

Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa

Primer 1 • 2016



By Dr Awino Okech



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DISCLAIMER

This publication is one of three primers in a series titled *Feminist Perspectives on Governance, Peace and Security*.

The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) commissioned Awino Okech to write the series. The aim is to generate discussions among feminists to influence policies that will address the diverse realities of African women. The primers have been published solely for the purpose of pursuing women’s rights in Africa.

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Nafi Chinery, Capacity Building Programme Specialist, AWDF

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
ANC	African National Congress
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
BNF	Botswana National Front
CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
FPTP	First past the post
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
KANU	Kenya African National Union
LPK	Labour Party of Kenya
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPK	National Party of Kenya
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PR	Proportional representation
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UWT	Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania

Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa

This is the first in a series of three African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) primers entitled *Feminist Perspectives on Governance, Peace and Security*. The primers are intended to:

1. Offer a review of the major debates on women, governance, peace and security in Africa.
2. Review and analyse women's movements' interventions in governance, peace and security.
3. Offer a set of policy and advocacy priorities based on political and practical realities.
4. Benefit women's rights activists, organisations and people in government at the frontline of local and national mobilisation initiatives seeking to enhance women's leadership.
5. Assist in building alliances and structuring support across various institutions working towards enhancing women's political participation.

The focus on governance is informed by AWDF's renewed thematic approach. It is also driven by the fact that women's participation in governance is a key indicator of the general level of democracy in a society.

The importance of increasing women's public and political participation is reflected in regional and international commitments to gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the African Union's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

Women's political participation is seen as a cornerstone for progress on women's rights as a whole, because once a critical mass of women is available, they can begin to influence policy and laws in general (Bauer 2004).

The AWDF primers

Primer 1: Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa

Primer 2: Gender and Security in Africa

Primer 3: Unlocking The Doors: Feminist Insights for Inclusion in Governance, Peace and Security

Introduction



Let us remember that in the fight to empower women, we can accept no frontiers, only breakthroughs. Governance cuts across all spheres of representation and decision making, from the community to national levels. Full political participation will become a reality for us, as women, when quotas and set-asides become a relic of the past; when our access in participatory institutions at all levels is considered a right; and when we no longer feel compelled to wage campaigns and stage protests in order to have a say in the decisions that affect our lives – be it at the peace table or in the political and economic arenas.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, 2010

This primer maps key areas of feminist analysis and intervention in governance. Based on existing research on the major factors that hinder women’s political participation, emphasis is placed on electoral systems, political parties, quotas and national constitutional mechanisms. These are also areas where the impact of the women’s rights movement has been felt.

This primer therefore assesses the ways in which women’s participation in governance has been assured, the challenges arising from these approaches, and lessons therein. This primer is intended to benefit women’s rights activists and organisations at the frontline of local and national mobilisation initiatives that seek to enhance women’s leadership. We hope the primer is useful for building alliances and structuring support across various institutions working towards enhancing women’s political participation.

PART 1

Women, Nations and States

African struggles for independence from colonial authorities led to nationalist platforms that asserted the right to (national) self determination (Osaghae 2006). Liberation movements relied on a gender neutral, homogeneous 'African culture' as a mechanism to rally new nations around the perception of a common and often uniting ideology. This ideology was often based on the continuity of a myth that pure African traditions and culture have been tainted by colonialism. This is not to suggest that colonialism did not impact African societies in multiple ways. However, as Wilson-Tagoe cautions, '... when culture is informed by anti-colonial debates, the link between "nation" and "culture" runs the risk of presenting culture as coherent and homogeneous rather than as continually contested and renewed' (2003: 25). Desiree Lewis adds, '... these fictions of authenticity, custom and "the past" bolster patriarchal goals and desires, while perpetuating the servitude of women and demonizing both the men and women who reject heterosexist norms' (Lewis, 2003: 1).

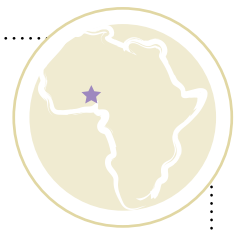
Nigeria

As early as 1925, women were increasingly active in protests and in the anti-colonial struggles that erupted from various quarters. The 1925 market women's riot in Calabar province protested imposed market tolls on commonly owned land, staging anti-government propaganda dances and protest songs to contest taxes and forced labor, while spiritual movements gave women a voice to express dissatisfaction with colonial reality.

