4)	15/22 (68*)	6/22 (27)
Male	10/41 (24)	18/41 (44)	13/41 (32)

*Which statement best describes your attitude about running for office? (N=68)*

	Definitely in future	Might in the future	Wouldn't rule out	Never
	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)
Female	3/24 (13)	9/24 (38)	12/24 (50)	0/24 (0)
Male	10/40 (25)	17/40 (42)	16/40 (40)	1/40 (2)
Total	13/68 (19)	26/68 (39)	28/68 (41)	1/68 (1)

\*t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

31% said that they have never considered running for political office. Similarly, when asked, '[w]hich statement best describes your attitude toward running for office?' 19% identified with the statement: 'I would definitely do it in the future.' Another 39% might consider running for office, 41% said they would not rule it out, and 1% said they would never run for elected office.

Our initial descriptive evidence shows that Pakistani Lawyers' Movement participants have strong nascent political ambition. Moreover, the data fail to support our Hypothesis 7 that being a woman decreases nascent political ambition. 72% of women and 68% of men had nascent political ambition. Our limited quantitative sample findings contrast with Lawless and Fox (2010) who found US females have lower nascent ambition than males: 56% of men and just 41% of US women eligibles in their comprehensive survey had ever considered running. This finding in and of itself is notable and might indicate institutional differences at work. In Pakistan, perhaps lower average standard of living, reserved seats, and strong female role models like Benazir Bhutto lead female eligibles to think of running for office as often as men. In fact, 52% of our female survey respondents listed Benazir Bhutto as an inspiring contemporary leader in Pakistan (see later sections).

To further probe nascent political ambition, we develop a logistic regression model. The model operationalizes our Hypotheses 2 through 7 according to the variable description in Table 7. The model shown in Table 8 predicts whether the participant has ever considered running for office. A review of the findings shows that the model performs well. All of the coefficients move in the expected direction except for the female variable. We also estimated a probit model as a robustness check to ensure that the results are not the artifacts of model selection, choice of link function or the distribution of errors. Our results remain the same and the variables come out to have added significance. We find that the most important factors determining whether someone had ever considered running for office in this electoral democracy are as follows: having connections with politicians (Hypothesis 3); having interacted with politicians in one's job (Hypothesis 4); and receiving a suggestion to run from a family member (Hypothesis 5). In the Pakistani context, we also find that the self-perceived chance of winning (Hypothesis 6) significantly affects nascent political ambition. Although we expect that some of these factors

**Table 7.** Logit variable description.

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
<u>Dependent Variable</u>				
Ever considered running for office	0-1	0.69	0.47	Indicates whether respondent ever considered running for office (1) or not (0).
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
(H2) Political interest	0-1	0.25	0.44	Indicates whether respondent joined or renewed membership in a political organization before the Lawyers' Movement (1) or not (0).
(H3) Connections to the political system	0-1	0.26	0.44	Indicates whether respondent self-reports connections to the political system (1) or not (0).
(H4) Interaction with elected officials as part of job	0-1	0.37	0.49	Indicates whether responded interacted with elected official as part of job (1) or not (0).
(H5) Family member suggestion	0-1	0.51	0.50	Indicates whether a family had suggested running for office (1) or not (0).
(H6) Perceived chance of winning	1-4	2.13	1.86	Indicates respondent's perceived chance of winning. Ranges from "Very Unlikely" (1) to "Very Likely" (4).
(H7a) Married	0-1	0.40	0.49	Indicates whether respondent is married (1) or not (0).
(H7b) Female	0-1	0.41	0.49	Indicates whether respondent is female (1) or not (0).
(H7c) Minority	0-1	0.06	0.49	Indicates whether respondent part of a minority group (1) or not (0).

**Table 8.** Logistic regression coefficients (and standard errors) predicting potential candidates' nascent political ambition.

