



perspectives on gender discourse

Women in politics: challenges of democratic transition in Kenya

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Contents

Authors	4
Abbreviations	5
Preface	7
Introduction	9
Chapter 1 Taking stock- women’s performance in Kenya’s..... parliamentary politics in the 2002 general elections <i>Prof. Maria Nzomo</i>	17
Chapter 2 Redefining women’s political participation through party politics: the context of Kenya’s political transition <i>Jason Oyugi</i>	34
Chapter 3 Affirmative action for Kenyan women:..... an analysis of the relevant provision of the Draft Constitution <i>Peter Wanyande</i>	49
Chapter 4 Financing for politics – which way for women? <i>Okumba Miruka</i>	62
Chapter 5 Media portrayal of women politicians – an enabling or inhibiting factor? <i>Kwamchetsi Makhoha</i>	95
Chapter 6 Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership? <i>Nyokabi Kamau</i>	103



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Abbreviations

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCGD	Collaborative Center for Gender and Development
EAS	East African Standard
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
ECWD	Education Center for Women and Democracy
EPPP	Engendering the Political Process Programme
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
FREDA	Friends of Esther and Deborah
IDEA	international Democratic Electoral assistance
IDIS	Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies
KANU	Kenya African National Union
LKWV	League of Kenya Women Voters
LPK	Labour Party of Kenya
MP	Member of Parliament
MYWO	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NDI	National democratic Institute
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NWC	NARC Women Congress
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



I like to use an axe, to see what life I can bring to parts of wood that are not talking to me ...(*Sculptor: Irene Wanjiku*)



Preface

Kenya went through remarkable elections in the year 2002 that saw the emergence of a new dispensation under National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in 2003. To the rest of the world Kenya had clearly demonstrated that democracy was possible in Africa. There is no change that is not riddled with criticism and the 2002 elections was no exception. Many lessons have been hopefully learned and the challenge for us is to put these lessons into practise so as to achieve even better results in the future.

During the first half of the year 2003, The Gender Forum, coordinated by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, held a series of discussions on the experiences of women in the last general elections, also focusing on how far women have come in engaging in politics. Significant questions were raised as to why should women be involved in electoral politics, what are their challenges and what lessons can be carried forward to improve the quality of women engagement in politics?

Though answers to some of these questions seem obvious, what came out of the discussions was most illuminating. It was evidenced that politics is about power which women have not been associated with and the patriarchal society has not yet accepted women leadership. For women to emerge and be accepted as equal partners in political representation and other decisions making positions, there is need for them to rise above social stereotypes and demonstrate to the world their potential and capabilities. In addition, there is also the need to institute supporting mechanisms in order to create a level -playing field for both men and women. An even more critical issue raised is the role of media in shaping opinions and conveying information to the general public. Media as a critical tool in communications needs to read the signs of time and provide coverage to women in their public life more than they are doing.

This publication contains a series of presentations and discussions, which will illuminate and sensitize the public at large and those who are particularly working





Preface

on gender issues. The resource people in researching on pertinent issues put in a lot of quality work. Our gratitude goes to all of them. We wish to also thank Prof. Maria Nzomo for her work in editing the whole document and giving an introduction. Some beautiful works of art have been included. These are some of the pieces exhibited at the exhibition dedicated to the contribution of Kenyan Women to the recent peaceful political transition. We wish to thank and encourage the Hawa artists for their contribution of these artwork. Last but not least, this would never have been a success without the participation of all the participants who have continued to make our monthly gender fora a very worthwhile engagement through their rich and diversified contributions. We thus thank all those who participated in whichever way and urge more to be involved in this discourse.

Lastly the challenge is to all of us. The value of knowledge is when it is shared and applied. Let us all translate these lessons into practise and see Kenya transforming into an even more mature democracy.

Aseghedech Ghirmazion
Heinrich Böll Foundation



Introduction

Nowhere in the world has universal suffrage provided women with political power on an equal footing with men. In formal terms women have had the same rights as men for many decades, but this has not led to radical changes in predominant ideologies and social structures which are necessary in order to give substance and cogency to the right of women to participate. Globally, with a few exceptions, the public political domain for many centuries has been, and continues to be defined and controlled by elite men. This divergence between political ideals and realities is a problem with ethical as well as power implications. The alienation of women from formal politics and women's marginality within the political systems, have remained fundamental weaknesses of democratic forms of governance and one of the persisting gender problems of our times.

Concerned with the marginality of women in established political structures, numerous scholars have tried to account for this phenomenon. (*Haavio-Mannila et. al. Eds. 1985; Parpart & Staudt (eds) 1990; Bystydzienski (ed), 1992; Nelson & Chowdhury (eds.) 1994; Nzomo 1992, 1994 & 2002; & McGlen & O'Connor, 1995*). Some of these scholars have pointed to the forces of patriarchy, capitalism, and industrialization that have kept many women out of the high levels of public sphere, effectively confining their work to the family and to the lowest paid, low-prestige occupations. Other scholars have faulted Marxist analysis for assuming that women would achieve political equality with men when the means of production were owned collectively. They note that even in countries where attempts were made to socialize the means of production, oppressive traditions and policies aimed at keeping women primarily responsible for the family, mitigated against gender equality in political and other spheres. Others also point to colonialism as an important factor contributing to sources of female exclusion from politics in formerly colonized countries. Most scholars however concur that, though there is no country where women have political status, access to resources, or influence equal to men's, the extent of women's political subordination to men varies, depending on the nature of the prevailing cultures, economic arrangements, and regimes.



In most societies, there is a complex matrix of power centers located at different levels of social hierarchies, politics, economics, culture, religion, law and gender relations. But amidst these complexities, men in any social category are more able to be active in politics than women of their group. The secondary status of women in each realm is reinforced by the total pattern of male privileges, often legitimized by existing legal and policy frameworks. The resulting gender inequalities on the one hand, negate the principles of basic rights, freedoms and justice, but on the other hand, generate opportunities for resistance, innovation, and transformation.

During the 2nd half of the 20th century, gender issues have gradually arrived on the public political agenda, thus making women's politics visible. Despite this progress, the allocation of political resources and critical decision-making power, still indicate unacceptable gender power imbalances.

One of the notable barriers to women's participation especially in Africa, has been the male character of the structures of political recruitment, especially political parties, local councils, and to some extent labor unions. In this connection, political alliances, lines of conflict and structures of political recruitment are so firmly male establishments that many prospective female politicians have found them difficult to penetrate.

Women's increased participation in formal politics and public decision-making in particular and progress towards gender equity and equality in general, depends then, not only on the more equitable sharing of reproductive, domestic, productive roles, but also on the democratic transformation of the norms and rules of institutions of political recruitment, including political parties and their affiliated organisations, as well on the strength of civil society.

Underlying gender disparities in most African countries, has been complex and deep-rooted patriarchal socio-cultural, economic and political structures and ideologies, legitimized by undemocratic systems of governance. Under such conditions, women were excluded from participation in key governance capacities and endured deprivation of basic human rights and access to and

ownership of strategic resources. With the democratic transitions and legal reforms that began in most African countries in the 1990s and continue in this first quarter of the 21st century, the status of women is improving significantly, hand in hand with the pace of legal/policy reforms and the rise in civic and gender awareness. Kenya is a good example of these gradual political changes, amidst numerous challenges that must be addressed if steady progress is to be sustained.

This book concerns itself with gender aspects of political representation and electoral participation in Kenya. It analyses and seeks to explain the key factors that continue to limit the involvement of women in formal politics, their minimal presence in parliaments and legislative bodies, and their marginal presence in the top echelons of political parties, cabinets, and bureaucracies of Kenya's governing institutions.

Written shortly after the 2002 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections, the contributions contained in this book are not only a response to and a reflection on these elections, but are also informed by the pre and post 2002 political scenarios and prospects.

The 2002 general elections marked an important political watershed from the 40 years of post colonial Kenyatta and Moi's regimes under the Kenya African Union (KANU) as the ruling political party, to Kibaki's regime under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) as the ruling coalition of over 14 political parties, that removed KANU from power. In Political terms, the year 2002 and to some extent 2003, can be regarded as a historic and an important political moment of systems change in Kenya, when the distribution and forms of power were in a state of flux, and when no single political party individually yielded the virtual monopoly of power to determine the ultimate outcome of the 2002 general elections and the post election's power sharing arrangements.

This is part of the argument advanced by *Nzomo* in the chapter :- "*Taking Stock- Women's Performance in Kenya's Parliamentary Politics in the 2002 General Elections*"

Her thesis is that in this more fluid and often less efficient political period, women of Kenya could have exerted more influence on political parties and alliances from within, as well as from without than they did. The disorderliness that made political life in this period tenuous, had opened up opportunities for women, if they were politically organised and willing to act, strategically as a gender interest group, rather than fall victim to divisive politics of ethnic, class, religious and other social identities.

Reviewing women's performance in Kenya's parliamentary politics in the 2002 general elections, she argues that, despite the notable gains women have made in the struggle for political empowerment since Kenya's return to political pluralism in December 1991, women clearly squandered a strategic political moment in the 2002 political transition. They failed to fully exploit a historic and fluid political moment, where women as a major voting bloc could have negotiated for a better outcome both, in the party nomination and electoral process, as well as in the post-election parliamentary and other public decision making appointments. Consequently, women did not register a significant presence by becoming major political players, with adequate capacity to negotiate effectively at the pre and post election-negotiating table. It is at this table where key political positions being shared among the principal players with their allies and strategic policy decisions regarding Kenya's future charted out. This chapter attributes the slow pace of progress in the political arena both to the legal/policy and institutional retrogressive socio-cultural barriers, but also to low levels of women's political socialization, undemocratic culture, and a divisive crisis of social identity among women.

Thus, despite the fact that the gender sector and the women's movement in particular has been an active and sometimes effective lobby group in engendering democratic change in Kenya since the beginning of the political transition in 1992, trends indicate that the female gender still has a long road to travel before attaining equity and equality with men, especially in the area of electoral politics. Nzomo however concludes that all is not lost. Women can now build on the limited gains made and the lessons learnt. In particular, there is need for greater engagement in political parties, persistence in building individual political profiles

and skills, constituency mobilization as well as building alliances with the women's movement and other strategically placed groups.

Oyugi's chapter: "*Redefining women's political participation through party politics: The context of Kenya's Political Transition*" also makes a case for women's greater involvement and participation in political parties as the most effective way of gaining entry into electoral political decision making structures. He argues that once women begin to enter the lower party ranks, they could directly increase pressure for representation at the highest level. In other words, women's participation inside the party as party activists at the local level, as organizers of intra-party women's groups, and as internal office holders should buy women power in the party. This power should increase women's opportunities and resources to lobby for further support of women candidates. Women's party activity also creates a new pool of politically experienced women. Local government elections can provide useful training grounds for political participation at the national level and increase the number of women representatives within parties. The chapter notes that one of the significant lessons the current political transition from KANU to NARC, has been that women do not benefit automatically every time the democratic system is reordered by successful transitions. It takes awareness, questioning and organizing by women inside and outside the mainstream to turn transitions into something good for women.

This is not to deny the continuing achievements on many political and policy fronts that at many levels that women have gained, but to underscore the obstacles that have to be overcome, including the nature of the Kenyan women's movement, the economic and political contexts and the way these have interacted.

Miruka's chapter on "*Financing for Politics: which way for women?*" argues that finance is not the key determinant of women's political success and hence should not be given undue attention. The chapter concludes that the constitutional provisions in Kenya's 2003 draft constitution have good intentions but do not constitute salvation to women's political ambitions. However, the chapter acknowledges that finances have a central role to play in politics, although the

best-financed candidate does not necessarily win the elections. Thus, while finances are important, determinants that could improve women's electoral performance are:

- Track record and affinity with the electorate that is ensured through grassroots networks and consistency at politics.
- Credibility as a serious candidate demonstrated by well timed declaration of candidature, choice of party, seriousness of campaigns and evidence of preparedness.
- Ability to mire in party politics without apology; claiming space in party activities and echelons of power and not expecting an easy ride just because of your gender.
- Packaging messages and ideas on addressing gender imbalances without projecting the image of being a representative of women only.

Wanyande's Chapter on "Affirmative Action for Kenyan Women: An Analysis of the Relevant Provision of the Draft Constitution" focuses on Affirmative Action (AA) as one of the strategies Kenyan women are employing in seeking gender equity with men in politics and public decision making. Examining AA as provided for in the Draft Bill of the Kenya proposed new constitution, which is expected to be finalized before mid 2004, the chapter attempts to analyse and assess the significance of AA, and identify its potential impact on effective representation of women in major decision making institutions, notably political parties, Parliament and Local Councils.

The chapter gives a cost- benefit analysis of the proposals on AA. The main argument of the chapter is that while the proposed AA principle is a major victory for Kenyan women that mark a positive step towards gender parity in Kenyan politics, it will not lead to gender parity in the medium and long term and may take a long time to achieve. The chapter further argues that Kenyan women have to find a way of influencing the nominating authorities such as leaders of political parties and the president, in the case of cabinet appointments. Furthermore, among the criteria for selecting individual beneficiaries of AA should include a woman's capacity not just to understand women specific issues

but also to articulate and champion their views and concerns effectively on non-gender specific issues.

Makoha's Chapter on “*Media Portrayal of Women Politicians – An enabling or inhibiting Factor*” advances the argument that the media has continued to be gender insensitive in its coverage and portrayal of gender issues in the Kenyan media. The chapter argues that the media has in particular given inadequate and/or inappropriate media coverage to women politicians while privileging male politicians. Makoha thus argues that the media needs to begin to recognize and give visibility to women politicians, their voices and, their contributions in decision-making, and their capacities as representatives of communities. Thus the current media portrayal of women only as beneficiaries of affirmative action, and as people who are disinterested in politics and hangers – on, must be debunked to promote women's political empowerment.

Kamau in her chapter: “*Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership*” argues that the presence of women in political positions in Kenya is one of the most effective and immediate ways of ensuring their participation in the decision making process not only for the good of women, but also for children and the nation in general. She asserts that women bring into politics a leadership style and perspective that is both complimentary to that of men but also serves as a positive demonstration effect to younger women and men who look up to women political leaders as role models.

The major theme that runs through most of the chapters contained in this volume is that, there is an urgent need for political capacity building of prospective women politicians, as a key to their political empowerment. This is despite the fact all contributors are alive to the fact that, having a total of 18 women in the 2003 parliament, is a major step forward compared with the 1963 parliament where there was not a single woman M.P. But considering that there is a total of 221 MPs in the current parliament out of which 18 are women, the latter begin to look like a drop in the ocean and a far cry from the minimum one-third (about 70 women MPs) required for women to make a significant difference in influencing policy decisions in any institution. Furthermore,

considering that it has taken forty(40) years after Kenya gained its political independence to have 18 women MPs, is in it self an indication that major ideological and structural constraints persist. To close the wide political gender gap requires reinforcement and persistence in the struggle for gender rights and more innovative and strategically inspired approaches, informed by past failures and successes.

Maria Nzomo

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CHAPTER 1

Taking stock-women's performance in Kenya's parliamentary politics in the 2002 general elections

Maria Nzomo

1. Introduction

“It is disheartening to note that in Kenya, women seemed to have resigned to fate. They seem to want things to happen to them without taking the initiative to be part of the change they crave. They refuse to do as much as whisk off a fly on the tip of their noses... women seem to be waiting for someone else to deliver them. But who will wake up women from their sleep, to do what they ought to do to improve their lot? Even the current jostling for power does not include women. Even the most vocal among them seem to be saying, by their eloquent silence, that the race is too hot for women... we do not want women to complain later that they were left out. They have to be part of these power shows, and the time to get out is now. (EAS, 21 August 2002).”

The 2002 elections were preceded by a two-year period that women political NGOs empowerment were engaged in a well funded preparatory programme under the so called- *Engendering the Political Process Programme* (EPPP) banner. Despite the EPPP, for most of 2002, when the succession and constitutional review debates took center stage in Kenya's political discourse, there was a notable absence of women's voices in those debates. Women's silence had become so loud that, even issues related to the traditional gender concerns that women were passionate about over the past 10 years, did not as much as

elicit a comment from gender based organisations. Instead, it was the media men and women, who took the lead role in commenting on such issues- including the issue of the significant drop in the number of the registered female voters (in proportion to men) for the 2002 elections. Then in early October came the story of the Kitale nun who was expelled from the convent for having committed fornication with a fellow priest, who was handed an extremely lenient punishment of three-year suspension. Again, this was a clear case of gender discrimination that did not inspire gender lobbyist to react, save for two women journalists who commented on this issue. To my knowledge, women and/or human rights NGOs did not follow up on the fate of the victimized nun. The media and other observers therefore concluded that the silence of the gender lobby was due to general political apathy among women, who naively expected that power would be handed over to them by men without any effort from them. Even this sharply critical and damning media commentary, did not provoke or elicit a comment or a rejoinder from women.

The central argument of this chapter is that, despite the notable gains women have made in the struggle for political empowerment since Kenya's return to political pluralism in December 1991, trends indicate that the female gender still has a long road to travel before attaining equity and equality with men, especially in the area of electoral politics. This chapter attributes the slow pace of progress in the political arena both to the legal/ policy and institutional barriers, but also to retrogressive socio-cultural factors, low levels of political socialisation, and undemocratic culture, coupled with a divisive crisis of identity.

In exemplifying this thesis, I employ the case of the 2002 General Elections in Kenya, both the process and the outcome. In so doing, the analysis began with a review of the immediate pre- 2002 elections and ends with an assessment of the electoral results and subsequent appointments of women in key political and other public decision-making positions. The chapter finally provides recommendations for the way forward.

Using this example, I argue that during the 2002 General Elections in Kenya, women squandered or failed to fully exploit a critical political opportunity that

only avails its self during periods of transition or revolution. As noted by Nelson and Chowdury (1994:16-17):

“Moments of system change, when the distribution and power are in flux, underscore the importance of parties in structuring women's opportunities to participate in formal politics. - -there has been growing recognition that even though social disjuncture like war, revolution, or economic distress may temporarily increase the range or intensity of women's political activism, these changes do not endure after political consolidation... In this more fluid and often less efficient political period, women can have more influence on parties from within, as well as from without. The disorderliness that makes political life in this period tenuous opens up opportunities for women if they are organised, willing to act, and not thoroughly opposed by entrenched interests.”

2. Back to the pre- 1992 silence or lack of a coordinated political strategy?

This silence begged a lot of gender related questions during the electoral transitional political context of 2002. For example, apart from Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) that spent most of 2002 mobilizing women to support Uhuru Kenyatta for presidency, the political position of other women's organisations remained unknown and their modes of participation in this electoral political process invisible. Similarly, their views about the changing fortunes of the constitutional review process, especially the possible negative gender impact of going into elections with the old constitution was also unclear, as was the post- election fate of Affirmative Action (AA), especially given the rapidly shifting power arrangements and alliances at that time. Indeed, one was hard pressed to discern concrete political strategies in place to ensure a large percentage of women won both party nominations as well as civic and parliamentary seats in the 2002 elections.