In 1928, amidst colonial promises to improve roads, schools, and court buildings and to end forced labor practices, taxes were collected for the first time among the Ibibio, Ibo, and Delta peoples of southeastern Nigeria. People paid the taxes, albeit somewhat reluctantly, assuming this was a one-time fee for the promised improvements. In 1929, when it was realized that tax collection was to be continuous and that women and their personal property were to be counted and taxed, violent protest erupted.

In multiple provinces women set fire to Native Court buildings, some destroyed property, chanted threatening songs, and organized customary "sitting on" to embarrass African warrant chiefs who aided colonial administrations or who were corrupt. More than 15,000 women in southeastern Nigeria were at war.

Source: Zukas, L. in http://www.revolutionprotestencyclopedia.com/fragr_image/media/IEO_Womens_War_of_1929



Most nationalist projects relied on gendered citizenship, sexualities and power as primary instruments of mobilisation. Relying on gendered citizenship in this way meant drawing on women's resources when it was essential to the broader cause. The 'women's war' in Nigeria is a case in point of women organising to counter the colonial state's efforts to dismantle the sites in which women exercised control.

The existence of anti colonial women's movements organising offers a window into women's active engagements in anti colonial struggles in their own right, and not necessarily as part of broader male led nationalist struggles. The Nigerian case draws attention to the purely instrumental agenda of nationalist platforms that mobilised women when needed in the labour force, or even on the frontline, only to return them to domesticity, or to subordinate roles in the public sphere, when the national emergency was over (Kandiyoti 1991: 421). The apparent convergence between the interests of men and the definition of national priorities leads to the assertion that the state itself is a direct expression of men's interests (MacKinnon 1989: 515).

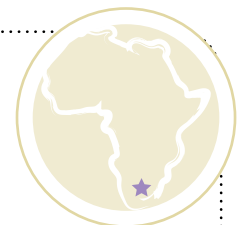
An examination of the inclusion of women within contemporary states shows how patriarchy is sustained through rules, practices and systems. An examination of some liberation movements across the African continent reveals that women were often invited to participate as 'national' actors in the following ways: as mothers, educators, workers and fighters. Despite women's inclusion, their roles were defined by culturally acceptable feminine conduct and pressure exerted for the articulation of gender interests within the terms set by nationalist discourse (Hijab n.d.). The example below on the evolution of the African National Congress offers a good illustration.

Bantu Women's League: South Africa

For the first thirty years of the African National Congress (ANC), black women were excluded from full political membership despite their increasing grassroots activism. While the ANC adopted inclusive language of national unity, the Congress was in fact exclusive and hierarchical. It was ranked by an upper house of chiefs (which protected traditional patriarchal authority through descent), a lower house of elected representatives (all male), and an executive (all male). Wives of male members could join as 'auxiliary members', but were denied formal political representation, as well as the power to vote.

The draft constitution of the SANNK (later the ANC), defined women's political role through marriage and domestic roles: "All the wives of the members ... shall ipso facto become auxiliary members. ... It shall be the duty of all auxiliary members to provide suitable shelter and entertainment for delegates to the Congress". At women's insistence, the ANC granted women full membership and voting rights in 1943, thirty-one years after its formation.

Source: McClintock, 1993



Women, and by extension motherhood, was and is still used to portray women as icons of the nation, whilst men and fatherhood are associated with the state (Delaney 1995; Papanek 1994). The link between woman/mother to nation and man/father to state has facilitated the institutionalisation of second class citizenship in state building projects. The false division made between the family and politics, public and private, relies on gender norms as a mechanism to exclude women from the political, and therefore public realm. For instance, women are told they cannot be good mothers and politically active at the same time. This myth is used to limit the political participation of women.

The mobilisation of women towards the service of the nation can therefore be argued to be opportunistic. At different moments, governments have used women's rights language to either identify as progressive or secure their place as protectors of 'authentic national values'. Drawing on experiences from North Africa, an underexplored area within dominant writings in sub Saharan Africa, the expansion of women's citizenship rights in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria occurred at a moment of post colonial transition under the leadership of single party regimes (Nasser in Egypt and Bourguiba in Tunisia) rather than by popular mandate (Kandiyoti 2011). Women's juridical rights were expanded and their public presence gained greater legitimacy under the banner of national development.

Egyptian nationalists such as Qasim Amin used the narrative of women's freedom as an indicator of modernity. He argued it was in the interest of the nation to educate women, recruit them into the labour market, transform their dress code and symbolically integrate them into the political process as emblems of modernity (Ahmed, 1992). The Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes in Tunisia constructed the emancipated woman as a pillar of resistance to Islamic fundamentalism (Charrad 2001: 184). When Ben Ali took power in 1987, he used the advancement of women's status as an action designed to challenge Islamic fundamentalism in Tunisia and neighbouring Algeria (Charrad, 2001: 184).