	Ever considered running for office
<u>Independent Variables</u>	
(H2) Political interest	1.54 (1.27)
<b>(H3) Connections to the political system</b>	3.77* (1.56)
<b>(H4) Interaction with elected officials as part of job</b>	2.40* (1.04)
<b>(H5) Family member suggestion</b>	1.93* (0.96)
<b>(H6) Perceived chance of winning</b>	1.76* (0.86)
(H7a) Married	-2.26 (1.32)
(H7b) Female	0.31 (0.94)
(H7c) Minority	-1.08 (1.31)
<u>Constant</u>	-4.11* (1.66)
<u>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></u>	0.43
<u>N</u>	53 (37 males and 16 females)

Note: Levels of significance: \*p < .05.

are also important in liberal democracies, these factors seem more pronounced in the electoral democracies where family connections matter more.

**Table 9.** Gender differences in self-evaluation of qualifications to run for office.

	Female	Male	Total
I know a lot about public policy issues	15/31 (48)	28/45 (62)	43/76 (57)
<b>I have relevant professional experience</b>	6/31 (19)*	23/45 (51)	29/76 (38)
I have public speaking skills	12/31 (38)	27/45 (60)	39/76 (51)
I have connections to political system	4/31 (13)	17/45 (38)	21/76 (28)
I have or could raise money for political campaigns	6/31 (19)	10/45 (22)	16/76 (21)
I am a good self-promoter	6/31 (19)	10/45 (22)	16/76 (21)

\*t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Survey question was, 'In thinking about your qualifications to run for an office, are any of these statements true?'

In the logistic model of nascent ambition, being female and levels of political interest are not significant. More Pakistani females than males in our sample possess nascent political ambition. Our Pakistani findings based on a small sample size of eligibles suggest that we contextualize our findings in a larger comparative literature. In the US case, females possess lower levels of nascent ambition than males. Our findings also bring into question literature that sees females and other minorities, especially in the developing world and in an Islamic country like Pakistan, as being less politically ambitious than men. Higher levels of nascent ambition among female Pakistani eligibles than their male counterparts could result from two main factors. First, the female participants in our dataset are more ambitious than the typical woman in Pakistan. Second, as Jalalzai discusses: '[W]omen routinely ascend to high office in countries where women's social standing lags far behind men's. Furthermore, though largely disadvantaged in attaining executive positions worldwide, in contexts where political power stems from such factors as ethnicity and kinship, some women, like men, occasionally rise as members of preferred groups' (2013: 3). In electoral democracies with reserved seats for women, gender may interact with political connections, and individual personality to increase nascent ambition for those with connections.

To interpret the magnitude of the effects of these variables on willingness to run for office, we calculated predicted probabilities for men and women. Within our sample of participants in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement, self-perceived chance of winning, family suggestion to run, interaction with politicians, and especially connections to the political system dramatically increase the likelihood of considering running for office. This shows the overwhelming effects of clientelism or connections to the system. For example, we find that a person's likelihood of possessing nascent ambition increases as his or her self-perceived likelihood of winning moves from very unlikely (51%) to unlikely (77%) to likely (98%). 94% of individuals who had a family member suggest running, 97% of those who interacted with a politician on the job, and an astonishing 99% of those reporting personal connections to politicians, reported considering running for office. The effect of a family member encouraging someone to run holds whether or not that person previously held elected office. That said, formal interaction with any politician emerges as significant in affecting nascent political ambition.

## **Toward expressive ambition, gender, and the Lawyers' Movement (Hypothesis 8)**

Triangulating our survey results with qualitative interview methods allows us to show that: 1) Expressive ambition is low despite high nascent political ambition because of the clientelistic nature of politics in Pakistan. This finding is true for both men and women. 2) Expressive ambition

**Table 10.** Gender differences in expressive political ambition.

	Discussed running with party leaders	Discussed running with comm. leaders	Solicited financial contributions	Asked about name on ballot
	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)	Number/each sex (%)
Female	11/22 (48)	1/20 (5)*	1/20 (5)	2/18 (11)
Male	21/42 (50)	13/38 (34)	3/37 (8)	4/36 (11)

\*t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Survey question was, ‘Have you ever taken any of the following steps?’.

of female eligibles is significantly lower than that of male eligibles because of informal norms in Pakistan. Female participants in particular did not have high levels of expressive political ambition, which includes discussing running for office with community or party leaders, seeking contributions, or finding out how to get one’s name on a ballot. Notably, these actions cost more than simply personally considering running for office. Taking concrete steps to run by contacting others for their support could invoke the ire of political incumbents.