At the level of female candidates, save for the well-known incumbents, such as Charity Ngilu, Beth Mugo and at the campaign stage, Martha Karua, the majority of other women candidates remained invisible. Apart from the rare

appearance of women candidates at the few training workshops organised under the EPPP programme, the political activities, profiles and visions, of these female political aspirants for the 2002 elections, were largely lacking and/or invisible. Furthermore, there was no visible gender support structure even for women candidates that were potential front-runners or served as key political players in the NARC party line up. Indeed, it could be said that the pre-election spirit of 1992, that galvanized and mobilized the women of Kenya from the village to the national level, to chart out a national women's agenda under the clarion call of *unity in diversity* had fizzled out, as was the commitment made to take every opportunity to use women's collective voice to ensure democratic transformation and removal of women's marginalization in Kenyan's governance dispensation. Whatever happened to those brave and determined voices of 1992 that swore that they would never again be heard to whisper and instead would shout in unison and reject politics of marginalization and insist on being heard? And yet, unity in diversity is essential to the empowerment of Kenyan women.

It is in fact my submission that it was largely because of the *unity of purpose* that women galvanized in 1992 that led to the historic electoral record of six (6) women winning parliamentary seats in the 1992 General Elections. Similarly, it was the thundering collective women voice that for the first time succeeded in persuading the Kenyan society that any form of violence against women was a gross violation of basic human rights, thus vindicating the fact that unity for a marginalized group does pay political dividend. Similarly, it was perhaps the formation in 1998, of one coordinating network for women NGOs - *Women Political Caucus (WPC)*- to serve the purpose of a midwife for women's fledgling unity that contributed to the temporary strengthening of the organisational and delivery capacity of the women's movement

Indeed, it was through this short-lived national umbrella lobby made up of 43 women's organisations and 23 individuals including 6 MPs, that the women's movement effectively lobbied for the engendering of the constitutional reform process, and as a first step, insisted and obtained a fairly good representation at the Constitutional review process launched in 2001. Before the WPC split in

2000, it was instrumental in providing a strong Lobby platform that ensured the application of the principle of AA in regard to female gender representation in the constitutional review process, by securing nearly one-third female membership in the District and National Forums and in the drafting committee of the Constitutional Review Commission. This arithmetically, translated into seven female commissioners out of a total of 26 members; and about 100 women delegates out of 600, for the proposed Constitutional conference planned for 2003.

The split that led to the creation of two sharply divided factions from the original WPC, has contributed significantly decline and lack of a common vision in the women's movement, which in turn has led women to slide back to their previous incapacity to negotiate for power on a common gender platform.

In the meantime, a group of predominantly male leaders, who for all practical purposes are the strangest bedfellows with little else in common except their common desire to grab power from Moi, effectively mobilized the whole country around a super-alliance termed *National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)*. Women on the other hand, with numbers and their expansive organizational structures on their side, were unable to marshal even something akin to their own "super alliance" to negotiate for sharing of power with NARC and to ensure that gender issues were not lost in the political scramble and jostling for power and control of governance institutions and reform agenda during the run up to the 2002 Elections.

The above notwithstanding, there was from time to time, during 2002, distinct though uncoordinated voices that spoke to some gender issues. Women lawyers in particular, were quite vocal especially on the issue of constitutional reform and gender violence. In addition, since the onset of multipartyism in 1992, a few politically oriented women NGOS, in collaboration with likeminded CBOs, had played significant roles not only in the traditional socio-economic arena, but also in engendering democratisation in the political arena; notably, the *League of Kenya Women Voters (LKWV)*, the *National Commission on the Status of Women(NCSW)*, the *Education Center for Women and Democracy(ECWD)*;

the *International Federation of Women Lawyers*(FIDA(K), the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD), and *Friends of Esther and Deborah* (FREDA), among others. They have initiated civic education and training curricula aimed at political empowerment and capacity building of women candidates and voters, as well as gender sensitisation of men and women. (Nzomo, 1994; 1995; &1996). Such civic initiatives have contributed to increased gender and civic awareness in the country, whose immediate impact has been observable in the increased numbers of women running and being elected to political office since 1992; with six of them being elected to parliament in 1992- the highest number ever in post-colonial Kenya, until 2002.

Though the number of elected women MPs went down to 4 in 1997, there was an increase in women running for political office and their greater political visibility, with two of them vying for the presidency and one becoming a major presidential contender. The number of elected women MPs rose to 10 in the 2002, with 9 of them winning under the NARC party ticket. The choice of a large number of women candidates to run under the widely popular party (NARC) ticket, certainly contributed to the relatively higher number of elected women MPs than earlier predicted.

3. Breaking the silence: November 2002- January 2003

After observing in shocked disbelief the dismissive and gender discriminative manner that most women political aspirants were handed down by the male dominated party leaderships during the party nominations, the women lobby groups suddenly realized that the political boat was setting sail without them. It is at this point that frantic efforts at damage control were put into motion. So, rather belatedly in early November 2002, a loose Coalition of women NGOs, including many of those affiliated to the *Women's Political Alliance and Women Political Caucus*, as well as individual activists and professionals, banded together to form a Forum that was initially labelled: *Women for NARC*, but was transformed some three weeks later into the *NARC Women Congress (NWC)*.

This ad hoc women's coalition had a very short-term political mandate, but a more long-term political objective. The mandate was to employ every available means to ensure the NARC party wins the 2002 elections. It was assumed NARC would support women candidates and nominate others to political office upon winning elections. For two months, NWC members volunteered their time and even financial resources to produce and disseminate presidential and party campaign materials; organised and conducted training for election party agents; participated in the presidential campaign; and monitored the Election Day polls. The key long term objective for this spirit of volunteerism, was to obtain a guarantee from the male dominated NARC, that if the party wins the elections, it would incorporate women as equal partners in the post- election power sharing and would complete and engender the new constitution and governance process generally. A proposed Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the envisaged partnership, was never tabled. Ultimately then, there were no guarantees, save for those contained in NARC's election agenda document. The post-election power sharing arrangement envisaged did not happen. Indeed, the only gain for women was the nomination of 5 women out of 7 NARC nominees. And even that, was a flawed process riddled with controversies over the representativeness of the nominees (East African Standard; January 17,2003,p1).

4. Structural constraints to women's participation in electoral politics

The apparent political silence by women noted above must also be understood within the structural impediments that women globally and at the national level continue to face as they seek to participate in all areas of politics.

Numerous studies on women's participation in politics and public decision-making globally (Nelson, & Chowdhury eds; 1994; Nzomo; 1994(a) & (b), 1995,1996,1999; Nzomo & Staudt; 1994); indicate that the electoral playing field has always been tilted heavily in favor of men; more so in countries such as Kenya, which are highly patriarchal; and by 2002, lacked a democratic constitution and electoral laws to facilitate free and fair electoral process.

In Kenya for the last 40 years since 1963, the gender specific unevenness of electoral politics, has manifested itself in the form of: - (i) the persisting *social resistance* and/ or *lukewarm acceptance* of women's participation in political leadership; (ii) *culture of electoral violence* that tends to be harsher towards female than male candidates. (iii) *Feminization of poverty that renders women more financially constrained to manage a campaign than men* (iv) *lack of adequate political socialization for leadership* that manifests itself in women's *exclusion from access to strategic political information* and general *inability in the art of public oratory and populist campaigning* and (v) *women's marginality in mainstream political party hierarchy and hence inability to shape rules of engagement which are defined and organised around male norms and values*. *Within these objective conditions, women are constrained from setting the political rules of representation and inclusion, in a manner that reflects their specific experiences and visions. Indeed, male political Ideology continues to define the standards of evaluation of women's political performance and participation, which is measured through male political lenses.*

Under the combined circumstances of a weak and fractured women's political lobby and gender imbalanced political playing field, women candidates in electoral politics are therefore unable to shape electoral party decisions especially at the nomination stage. The latter would explain why so many women were sacrificed by their political parties at the party nomination stage in the run up to the December 2002 elections.

5. Women's performance in parliamentary Politics: 1963-2002

As shown in *table 1* below, since Kenya's independence some 40 years ago, women's performance in the area of parliamentary electoral politics has registered marginal but gradual increase in the number of women MPs between 1963 & 2002. The only exception to this trend was 1997, when women's performance in electoral politics, dropped despite the fielding of two women presidential candidates. Women candidates also increased to a total of 150 from a total of 60 in 1992, and 48 secured party nominations, compared with 19 in 1992.

The number of *elected* women *MPs* moved from 0 in the first post- colonial government, to 6 in 1992 and then dropped to 4 in 1997 and then rose again to 9 in 2002.

The number of women parliamentary *aspirants*, improved from 7 in 1963 to over 200 candidates in 2002, parliamentary elections, while the number of women *nominated MPs* increased from 0 in 1963 to 8 in 2002, as table 1, below indicates:

Table 1: Parliamentary women's participation-1963-2002

Year	Party nomination	Elected members	Parliamentary nomination
1963	0	0	0
1969	1	1	1
1974	11	5	2
1979	15	3	1
1992	19	6	0
1997	48	4	5
2002/2003	45	10	8

***Source: compiled by Maria Nzomo, August 2003©

6. Women's presence in the 2003 NARC government structure***

Following the landslide win of the 2002 elections, the immediate challenge for the winning party NARC was to form a *government of national unity* that not only ensured broad based participation in decision-making by all the diverse communities of Kenya, but also responded to the need for gender equity and justice in representation and participation in all key political and other public decision making. Table 2 below shows the outcome of the negotiated power sharing arrangements of the NARC government, by mid February 2003.

From a gender perspective, the new decision-making structures are a mixed bag of gains and losses for women. For example, comparatively speaking, women's presence in the cabinet has improved from 0 up to 1974, and thereafter, to 1

assistant minister for Ministry of Culture & Social Services, up until 1994. Except for the period 1994-1997, when Kenya had one full woman cabinet minister. 2003 is the first time in 40 years; women have secured 7 ministerial positions. However, they have lost some of the *quantitative* gains made under the Moi regime, especially in the ministerial appointments of Permanent Secretaries (PSs). Furthermore, whereas in the last Moi government, the civil service was headed by a woman and an additional 6 women were PSs, the Kibaki civil service is headed by a man and has only 3 women PSs. Furthermore, the principle of 1/3 women's representation in all decision-making bodies, is still a far cry, as shown in the table: -

Table 2: Women in key government positions

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet (3 out of a total of 23) Ministry of Health — <i>Charity Kaluki Ngilu</i> Ministry of Water — <i>Martha Karua</i> Office of the Vice President and National Reconstruction — <i>Linah Jebii Kilimo</i>• Assistant Ministers (4 out of a total of 24) Tourism and Information — <i>Beth Wambui Mugo</i> Local Government — <i>Betty Njeri Tett</i> Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife — <i>Prof. Wangari Maathai</i> Gender, Sports and Culture — <i>Alicen Chelaite</i>• Permanent Secretaries (4 out of 24) Tourism and Information — <i>Rebecca Mwikali Nabutola</i> Labour and Human Resource Development — <i>Deborah Ongewe</i> Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife — <i>Rachel Arunga</i> Gender, Sports and Culture — <i>Nancy Kirui</i>• Ministerial Directors and equivalent positions (3 out of 17) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology — <i>Naomi W. Wangai</i> Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Director of Public Prosecution) — <i>Uniter Kidullah</i> Ministry of Health — <i>Florence Musau</i>
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***Source: compiled by Maria Nzomo, January 2003 ©

Overall assessment

In sum, although the gender sector and the women's movement in particular has been an active and sometimes effective lobby group in engendering democratic change in Kenya since the beginning of the political transition in 1992, women clearly squandered a strategic political moment in the 2002 political transition. They failed to register a significant presence to become major political players, with adequate capacity to negotiate effectively at the pre and post-election negotiating table, where key political positions were being shared among the key players and strategic policy decisions regarding Kenya's future were being charted out. It is no wonder then, that during the party nominations and in the post-election power sharing arrangements, women were heard crying foul for having been betrayed and politically marginalized by men once again!! This political miss was in part a reflection of the socio-political fragmentation, lack of a common vision and consensus on a minimum gender agenda that is reasonably inclusive and articulates the interests and expectations of women across board, but also enlists support of non-gender social sectors.

Lack of a common women's political voice for most of the year 2002-a year of critical political transition- reduced women's chances of better performance at the 2002 polls and subsequent political developments. In fact, the relatively better than expected performance women registered, can largely be attributed to the NARC party euphoria, that increased the winning chances of both its male and female candidates.

The 2002 women's participation in electoral and reform politics demonstrated that there has been inadequate learning from *past setbacks and lack of consolidation of gains, building on past achievements..* For ten years since Kenyan women launched a women' agenda for engendering democratization in Kenya, the same weaknesses that were noted as a "no go zone" on the road to women's empowerment, are still the subject of endless lists of "obstacles still to be overcome" and "Way Forwards". It is as if the women's movement attempts to reconstitute itself afresh a year or so before each general election- hardly enough participatory time for a disadvantage sector. Indeed, observers might

be excused for concluding that many Kenyan women (and men) activists and politicians who suddenly emerge as electoral candidates at the twilight of every 5 years, are no more than political opportunists capitalizing on the spirit of general elections that inspire good will and generosity of election funding agencies.

7. Some strategies for improved women's electoral political performance

In my view, in order to improve women's electoral performance, and especially strengthening their political participation and the representative character of parliament, there is need to devise strategies for redressing numerous factors associated with the *political opportunity structure* that negatively affect their performance. These include: -

8.1. Candidates

- Consistent political participation and engagement in leadership activities and training to overcome women's low political socialization
- Frequent attendance of social and political gatherings where political information is likely to be shared, as well as engaging in wide reading of any available political literature and media articles, with a view to beefing up ones' "bank" of political information.
- Develop fundraising skills to strengthen ones financial base for the political campaign
- Start constituency building and informal campaigns five years before a subsequent election. This is with a view of mobilizing, building and sustaining loyalty of target voters towards self, thus lessening the challenge of the official one-month electoral campaigning.
- Develop political professionalism and power of incumbency retention rate. In this connection both women political incumbents and election losers must soldier on in electoral politics so as to acquire the necessary political experience and/or to entrench themselves in various political

structures. Women politicians therefore need to be more persistent and professional in their attitude towards politics and learn to accept electoral defeat as a temporary setback and a good learning experience rather than a permanent knock out!

- Women candidates need to consistently participate in the affairs of any one party that they join and lobby within it for inclusion in key decision making positions of the party structure, with a view to curb their marginalization during critical moments of political party recruitment such as the nomination for general elections.

8.2. Women's movement

- Lobby for the attainment of gender sensitive legislative and policy framework as a fundamental strategy for reversing undemocratic governance. In particular, women need to lobby for the engendering of the new Constitution to include the following elements (c.f. *Nzomo: 2002*):-
 - Entrenchment in the Bill of Rights, of the principle of non-discrimination on basis of gender
 - Mainstreaming Affirmative Action principle
 - Commission for Gender Equality separated from Commission on Human Rights and Administration Justice
 - Mixed Proportional Representative system
 - Introduction of 2 parliamentary chambers
 - Ensure gender responsiveness of the language of the constitution.
- Avoid taking a narrow view of individual rights and freedoms that tends to destroy and/or curb the development of a common/ collective vision among women. In this connection, there is a need to learn to view positively social diversities and differences and maximize on aspects that unite rather than divide.
- Strengthen Women's Movement and its support structures in order to strengthen the mushrooming women's organization, which currently occupy a large political space that is not strategically and adequately utilized to empower the female gender. Women need to guard against

the tendency to focus on factors that divide (e.g. *ethnic, class and racial* differences) and focus on and maximize on factors that unite, (e.g. *patriarchal ideology, violence against women; feminisation of poverty and women's marginality in key decision-making organs*), especially in the political arena.

- Establish broad based networks, partnerships and alliances with other marginalized groups, including men especially those that share similar concerns.
- There is therefore need for women to embrace a *common denominator that would become the **unbrogable unity in diversity glue*** that would hold the movement together for the promotion of a gender agenda in the country's governance and democratization process during this first quarter of the 21st century. The last 10 years of gender activism in Kenya has clearly shown that *mobilization of people is not enough*. Social movements must also have sustaining ideas, shared goals, aspirations and a unifying ideologically inspired gender vision that transcends, their respective members' socio-cultural and economic diversities.

9. Way forward- post 2002 election agenda

Despite their marginality at the negotiating table during and after the 2002 elections, women as candidates, activists and voters nevertheless succeeded in securing 5 out of 7 nominated parliamentary seats allocated to NARC, and 3 out of 4 allocated to KANU, in addition to 3 Cabinet and 4 assistant ministerial positions. But despite the improved electoral performance by women candidates and the government's subsequent marginal effort to exercise Affirmative Action in parliamentary and public sector appointments and nominations, it is my submission that the *gender agenda remains a major unfinished business* that will require both women and men committed to gender justice and equality to take sustained action, to move the gender agenda forward.

One way forward is that, the political gains women made at the polls and subsequent appointments, could be strategically utilized to provide an effective political platform for negotiating for a comprehensive implementation of AA

within the political arena. In this connection, given that the completion of the constitutional review process has been postponed to June 2003, energies should now be put towards preparing well and adequately for the constitutional conference.

In the meantime, women's groups should constitute a powerful lobby to pressurize the NARC government to live up to its campaign promises and statements of intent spelled out in signed party policy documents, committing the ruling party to prioritize the completion of the constitutional review process. The government thereafter confirmed that the review process would be complete by June 2003 (EAS; February 6, 2003 :1). Despite pressure put on government to meet this commitment, squabbles within NARC have derailed and delayed the completion of the constitutional review process. All indications are that the new constitution may not be ready before mid 2004.

The preparatory period for the constitutional conference however provided more time to build the capacity of women delegates in the art of lobbying and negotiating at the conference, so as to ensure, through them, that the new constitution has adequate and non-contradictory provisions for women's rights and justice, on matters of access, ownership, and control of resources, as well as power sharing, representation and participation in decision making.

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The painting is a searching indictment on war and acquisitiveness; it implies that these are the things men do. (*Sculptor: Veronica Njeri Ng'ang'a*)



CHAPTER 2

Redefining women's political participation through party politics: the context of Kenya's political transition

Jason Oyugi

1.0 Introduction

The year 2002 was overall an optimistic era for those whose core responsibility is to promote democratization and good governance practices all over the world. This is because more and more countries are making good progress on this front more than ever before. This is the general opinion expressed by the United Nations if the 2002 Human Development Report¹ is anything to go by. But maybe this is not the case. A deeper look at the report however provides some incisive insights that would worry all who may already be celebrating these gains. And the Achilles heel lies in the findings from the worldwide review of transitional democracies, or what the NDI² would refer to as something in between a democratic breakthrough and a managed transition. In most of the 81 countries that recently took steps towards democratization, many are yet to shake off the legacies of authoritarian pasts, and democratic institutions and practices are yet to take root. The argument brought forth in this chapter is that countries can restore public trust in representative structures and reduce the concentration of political power by:

¹ UN Human Development Report, 2002

² The National Democratic Institute (NDI) differentiates country democratic contexts into five broad categories; democratic breakthrough elections where a power shift leads to elections under new conditions, managed transition elections where the old power structure remains in place and implements democratic reforms, continuing transitions, backsliding elections and post conflict elections.