In Morocco, the first voices of women in the public sphere were made possible by the liberal views of key political male actors such as prominent nationalist thinkers, the monarch, and political parties (Sadiqi 2008: 325). Allal Al-Fassi, a Salafist, religious reformist and prominent nationalist, dismissed polygamy, not because it harmed women as individuals, but because it was a practice that 'tarnished' the image of 'modern' Islam (Sadiqi 2008: 325-326). Mohamed Hassan Ouazzan called for equitable inheritance laws, not because these laws were harmful to women, but because equitable inheritance laws were 'tokens' of a modern egalitarian society (Sadiqi 2008: 325-326).

In Algeria, the history of French occupation for over 130 years and the attempts to dismantle Islam, its economic infrastructure, and its cultural network during this period led to a different relationship between Islam and the state (Moghadam 1999: 142). Many Algerians regarded Islam and Muslim family law as sanctuaries from French cultural imperialism (Knauss 1987:49). To many Algerian men, the unveiled woman represented an aspiration to European culture.

The popular reaction to the mission civilisatrice was a return to the land and to religion, the foundations of the old community. Islam was transformed, the patriarchal family expanded in importance, and the protection and

seclusion of women were viewed by Algerians as increasingly necessary (Moghadam 1999: 142).

Consequently, the erasure of women's agency within post colonial states can be viewed as the continuity of patriarchal systems of organising in which women are cordoned off to particular spheres of society. Post independence constitutions and subsequent reforms have therefore become important, since they define the relationship between ideas about national unity, responsibility and norms on the one hand, and the daily practice by citizens on the other hand.

Gender and Constitutionalism

Constitutionalism in Africa is riddled with a complex interplay of nationalism, preservation of custom and contemporary conceptions of equality (Oloka-Onyango 2001). Independence constitutions were shaped by a context of inequality between colonisers eager to protect their colonial interests, and soon to be independent nations, reliant on the goodwill of the former colonial master to transit into fully functional states. These early constitutions, often crafted in foreign capitals, did not capture the dreams and aspirations of citizens. They were also exclusionary; they did not address the diverse needs in newly independent states. The silencing of gender equality concerns within liberation movements filtered into post independence constitutions. This had the effect of not only ignoring women's contributions towards independence but it also entrenched the patriarchal state and women's relationship to it. Consequently, most African states have a plural legal system in which multiple systems of laws: statutory, customary and religious systems operate simultaneously, with detrimental effects for women.

As a basic foundational norm, the constitution defines relationships in the state. Citizenship therefore becomes an important way through which participation and state obligations are negotiated. Many post colonial African constitutions contained nondiscrimination provisions that specifically excluded personal law, including most family law issues, from constitutional protection (Kibwana 2001).

Family law deals with matters that lie at the intersection of kinship and state. It regulates marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. A woman may invoke constitutional equality guarantees. But she may only do so if the contested issue does not concern marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other such matters.

Family and nondiscrimination laws can rightfully be said to be the most critical site of power of religious communities over the shape of citizenship. The law acts as a boundary setting device that does not determine what people do, but restricts their choices. It has therefore been the most critical arena in the struggle between feminists, nationalists and state builders.

Most African states define the heterosexual family as the central social, and therefore economic and political institution, in the constitution. This effectively connects family processes into state dynamics. A woman's political relation to the

nation and state is therefore constructed as a social relation to a man through marriage. This is sustained through regulations concerning who a woman can marry and the legal status of her offspring – in the interest of preserving group identities.

In Nigeria, a married woman who moves to her marital state loses indigenous citizenship in her father's indigenous state and her marital state (Pereira n.d). The exclusion of customary and personal law from the constitution therefore reverts power to traditional gatekeepers since customary law consists largely of unwritten rules or laws that may be applied informally or by the courts. The 1929 Igbo women's riots against the role of warrant chiefs and their discriminatory practices offers a good illustration of this.

It is useful to understand the exclusion of women from state through the centrality of the heterosexual family and 'culture' in national constitutions. It is through the extension of 'family values' to those of nation and state building that women's exclusion begins. However, when regimes seek to show that they depart from traditional norms, women's freedom becomes a symbol for progress. This strategy exposes different governments' approaches to securing women's political participation in post colonial states.