Our data show overall a low percentage of participants had expressive ambition, but more males did than females (see Table 10). About half percent of the respondents had talked to a political party leader: 50% of male respondents and 48% of female respondents. Only four of 57 respondents (7%) reported soliciting financial contributions. Roughly 11% of respondents (male or female) inquired how to place their name on the ballot. However, Pakistani males were more likely than female movement members to have talked to a political party leader about running for office. Pakistani males were significantly more likely to have discussed running for office with a community leader (34% of males as opposed to 5% of females).

The presence of clan connections, social class, and gender combine to effect political ambition. When asked whether one’s gender affects political ambition, one male answered:

The main hindering factor is social class, wealth, and family name. Whether men, women, or non-Muslim, all can assume office given wealth, clan support, and brute power. A former Member of National Assembly from my district in Punjab, Sumera Mailk, had money, family name, clan support and there was no stopping her from becoming MNA... Gender does not matter if one has money, strong clan presence. Hina Rabbani Khar, who is foreign minister now, did not even campaign herself, her father campaigned for her and she won elections.

American sociologist Erik Olin Wright notes that few concepts are ‘more contested in sociological theory than the concept of “class”’ (Wright, 2005: 717). This male eligible is using the term social class to denote the ‘privileged background’ of the person. In a clientelistic system, his lack of connections to powerful clans or economic privilege has reduced his expressive ambition. However, a similarly situated woman would also have the additional hurdle of challenging informal gender norms to launch her candidacy.

The survey questionnaire asked movement participants in particular whether personal or structural factors would prevent them from running. Personal factors included: spending less time with family, loss of privacy, less time for personal interest, and hindrance to professional development. Structural factors included: the possibility of engaging in negative campaigns, the need to solicit financial contributions, and the need to deal with party officials. Generally, movement participants were moderately concerned about running for office because of the attendant loss of privacy and possibility of hindering professional goals. Nearly 50% said loss of time with their family would be a negative factor in the decision to run, and 9% said this

**Table 11.** Barriers to expressive ambition.

	Comfortable (Total%)	Wouldn't bother me (Total%)	Negative (Total%)	Deter running (Total%)
<i>Spending less time with family*</i>				
Female	1/24 (4)	7/24 (29)	13/24 (54)	2/24 (13)
Male	6/42 (14)	15/42 (37)	18/42 (42)	3/42 (7)
<b>Loss of privacy*</b>				
Female	1/23 (4)	7/23 (30)	4/23 (17)	11/23 (48)
Male	7/42 (16)	18/42 (44)	12/42 (28)	5/42 (12)
<b>Less time for personal interests*</b>				
Female	4/23 (17)	5/23 (22)	11/23 (48)	3/23 (13)
Male	14/42 (35)	17/42 (40)	9/42 (21)	2/42 (5)

\*t-test findings where female/male differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Survey question was, 'How would the following affect your decision to run for political office?'

factor would deter them from running at all. Almost 25% of the respondents said that having to engage in or to endure a negative campaign would prevent them from running for political office in Pakistan.

Our results show that female movement participants, much more than their male counterparts, are deterred by these barriers from running for office. Two trends appear from combining survey and qualitative interview data. First, compared to male counterparts, female eligibles generally tend to see almost all listed factors – ranging from interacting with the media and politicians to engaging in dirty politics – as negatively affecting their decisions to run for an office. Men tend not to be as affected by these factors when deciding whether or not to run for office (see Table 11). Second, as Fox and Lawless (2005b) found in the United States, Pakistani female eligibles report more concerns with how their electoral bids would affect their families. For example, these women are more concerned about spending less time with their families, the effects of negative campaigning on their families, and the loss of privacy. Regarding contemplating running for political office, 13% of female respondents said that the likelihood of spending less time with family would deter them from running for office compared to 7% of men. Surprisingly, 48% of these women said a loss of privacy would deter them from running for office, whereas just 12% of men stated the same.