- Developing stronger vehicles for formal political participation through political parties and electoral systems
- Strengthening checks and balances on arbitrary powers separating the executive, judiciary and legislature
- Democratic decentralization and
- The development of free and independent media.

To this growing list, it is important to include the responsiveness of public institutions to the women's agenda and participation, which though a cross cutting issue, needs to be an integral part.

The functioning of a democracy depends no doubt on the well functioning of its institutions. And many times, new democratic renewal means new institutions and new public bodies such as: a new judiciary, executive, legislature, political parties and even new players in these institutions. The newness of democratic change may be looked at from two perspectives; the entry of new players such as in Kenya under NARC government or like in many cases, new political thinking even if by old players. This is circumstantially the scenario Kenya has to grapple with in the legislature, judiciary, and civil service and even in political parties. These parties are not yet able to fulfill their traditional functions of political education, mobilization and representation of diverse interests. As in many African countries, opposition parties disappear in between elections, while ruling parties behave like they used to under the single party regimes. What women have significantly learned however during this time of Kenya's political transition is that *they do not benefit automatically every time the democratic system is reordered by successful transitions! It takes awareness, questioning and organizing by women inside and outside the mainstream to turn transitions into something good for women.*

This is not to deny the continuing achievements on many political and policy fronts that women have gained. Indeed, they are more impressive given the very obstacles that have to be overcome. The difficulties have been a consequence of a combination of factors including the nature of the Kenyan women's movement, our economic and political contexts and the way these



have interacted. Some of the problems are longstanding, apparent even in the pre-transition era while others are more specifically the result of how the movement has changed. Related to that change is the impact of multiple transitions.

The first part of the analysis sets out the general arguments on the factors that impact on women's political activity within parties. The second, which is connected to the first, considers specific cases of women's political involvement and the last, makes an attempt to tease out some important lessons, implications and challenges for women's political party involvement in future.

The object of this chapter is not to give a comprehensive background account of the political development in various parties, but rather to show how the system of party organizing exemplifies the dilemmas for political strategizing. At the same time, there are also features peculiar to this context, which may create particular problems, opportunities and uncertainties that have been presented together.

2.0. Ours is a "dysfunctional" democracy

"No-one knows African governance, its strengths, and its weaknesses, better than those who are governed, but excluded from governance, and those who work in governing institutions in a dis-empowered way. That is why it is so important that African women generate the strategies for increasing their effective participation in decision making, in governance and leadership"³

One of the most difficult political assignments or so we have come to realize, is translating that which one is entitled to on paper (whether it is a constitution, a law or any legal document) to that which one can actually achieve in itself⁴. However, it is also important to note that this is not just a feature of women's rights issues but also a feature of many other development issues in general. Yet

³ Dr. Amina Mama at the African Women and Governance Training Workshop organised by Abantu for Development, Entebbe, July 1994

⁴ During the tenure of the 8th parliament, the ruling KANU party marshaled support in the house to reduce the number of women representatives to the East African Legislative Assembly by reversing the legislation that required at least one-third representation.



even though the realization of legal rights still remains elusive, the law still undoubtedly, remains one of the most important empowering mechanisms for the achievement of rights and even representation. It is probably just but one of the ways one may summarize the challenge for Kenyan women in electoral politics for the last ten years.

Beginning from the process of nominating candidates in political parties which is one of the most crucial roles played by political parties. The rules of nomination vary from party to party and can be distinguished by a number of features, including for example, the breadth of participation and centralization or decentralization of the process. In Kenya, political parties, even the forty-year-old ones are yet to adequately respond to the challenge of promoting the participation of women in their political processes. Traditionally, it has been argued that women's low representation and participation in politics is as a result of the conspiracy between our social construction, culture, and development which undermine not only the rate and levels of entry for women, but also their retention and transition. This is not entirely the case. The real reason for women's under-representation is largely as a result of the political structures, how they are organised and managed.

Most important of all is the question of the organization structure of the party as well as its degree of centralization and institutionalization or lack of it. Party policy only anchors what is achievable within these structures. The scope of this paper is restricted to these elements, which have greatly impacted on the participation of women in our political institutions.

2.1 Party centralization

The first component that is a characteristic of most of the political parties in Kenya - centralization, describes the distribution of control over decision-making among the levels of the party hierarchy. And so, the question of whether a centralized or a decentralized party better promotes women's participation will depend on one major factor; the accommodation of the women's agenda by top party leadership. This is because highly centralized party means that party leaders

have the power to control and to create openings for women— when they want to do so because sometimes they close them.

A centralized party is characterized by the establishment of a strong center of political power, which acts as the fulcrum of party strategy, organization and control. These centers of power may exist in many forms (even though they are formal) such as the National Executive Council, Political Bureau or even a summit. The lower party ranks are used simply as Implementation units for political mobilization and rallying points for other party activities such as constituency visits by party leaders. Within the former Democratic Party, National Party of Kenya and later within the National Alliance for Change,⁵ this centralization was extremely advantageous as the top leadership's concession and accommodation of the women's agenda accelerated the performance and activity of women within the latter day NARC. Taking advantage of this responsiveness, many women activists participated in the negotiations and party organization eventually, some of them earned parliamentary nominations in the process.

In this regard, the challenge for women party members who preferred entry through the electoral process within the NARC thus called for a shift from lobbying at the national level to strengthening the presence of women at the constituency and other party levels as a means towards the attainment of political clout. As a matter of fact, the success of many women members of parliament on the NARC party is directly attributable to this dimension. The subsequent nomination of six (6) women out of the seven (7) allotted slots also adds testimony to the party's commitment and responsiveness to the women's constituency.

The impact of this commitment has been varied. On the reverse side, it re-awakened the top KANU leadership to accommodate the women's agenda through the allocation of three (3) out of the four (4) of its allotted slots to women representatives in the party. Indeed, KANU has since gone ahead to

⁵ The Democratic Party, National Party of Kenya, FORD-Kenya Party and other smaller parties formed the National Alliance Party of Kenya during the 2002 general elections to augment their capacity to compete for political power. This alliance later coalesced with the Liberal Democratic Party to win the elections with a landslide.

make bolder moves. The party gave all its nominations to women in Isiolo County Council marking a radical departure from tradition while for the first time in the party's history, Dr Josephine Ojiambo served in the capacity of Deputy Advisor to the Chairman. These are important milestones that reflect the party's desire to construct a new gendered membership.

2.2. Institutionalization

The second component, degree of institutionalization, determines the nature of the rules by which party functionaries are recruited. Highly institutionalized parties are bureaucratic as opposed to patronage-oriented systems. Bureaucratic systems are full of formalized, explicit rules. A low degree of institutionalization signifies ad hoc, pragmatic decision-making. Here, there are far less likely to be clear rules, and even where they exist, there is a distinct possibility that they are not carefully followed. Authority is based on traditional authority or charismatic leadership, rather than legal-rational authority. Loyalty to those in power is therefore paramount.

Because many parties have very low degrees of institutionalization, these affect the career ladder of officeholders and party members. If parties were more institutionalized even in their nomination process, it would be easier for any outsider to understand how these processes work. Those not in power would know and trust how candidates are recruited and also can anticipate the criteria by which each applicant will be judged.

Case 1:

In Kwana, the ECK list also confirmed that the winner of the KANU nomination Mrs. Jennifer Chepkemboi Masis had been replaced by a former nominated MP, Mr. Samuel Moiben. ..During the nominations, she beat five other candidates including Mr. Moiben who had 1,813 votes to her 3,519. *Daily Nation, November 30 2002, Pg 5, Col.3.*

Case 2:

"I won in the queue. I had 1,560 votes and my closest opponent had 46. When I called Nyachae's (Party Leader) office a day after the nominations, her secretary congratulated me for doing well. The certificate was later given to a man whose name had not even been on the ballot paper. I could not be given "another" certificate because my brother had won one in the rural constituency. Strangely, that certificate was signed by another woman "- *Caroline Magara, a Ford People parliamentary candidate in Makadara Constituency in Nairobi*

Again, because of their weak institutionalization, parties tend to bias candidate nomination in favor of those who have accumulated “personal political capital” and resources based upon personal status or external group support. In most cases, the beneficiaries of these biases are men.

The party elections are also held arbitrarily and at the party officials' whims. In some cases, the elections are never held altogether. Thus women, as newcomers to parties, who have fewer resources find it more difficult to catch up with established men. As a result, the career of a woman in our less institutionalized parties would only begin outside the party where they could gain a power base. In many cases, this “outside” platform has had tremendous effects⁶. Women are likely to have a better chance in a highly institutionalized environment.

In sum, while the degree of institutionalization and centralization together define the possible strategies a party can use to promote or inhibit women's participation, the frustration of the political parties lack of capacity is best summed in The Daily Nation's Editorial of November 24 2002, “... *And political parties have proved that they do not take the issue of internal democracy seriously... If they are willing to bend the rules for old boys, wouldn't they treat the law and the constitution review the same? Kenyans are very disappointed-to put it mildly-and demand an explanation from political parties. In any case there is need for strong demonstration of public disapproval for this outbreak of rigging.*”⁷

2.3 Irresponsive party policies and the absence of representation quotas for women

Many political parties who recognize the need for women's representation have in the past either failed to reserve seats for women's participation or for those who have reserved quotas, they have failed to fill these quotas. This has therefore

⁶ Hon. Prof. Wangari Maathai, Adelina Mwau and Cecilly Mbarire earned their nominations partly due to the civil society platforms well as party activism. Hon. Prof. Ruth Oniango' was nominated due to her public stature.

⁷ Daily Nation, November 24th 2002

led to the low presence of women in party leadership positions as well as in the number of women who seek parliamentary seats in the general elections. Often, the women's low representation is further weakened by the extrication of women party leaders to the Women Party wings. This essentially delimits their platforms for participation as well as reduces their capacity to fully engage in frontline party activism.

It is also important to note that due to inadequate regulation of political parties in terms of their membership, recruitment or requirements to practice internal democracy, most parties in Kenya hardly conduct elections. This principally locks out the admission of new membership and women in particular. This partially explains the reasons why women take too long to ascend the party hierarchies. The consequence of these limitations is that women eventually fail to gain the necessary exposure and visibility to present themselves for party nominations or primaries.

Table 1: Number of candidates nominated for parliamentary elections per political party by gender in the 1997 general elections

Party		Women	Men
1.	Democratic Assistance Party	0	1
2.	DP	3	131
3.	Economic Independent party	0	1
4.	Ford Asili	3	33
5.	FordK	6	98
6.	FordPeople	2	35
7.	Green African Party	0	1
8.	KANU	6	204
9.	Kenya National Congress	1	11
10.	KENDA	0	12
11.	Kenya Social congress	3	16
12.	Labour Party of Kenya	0	4
13.	NDP	5	26
14.	Liberal Party of Kenya	6	103
15.	PICK	0	7
16.	Republican Reform Party	0	1
17.	Safina Party	0	46
18.	Shirikisho Party of Kenya	0	9
19.	SDP	13	90
20.	Umma Patriotic Party of Kenya	0	1
21.	United Patriotic Party of Kenya	0	5
	TOTALS	48	835

Source: ECK records, 1997

Table 2: Historical Chronology of Women's representation in Parliament, 1963-2002

Year	Number of Women Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Total Number of Women MPs
1963	7	0	0	0
1969	13	1	1	2
1974	11	4	1	5
1979	15	5	1	6
1983	7	2	1	3
1988	6	2	0	2
1992	19	6	0	6
1997	53	4	5	9
* 2002	44	9	8	17

Source: ECEP Handbook: Making Informed Choices, 2001/ UNDP Human Development Report 2000

3.0. Strengthening the vehicles for women's political participation and representation in political parties

3.1. Are political parties regulation law?

Obviously, the case for the regulation of political parties is strong indeed. There is need for political parties to attain certain basic ethical standards, discipline, and management. The Democratic Party of Thailand for example has embarked on a process to professionalize party management. In the Philippines, The *Labang Demokratikong Pilipino Party* is working on the problem of patronage through research, seminars and policy discussions. In Kenya, women are bound to benefit directly from the stability of political parties as well as their regulation. This may be done by first of all, delinking the Electoral Commission of Kenya from the executive followed by broadening its mandate and effectiveness. A strong ECK should in the long term be in a position to preside over as well as validate the conduct of party election primaries for those parties who hold primary elections such as KANU, NARC and Ford People in the just concluded elections. The democratic farce that marked the 2002 General elections in all senses is huge stumbling block to the process of fair representation and popular participation. Essentially, a political parties regulation bill should aim at strengthening the organizational capacity and credibility of political parties so as to make them more responsive to the demands of new democracy.

3.2 Campaign finance reforms

There is need to limit the distortion effect of the influence of money and “gifts” on politics. Reform of political financing is under active debate in many countries, aiming to improve the transparency, level playing field (by setting limits on spending and contributions). Whereas in many countries this campaign is limited to regulating the funding of political parties, the use of money in Kenyan politics has over the years undermined the vote at all levels of the elections and there is urgent need to focus on “how the money undermines the vote”. In the 2002 party primary elections, many results favored those traditional party powerbrokers that financed the primaries or aided the political parties at various levels of negotiation, organization, lobbying or strategizing.

In Uganda, campaign costs were as high as \$60,000 (approx. KShs. 4.7million) in 1998. This was partly due to widely spread rural populations, poor and costly transportation and communications, and limited media coverage.⁸ But in some countries such as Kenya, campaign costs are driven up by traditions and expectations of political patronage. The average cost of campaigns in Kenya currently varies widely but there are cases where politicians used over KShs. 10million (\$13,000) on single projects alone during the recent campaigns. The high cost of the campaigns undermines political competition by excluding those who lack massive resources, especially women and other newcomers.

Already, the NARC government has slapped a ban on the holding of harambees, which has been a major conduit of illicit cash donations to influence political choices at the grassroots level. These laws need to be institutionalized to include disclosure laws, spending limits, contribution limits and bans on certain types of donations, indirect and direct subsidies for both parties and candidates. However, according to the IDEA⁹, stricter laws are only a first step. Indeed, when political financing laws are accompanied by silence, indifference and lack of technical training, abuses are best able to flourish.

⁸ Source: World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century: Improving Governance, Managing Conflict and Rebuilding States*, pp.68.

⁹ International Democratic Electoral Assistance

3.3 Representation quotas

The history of Kenya women's struggle for the legislation and implementation of Affirmative Action has indeed been a steep precipice. Women have lobbied with political parties, advocated, drafted bills and where necessary, occasionally protested for women's inclusion from the streets. This is what the women did following their marginalization in representation to the East African Assembly for instance. Significant effort has been made through civic education, capacity building for women politicians even the registration of women led political parties to address the deficit of women's representation. These have not borne encouraging fruits, but they have provided essential lessons upon which the movement has made continuous progress in the battle for better and fairer representation. It is now widely agreed that the gap of women's representation will only be arrested through legislation. Political parties need to be implored to adhere to specific quotas for women's representation. In the event that state funding for political parties become a reality, the adherence to these quotas should be one of the guiding criteria to qualify for state funding.

3.4. Small parties, new political coalitions and rebuilding political institutions

It was always expected that smaller and newer parties or political coalitions would be the first to nominate women because they have less to lose and more to prove. Then later, perhaps once the ground has been broken, the larger parties may follow. This is because the majority parties would be less concerned with "problems of socio-demographic representation" than would a minority party. As mentioned earlier, this spiral effect has seen the nomination of many capable women as members of parliament in KANU.

The year a party enters the political system may be another measure of 'newness' that affects the representation of women even if the party members have been players before. Evidence suggests that new parties may be more supportive of female candidacy. New parties may be more likely to open their doors to a less powerful group such as women and to encourage them to run for office for three reasons.

First, new parties are normally more likely to hold post materialist values such as equality and increased internal democracy and in the process be more receptive to entry by minority groups than traditional parties.

Secondly, new parties have few entrenched power holders and are thus open to newcomers because no incumbents will be deposed in the process. So, new parties' lack of traditional power centers, plus the possibility for new rules and norms, suggests women can use this malleability to their advantage. Innovative policies to promote women are more likely where there are no previously established norms.

Third, new parties may try to lure female voters with female candidates. New parties need to attract new voters if they are to survive. One strategy might be to appeal to women by demonstrating the party's willingness to run a larger proportion of female candidates than other parties in the nation.

3.5 Women and political party activism

Once women begin to enter the lower party ranks, they could directly increase pressure for representation at the highest level. In other words, women's participation inside the party as party activists at the local level, as organizers of intraparty women's groups, and as internal officeholders should buoy women's power in the party. This power should increase women's opportunities and resources to lobby for further support of women as candidates. Women's party activity also creates a new pool of politically experienced women. Local government elections can provide useful training grounds for political participation in the national level. It may rightly be argued that women's direct activity within parties increase the number of women representatives.

Even in the consideration of the systems used by party gatekeepers to nominate candidates during party primaries, different factors come into play. Most importantly, party gatekeepers widely value aspirants' track record in the party organization, in the constituency or in some other platform. This is probably the reason for the high rate of incumbents being renominated. For this reason

also, we might expect those parties with higher proportions of women activists will display correspondingly high proportions of women MPs.

3.6. Leveraging support from party “Queenpins and Kingpins”

One of the most desirable results of women leaders' capacity to organize and mobilize would be the strengthening and invigoration of a network of senior women leaders for political engagement. Because of their influence, experience and visibility either as party insiders or climbers, it would be important that a linkage be created between these leaders and the emerging “outsiders” who are entering politics through activity in some community level movement or opposition politics.

Based on their “inexperience” and thus ignorance of the dirty, riff-ruff and corrupt politics of the inside, these “outsiders” can as well be groomed as the new brooms that will sweep clean. Great women leaders such as Gro Harlem Brundtland, Mary Robinson and Marcia Liberia-Peters who moved from a kindergarten teacher and school administrator to prime minister actually progressed on the outsider platform to make their marks in politics in some cases even when they were actually incumbents. In the US, 1992 was said to be “The Year of the Women” in politics as a result of their perception as “outsiders” because so many women ran for and won state and national offices. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton argued that voters were fed up with political corruption such as the congressional bank scandal, and gridlock (the inability of parties and leaders to agree on coherent policy) that gave women an advantage in the elections.

Conclusion

In many countries, women's visibility, particularly in women organisations' activities has generally helped win recognition of the need to foster women's political representation and to address their issues under the new democratic governments that have emerged. Ultimately, this has provided a useful but rarely acknowledged impetus to broadening constituencies for democratic reforms.