For instance, in 1956, President Nasser of Egypt, immediately after granting women suffrage, outlawed all feminist organisations and put in place sweeping legislation guaranteeing education, jobs, labour rights, maternity leave, and various forms of state welfare (Hatem 1992; Nelson 1996; Elsadda 2001). Women's rights are also co-opted through the establishment of national women's organisations as propaganda machines that are used to legitimise national women's rights policies that are already drawn up.

Women are therefore portrayed in three main ways: as victims of their societies' backwardness, symbols of the nation's newly found vigour and modernity, or the privileged repository of uncontaminated national values. As seen above, reformers often engage in a selective process of looking back in search of 'indigenous' models to legitimise women's emancipation. This approach endorses the notion that any changes in the position of women can only be accepted when they serve 'national interests'. Admittedly, constitutional and legal reforms have formed an important part of African women's movements' interventions.

Constitutional and Legal Reforms

In the last forty years since independence, many African countries have amended their constitutions. Some countries have eliminated the exclusionary provisions that place personal and customary law outside the purview of constitutional protection. They include Botswana, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritius, Egypt, Morocco, to name but a few; while others have not.

The new or reformed constitutions grapple with the desire to preserve custom and cultural identity and at the same time aim to recognise women's rights. These shifts have, in part, been informed by regional and international conventions on women's rights that demand compliance with gender equity provisions. These constitutional provisions were also informed by the hard work of transnational women's rights alliances. It is through these alliances that legislative reforms have been lobbied for in the following areas among others: gender equality principles, gender based violence, citizenship, family and marriage. In this section, constitutional reforms are examined to highlight the provisions for gender quotas, political party rules and electoral systems and the role these have played in enlarging the space for women's participation in political governance.

Quotas

Quotas are mechanisms used to increase the representation of historically excluded or underrepresented groups in politics. Quotas in politics involve setting up a percentage or number for the representation of a certain group, most often in the form of a minimum percentage, for instance 20, 30 or 40 percent (Ballington 2004; Ward 2006). Quota systems represent a break from a gradualist approach to equality policies. There are different types of quotas, which can be applied independently or combined.

The first is a constitutional quota provided for in the constitution, which is the highest law of a country and cannot be overridden by any statute. However, where implementation mechanisms are not appropriately defined in the constitution, the possibilities for dismissing such provisions remains high.

The second is an electoral gender quota which would, for example, require that at least 40 percent of the candidates on the electoral lists are women. A minimum requirement for women implies a maximum set for the representation of men. Since women are often underrepresented in political institutions, most regulations seek to secure a greater minimum number of seats for women (Dahlerup 2004).

Tanzania

In 1998, Tanzania was the first African country, followed by Burundi in 2005, to include 20 percent and 30 percent quota representations for women in their national constitutions respectively. In 1998, the Ghanaian cabinet adopted an affirmative action policy which established a 40 per cent quota for women's representation on all government boards, commissions, committees and other official bodies. In 2001, the government followed this up by the creation of a Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (Duke 2010: 87).



The third is a gender neutral quota which establishes a maximum for both women and men. The requirement may be that neither gender should occupy more than 60 percent and no less than 40 percent of the seats or establish a 50:50 quota (Dahlerup 2004; Ward 2006).

The fourth is a double quota which refers to a quota system that not only requires a certain percentage of women on the electoral list but also prevents women candidates from merely being placed at the bottom of the list with very little chance of being elected (Dahlerup 2004). Therefore every other name on the list must be a woman's.

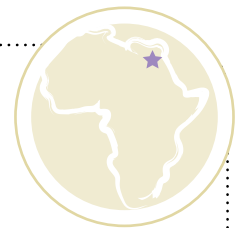
The fifth approach, adopted in Kenya and Uganda, in its revised constitution of 1995, institutionalises the quota system by providing for a number of reserved seats. In Uganda, the seats in the national parliament must be equal to the number of districts in the country. The Ugandan provision further guarantees that women constitute one-third of all local council seats. Women also benefit from the limited number of quota seats reserved for people with disabilities, the youth and workers (Tamale 2004).

The final approach is through presidential decrees as shown in the Egyptian example in the panel.

Egypt

In 1979, a presidential decree was passed regarding the application of the quota system (law 21/1979). It defined defining a formula reserving 30 seats (out of 360 seats) for women in parliament. A broad system of reservations was implemented where it was mandatory to vote for two members in each electoral zone: one had to be a farmer and one a worker. In 30 of the zones, there was the additional requirement that at least one woman must be elected, thereby reserving 30 seats for women. In 1983, the electoral law changed the electoral system from constituency elections to list nominations, in theory making it easier for women to be elected. However, this same law introduced severe restrictions on independent candidacies and nonpartisan candidates. As a result, a law was passed in 1986 that cancelled the reserved seats for women.