A young woman who initially participated in the movement through a political party and later through civil society groups remarked:

I would have to be a very different person to be a politician in Pakistan. There are several reasons [for my not being able to participate in politics] actually. First, there is no political party that matches my ideology. Second, not many people have access to politics. Parties are not democratic. So I don't think that I can run for political office even if I want to. Besides, politics is just so dirty in Pakistan. I don't feel safe in joining politics. I would rather just contribute to civil society than being part of politics.

This female interviewee notes not just a lack of clan connections, but also a feeling that it is not safe to participate, arguably because of her gender, and because a woman's participation in public office challenges more informal norms in Pakistan than her participation in civil society. Our findings thus build on Fox and Lawless' body of research on ambition but qualify it for electoral democracies. We show that in the electoral democracy of Pakistan, women's political background and participation tends to be more varied or behind-the-scenes than men's. When women overcome obstacles to participate in a democratization movement, and operate in a context where 17% of parliament seats are reserved for women, they overwhelmingly consider running for

political office. However, informal norms such as an unsafe environment for women in public life and familial concerns, prevent even these elite female Pakistani eligibles from taking concrete steps to run for political office.

## Conclusions

This study builds on seminal work on candidate emergence to present important new findings on political ambition in the context of an electoral democracy. Although the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement attracted participants from across the class and political spectrum, many leaders and active participants in the movement had economic, class, or educational advantages. First, we demonstrate that many talented males and females in Pakistan possess nascent political ambition. Nearly 70% of all movement participants indicated that running for political office had at least crossed their minds, but only 1% said they had taken concrete steps to put their name names on the ballot. We argue that Lawyers' Movement participants are a valuable, untapped resource that holds the potential to move Pakistan toward liberal democracy. Although the movement itself eventually dissipated as factions disagreed about how to move forward, the movement was successful in reinstating the Chief Justice and remove the former army chief cum President Musharraf. We therefore suggest further exploration of: 1) the potential of democratization movements to supply new political candidates that deepen democratic institutions in electoral democracies and 2) the determinants of nascent and expressive political ambition in other electoral democracies.

Second, there is no statistically significant difference in nascent political ambition among Pakistani women and men in our sample. The women who participated in the movement were more educated and elite compared to Pakistani women in the population at large. These women had many skills and resources, and some had spoken to party leaders about running for office. Males who participated in the movement tended to have either little political experience at all or very direct experience working for candidates and attending political party events. Despite many skills and qualifications, women viewed themselves as less qualified to run than male counterparts (Table 9).

Third, and related, although men and women both face barriers in converting from nascent to expressive political ambition given the clientelistic nature of Pakistani politics, women are more hindered than men by factors such as familial concerns and concerns about loss of privacy. Men demonstrate expressive ambition through speaking to community leaders about running for office, whereas women demonstrate expressive ambition by speaking to a party leader, showing the influence of reserved seats in structuring women's candidacies. Notably, Pakistani women face higher threats of violence and greater hurdles in establishing work-based connections to politicians. Our findings on women's lower expressive ambition comport with the moderate-sized gender participation gap Coffé and Dilli find in Muslim-majority Pakistan (2015).

Women face a different set of challenges in Pakistan's electoral democracy than in the liberal democracy of the United States, where Fox and Lawless demonstrate a substantial gender gap in nascent ambition. Although our sample size is small, it is still notable that there is no statistically significant difference between females and males possessing nascent ambition. This difference across cases may be a function of American women's higher average standard of living, which yields higher opportunity costs of running for office. In contrast, eligible Pakistani women recognize the value of running for office and have experience with visible executive role models, but may lack family support or fear targeted violence again them as female elected officials. For female Pakistanis brave enough to participate in the Pakistani Lawyers' Movement, running for office has crossed their minds. But for the time being, in the current institutional environment, many eligible women active in the movement have ruled out running for elected office.



## Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

## Notes

1. Available at: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013\\_en\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013_en_complete.pdf).
2. We sent out 776 emails, of which 100 emails bounced back, and 50 were addresses belonging to students who had graduated. A total of 626 operable email contacts remained. We had 52 full survey responses. Of 40 partial responses, 30 were blank and 10 were completed. We had a grand total of 62 responses.

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