By encouraging the hope that proper democratization will be popularly based and representative, it reinforces the view that civic participation plays an essential role in the whole democratization process. Finally, even if women's political attitudes and participation may not be globally predictable, they will nonetheless be of central importance to the future of democracies not just in Kenya but worldwide. This is because many "women still believe that entering parliament means choosing between a private life or public life. This is not the case. Instead, women should view their life as a continuum. They should decide what they want to achieve in life and prioritize these goals in chronological order. There is a certain right time to achieve each of these goals, whether it is becoming a wife, mother, professional or a parliamentarian. Life is long and women can achieve many things". (Anna Ballebo, MP Spain)

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'She the protector', takes on the shape of a woman forming, her lines rising sensuously, as if she is a natural swelling of the wood. But her arms remain imprisoned. She is unable to leave her source, and stand on her own, be a creation of her own image. she is bound by the place she belongs. she must protect it. (*Sculptor: Lydia Galavu*)



CHAPTER 3

Affirmative action for Kenyan women: an analysis of the relevant provision of the draft constitution

Peter Wanyande

Introduction

This chapter examines issues of affirmative action as currently provided for in the Draft Bill of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission. The objective of the analysis is to assess the significance of these provisions and identify their potential impact on effective representation of women in major decision-making institutions, notably political parties, Parliament and Local Councils. Kenyan Women have over the years complained and rightly so, that they are under-represented in key public decision making organisations such as parliament, the civil service and local authorities. This marginalization they argue, has resulted in their concerns either not reaching the public agenda or if they do, the concerns do not receive the serious attention they deserve. It is against this backdrop that Kenyan women hope that the provisions of affirmative action as spelt out in the Draft Bill of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, will help address their marginalization in the public realm. The essay will thus give some indications on how women stand to benefit from the proposals on affirmative action. We also attempt to identify any bottlenecks or weaknesses of the proposals. Some recommendations should also emerge from the discussion. To place the discussion in its right perspective and in context, this chapter provides a brief background to the long struggle by Kenyan women to achieve gender parity in political and other forms of representation. This background includes the steps taken by Kenyan women to achieve this noble objective.

The argument of the chapter is that the proposed affirmative action is a major victory for Kenyan women. It also marks a positive step towards gender parity in Kenyan politics. However, it will not lead to gender parity in the medium and long run. This may take a long time to achieve. Secondly we argue in this essay that Kenyan women have to find a way of influencing the nominating authorities such as political parties and the president, in the case of cabinet appointments, to identify capable women who are able not just to understand women specific issues but also to articulate them effectively. We further argue that women should put pressure on those who might benefit from affirmative action to effectively champion their views and concerns. Ruth Kibiti (1993) has identified a number of women issues that women leaders should champion. These plus other issues should be made known to women representatives to champion on behalf of women.

The concept of affirmative action

“Affirmative action” refers to a body of policies and procedures designed to eliminate employment discrimination against women, ethnic and other minority groups, with the objective of redressing the effects of past discrimination. In practice it is effected when a deliberate action is taken that gives such groups priority in the appointment and or nomination to positions of responsibility. An Affirmative Action organization will thus consider members of hitherto disadvantaged groups for appointment before members of other groups. It must be noted however, that normally the decision to give an appointment to a member of a disadvantaged group first takes into account the required qualifications. This means that if there are two or more qualified people and one of them is a member of the disadvantaged group, then priority will be given to this particular person. It is this approach that makes affirmative action appear negative and therefore controversial.

Some regard the practice as a temporary measure aimed at enabling members of the under-represented group to participate in those areas in which they have been disadvantaged. The assumption is that at some point when such groups have been empowered and have acquired what it takes to participate in a



particular programme and to compete effectively with the rest, affirmative action would cease. The challenge then would be to determine at what point to stop the practice. It is also worth noting that affirmative action is not confined to political office alone. In the United States of America, for example, many institutions both private and public including universities, practice affirmative action. Tanzania and South Africa too have extended affirmative action to professional and administrative organisations including the civil service. The point is that the scope of affirmative action can be extended to cover areas other than just the representative or elective bodies as contained in the Draft Constitution. Kenyan women stand to gain more by having the scope of affirmative action widened. The challenge is for Kenyan women to fight for this extension beyond parliament to include administrative and professional bodies including the civil service and parastatals.

The debate about affirmative action

Affirmative action has been the subject of a lot of controversy both in theory and in practice. The controversy revolves around its utility as a tool for achieving fairness in society. Some people regard it as a purely discriminative practice while others say that it is positive discrimination that corrects injustices caused to groups in society for reasons not of their own making. Whatever position one takes in the debate on affirmative action there can be no denial that its inclusion in the Kenyan constitution is both a positive and bold step. For one it recognizes that there have been and continue to be structural and other forms of injustices that some groups in society have been subjected to and which require effective redress through the supreme law of the land, namely the constitution. It also gives women and other disadvantaged groups some hope that their plight is recognized and more importantly that it is being addressed by the right authorities.

The road to affirmative action in Kenya

The last ten years has seen Kenyan women struggle hard to make an impact on public affairs. This struggle has taken different forms. They include competing with men for jobs in the public sector despite the disadvantages they face, and



lobbying for appointment to critical public offices including nomination to parliament. The women have also contested parliamentary and civic seats as part of the struggle to overcome gender disparity in political representation. In this regard, it is worth noting that the number of women contesting parliamentary and civic seats has been on the increase. At independence in 1963, for example, there was no single woman Member of Parliament either nominated or elected. The first woman, Grace Onyango was elected in second parliament. The next elected women members of Parliament were Julia Ojiambo and Chelagat Mutai who were elected in third Parliament.

It is important to note that even when women were nominated to parliament the number nominated was also very small compared to men. Thus out of the twelve nominated MPs only one was a woman in any of the parliaments between 1963 and 1978, when the first President of Kenya died. The nominated women MPs at the time included Rose Waruhiu and Eddah Gachukia. The same story applied to elected women MPs. Very few of them were elected before the 1990s. Indeed, it was not until the reintroduction of multiparty politics in the 1990s that more women were elected to parliament. As Miguda points out “ the 1992 elections witnessed a sharp increase in the number of women with interest in vying for parliamentary seats as well as the number of those who finally presented their candidatures. For the first time in the history of Kenyan politics, 18 women presented their candidature out of which 6 were elected to parliament. This also marked the highest number ever, of women MPs in Kenyan parliament” (*Miguda: 2002:116*). The situation however, changed in both 1997 and 2002 elections. In the two elections more women vied for elective posts than in the previous elections. In 2002 elections, nine (9) women were elected too parliament while eight (8) women were nominated to parliament. This is the largest number ever in any one of the nine Parliaments since independence.

These achievements were to a large part attributable to the pressure by women to get to these institutions including demands that they be nominated as a special consideration. These pressures eventually led to the affirmative action Bill presented to parliament by Beth Mugo, MP for Dagoretti constituency in Nairobi in the late 1990s.

In the last ten years or so, the Kenyan women have also demanded for the introduction of affirmative action. The arguments and demand for more women representation including affirmative action have been quite sound and convincing. They revolve around the fact that women constitute more than half the total Kenyan population and should therefore play a more active and visible role in the country's public affairs and in particular politics. The women have also argued that their marginalization from mainstream politics is due to male chauvinism, an attitude that is no longer sustainable in modern day world, Kenya included. The women are in other words, calling for an end to male conservatism. The women also attribute their inability to compete with men in electoral politics to the violent manner in which Kenyan politics is played. This violence must include the embarrassing language used in campaigns. This is in addition to the fact that campaigns go on into the night and in bars and other social places that women do not wish to be associated with. In addition women argue that their participation in politics is hampered by the high cost of electioneering that disadvantages them compared to men. Men, women point out have access to more resources than women and so have a head start on matters of electioneering. Finally women argue that their participation in politics is hampered by their multiple roles. Many care for children and other members of the household at home and find it hard to go campaigning at night. It is on the basis of these and related considerations that Kenyan women have been demanding the introduction of affirmative action. One Kenyan woman justified affirmative action in the following words: "There is nothing in the law that suggests that women cannot seek political seats. However, and culturally, women were led, and did not lead. Women aspirants are at a disadvantage. We need affirmative action..." (*Thongori: 2002:29*). For these and other reasons women have demanded that they be treated differently from men on matters of appointment to public office and even representation in parliament hence their demand for affirmative action.

These efforts appear to have borne some fruits for the Kenyan women. To start with, more women have been nominated to the current parliament than at any other time in Kenyan political history. The ruling party nominated 6 while KANU the main opposition has nominated 2 women. The Narc government has also

appointed three women, the highest number of women to the cabinet. These are Chebii Kilimo, Martha Karua, and Charity Ngilu. Four women assistant ministers, namely Betty Tett, Professor Wangari Mathai, Beth Mugo and Alisen Chelaite have also been appointed. Betty Tett was in the first instance nominated to parliament by Narc and subsequently appointed an Assistant Minister. These achievements can of course be attributed to many factors including the personality of the president and the changed political mood in favour of having gender parity in politics and public affairs generally. However, one cannot disregard the impact of the pressure from women themselves. In this regard it is imperative that women have formed several organisations to press for their rights. Notable among these are the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), the Federation of Kenyan Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya Chapter and the Women Political Caucus. These organisations have worked alongside the older organisations such as Maendeleo Ya Wanawake organization and the National Council of Women of Kenya to lobby for increased women representation in the public realm. They have done this quite admirably given that their approaches to the issue of representation have not always been in harmony.

In the year 2000 Kenyan women introduced a bill in parliament aimed at amending the constitution to provide for the introduction of affirmative action seeking to improve their position. Hon. Beth Mugo the MP for Dagoretti constituency in Nairobi introduced the bill known as The Constitution of Kenya Amendment Draft Bill 2000.

It is also important to note that a number of actions and practices that qualify to be called affirmative action as defined above have also been taken in Kenya from time to time. These include the introduction of quarters for female students and other students from disadvantaged groups or regions in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Cut off points for admission into public universities has for example been lowered for girls at some point. It is thus important to note that affirmative action is not a new practice in Kenya. However, the inclusion of affirmative action in the Draft Bill of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission is a significant achievement for women precisely



because it makes the practice a legal requirement and therefore legally binding on those institutions that it targets, notably Parliament, local councils and political parties. Women can, in other words, seek legal redress if the targeted institutions do not respect the constitutional provision.

The provisions of affirmative action in the draft constitution

The provisions of affirmative action are contained in part 11 of chapter seven of the Draft Constitution. Article 106 clause (1) (b) states as follows:¹⁰ “thirty seats for women candidates on multi member constituencies representing provinces and Nairobi” while clause (3) of the same Article states that “for purposes of elections under Clause (10) (b), the seats shall be distributed as follows – (a) four women representing each province; and (b) two women representing Nairobi”.

The Draft Constitution goes on in clause (5) (b) of article 107 to state “each party list shall alternate between women and men in the priority of nominees. And (c) take into account the need for representation of the disabled, youth and minorities”.

More provisions of affirmative action are spelt out in Article 109 Clause (1) and (2). Clause 1 states, “subject to Clause (2), at least one third of the members of each House shall be women”. Clause (2) on the other hand says, “Within three years of coming into force of this Constitution, Parliament shall enact a law to implement the requirements of Clause (1)”.

The Draft Constitution further provides for affirmative action at the lower levels of government. This is captured in chapter 10 of the Draft Constitution on Devolution of Powers. Article 214 (1) (e) states “at least one third of Councils shall be women”. Clause (1) of Article 217 says, “The Location Council consists

¹⁰ Constitution of Kenya Review Commission draft constitution, 2002



of two representatives one of whom shall be a woman elected by each Village Council from among its members”. In article 219 it is stated in clause (2) “the Provincial Council consists of two representatives, one of who shall be a woman, chosen by each District Council from among its members”.

The Draft Constitution also alludes to affirmative action in section 90 (1) c and 2 (e). In these sections the Draft Constitution requires political parties to respect the need for gender equality and equity and to avoid forming parties based on sex. All these provisions have implications for the impact of affirmative action on women. It is to this that the essay now turns.

Affirmative action: an analysis

A number of issues arise from the provisions on affirmative action listed above. First is that the constitution confines affirmative action to legislative bodies only i.e. parliament and local councils and only alludes to it with regard to political parties. It does not, for example, talk about affirmative action in other important public institutions, notably the judiciary, parastatals and the executive and particularly the civil service.

It is not quite evident why these other institutions are left out when we know that they are very critical to the empowerment of women. In any case these institutions make important decisions that may directly affect women or gender parity. Thirdly it is also the case that women are as under-represented in these institutions as they are in the legislative bodies targeted by the Draft Constitution. The provision as it stands now is rather limited in scope. There is no reason why they should not cover other sectors of public life in which women are under represented. There is need to expand the scope of affirmative action.

The provisions should also require the employer to give equal opportunity to all for purposes of promotion and career advancement including those employed as a result of affirmative action. Kenyans should ensure that past injustices

especially of an administrative nature pertaining to appointment and promotion in public offices is addressed through affirmative action. It needs to be observed that most countries that practice affirmative action have widened the scope of the policy to include employment even in private companies. This is the case, for example, in South Africa and Tanzania, just to mention a few. Women stand to gain more by having the scope of affirmative action widened to cover all areas of injustice.

The other point that emerges from the provisions of affirmative action in the Draft Constitution is the lack of clear guidelines on how and perhaps more importantly why political parties would be compelled to attract women in their party list or even in the single member constituencies. This is especially so in cases where for some reason, women do not subscribe to the party ideology or even policies and programmes. It is quite possible to have a situation in which a party does not attract women candidates even though it is quite willing to respect the relevant provisions of the constitution on affirmative action as it applies to parties. The question is why should such a political party be punished by, for example, being denied participation in elections when the absence of women in the party is not caused by the policies or actions including inaction of the party?

The other problem with the provisions is that they do not spell out whether this will be a temporary or a permanent feature of Kenyan politics. Our argument is not that the affirmative action should be temporary or even permanent. Rather, we are suggesting that some indication of whether or not it will cease to be applied once gender parity is achieved or once the political playing field is even or conducive enough for women to participate in elections should be provided for in the Draft Constitution.

Another question relates to the fact that numbers alone will not ensure that the impact of women on policy is felt. While numbers are important in politics especially when votes have to determine an issue, numbers alone do not seem to be sufficient to achieve all the intended results with regard to having women

specific concerns addressed. The quality of the people brought into the picture by affirmative action would seem to be an important consideration if the aim is to influence public policies and decisions in favour of women. The potential danger we are alluding to is that when weak and non-assertive women are elected to parliament under affirmative action, they may not have much influence on government decisions, policies and programmes. It is against this background that we suggested that a way of identifying capable women that are committed to the course of women should be put in place. It is on the basis of these criteria that women will be able to get the right individuals nominated or elected to parliament to represent their interests. As for those to be appointed to administrative posts, the way forward must be to use the established academic and professional qualifications that apply to all groups. The only variation then would be that the women would be given priority over the other equally qualified candidates. This detail of course cannot be provided for in the constitution. It is up to the women to spell it out and demand that it be adhered to.

A related issue is that affirmative action alone as presently articulated in the Draft Constitution may not necessarily lead to the elimination of the causes of under-representation or factors that make equal opportunity for fair competition difficult. This needs to be addressed precisely because opportunities for equal and fair competition is what women and any other disadvantaged group should fight for. This is why we suggested that a time frame within which conditions conducive for equal political competition should be spelt out so that affirmative action ceases to be applied. The long-term focus should thus be on encouraging the government and political parties to put in place a level playing field with regard to politics generally and the electoral process in particular. The fight against gender discrimination must, in other words, be approached from a broad perspective with attention being paid to the fundamental and underlying causes of the problem. These causes must be addressed effectively even as the country applies affirmative action. In other words, affirmative action without corresponding supportive policies, practices and legal and political environment may not be the ultimate solution to the lack of participation by women in the political process. So long as women continue to suffer unequal access to the resources needed for participation in politics, they will continue to feel

intimidated and therefore shy away from active participation in politics, the application of affirmative action notwithstanding. The argument is that unless carefully thought out, affirmative action may simply serve to intensify class privileges without changing gender power relations in society.

Of critical importance is that women should also struggle to liberalize societal attitudes towards gender relations as a way of supporting the gains made through affirmative action as spelt out in the Draft Constitution. Equally important is the need to encourage, through deliberate government policy, the education of girls so that they are available to take up jobs in the public sector. This is because even when affirmative action is in place, qualified people must be available to take advantage of the policy. This is important precisely because the application of affirmative action does not and should not be used to dilute the quality of people to be appointed. It should not in other words, promote mediocrity or lead to inefficiency. The argument here is that a combination of strategies should be used to support affirmative action if a greater impact is expected.

One major potential problem with the policy as currently presented is that it may lead to a situation in which the balance is tilted to the other extreme i.e. men becoming the disadvantaged. This may then lead to demands for affirmative action in favor of men. This may create a vicious circle. The policy would thus not have solved a problem, as it would have created another problem. This problem can of course be sorted out by indicating in the Draft Constitution the point at which the policy becomes unnecessary.

In addition it can lead to complacency among the beneficiaries of affirmative action. It may thus lead to perceptions among the beneficiaries that since their positions are not earned they can simply sit back and enjoy the benefits of occupying those positions.

Related to this is that it has the potential danger of calling into question the credentials of qualified women especially in administrative and professional organisations. Under these circumstances even the qualified women who get jobs on account of affirmative action may lose confidence in themselves. This

however can only be a problem if those who benefit from affirmative action do not perform well. This is why it is important to ensure that the required qualifications for appointments are maintained and that the beneficiaries of affirmative action prove their competence.

It is worth noting that one of the major causes of gender disparity in the public sector jobs has been the fact that women were not given equal opportunity with men to go to school. The number of educated girls were consequently much lower than those of men. Men therefore dominated available employment opportunities especially but not exclusively in the public sector.

One of the major strengths of affirmative action if implemented is that it would make the representative institutions to more accurately reflect the Kenyan society. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, women constitute more than 50% of the Kenyan population and it is deceptive to have very few of them represented in public representative bodies. Affirmative action can also serve to remove the conservatism associated with Kenyan politics over the years especially if the women who get to the position of responsibility via affirmative action perform well and to the expectation of their colleagues.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the various issues relating to affirmative action. It has also highlighted the steps taken by Kenyan women to achieve fair and equal representation in key public institutions, notably Parliament, local authorities and the civil service. The chapter has also discussed some of the weaknesses in the provisions of Affirmative Action in the Draft Constitution. We have argued that the struggle, by Kenyan women, for equitable and fair gender representation has been long and bumpy. We have further argued that although the achievement of this noble objective is far from being achieved, the inclusion of affirmative action in the Draft Constitution is a major step in the right direction that is likely to make a major difference in this struggle. We have further observed that the struggle must address all the fundamental and underlying causes of gender disparity in representation including addressing the wider environment

in which these injustices occur. In short, a combination of approaches to the issue of inequitable, unequal and unfair gender representation must be adopted.

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CHAPTER 4

Financing for politics – which way for women?

Okumba Miruka

Introduction

Are women who go into politics more disadvantaged than their male colleagues because of lack of finances? If so, what are the causes of this disadvantage? To what use does a political candidate put money? To what extent does money determine voting patterns? Is it such an over-arching determinant that those without it are necessarily obvious losers? What initiatives have been tried to assist women candidates financially? With what level of success? Does the draft constitution of Kenya provide a remedy? What is the way forward?