Source: Abou-Zeid, 2004



Where countries and parties have not adopted formal gender quotas, financial and legal approaches have been used to promote women's participation in politics. In Mali, the government gives funding priority to political parties that have a large female membership and who ensure that at least ten percent of their candidates are women (Diouf and Ivory 2006). Although this regulation does not establish a formal requirement for party quotas, it provides financial incentive for political parties to ensure that at least ten percent of the candidates on the party list are women.

Quotas produce a numerical increase and enable a critical mass of women but do not necessarily transform the way political parties work and how the state perceives women's participation. It is important to consider the following points about quotas.

1. While quotas can improve opportunities for women to hold elective office, once elected, many barriers still block women's ability to effectively use their positions. Quotas do not remove barriers such as the double standards women politicians face in politics, or the lack of campaign funding.
2. The law establishing quotas must be carefully worded. For instance, when a law is framed in this way: 'at least one of the offices ... shall be held by a female', it is usually interpreted as the maximum number. This creates a glass ceiling, making it impossible for women's representation to rise above the stated quota (Tamale 2004). Connected to this is the feminisation of deputy positions which limits women's ascent to key management positions (Tamale 2004).
3. The use of reserved seating reduces political party responsibility to field women candidates in other elective posts. There is the risk of women being handpicked, which can contribute to lack of clarity about who they represent and where their allegiance lies (Ballington 2004). In Uganda, the emphasis on female representatives has resulted in the creation of 'status quo' representatives. The ruling party 'allows' women to participate in decision making, but not to represent women as an interest group, nor to assume special responsibility for them (Tamale 2004).

Akwasi

One time I went over to say hello to a male colleague. I don't know, maybe I caught him at a bad time or maybe he had other things on his mind [chuckles nervously]. And then he sort of grabbed me here [points to her crotch]. I was shocked. I literally went down on my knees. I said, 'Please, please, I have a lot of respect for you.' But I wasn't angry; I thought maybe it was my mistake. Maybe I took him for granted. I just learnt a lesson that time that sometimes you have to be careful with men. By nature they can misbehave simply by the way you present yourself (Tamale 2000: 13).

Electoral systems

An electoral system includes multiple aspects of electoral law and regulations. They decide how elections are conducted and representation determined. Basic features of an electoral system include: ballot structure, electoral threshold and an electoral formula. For women to reach their optimal representation, an appropriate electoral system has to be put in place. Favourable social conditions do not substitute for an unfavourable electoral system. Political researchers suggest that in countries where 35 percent of the members of the legislature are women, proportional representation (PR) is in use as an electoral system, as well as some party based quota (Bauer 2004:452; Dahlerup 2004).

List PR is the most common system of proportional representation. In list PR, parties get seats depending on the proportion of votes they win. The winning

candidates are taken from the list in order of the position they occupy. So, if a party puts forward a list of 20 names and gets six seats on the basis of the votes garnered, the first names go through. It is important to note where women's names are placed on the list. The 'zebra' system with women's names interspersed throughout the list is useful (Bauer 2004: 484). Closed party lists are another alternative. This means women's names cannot be moved down the list. This method relies on high levels of democratic principles at a party level.

Increasingly, African countries are also enhancing women's political participation by reforming national laws on political parties and electoral systems. South Africa, in April 1994, changed its electoral system from the first past the post (FPTP) system to list PR. Uganda's gender quota of 30 percent is based on a 1995 constitutional provision which mixes FPTP system (majority wins) and reserved seating. Tanzania currently has reserved seats for women enshrined in law at 20 percent in the national parliament and 33 percent in local councils. Political parties therefore, have to apply quotas internally after the electoral process.

Political parties

In almost all political systems, irrespective of the electoral regime, it is the political parties, not the voters, who are the real gatekeepers with regard to elective offices.

The immediate post colonial period saw many national political parties create women's wings that often co-opted national women's organisations. Some examples include Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania (UWT) linked to Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the League of Malawi Women (the women's wing of the Malawi Congress Party), the Women's League of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia, among others (Aili-Tripp, n.d. Mikell 1984; Tsikata 1989).