These are the key questions this chapter attempts to answer. The chapter does not pretend to have conclusive answers to each or all of them. But it seeks to provide a platform for discussing them by making observations based on research primarily from published sources and oral interviews with players in the political sector. The paper does this analysis by looking at:

- The place of finance in Kenyan politics.
- Sources of political funding.
- The conventional view about women politicians and finance.
- Analysis of factors that determine women's political chances.
- Experiences in financing women politicians.
- The Draft Constitution and political finance.

The paper concludes that finance is not the key determinant of women's political success and is being given undue attention. It also concludes that the

constitutional provisions in the draft have a good intention but do not constitute salvation to women's political ambitions.

The place of finance in Kenyan politics

An anecdote goes that in some presidential elections in one African country, the ruling party had many of its politicians clamouring for nomination as the party candidate. The president invited the contestants for a discussion of the party candidate. He asked each of the candidates how much money they had earmarked for the campaigns. One candidate is reported to have indicated he had one million shillings. The second said he was hoping to be financed by the party. Others mentioned other odd sums. Then the clincher mentioned that he had set aside some billions of shillings. The president turned round and asked the others whether they thought campaigning to be a president was a joke.

This episode illustrates starkly that finances have a central role to play in politics. But it does not quite tell us that the best-financed candidate necessarily wins the election. In the postscript to the above story, it could be mentioned that the chosen candidate was actually defeated at the elections by a candidate who did not demonstrate such an impressive financial outlay.

But let us begin by looking at the role of money in Kenyan politics. The finances required for politics can be categorized according to the electoral phases as follows:

- *Pre-polling*: This is the most demanding phase because of nominations and campaigns.
- *During polling*: The resources at this time are particularly for mobilizing agents and to personally monitor the elections. They are largely logistical.
- *Post-polling*: For those who have triumphed, the resources may be needed for celebrations. For those who have lost, finances may be required to file petitions if they deem the polls to have been irregular.

During these phases, money is spent for purposes that are legitimate but also for purposes that are clandestine, criminal and immoral. The legitimate items that must feature in the elections budget of any candidate include:

- Nomination fee at party and electoral commission level.

Financing for politics – which way for women?

- Transportation (hardy vehicles, fuel, spares, repairs, licences, insurance).
- Allowances for agents and campaigners.
- Publicity (public address system, mass media adverts, T-shirts, posters, hand bills, badges, caps, calendars and other items of merchandise).
- Hire of security personnel.
- Hire of meeting/campaign venues.

Borderline items (in the sense that they are not obligatory but are specific to the culture of Kenyan politics) on which money is spent are:

- Donations to harambees and other welfare causes such as funerals.
- Entertainment and food for “supporters”.

Illegitimate expenditure which nevertheless occur are:

- Bribery of voters with cash and material handouts.
- Hire of thugs to intimidate, sabotage and even physically brutalise opponents.
- Publication of slanderous literature on opponents directly or by proxy.
- Hire of hecklers to disrupt the campaign speeches of opponents.
- Purchase and destruction of voter cards in opponents’ strongholds to reduce the latter’s chances of winning.

Achim Chiaji and Otieno Aluoka¹¹ also cite the following financial expenses incurred by female candidates in Kisumu Town East, Gem, Kaiti, Khwisero and Msambweni constituencies in the 2002 elections:

- Payment to party brokers to avoid being rigged out during nominations.
- Advances to “youths” as condition for support¹².
- Bribes to spies of male candidates.
- Payments to fake campaigners who decamp at the last minute hence put the campaigns into total disarray.

¹¹ Chiaji, Achim and Aluoka, Otieno. “Women’s Experiences as Voters and Candidates in the 2002 General Elections: Final Monitoring”.

¹² Kabira, Wanjiku and Wasamba, Peter in *Reclaiming Women’s Space in Politics. The Collaborative Center for gender and development* (1998, p. 62) cite the same when they state that “agents who complained loudly about delayed payments and hunger were young men”. They later suggest that candidates should consider recruiting more female agents because “male agents have short tempers, are very money minded, ...aggressive ... (and) ...easily resort to violence in case of disagreements”.

From the above, it is clear that the key electioneering costs are related to logistics and staffing in order to put in place an infrastructure for effective coverage of the constituency. If there is any disadvantage faced by any candidate with regard to resources, then it must be critical at the pre-polling stage. As a matter of fact, and as the paper will point out later, candidates complain of resources largely for pre-polling activities. We are yet to hear of someone - woman or man - complain of lack of resources to host an election victory party or to file an election petition.

The reason that politics may appear to require such a large financial outlay is that there are all these strictly unnecessary expenditure items that candidates feel they must budget for in order to 'sell themselves' to the electorate in the belief that it will change the voter's minds. Experience indicates, however, that voters do not often vote as much with their stomachs as politicians believe. The following three cases in Box 1 below illustrate this point.

Box No. 1

Oloo Aringo from Alego-Usonga for a long time had an unassailable stranglehold on the seat. Yet this is one candidate who was not famed for financial or other material handouts. In fact, he was far outstripped by Edwin Yinda in the 1997 elections with the latter having heavily invested in development projects in the constituency in the run up to the elections.

The case of James Orenge of Ugenya is also illustrative. Orenge was forever vilified by his constituents for not initiating "development projects" or giving handouts and in deed for being more of a national than a local politician. Yet he remained unassailable until he blundered in 2002 by not reading the changed mood and the NARC euphoria.

Wangari Maathai in the 1997 elections failed in her bid to clinch the Tetu parliamentary seat leave alone the presidential one she gunned for¹³. Yet in 2002, she sailed through easily not because there was a sudden improvement in her financial fortunes but simply because she was in the right political party.

In other words, one may say that voters are actually wiser than candidates. They consider election times to be opportunities to enjoy free handouts and meet their financial and material needs through the politicians' pockets (after all, this is the only time they are certain the candidates will deliver anything in five years) but make up their minds on who to vote for based on other criteria. They are indeed practitioners of the principle of "Kula kwa fulani, lakini kura kwa fulani" (Eat from Candidate A but vote in Candidate B).

Using this argument, therefore, we can tentatively conclude that there is no correlation between political success and financial outlay. Given, candidates must have certain basics to enable their campaigns to be meaningful and to create any impact. But just having that money in the absence of other key determinant factors is irrelevant to success.

Sources of political funding

It is obvious that all Kenyan politicians largely source their funds for political office from their personal coffers (savings, sale of property, utilisation of personal vehicles, hotels etc). In fact, the electorate often associate a politician with a certain minimum level of resources and those who display an obvious deficiency are often taken to be jesters out to add spice to electioneering but not to be in serious contention. A second source of political funds is close associates and people who believe in the competence of a candidate, are simply friends or expect favours once their candidate succeeds. Such funding could come in the form of cash or utilities mobilized privately or through public fund raising events. A third source of funding is the political party one belongs to. Political parties advance some cash to their candidates, perhaps not all candidates, but at least those that are perceived to have a realistic chance of making it.

¹³ Kabira and Wasamba (ibid., p. 63) attribute her fate to poor campaign strategies. They observe that "she engaged her audience in civic education instead of selling her LPK policies and herself as the best presidential option...She assumed that by going for the presidency, getting the parliamentary seat was automatic. She was forced to bow out of the presidential race at the eleventh hour to concentrate on the parliamentary race. But this was too late to have impact. She lost".

One must therefore seek to understand women's standing in regard to these three sources of funding.

At the personal level, whoever is getting into the political game, whether woman or man, has no business doing so unless they have established that they have campaign funds set aside. It is no use entering the field and then whining about lack of resources. Wanjiku Mbugua puts this analogically thus: "Getting into politics is like building a house. You cannot start building a big house and then start complaining that you cannot afford it"¹⁴.

At the level of donation from supporters, there is the question of the extent and resource base of ones networks. This again goes with the extent to which one is a political animal. This means that you are not just a politician during election time but one all the time. You must also have a reliable and fervent group of supporters who will always pitch in for you. One may surmise that inchoate women politicians may have a slight disadvantage in this area because of the traditional marginalization of women from the public domain. But seasoned women campaigners for political office cannot claim remedy under the same category because they would then be seeming to say that they are involved in a game whose rules they do not understand.

On the question of party funding, there are two perspectives to consider. The first is a scenario where a party allocates a similar sum to all its candidates. If this is done, then there is no inherent disadvantage that women face unless they are from the beginning poorer than their male colleagues. This is the approach Kanu used in the 2002 elections. The second scenario is where a party divides its coffers disproportionately to the candidates. This is the approach that NARC used in the 2002 elections. It provided funding to all its nominated candidates using a graduated scale, which considered incumbency, the acknowledged financial capacity of the candidate and specificity of request by candidates. Incumbents were expected to have saved to defend their seats. So they were allocated less. Candidates with obvious financial clout were expected

¹⁴ Mbugua, Wanjiku. Oral interview on May 14, 2003.

to easily finance their campaigns without party intervention. Then those who demonstrated a deficit even after receiving the initial party funds were considered on their merit to determine how much extra funding they were allocated. Wangari Maathai is reported to have been one such candidate.

Needless to say, the extent to which a woman will receive party funding depends on her investment in the party and the groundwork she has done to make her a credible candidate. This investment may, however, be constrained by the domination of the parties by men and the cultural milieu which constrict women's political space.

Nick Wanjohi mentions a problem with party funding which has implications on women or any other candidates relying on it for their political activities. He observes that:

the branch and local leadership in all the parties expect the national leadership to do fundraising to maintain local party offices and sponsor local committee meetings. When funds are not forthcoming, regional, branch and local officials must be bankrolled by local party tycoons or else they close down altogether...Equally, the regional and local party levels expect the national leaders to provide financial resources for parliamentary and even civic electoral campaigns¹⁵.

Wanjohi is articulating what may best be described as a dependency syndrome and over-expectation by political candidates of their party, not realizing that they are the party. He sums up the entrenchment of the culture of handouts in the political psyche beautifully when he says that party members "are not sufficiently motivated to sacrifice a portion of their income for the party"¹⁶.

Some informants interviewed for this paper confirm that women candidates are afflicted by this syndrome, which is not only an unsustainable, but also lays

¹⁵ Wanjohi, Nick. "Financing of Political Parties: Problems and Challenges", a paper presented at a workshop in Nairobi November 10-17, 2000, p.6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7

a foundation for non-democratic practice because, as the adage puts it, “he who pays the piper calls the tune”. Any candidate who relies on funding by the party bigwig must pander to the dictates of the same.

We can therefore at this point conclude in agreement with Wambui Kimathi that “Financing campaigns is strictly your personal business which the party may only assist in”¹⁷.

Women politicians and finance: the conventional view

In discussing what she calls “universal barriers” to women’s participation in public roles, Maria Nzomo identifies socio-cultural, policy and institutional frameworks and “lack of adequate money”. She observes that “many women are poor and even the wealthy ones may not be independently so”. Hence they may not be able to afford the “enormous amounts of money required to fund an electoral campaign”¹⁸.

Although Nzomo acknowledges that the most critical barrier in Kenya is the established male dominated political system, she still gives the economic theory pride of place when she says that the basic problem facing women is “lack of opportunities where resources continue to be disproportionately controlled by men through the latter’s domination of machineries applied in the allocation and distribution of these resources”.

She observes further that “despite women being the majority of voters in Kenya, they do not sponsor or lobby for fellow women candidates to represent them”¹⁹.

Nzomo is not alone in making such statements. An AAWORD publication on the 1997 general elections also makes the claim that lack of resources constrains women’s participation in politics. “Women tend to lack finance which is

¹⁷ Oral interview on May 16, 2003

¹⁸ Nzomo, Maria. *Women in Politics*. Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD). 1992, p 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.15

necessary to boost them into political leadership”, it says. “This factor is closely related to culture” because “due to cultural gender bias, women have less access to credit, education and employment opportunities. Yet in Kenya, economic empowerment seems to be a prerequisite to political participation and leadership”. The text gives the example that “election campaigns in Kenya tend to concentrate on ‘dishing’ out handouts ... rather than in spelling out individual manifestoes and strategies for development”²⁰.

Chiaji and Aluoka share the same opinion when they state that “money has always played a vital role in mobilizing voters”. The two observe that it is “difficult to give exact accounts” but still aver that “it is evident that men control greater resources than their female counterparts”. In which regard, they continue, “commercialization of Kenyan politics has been a disadvantage to women” because “the intensity of poverty among voters, voter bribery and voter buying” automatically “tilts the political field in favour of wealthy (male) politicians unless desired interventions were made in time”. They cite that when they asked “what prevented women with good leadership qualities from declaring their candidature, lack of adequate financial resources was ranked highest”²¹.

Jeremiah Okoth Owiti actually provides statistics on the challenges to women candidates in 2002 to which responses tallied as indicated below²².

Challenge	% of total responses
Lack of resources	15.6
Partisanship/other women's weaknesses	14.65
Poor personality	5.15
Inadequate education/experience	9.8
Inability to conduct campaigns at night or door to door	3.4
Civil status ²²	3.1
No responses	48.4
Total	100

²⁰ Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD). *Women's Political Leadership in Kenya: Involvement, Challenges and the Way Forward*. AAWORD, 1998.

²¹ Chiaji and Aluoka. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²² Owiti, Jeremiah Okoth. “Report on Practical and Strategic Issues for Women Candidates in 2003 General Elections”. Kenya Women's Political Caucus, June 2002.

To these voices could be added Kabira's and Wasamba's, that:

Lack of basic resources in an election contest like campaign vehicles and money to publicize one's candidature was a major impediment to women's quest for increased political participation and representation. Some candidates could not be nominated because of inability to pay nomination fees to the political parties sponsoring them...²³

The two go on to cite examples from the 1997 elections.

Zipporah Wangari Njugiria of Kanu Muguga...was not able to raise Kshs. 2,000 for the party life membership card. Mrs. Jane Kironji of Kiambaa Ward also had to embark on door-to-door campaign as she could not meet transport costs necessary for effective campaigns in the larger Kanunga Ward. Jane Murugi Kiare of Karai in Kabete Constituency withdrew due to inability to pay the high nomination fees required by Kanu

In Juja Constituency, some women civic candidates could not organize their own political rallies because of lack of money, transport and public address systems. Such candidates were forced to rely on invitation to rallies organised by other rich men candidates...²⁴

They echo Nzomo's sentiments by stating that:

the problem was compounded by the fact that women politicians were not economically independent. During campaigns for party nominations, a good number relied on their husbands as financiers and so could not compete effectively against their male opponents with vast financial resources²⁵.

These are what may be called conventional arguments to explain the dearth of women in the political landscape. But they may be faulted and challenged on several grounds.

²³ Kabira and Wasamba, *ibid.* , p. 66

²⁴ *Ibid.* , p. 670

²⁵ *Ibid.* , p. 70

First, poverty is not exclusive to women. And even it was, people (both sexes) who decide to go into politics must have weighed the scales and learnt that Kenyan politics is resource demanding and resource draining. No one in their right senses should therefore get into it without knowing that they have the capacity to finance it. Therefore, anyone venturing into politics should be assumed to have a certain minimum level of resources to get by. In the words of Kimathi, by the time a woman is declaring her candidature, she must have broken certain barriers including the financial. Therefore the question of having “enormous amounts of money” does not arise.

Secondly, the argument that women are not independently wealthy infers the point that they have no freedom to commit family or their spouses’ wealth to political contests. This is a generalization, which can be countered by pointing out that for those who declare their candidature for political office, it must be assumed that they have the support of their spouses. The argument, as echoed by Kabira and Wasamba, is actually self-defeating. The two cite that women candidates had to rely on their husbands for support. If it is said that men have superior financial resources, what makes the resources of these supportive husbands less effective than the resources of the male candidates contesting against their wives? The argument does not also explain the case of single women who, nevertheless, have made it through elections two of them sitting in Parliament right now.

Thirdly, Chiaji and Aluoka talk of “mobilizing voters” without explaining what exactly this means (bribing them? transporting them to voting stations?) Even then, what is the evidence that if you mobilize more voters (because you have more resources) then they will necessarily be faithful and vote for you? The Kenyan political scene is littered with examples of the opposite kind. It is in this vein of thinking that one also dismisses the conclusion that wealth tilts the political field in favour of male politicians. It is also unclear what is meant by “desired interventions” the two talk about.

Fourthly, the sentiment that women do not lobby for or support women candidates corresponds to an observation made by several interviewed respondents that women

candidates suffer from lack of networks that could assist in effective mobilization of resources. It, however, assumes that support for women candidates must necessarily come from fellow women and in deed has the unfortunate undertone that women politicians are representing women electorate. It is precisely on the faultiness of such arguments that the case for a women's only political party in the mid 1990's may have failed to see the light of day.

Owiti in fact established that the electorate:

were ...concerned that women politicians tend to address women's issues more than the broader development problems facing their entire electorates. Due to this, it was argued, some voters feared that women would not make good representatives, being more concerned with the lot of fellow women than all of the people they would be representing²⁶.

If in deed women candidates portray themselves as just representatives of women, then they make a mistake that no one else should be blamed for. An apt example is provided by Kabira and Wasamba from the 1997 elections. Sample these quotations.

Women candidates tended to appeal to fellow women and the youth. It was assumed that men could not be converted²⁷.

Some candidates ...made it clear before nomination that they were going into politics to champion the rights of *akina mama* (womenfolk). A woman candidate in Makueni was very explicit on this issue. She said that she joined politics to liberate women from men's oppression. This was conceived by voters as separatist and divisive ...her feminist agenda made her unpopular not only among men but local women as well²⁸.

Finally, although Owiti's statistics has lack of resources as the most frequently

²⁶ Owiti, *ibid.*,

²⁷ Kabira and Wasamba, *ibid.* p.74. In another episode, a woman candidate in Kasarani tried unsuccessfully to rely "on her being a woman as an advantage over men opponents".

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 73

cited challenge (15.6%), we notice that the rate of no responses to the question (48%) is so high that the statistics may not be regarded as conclusive.

It is therefore the tentative submission of this paper that lack of resources is only a ready made populist explanation to women's poor political showing but not the fundamental reason.

Analysis of factors that determine women's political chances

If women may be slightly disadvantaged financially in politics, there are more compelling determinants of success. These are now analysed below.

Motivation

Why does one seek political office? The typical Kenyan politician will tell you that they had no desire to seek political office, but the "people" insisted they must. The other typical answer follows the Messiah model of thinking: that you have been touched by the suffering of your people because of poor representation and you are offering yourself to create heaven on earth for them. At the end of the day, however, these are more like excuses and justifications for seeking political office rather than concrete reasons. The only reason anyone seeks political office is to gain power and people should not make pretence about it. As Kimathi points out, seeking political office is an act of self-actualization.

Many sources of research suggest that many women who seek political office have no clear idea as to their motivation and are therefore hesitant about even declaring their candidature. Indecision and lack of clarity of ones motivation translates into poor vision and strategies. Kabira and Wasamba point this out that:

Women candidates in some areas...could not decide on when to declare their candidature and in which political party.... As late as November

1997, seventy one women candidates ...were still undecided on which party to contest in...(which) laxity gave advantage to men opponents campaigning in their old parties²⁹.

There is also the notion that supporters of gender equality are hungry for women to support. Thus some women jump into the bandwagon simply so that they can participate in “eating” this money. Kabira and Wasamba again point this out thus:

A good number of aspiring women candidates mistook women’s affirmative NGOs for donors with vast financial resources. Such candidates expected NGOs to give them support ranging from campaign vehicles to money to pay agents and feed their supporters³⁰.

With this kind of attitude, one wonders whether such are genuine candidates or financial speculators!

Level of Preparedness

All interviewed respondents in researching this paper pointed out their disappointment with the level of preparedness of most women candidates. They cite that many women candidates do not seem to have critically understood what they are getting into and what it requires. “By the time you are declaring yourself a candidate” states Kimathi, “you must have broken certain barriers including financial ones to be taken seriously”³¹. This is to say that venturing into politics without resources sounds counterfeit, insincere, simplistic and unrefined. Chiaji and Aluoka demonstrate this un-preparedness by pointing out that only 8% of the women candidates they encountered mentioned financial preparedness as a key propeller of their political ambitions. They observe that many aspirants had pitched their hopes on some “promised adequate financial support from various women’s political lobbies”. They summarise their

²⁹ Kabira and Wasamba. *Ibid.*, p. 52. The elections were held a month later.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70-71

³¹ Kimathi, *ibid.*,

disappointment in the words that “one would have expected that women candidates had prior arrangements for financing the elections before declaring their candidature”³².

One can sense a certain level of naivety in candidates who rest all their hopes on promised funding from women’s lobbies. This is the old problem of putting all your eggs in one basket, a sure pathway to disaster. In any case, is it obligatory on women’s lobbies to fund personal ambitions? How again can one bank on promise of “adequate” resources without establishing the exact amount and the plan for its disbursement? The folly of this kind of expectation is illustrated in the case of a female candidate in 1997 reported by Kabira and Wasamba as follows:

An LPK parliamentary candidate for Kasarani was financially handicapped and could not conduct her campaigns in an organised manner. She relied on a cheque allegedly promised by Education Centre for Women in Democracy (ECWD). She claimed that they had paid Kshs 10,000 to ECWD with a promise that should they be nominated, they would get Kshs. 200,000 each for election campaigns. Due to financial difficulties, the LPK candidate abandoned planned and advertised rallies to chase the cheque from ECWD offices. Chasing the cheque became the candidate’s campaign routine every morning. Unfortunately, the cheque did not materialize upto the last day of election³³.

Need we say that this candidate fared badly in the elections? Later in the paper, we highlight the experience of another women’s lobby, which attempted to support candidates financially in the 2002 elections.

Networking

A politician by definition must be a person who has a wide outreach of people in the targeted constituency. This network is crucial for sending and gathering

³² Chaiji and Aluoka, *ibid.*, p.27-8.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 68

information, campaigning, reaching the electorate and mobilizing resources. It must therefore consist of opinion leaders and other influential players who would be able to make a difference.

Two key informants opined that women suffer from a relative lack of such networks because of the traditional set up of society such that public domain affairs are men's turf. One observed that men have more developed networks because, they "play politics all the time"³⁴. They also observed that supporters of male candidates tend to be more forthcoming with donations than those of female candidates. If this is true, then we are probably dealing with a situation of a stronger public confidence in the candidature of males than females. But it could also mean that the females are less skillful at establishing the necessary networks. One wonders, however, why this should be so given that the female candidates have male siblings, spouses and confidantes who can bring to bear on their resource mobilization, unless we are saying that they are not equal to other men, if being male is all it takes!

Context

Related to the above is the question of context (geographical and chronometrical). The venues and times for playing politics are not always conducive for women candidates being constrained by socio-cultural factors. Strategizing often demands long hours of sitting during late hours in places such as bars and other public conveniences not necessarily convenient or attractive to women. This means therefore that the males, who are spared the public scrutiny and stigma of context, have a head start when it comes to electioneering, money notwithstanding.

Prudence

Lack of prudence (political savvy) in choice of political parties does also contribute to women's poorer showing. There is no gainsaying the fact that in

³⁴ Mbugua, *ibid.* ,

Kenya, the party you belong to largely determines whether you have a chance of making it to elective office or not. This is because of “block voting” whether the block is geographical, tribal, religious or based on any other criterion. Inability to gauge the atmosphere and latch on to the party with the most practical chances of succeeding, denies many candidates the chance to make a dent. One informant surmises that women politicians tend to restrain themselves from changing parties so that they are not seen to be jumping around. In other words, they try to play principled politics, which does not work in Kenya.

Kabira and Wasamba clarify why this may be so when they say that although defection has been popularized by male candidates, “women are frowned upon when they do the same. When a woman defects”, they add, “it becomes a big issue, and in most cases, a fatal political blunder. Defection by a woman is seen as a clear manifestation of the indecisive nature of women in general”³⁵.

This must therefore be implying that women must do either of two things: play the game by the rules already established (meaning not being ashamed of defecting) or carefully selecting the party to run on and sticking with it. The latter is probably the more prudent thing to do, for as Owiti tells us, “where a party is strong and a woman candidate has captured the nomination, the ultimate result is for the most part a foregone conclusion”³⁶.

Patronage

Going hand in hand with the above is sheer patronage. As a character in Ayi Kwei Armah’s novel *The Healers*³⁷ says, those close to power are themselves powerful. In Kenya, affinity with the party boss is critical for visibility and for eventual nomination. Needless to say, the major parties in Kenya are headed and dominated by males. The party culture is therefore of necessity masculine and this could itself alienate female politicians. But there is also the public

³⁵ Kabira and Wasamba, *ibid.*, p. 71

³⁶ Owiti, *ibid.*, Notice that of the eight women elected to parliament in 2002 (the highest ever in Kenya’s history), seven came from NARC, the party of the moment. Of these, only three were incumbents.

³⁷ Ayi Kweyi, *The Healers*

image concern, that a woman politician seen to be “close” to the party boss runs the risk of being suspected of moral impropriety. This is, however, a petty reason, which any serious minded politician should ride over easily by focusing on, the task and letting rumour mongers tire of their own wasteful engagement.

Nomination and support by political parties

By Kenyan law, you can only contest political office if a political party nominates you. In order for this to happen, you must be seen by your party to be sellable. What makes you sellable in a party are various factors that include: consistency, financial standing, contribution to party work and affinity with the party leader. In other words, a party will invest in you if you have invested in it. This means that women aspiring for political office must withstand the mire of party work if they are to expect any considerations.

Of course parties also charge the party nomination fees. If women do not have money, then only a few of them can even seek party nomination. Chaiji and Aluoka report the following nomination fees levied for parliamentary and civic candidates by the three leading parties in the 2002 elections.

Party	Parliamentary	Civic
NARC	25,000	10,000
KANU	15,000	5,000
FORDPeople	10,000	5,000

Additionally, NARC had “clearance fees” levied by its constituent parties before candidates were cleared to contest NARC nominations. From these nomination fees, Chaiji and Aluoka note that “women at the civic level complained of the relatively high charges imposed by KANU and NARC. Worse still, the two-tier nomination hierarchy in NARC presented yet another obstacle to women’s bids”³⁸.

³⁸ Chaiji and Aluoka, *ibid.*,

“Such high financial requirements before declaration of political debut”, state Chiaji and Aluoka, “may in retrospect have marginalized the majority of women aspirants since they are disproportionately afflicted by widespread poverty... Coupled with the high cost of conducting Political campaigns, these fees served to raise the initial entry barriers beyond the capacities of most aspirants”³⁹.

Unless backed with statistical evidence of the financial status of contestants disaggregated by gender, such sweeping statements may only sensationalize the issue. It is known that for psychological reasons, people look for excuses for their failures. In Kenya, we see this in sports where people blame lack of finances, inadequate preparation time and lack of international exposure for poor results. The politicians are certainly playing the same game of blaming their failures on extraneous factors. Unless we have it from the mouths of women candidates who succeeded that they did so on the strength of their financial superiority over their competitors, we are again here dealing with platitudes.

One cannot fault parties for charging nomination fees, as this is one way of raising funds for financing their campaigns. In fact, it defeats reason to expect parties to financially support their candidates without first raising the funds themselves. The extent to which the fees can be termed high is also relative given that these parties largely rely on the largesse of their leaders for funding during non-election years. How do we expect a candidate who cannot raise Kshs. 2,000 for a party’s life membership to finance the campaigns? How in deed do we expect people who complain of Kshs 25,000 being too high to survive the campaigns?

Candidates, whether women or not, must stop seeing themselves as dependents on their parties and start contributing to those parties on a serious note. Otherwise, we will never outlive the disease of expecting harvests without sowing any seeds. It seems that candidates expect the party to invest in them but they do not want to invest in the party. But where are the parties to get finances when we know that they have no reliable investment that brings in returns on a regular basis?

³⁹ Ibid.

Kanu and NARC distributed campaign funds to their final nominees in the 2002 elections. This money came largely from the nomination fees charged to aspirants. Kanu gave out Kshs. 500,000 to parliamentary candidates and Kshs. 50,000 to civic candidates, which the candidates deemed “far below the requirements”⁴⁰. NARC, on its part, staggered funding from Kshs 100,000 to Kshs 50,000 for parliamentary candidates basing itself on ones incumbency, known financial stature and demonstrated need⁴¹.

One can obviously sense the irony that when candidates are paying nomination fees of between Kshs 5,000 and Kshs 25,000 for nomination, the fees are too high. But when they are receiving Kshs 50,000 to Kshs 500,000 for campaigns, the disbursements are “far below requirements”!

Note also that based on these statistics alone, KANU parliamentary candidates received four times more financial support from their party than did NARC candidates. The election results, however, show an overwhelming triumph of NARC over KANU. Assuming that candidates were to use only the party-given funds, what does this prove if not that finances alone do not determine the outcome of elections?

In investigating non-financial determinants of nomination, Chiaji and Aluoka seem to dismiss their own arguments about finances when they say that:

First, there was a reasonable number of (women) incumbents and new entrants who were relatively better endowed than their male challengers who lost the nominations and had to either benefit from interventions of top leadership or their own strategies in second choice parties. Secondly, the majority who lost the nominations in first choice parties easily gained nomination in second or third choice parties without the issue of finances coming up. Thirdly, more than half of the contestants who lost the nominations in their first choice parties invariably lost to less endowed

⁴⁰ Chiaji and Aluoka. *Ibid.*,

⁴¹ Kimathi. *ibid.*

aspirants ... (which) ... reflects on the fact that factors other than finances could have played a more visible role in the nominations⁴².

Is it not clear then that finances are given more premium than they deserve in determining electoral results?

Experiences in financing women politicians

Many observers propose the setting up of trust funds to finance women's politics. Chiaji and Aluoka, for example, recommend that "women should create a sustainable campaign trust fund and raise funds well in advance to support women's candidature in future elections"⁴³.

In the 2002 general elections, a few organisations directly engaged in supporting female candidates to increase their chances of success. The support came in different forms such as:

- Training for candidates and their agents on media strategies, campaigning, electoral law, planning and monitoring elections.
- Re-imburement of electoral expenses incurred.
- Direct disbursements to candidates.

One such organization was the Kenya Women's Political Caucus through its Engendering the Political Process Programme. This programme includes a trust fund to support women financially during elections. The Caucus organised a funds drive a few months to the elections to mobilize the resources. Owiti, while lauding the launch of the fund as "a commendable effort towards bringing some order to the fundraising effort", nevertheless recognizes that there would be a lot of "logistical, legal and moral questions" in distributing the money. To this end, he poses the following questions:

How many women, for instance, would qualify and who would decide this? Which category of women would be supported (civic or

⁴² Chiaji and Aluoka. *Ibid.*, p. 27-8

⁴³ *Ibid.*,

parliamentary) and to do what with the money? Would the support be extended to women before nominations? What is the guarantee that they would use the money appropriately or even contest the nominations in the first place? How would problems of favouritism, party differences, legitimacy and sheer numbers of women politicians be resolved⁴⁴.

Anyhow, the Caucus attempted to raise the funds and ended up with less than Kshs. 200,000. The Programme Officer, Deborah Okungu, attributes this dismal show to two main factors.

- The timing of the funds drive was counterbalanced by the unfolding political events in the ill-fated merger of Kanu and NDP. The drive had targeted politicians from the two parties as its key guests. But the two parties separated just before the funds drive and threw the whole initiative into disarray.
- There are too many vested interests in Kenyan politics to get genuine supporters of the fund. This relates to the fact that traditionally politicians are relied upon for fund raising. It is, however, contradictory, to expect male politicians (who are the majority) to raise funds for candidates who are standing against them in the elections. It is like buying a rope that will be used to hang you.

In Okungu's mind, fundraising of this nature could probably succeed if carried out abroad among those who have no local political interest but just the interest of women at hand.

Other anecdotal information from the 2002 experiences indicate that money alone does not ensure success and that in deed money that is not well planned for is useless. An example is cited of a female parliamentary candidate who received Kshs. 500,000 towards her campaigns but went back to the benefactor after using Kshs 150,000 to be advised on how she could spend the balance!

⁴⁴ Owiti. Ibid.

The Draft constitution and political finance⁴⁵

The Draft Constitution of Kenya proposes the public financing of political parties in Articles 93 to 100. Code-named the Political Parties Fund, this would be a fund sourced from parliamentary allocations to the tune of not more than 0.3% of the national budget for the preceding financial year and “contributions and donations from any other sources”.

The proposal is that the fund be distributed using the following formula: Fifty percent of the monies allocated by Parliament shall be distributed equally among political parties each of which obtained not less than five percent of the total votes cast at the previous parliamentary elections, and the remaining fifty percent shall be paid proportionately by reference to the number of votes secured by each of the political parties and the number of women candidates elected in each party.

The fund would be used to cover:

- a) Election expenses of the political party and the broadcasting of the policies of the party;
- b) For the organization by the political party of civic education in democracy and the electoral processes; and
- c) Not more than ten per cent of the administrative expenses of the party.

The draft constitution bars non-citizens from making donations to political parties and also mandates the Electoral Commission to “prescribe the maximum amounts of moneys that a political party may spend on each of its candidates for election to a public office, and the amounts of money that an independent candidate may spend on an election to a public office”.

Do these provisions offer any remedy for women candidates in terms of financial resources and generally in terms of opening up political space for women? On the surface, the question can be answered in the affirmative because:

⁴⁵ All quotations taken from *The Constitution of the Republic of Kenya (draft)*, 2002, Articles 93-100, p.13 in the version published by *Daily Nation* newspaper October 2, 2002.

- The provisions assure political parties of certain minimum resources for electoral activities and women candidates should benefit from such resources.
- Parties are implicitly encouraged to promote women's election (by first of all nominating them). If we use the earlier argument that the clout of a party plays a significant role in eventual election results, then it follows that if more women get nominated by a powerful party, chances of their going through are higher. The provisions offer the fund as an incentive for parties to promote women candidates.

But the provisions do not:

- Prescribe how the parties should divide the funds among the candidates hence leaving the door open for manipulation.
- Allow political parties the freedom to distribute the money to their candidates as they wish because the Electoral Commission prescribes the maximum amount that a party can give to each candidate. Since the minimum is not prescribed, there is no guarantee that the distribution will not be manipulated against women candidates.
- Compel parties to accept the funds hence there is no guarantee that they will necessarily promote women's participation. In fact, parties will look at the size of the fund they are being allocated and consider whether it is worth their while before they necessarily consider women.
- Explain how it will ensure that independent candidates spend not more than the maximum prescribed on election to a public office, which, if done, would level the playing ground.

Conclusions and recommendations

In order to draw our conclusions, we refer back to the questions posed at the beginning of the paper and post our considered responses.

Are women who go into politics more disadvantaged than their male colleagues because of lack of finances? To some extent yes.

If so, what are the causes of this disadvantage? There are historical, socio-cultural and economic factors that militate against them.

To what use does a political candidate put money? Largely for pre-polling activities although some of the items they spend on are not entirely legitimate. Candidates must have certain basics to enable their campaigns to be meaningful and to create any impact. One female candidate is reported to have confided that she only required Kshs. 600,000 for the 2002 elections. She provided half from her savings and raised the other through her friends⁴⁶. She was elected to Parliament.

To what extent does money determine voting patterns? There is no correlation between political success and financial outlay. Having that money in the absence of other key determinant factors is irrelevant to success. The 2002 elections give us numerous examples to prove that money alone does not determine voting patterns.

- In Ukambani, Haroun Mwau contesting on a Kanu ticket was reported to have invested a lot of money in his campaign. This was evident in the transport facilities he used (helicopter) and the “development” (water and electricity) he took to the constituency during electioneering. But he was roundly defeated in the elections.
- In Tetu Constituency, Wangari Maathai contested against a certain Nyamu who had not only done ground work much before the elections but also had impressive financial clout way beyond Maathai. But Maathai triumphed.
- In Kabete, Paul Muite defied the odds of being in a non-euphoric party and not laying out a financial display but he still got elected.

These examples, plus many others, demonstrate that voters look at more than just the financial clout of a candidate, whether that candidate is male or female. Chiaji and Aluoka summarise this when they say, “even though resource constraints was a major factor ...it is difficult to attribute women’s poor

⁴⁶ Mbugua, *ibid.*

performance ...to lack of financial backing. If this were to be the case, how would one explain the failure of such established politicians as Marere Mwachai, Grace Ogot and Zipporah Kittony, among others, who were not necessarily resource starved?”⁴⁷ Lack of resources is therefore only a ready-made populist explanation to women’s poor political showing but not the fundamental reason.

Is it such an over-arching determinant that those without it are necessarily obvious losers? No.

What initiatives have been tried to assist women candidates financially? With what level of success? Support was advanced to women candidates by some women’s lobbies in the 1997 and 2002 elections. But they were compromised by poor timing, inadequacy of size to meet the demand, administrative difficulties and counterbalancing weaknesses in the candidates.

Does the draft constitution of Kenya provide a remedy? It has good intentions but is not foolproof. The shortcomings of public funding for political parties are provided by Wanjohi when he says “public financing is not intended to make the very poor and embryonic parties stronger and capable of inspiring support”. Rather, “it is intended to help strengthen and sustain the competitiveness of the political parties that have inspired a certain level of public confidence and support so that they can no longer be brushed aside in public policy making”⁴⁸. In other words, it is the principle of to those who have more shall be given and to those who do not have, even the little they have shall be taken away. Public financing of political parties may therefore not be a panacea for women and may only contribute a little if the women belong to dominant parties. In fact, it is indirectly a way of bullying people to join just the dominant parties.

What is the way forward?

We must stop placing too much premium on finances and look at the real determinants. They tessellate around:

⁴⁷ Chiaji and Aluoka, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Wanjohi, *ibid.*, p.7

- Track record and affinity with the electorate. This is ensured through grassroots networks and consistency at politics. The winning formula does not often come in the first try.
- Credibility as a serious candidate demonstrated by well timed declaration of candidature, choice of party, seriousness of campaigns and evidence of preparedness.
- Ability to mire in party politics without apology. This includes claiming space in party activities and echelons of power and not expecting an easy ride just because of your gender.
- Packaging messages and ideas on addressing gender imbalances without projecting the image of being a representative of women only.

There is probably no better example to illustrate the truth of the above facts than the case of Beth Mugo. While analyzing the 1997 general elections, AAWORD rightly notes that “Kenyans are also seeking for political leaders who have a clear vision for Kenya”. Noting that Mugo had consistently sought the Dagoretti parliamentary seat, it observes that “the just concluded general elections indicate to a significant extent that the electorate is judging political candidates by their own record of performance”. Beth Mugo is by no means a poor woman yet her financial endowment did not enable her to ascend elected office until 1997. But her consistency, investment in grassroots networks and visibility in the party eventually convinced the electorate that she was the right candidate. Even her political pedigree as a member of Kenya’s immediate post-independence first family seems to have been largely irrelevant for her success. Otherwise she could have suffered a backlash in the 2002 elections when she stuck with NARC rather than decamp to Kanu where her cousin was bearing the presidential mantle.

A lot of people also support affirmative action as a way of eliminating the gender imbalance in politics. In deed this is what the draft constitution is trying to achieve. Bearing in mind the various factors that constrain women’s ascension to political office, this action is easily defensible. But let us remember that affirmative action is meant to be a temporary measure with a specific time frame after which it gets phased out. There are also inherent defects in it. This is

captured well by Hon. Margaret Dongo (MP, Harare South and President of Zimbabwe Union of Democrats) in her opening speech during the Annual Gender Studies Conference hosted by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme in 1999 when she said:

Personally I do not subscribe to the notion of having quota system. It merely promotes laziness. It also raises a lot of questions...as to whose views they represent – those who selected them, women's or their own? Apart from this, the whole idea interferes with the electorate's freedom of choice...and hinges on the fact that you are there because of gender not qualification. Women can make great strides in politics on their own merit without riding on the coat tails of quota systems or reserved seats. After all, gaining numbers in ...parliament may not necessarily change the conditions and opportunities of women...Affirmative action using the quota system addresses the problem of gender gaps without tackling the underlying causes of discrimination, oppression and patriarchal belief. It interprets the problem purely in terms of numbers whereas the problem actually has other more fundamental dimensions. The quota system should be accompanied by strategies to address the underlying causes of gender gaps⁴⁹.

We could pursue greater investment in mentoring of women who wish to seek elective posts to ensure that when they eventually give it a go, they have developed certain basics. Kimathi suggests that they should team up with other politicians (male or female) to learn the ropes, understand what it takes and to gain visibility as political functionaries.

To illustrate that nothing comes on a silver platter even elsewhere, Kimathi cites the Campaign School in Yale, United States, where professionals in different areas prepare women for office through capacity building. But the selection criterion is so stringent not just any woman gets into the list. You must demonstrate a track record of political activity and a potential to make a

⁴⁹ Tanzania Gender Networking Programming. *Gender and Political Empowerment in the New Millennium*. TGNP, 1999, p. 63.

difference with the support provided. This is certainly the most assured way to success.

The point here corresponds to what Nzomo identifies about women's organisations as "good training ground for the few women who have participated in politics"⁵⁰. Although Nzomo decries the fact the organisations do not financially sponsor women candidates, she recognizes that they have made a difference. If we argue that money is not all there is, then the organisations are probably better off doing what they are best at: providing a "training ground" to even begin to cultivate the culture of politics in the future aspirants.

Setting up trust funds may still be useful. Although, the experiences of the women's Political Caucus point to the fact that such a fund would be compromised by many controversies, maybe the experience is too short to dismiss the idea altogether. How about setting up such funds within party structures? But again, is it conceivable that the parties, which are male-dominated anyway, will not necessarily understand why such a fund should benefit only women and not the other candidates. Is it conceivable that they would even invest much energy and time in raising the finances towards it?

At the end of the day, however, financing politics in Kenya will continue to be a personal affair because getting into politics is a personal decision. This is especially so given that being a parliamentarian in Kenya today is a very lucrative business, which is bound to become even more competitive. No one will be willing to give up the space that easily. This calls for tougher strategies to make a dent and if incumbent to survive the heat.

⁵⁰ Nzomo, *ibid.*, p. 18

Statistical trends in election of women into parliament

Women's performance in past general elections

Year	No of women candidates	No elected	No. elected as percentage of all women candidates
1969	7	1	14.2
1974	13	4	30.8
1979	15	4	26.7
1983	7	2	28.6
1988	6	1	16.7
1992	19	6	31.6
1997	47	4	8.5
2002	44	8	18.2

(Source: Chiaji, Achim and Aluoka, Otieno. "Women's Experiences as Voters and Candidates in the 2002 General Elections Final Monitoring Report". Kenya Women's Political Caucus, 2003)

Party nomination patterns in 2002 (figures rounded to the second decimal place)

Party	Total	Women nominated	Women as % of total
NARC	206	12	24.72
FORD People	186	7	13.02
SDP	96	5	4.80
KANU	209	2	4.18
Safina	59	3	1.77
FORD Asili	41	4	1.64
United Agricultural Party	10	2	0.2
Kenya People's Party	23	1	0.23
Shirikisho Party of Kenya	17	1	0.17
Kenya National Congress	11	1	0.11
Economic Independence Party	4	2	0.08
Sisi kwa Sisi Party	10	1	0.10
Labour Party of Kenya	6	1	0.06
KENDA	4	1	0.04
FORD Kenya	3	1	0.03
Total	885	44	4.97

(Source: Chiaji, Achim and Aluoka, Otieno. "Women's experiences as voters and candidates in the 2002 General Elections final monitoring report". Kenya Women's Political Caucus, 2003)

Elected women in 2002

Name	Constituency	Party
Martha Karua	Gichugu	NARC
Charity Ngilu	Kitui Central	NARC
Wangari Maathai	Tetu	NARC
Christine Mango	Butula	NARC
Lina Kilimo	Marakwet East	NARC
Alicen Chelaite	Rongai	NARC
Beth Mugo	Dagoretti	NARC
Naomi Shabaan	Taveta	KANU

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I am many people... (Sculptor: Nelly Wanjiru-Mama Uji)



CHAPTER 5

Media portrayal of women politicians – an enabling or inhibiting factor?

Kwamchetsi Makhoha

Introduction

The media often shapes how a person, group or thing is socially perceived by not only reflecting the values of the society, but also by shaping them. Although the media is a chronicler of events, an informer, entertainer and educator, it can also serve as a tool for social change.

In developing democracies, the presence of women politicians plays a significant role in entrenching the principles and practice of representative government. The contribution of women politicians to these processes deriving from their presence and engagement in the political equation† needs to be weighed against the attention they receive in the media. Ultimately, media attention affects public perception of their performance.

The presence of women politicians in the political equation is, in the Kenyan case, an attempt to capture the aspirations, support and goodwill of 52 per cent of the population. The media space given to creating or unmaking these women's images as individuals, assessing or reporting their performance on their jobs, and capturing the issues they voice, constitutes the total picture of women's portrayal to the society. Such portrayal determines who among these women politicians can be taken seriously, or how much influence they command; which among the issues they raise are considered important; and how effectively they perform as holders of public office.



Scope

This paper shall limit the definition of women politicians to only the 17 women MPs elected and nominated and how they have been portrayed in the media in the first quarter of this year. There are two reasons for this choice. The election of nine women MPs to the ninth Parliament set the pace for public recognition of women politicians as a group. The nomination of a further eight, making an unprecedented total of 17, signaled the fact that women's issues would receive higher priority in public life and in the media than before. Although there are women politicians outside these parameters, i.e., civic and party leaders, their authority has traditionally been regarded as insufficient to enable them command attention in the mainstream media.

A story covering a woman politician in her capacity as minister, assistant minister, parliamentary committee member/head or MP would qualify to be captured in this study. This way, it is possible to determine whether women got attention as figures of authority, or as women politicians.

In examining how the media has portrayed women, this paper attempts to make a qualitative, rather than quantitative assessment of coverage. One of the great flaws of qualitative surveys is that they can be heavily subjective from the selection of study material down to the criteria. That subjectivity being limited largely to the conclusions, however, does not detract from the need to examine the incidents that inform these conclusions.

Overview

Women's growing influence in public affairs and in decision-making has not been reflected in the media. Although many media houses have developed professional guidelines that may have helped to eliminate blatant sexism from news, they have not ensured attention to women politicians is at par with that accorded to men. Politics has always tended to be portrayed in male gaming terms.

Coverage of women has tended to over-simplify the issues they represent or

raise to one of numbers or as the media's contribution to affirmative action. Often, this coverage only ends up in accentuating women's roles as outsiders. Being politicians is not accepted as what they do, but that it is something that they need to be praised for. Although media visibility may have increased for women politicians, it needs to be asked: "What kind of publicity has it been"?

Lost in the shadows

On the morning of January 24, 2003, the mass-circulation Sunday Nation ran a large picture on its front page. It is an unforgettably tragic picture of Water Minister Martha Karua on a stretcher. Observers have chosen to apply a prurient eye to it, allowing their imaginations to work ahead of the camera, but it is an unforgettable picture for one main reason: A woman hitherto seen as a symbol of authority lies stripped down to her pyjamas, utterly helpless.

Although this picture is a truthful representation of reality, it omits to show Tourism and Information Minister Raphael Tuju and assistant minister Robinson Githae, who were in the same plane crash as Ms Karua in Busia, in the same light. Although the stories about the accident were generally sympathetic to the victims, the use of images inadvertently undermined the authority of the leading woman minister in the NARC Cabinet.

This inadvertent use of images has persisted beyond the accident. Women politicians who were previously viewed as forceful and articulate have now slunk into the ignominious role of assistant politicians. It does not help matters that Prof Wangari Maathai, Beth Mugo and Betty Tett have been appointed assistant ministers. For the first three months of this year, each of these assistant ministers was only shown in the media accompanying their senior male counterpart: Mrs. Beth Mugo with Mr. Tuju at Utalii Hotel and at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre takeover, Ms Tett with Local Government Minister Karisa Maitha at the Pumwani Hospital, and at the City Hall registry, and Prof Maathai following Dr Newton Kulundu into Karura Forest.

It is not that these women are timid or ignorant. It is not that they are silent. It

is just that it is the perception of the media: they look good as assistants, and are never given the opportunity to outshine their bosses, even when they are more authoritative and knowledgeable.

Yet, it is Prof Maathai that the public had hitherto associated with Karura. Indeed, when it seemed that the forest might be hived off to allow an hotelier set up his business, it was to this renowned environmentalist that public pleas were directed. Yet, in matters of authority, all the women assistant ministers have seemed to exude no authority of their own, and have instead been demoted to playing the unfamiliar role of assistants. This image persists all the more when it is reinforced by television and press pictures of ministers accompanied by the women assistant ministers. Such media coverage has only succeeded in undermining women's authority.

Women politicians official work

Three women sit on the Cabinet, and the coverage they have received has tended to go hand in hand with the authority of the offices they wield. Even so, they have often been portrayed as pioneering outsiders in a male-dominated field. Thus, when these women have performed at par or even better than their male counterparts, they have often been portrayed as being extra-ordinary, and thus expected to outperform in the duties they are assigned. Ms Karua has been saying some very sensible things about water, corruption and human rights, but not once have her ideas been the subject of an editorial or column in the mainstream media.

Health Minister Charity Ngilu has not been so lucky. A one-time presidential candidate and one of the architects of the ruling coalition, Mrs. Ngilu has often been portrayed as someone who has difficulty thinking and expressing herself. Mrs. Ngilu has been battling with all sorts of problems, getting the doctors a pay increase within a week of Parliament opening, standing with women on the issue of reproductive health rights and launching an ambitious HIV/Aids campaign. She also started the resignation campaign against the Central Bank boss Nahashon Nyaga and Kenya Revenue Authority's John Munge. Even exercising her moral authority, the media would not give the time of day to

argue her case for retaining Health PS Julius Meme also implicated in the Euro Bank scandal. It may have been a mistake, but other ministers who have made mistakes Mr. Maitha on availability of educated people at the Coast, elevation of Kisumu to city status and the possession of an illegally allocated plot remain public heroes. Mrs. Ngilu is presented as an inarticulate and less educated minister, yet, her credentials compare quite favourably with those of her male counterparts in the cabinet. She got to the headlines claiming there was a plot to have her sacked.

The other Cabinet Minister, Linah Jebii Kilimo, is the most photographed minister and clearly the most sinned against. When Linah Jebii Kilimo was appointed State Minister in the Vice-President's office, one of the national newspapers made a great issue of the fact that she was the mother of five children, and continued: "Compared to the rest of the eight elected women, she was not known at all". Then, but some dint of imagination, the same writer continues: "A former house girl, Mrs. Kilimo has risen from a humble background to a highly respected member of her Marakwet community, but also in the country at large". Mrs. Kilimo puts up a great show as a survivor of the Busia plane crash, and is seen modeling a traditional Marakwet dress. Remained the minority candidate, yet this was a community mobiliser campaigning against female genital mutilation and HIV/Aids. Her elevation has succeeded in losing status for her where the media is concerned.

The world needs flowers

Jan 14, 2003: In the Daily Nation, Prof Maathai is seen crossing Gura River to tour Mt Kenya Forest. In that poignant instant, her hand had hitched her dress, so the photographer only saw her legs; they ended up in the newspaper the next day.

The homecoming parties hosted by women politicians have been treated as low-key events, with little or no media coverage. But as guests at other politicians' parties women leaders have often seemed like pleasant decorations, providing variety of dress, dancing a little, and spicing up the occasion. It is all that the

television footage has showed, and all that the newspapers published.

Women hardly showcase their political power, and the media seems to be genuinely convinced that they are not serious political players. Even when there was talk of power barons at State House, and the kitchen cabinet coming from Mt. Kenya, not once did Nominated MP Njoki Ndung'u, herself a key player in the inner circle and Ms Karua get mentioned. Either they concealed their position pretty well, or the media reckoned that they did not merit any serious attention. The optimistic may view this as placing these two women politicians above narrow interests and infighting, would be just as well. But it is an ambitious assumption. Inside the parties, women have maintained a studious silence even in the face of great storms. At the height of the controversy over the KICC takeover, Kanu Nominated MPs Naomi Shabaan, Ruth Oniango, Amina Abdulla and Esther Keino were not heard. Neither were their views sought.

At the height of the crisis within the National Rainbow Coalition, the party's key architects Mrs. Ngilu, Ms Karua, Ms Ndung'u were never heard. They all went to a two-day retreat and did not speak or said something inconsequential.

The reports focus was wide and varied. The women were covered in relation to their official duties, in relation to their constituency work, in Parliamentary debates, in their personal lives, and in relation to their political parties. One report focused on a clash between two of the women politicians.

There is a great challenge for the papers to report more on women, especially for those who have not questioned their own internal policies and their views on women and their political participation; from regularity to the quality of coverage women politicians received.

Specialist areas

Women politicians are portrayed strongly, however, when they tackle issues concerning family planning, women's issues and affairs that have been traditionally associated with them. The parliamentary uproar over alleged sexual assault on a young woman in an MP's office produced indignation among women

politicians and hence sufficient press coverage.

Family planning, too, has been portrayed as an area where women possess special competence. The discussions on the motion to increase the national population helped the media to identify female parliamentary fervour. In this instance, like in similar others, women politicians have helped to provide the same simplistic lenses through which the media views and judges them.

Professional women politicians who sink into their own world like Ms Abdulla, Prof Maathai, Ms Karua, Prof Oniang'o, and Dr Keino are often ignored for fear of failing to understand them. Thus, the only specialties women politicians are allowed by the media to practice are in regard to the same stigmatized roles they are trying to flee from.

Conclusion

The media portrayal of women politicians as it does, is part of its news framing that is useful in work that needs to be done routinely, and quickly. Sometimes, women, who are subjects of news, contribute to this framing.

Although this may be the reality, and the media claims to be a messenger of the truth, they must not just report accurately, but also report truthfully. The media needs to begin to recognise women politicians, their voices, and their contributions in decision-making, in their capacities as representatives of communities. The current portrayal of women only as beneficiaries of affirmative action, people who are disinterested in politics and hangers-on, must be debunked.



The woman is the third and fourth legs of the table. Turugah sees the modern woman as someone who is often forced to be the family decision maker. (Sculptor: Hannah Turugah)



CHAPTER 6

Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

Nyokabi Kamau

Introduction and background

“An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come”
(Victor Hugo, French writer, 1802-1885)

“We shall negotiate while fighting. We shall fight while negotiating...whichever road leads to peace” (President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia (2002)

With only 18 women out of 222 parliamentarians in Kenya, and in total less than 3% representation in all other political sectors, these two quotes make a lot of sense for all of us here. The time is ripe and we must fight and negotiate at the same time whichever bears fruits first!

I think the time has come for us to realize and appreciate that women have both a right and an obligation to active participation in political leadership. Women’s participating in political leadership is a God given right which can neither be taken away by any man or woman, nor be given to them as a token. More women in politics would not only be a good thing, it would also help solve a lot of problems associated with perpetual poverty. It would help to balance up the decision making processes which in most cases do not have women in mind; Such decisions as concern education, health, agriculture and the girl child in this part of the world.





Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

However certain issues need to be ironed out. Women in many parts of the world, shy away from voting for fellow women into political positions because they know that once women occupy those positions, they forget the plight of their fellow women! Whether this is true or not is debatable. On the other hand, women in political positions say once they are in power, they face a lot of stigma from ruthless men who are out to get them at the slightest mistake they make. Therefore most of their time is spent trying to attain a certain standard recognizable by the men folk. It is this stigma that takes them away from problem solving to concentration on seeking male acceptability. African men on the other hand, are the most insecure beings when it comes to women getting closer to their domain. Their insecurity is manifest in the way they derail the women in similar positions to theirs! To increase women's participation in elective politics, we need a reverse of this scenario.

It is against this background that this chapter is written with a view to addressing the following questions

- How can women be awakened from their political slumber
- Do women actually bring a different perspective in leadership?
- What issues will women, if elected into political offices, address more effectively?
- Why can't the same issues be addressed by Gender Sensitive men
- Apart from politics, women are leaders in other areas. Which ones are these and how can they be used to build their capacities?

This chapter argues that the presence of women in political positions in Kenya is one of the most effective and immediate ways of ensuring their participation in the decision making process for the good of women, children and the nation in general.

Awakening women from the tradition-imposed slumber:

Politics has for a long time been considered a 'no go area' for women. We have been socialized to believe that it is only men who can take up political leadership. A woman who takes up such challenges is said to be a bad woman (i.e. not a





Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

good mother, wife). In fact most of the women in Kenya who tried their hand in politics have been branded as divorcees, feminists who hate men because they cannot find men for themselves etc. This name-calling has continued to discourage other women from even going near politics. They continue to get discouraging comments such as; politics is dirty, it is not good for any women of moral standing, it is too violent, one requires a lot of money, who can vote for a woman? Who wants to be led by a woman? we are not yet ready for women leaders, why not serve the nation in other capacities other than politics after all politics is a dirty gate etc. the list is endless. I have personally mentioned to people that I would like to try my hand in politics at some point and over 90%, more so women, have discouraged me a great deal until I have wondered whether it is even worth trying. The biggest discouragement has been that if I ever go into politics I will have to give up my family. I must admit that this has not helped me much and many times I really wonder whether it is the right thing for a 'good' woman to do.

Just to show how deep rooted this attitude towards women is, let me share an experience I had with my 7 year old son. When Kibaki was inaugurated as the third president, I told my son that in the next elections I will be the president. He vehemently refused and said "mum you can't". I asked him why I could not and he said, "you just can't". But why my son? I insisted, and the answer that came from the little boy shocked me: - "because you are a woman and presidents are not women". He went on to say that even if I became a candidate he would not vote for me. I have tried to bring up my children with very little gender bias if any (only when done unconsciously). Yet they have such set ideas about who should and should not be a president. Of course in their short lives they have not seen a woman president and neither have I seen one in my longer life.

The Vice Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Prof. Wanjohi recently noted that we must begin a process which acknowledges that women as a group are a very significant component of any nation and that the development of any nation is dependent on the extent to which women are involved in all aspects of national life particularly in decision



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

making (*East African Standard, May 12, 2003*). It is a fact that unless women wake up to the call and get fully involved in political leadership then such a process cannot begin and even if it does, it will not get anywhere.

My submission is that this political slumber by women is not good for them or for the nation. Prof. Wanjohi, likens this seclusion to a prolonged non-use of a leg after injury, which may lead to disability. If women are not given an opportunity to participate in political decision making as leaders, this will lead to their virtual disability politically.

The government has an obligation to create enabling socio-economic and political environment. A gender responsive constitution is one of the ways the current government seems to be showing its commitment but we are yet to see the implementation.

Do women bring a different perspective to political leadership?

Politics is very central in any nation and it is a known fact that if one wants to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of the masses it is best to get involved in politics as it affects every aspect of life from the cradle to the grave. Most of the countries in the world that have the best economic, social and political policies that have helped improve their citizens' quality of lives are those that can pride themselves of good political leadership. Equality and freedom are rooted in the kind of government that a nation has. Power flows through political systems and people have to work within these systems to make a difference. There is no doubt that with good political leadership the world can be better place to live in and both men and women have a right and a responsibility to make this happen. Why am I saying that women should actively participate in politics? What exactly do they bring to the political scenario?

First and the most important reason why women need to be involved in political leadership is the fact that it would be impossible to build a modern nation on the *basis of exclusion and inequality*. As a nation, we have come out of the age



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

where diversity was treated with suspicion. It is well appreciated that different forms of political organizing is healthy for national unity. We have all come to appreciate diversity and that is why women must be given their opportunity to bring in their views and expertise into the political leadership of our nation. Involving women in political leadership will bring the diversity that would help us have policies that are not monopolistic, centralized and non competitive which lead to bad economies.

The first African America woman US Senator, Carol Moseley-Braun noted that “A society that taps the talents of 100% of its people is a stronger society, because it can pool on a broader talent pool, it leads to governance that is more reflective and representative”

What issues will women if elected into political office, address more effectively?

I now want to focus on issues that women leaders may look at which could easily be ignored by men simply because they do not concern them.

First and most importantly is the issue of inclusion of all key groups in political decision making which serves 4 main purposes:

- Creates a sense of ownership of government among the led
- Enhances their inclusion as partners in the allocation of the national resources and other valued goods
- Boosts mutual trust and willingness to exchange and cooperate for common good
- Helps people to assume ownership and responsibility of creating and increasing the national wealth and helps people to make the sacrifices required for the creation of the wealth of the nation.

The inclusion of women, who in almost all nations are about 50 to 52%of total population, has considerable impact on the manner in which this critical group is employed and put into good use. When women are elected into political office, there are bound to be positive consequences such as;



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

- They will make the government to give attention to the plight of women as a distinct social category
- Help in the inclusion of women in decision-making.
- Create women's access to physical and financial resources as well as allowing them their rightful share of opportunities in educational, health and business sectors of the nation.
- Empower women politically, removing them from the role of spectators that forces them to constitute the largest part of the continent's cheering crowd. (are our women not always seen dancing for leaders? Sometimes in the most embarrassing styles?)
- Reduce women's exposure to all manner of oppression and deprivation.
- Help release women from the yoke of ignorance as they continue to be among the majority of the illiterate and semi illiterate, enslaved by retrogressive traditions and abject poverty.
- Help improve women's self esteem which will make them actively participate in politics without fear. This has already become evident since the 2002 elections, which managed to get the largest number of elected and nominated MPs. We have seen women gaining much more confidence and I believe even the electorate is beginning to appreciate women's leadership. In the by-election of Naivasha, we saw Mrs. Kihara win with a landslide. This is a trend we have not seen in the past. The clear political will to support women and the increased number of women holding political positions has surely helped to increase their self esteem.
- Increase the speed of national development due to utilization of women's physical and intellectual capabilities to the maximum.

The opposite of all the above would be the case if only men are included in the political leadership of any nation.

In a book by the United States League of Women voters, "*True to ourselves: A celebration of women making a difference*", several women politicians share the perspectives that they brought into their country's political policies that would never have found their way there. These women confess that it was only after



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

they took their place in congress that women's issues such as health care, child care, child support, sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender based wage differentials etc. finally found their voice. Since women are likely to have faced challenges on these issues, they felt they had the obligation and a responsibility to raise them. Due to the efforts of these American women, the year 1990 saw the women's health act enacted. The act recognized the need for equal treatment in health and especially touching on the health care providers' attitudes. In 1994, president Clinton signed into law the violent crime and law enforcement act. The act increased funding for battered women's shelters and programs for battered women and their children

A male dominated parliament like the one prevailing in Kenya, (with about 7.5% women representation up from 3% in the eighth one) continues to block any agenda that seems to address issues that specifically affect women. For example the equality and the domestic violence bills were simply thrown out of the window yet they were addressing such pertinent issues of concern to all and not just women. Besides, when one considers the bulk of work being done by women in this country, they are literally the backbone of our economy, a fact acknowledged by president Kibaki. It is sad that all their efforts are left at the doorstep of policy makers who happen to be men and without their will none of their issues get addressed. Unless women find their space in politics there will be no good Samaritans amongst the men to save them.

We cannot miss examples here at home of the issues that women politicians have addressed which men who had been there over the years have never seen a need for. I have in mind pending bills like equality bill, family protection bill, affirmative action and the domestic violence bills. These bills were tabled by women parliamentarians but received hostility from some of the men politicians.

Since Hon. Ngilu became Minister for Health, she has spoken a lot on health issues that affect women's reproductive health and the rights of women to choose when to have a child. She ended up being misquoted as having spoken for abortion. A woman is much more likely to understand issues of reproduction more than a man since she is likely to have gone through these challenges. I



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

also learnt recently that sanitary wear has been vat able (has V.A.T) because no one ever recognized it as an essential and basic commodity. It is only women who know that they need sanitary wear as much as they need bread and milk!

The problem of HIV and AIDS for example must be seen from a gender perspective. Looking at it generally is likely to marginalize women's concerns. We are aware that for many years, HIV and AIDS campaigns have left out the fact that women experience this problem in a very unique way. Women generally have very little control over their sexuality, the most known condoms in this part of the world are for males and women's economic dependence on men worsens the problem. As a result of these factors, women have become the most vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, which has slowly but surely acquired a feminine face. Such issues require the input of women who understand directly how they affect them.

Why can't gender sensitive men address these same issues that women address?

I have in my life worked with men who have been very gender sensitive and will do all they can to fight for the rights of women. In fact there are women who truly believe that they are better off working with men than with women. The truth is that people should be able to present their own issues and where they require help they can always seek it. To say that men can represent women as well as they would themselves, is comparable to what colonialists believed that they understood our needs better than we did ourselves and we were to sit back and let them run our affairs. Women in any nation form a group with unique issues that no one can afford to ignore. The example given above on sanitary wear requires women to understand. Even the most gender sensitive men may not understand it. They have a right to be their own representatives just like men are. The goal for all men and women is to give each other their rightful space and work together towards common good of the nation.

A case in point is the national delegates conference on the constitutional review held in Bomas. Many of us had been of the opinion that the work should have been done by a group of experts, but we chose to have the people write their

own constitution. The latter is more sustainable since everybody's views will have been taken into consideration. The same must apply in political leadership where men and women have to be involved in the process of decision-making. As already mentioned diversity is wealth.

However, women need to understand that in their struggle for equal opportunities, it always helps to identify men who are women friendly so that they can work with them. It is also important to always be aware that not all women are women friendly and they may not even think of addressing issues that I have mentioned as being likely to be addressed by women. The latter belong to the category of Margaret Thatcher, popularly known as the iron lady, who Ronald Reagan referred to as the "best man in Westminster". There are many Thatchers around.

Being women and remaining women even in leadership

There is need to focus on the fact that political leadership is often or even always associated with masculinity and the more pronounced the dissonance if the senior political position is held by a woman. Due to this association of seniority with being male, then what we experience are situations where, when women hold senior political positions they do everything possible not to portray characteristics of leadership associated with being female because they view this as being an inferior position.

As I argued elsewhere (*Daily Nation* May 19th 2003), this complex sometimes makes some women not to even identify with other women and they end up being branded as hateful of other women. This has made many women leaders to be seen as very masculine and therefore not allowing for the gender perspective that they would have otherwise brought to the leadership flourish. The way out of this as I see it, is to appreciate our gender differences and work with them without viewing one gender as inferior to the other. Women would then feel comfortable to bring their feminine model of leadership into politics and this would be of great benefit to all. As indeed I have already argued earlier in this chapter, diversity is wealth and it is healthy.



Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

Anna Tibaijuka, the Director UN Habitat was quoted in the Eve magazine (April 2003) as having said “as a woman, don’t try to be a man. Make sure you display femininity because it is part of being a woman. On the other hand, do not be empty-headed. In short, fight the stereotype image of being a woman”. By remaining a woman and bringing that feminine perspective into the leadership of UN HABITAT, Dr. Tibaijuka’s tenure has seen donor confidence increase with a number of countries raising their contributions.

It is documented that women are more result oriented than men as Margaret Thatcher was once quoted to have said that “ if you want anything said ask a man while if your want something done ask a woman”. We may all have our own experiences about our own parents where most of what was achieved in our homes was more as a result of our mother’s efforts than our fathers. Women are truly result oriented, an aspect we very much need in political leadership.

Do women bring different leadership styles that can help in politics?

Women are known to manage and lead differently from men and their perspective is also required in political leadership. Research in different areas of leadership and management has indeed come up with the styles that tend to be applied by women leaders/managers. One such study done by Judy Marshal, author of the book “*Women managers: moving on*” offers the following models of leadership:

	Feminine leadership model	Masculine leadership model
Operating style: Organizational structure: Basic objective: Problem solving style: Key Characteristics:	Cooperative Team Quality output Intuitive Lower control Empathetic Collaborative High performance standards Persuasive Inspiring	Competitive Hierarchy Winning Rational High control Strategic Unemotional Analytical





Do women bring a different perspective into political leadership?

Various studies to find out the principle features preferred and processes associated with effective management have consistently shown that many people are more comfortable with the feminine model of leadership. In one such study carried out in London by *Agnes MacMahon et al* (1993) the respondents spelt out the following features as what they would prefer when being led and managed

- That they would prefer leaders who work well together as teams, have roles and responsibilities which are clear and are highly visible and approachable
- Those who take the key decisions but consult before doing so, face up to differences of opinion and work for a negotiated solution and a sense of joint ownership of institutional developments
- Those who model desired behaviors and attributes (e.g. hard work, commitment, mutual support and teamwork), behave with honesty and integrity, in straightforward and non-devious ways, behave as if accountable to those they work with and those under them by providing clear evidence of the outcomes of their actions, are ready to accept mistakes and consider alternatives
- Are good at 'people' management, including identifying and mobilizing individual talents, briefing others regularly on day to day issues, delegate meaningful tasks in order to develop and empower others

Most of the characteristics preferred seem to tally with the feminine model of leadership. It is my view that we do require what women have to offer in political leadership. What we see here is diversity and we need a blend of these characteristics in political leadership.

Other areas apart from politics where women can and have excelled

On other issues like FGM, girl child education, women's economic empowerment, health, child rights, domestic violence, women's property rights etc have been very well addressed by women in this country who are not necessarily politicians. The examples of the leadership roles held by women and how they have excelled are uncountable. From international and national



personalities like Wangare Maathai, Eddah Gachukia, Mrs Nangurai, Martha Koome, Anna Tibajuka, Miriam Makeba, Janet Museveni, Graca Machel Toni Morrison, Oprah Winfrey among so many others- all these women have in one way or another touched the lives of men and women, boys and girls through their leadership and commitment to what they have set themselves to do.

We are all aware of the leadership roles played by our mothers in each and every household. Every single day a woman is contributing to shape the future generation. The best-known way of improving the capacities of all women in order to tap their leadership capacities is by educating them. Education for all is the goal and hence it is laudable that Kenya now has free and compulsory primary education. Education is the sure way of building the capacities of all people.

Conclusion

The presence of women in political leadership is one of the most effective ways of ensuring their participation in the political decision making process for the good of the women, children and the nation in general. The challenge therefore is for us women to reach outside of our private lives to shape our nation.

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Heinrich Böll Foundation Publications

We the women... for Peace

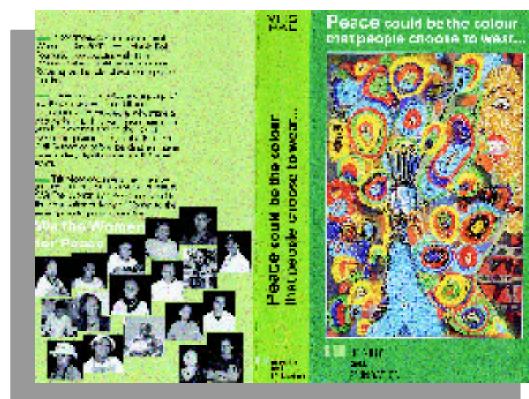
The book is a collection of artwork, exhibited during an exhibition- 'We the Women ... for Peace', dedicated to the contribution of Kenyan women to the recent peaceful political transition. The exhibition was in recognition of the International Women's day 2003. This was facilitated by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, in collaboration with a local women artist group – Hawa Women Artists. The book highlights the artists and their work.



Peace could be the colour that people choose to wear

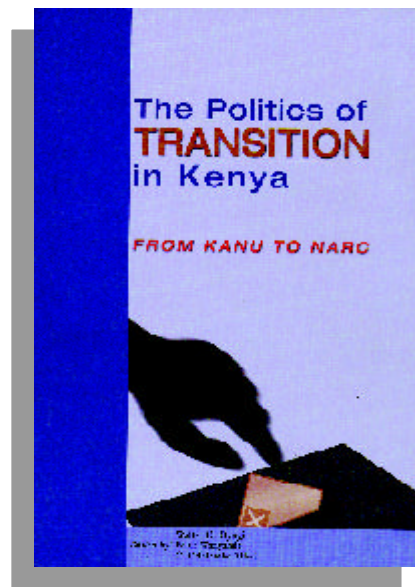
A video

In commemoration of International Women's Day 2003, the Heinrich Böll Foundation collaborated with Hawa Women artists to hold an art exhibition focusing on the role of women in peace making. This video documents the creative journey of these women and the resulting exhibition entitled: 'We the Women for Peace' dedicated to the contribution of Kenyan women to the recent peaceful political transition.



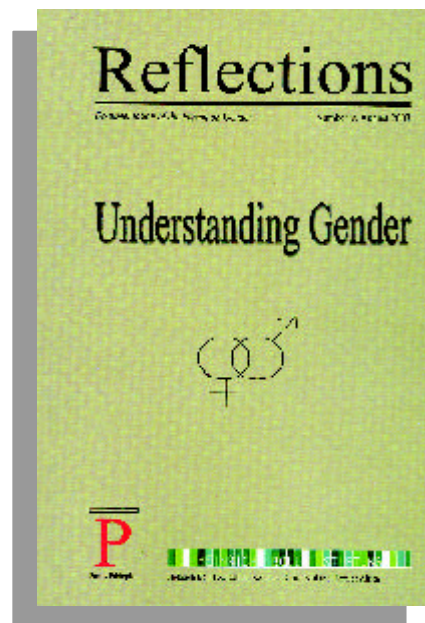
The politics of TRANSITION in Kenya From KANU to NARC

The book is a collaborative effort between the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Nairobi and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Through analysis by diverse scholars and two practitioners, it reflects on the peaceful transition witnessed in Kenya after the 2002 general elections. It discusses one of the rare cases of peaceful transfer of power that has been witnessed in Africa, and draws some valuable lessons for the country and other developing countries. The book provides a timely synthesis of the core issues involved in the politics of transition.



Reflections: Understanding Gender

'Reflections' is a publication of the Gender Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Gender Forum, which is managed by Panos Institute, focuses on the personal, institutional and political empowerment of women. This is the Ninth publication. The theme for discourse was 'Understanding Gender'. The forum covered most of the concerns many face when working on gender. The view of the discourse was to encourage those working in gender to think about the issues raised, in their own context, in the hope that a common working agenda on 'gender' will be realized.





Other publications

1. Gender Gaps in Our Constitutions, Women's Concerns in Selected African Countries, October 1-3, 2001 Nairobi by HBF Nairobi
2. Perspectives on Gender Discourse, Gender and Constitution-making in Kenya, 1/02
3. Perspectives on Gender Discourse, Gender Dimensions of NEPAD, 2/03
4. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 1, Empowerment. December 1999
5. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 2, Electoral Programs and Gender. May 2000.
6. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 3, Gender and HIV/AIDS. September 2000
7. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 4, Intergenerational Panel on Gender. December 2000
8. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 5, Gender and Conflict. July 2001
9. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 6, The Role of Women in Development. December 2001
10. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 7, Violence against Women from Gender and Cultural Perspectives. June 2002
11. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 8, Environment and Gender. February 2003
12. Reflections: Documentation of the Forum on Gender, No. 9, Understanding Gender. August 2003
13. Who is Doing What on Gender Issues, A Directory of Organisations Working on Gender in Ethiopia by Panos Ethiopia Sponsored by HBF Nairobi





Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Green Party and headquartered in Berlin, is a legally independent political foundation working in the spirit of intellectual openness. The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and developmental cooperation. Its activities are guided by the fundamental political values of ecology, gender democracy, solidarity, and non-violence.

The Foundation in the East and Horn of Africa

Since 1991, the Heinrich Böll Foundation has been supporting development projects in Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 1999, the Foundation expanded its activities to Somaliland and Djibouti. Since 2001, the Foundation's activities have spread to many countries in the region including Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. We mostly work in cooperation with project partners who focus on raising awareness on ecology, gender democracy, conflict and dialogue, democratization and cultural identity.

The overall goal of the Foundation's engagement in this region is strengthening Civil Society. As a result, most of the program activities in the East and Horn have been in partnerships with non-governmental organisations working in the environmental field, gender issues and conflict.