The need to transform political parties therefore stems from a historical perception of women as auxiliary to the main party thus limiting women's participation. It is this nature of male dominated political parties that led to the formation of women led parties in some countries. (See panel)

Closely linked to political party structures is the high cost of contesting elections (Gretchen and Meena 2007). Research on women and electoral financing suggests that one of the greatest hurdles women face is financing the process of gaining a party nomination. Nomination costs require that women candidates come up with funds to build name recognition, travel, attend party meetings, organise a campaign team and cultivate a constituency (Gretchen and Meena 2007). The lack of campaign financing magnifies deficits in democracy, especially when it is controlled by a few powerful

Political parties

Dr Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika started the National Party in Zambia in 1991, and Margaret Dongo the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats in 1999.

In Lesotho, Limakatso Ntakatsane formed Kopanang Basotho; Ruth Rolland-Jeanne-Marie led a party in Central African Republic (CAR) and Amália de Vitoria Pereira led an Angolan party (Aili-Tripp, n.d.: 4).

In Kenya, the National Party of Kenya (NPK) led by Charity Ngilu, and the Labour Party of Kenya (LPK) led by Julia Ojiambo, were formed at the height of the multiparty movement in Kenya.

sources who are often powerful males. It results in an uneven playing field where co-opted politicians no longer represent the people who elected them but those who funded them (Gretchen and Meena 2007).

It is possible to shift political parties' internal mechanisms by reviewing internal regulations and procedures (Dahlerup 2004). The ANC in South Africa and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) in Mozambique are examples of political parties that implemented voluntary party quotas (30 percent) combined with a PR electoral system so that every third person on the list is a woman (Kethusegile-Juru 2004). Public financing provisions for political parties, where they exist, can also ensure that finances are distributed equally across the party. It also enhances internal accountability and sharing of resources and campaign platforms.

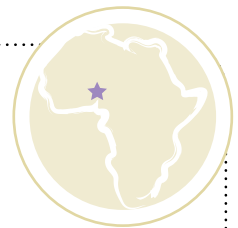
The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund (see panel) highlights other mechanisms through which 'early money' has been mobilised for women candidates.

The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund

The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund was created in 2011 to increase the representation of women in Nigerian governance at all levels, and to address the growing concerns about the gender imbalance in elective and appointive positions. The fund's goal is to institutionalise access to resources for women in politics. Its objectives are to:

- Transparently provide aspiring women with financial and other forms of resources towards their political campaigns, irrespective of political inclinations.
- Identify and build a database of aspiring women politicians and those in appointed positions to enhance their leadership capacity.
- Fundraise.
- Invest and manage resources for women's political participation.
- Provide national and international networking opportunities for women politicians in elective and appointive positions to build strategic alliances and raise resources
- Engage in research and advocacy to further expand women's political space.
- Enlist champions of change (men and women) to support the aspirations of women politicians.

Source: <http://www.nigerianwomentrustfund.com>

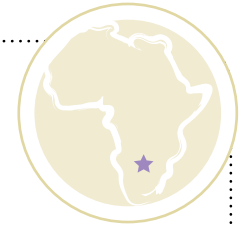


Political parties can further enhance internal democratic principles in the following ways.

1. Where proportional representation systems are in place: position women contenders high enough on the candidate lists to ensure they will be elected.
2. Where majority electoral systems function: establish voluntary targets to ensure a minimum number of women are candidates.
3. Provide support and resources to ensure the election of women candidates. This can include waiving or reducing the internal nomination fees.
4. Make sure that women are fully represented in party leadership and policy committees, and prioritise the advancement of women as a priority within the party (Dahlerup 2004).

Manifestos

From the early 1990s, manifestos became a popular route for the articulation of a set of political demands by women's movements. Manifestos generally present a set of core values, beliefs and priorities. The demands contained in national women's charters or manifestos, as the case may be, were designed to ensure women's priorities became an integral part of the programmes pursued by political parties ahead of elections. In the panel are three examples of manifestos with a focus on their broad principles. The Botswana example focuses the events that animated the manifesto development, since this is the first African country to develop a women's manifesto.

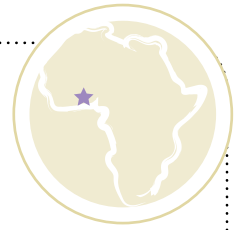


Emang Basadi, Botswana

The Emang Basadi (Stand Up Women!) Women's Association came into formal existence in 1986 to lobby against laws that discriminated against women in Botswana. Its creation was catalysed by the enactment of the 1982 Citizenship Amendment Act. The act sought to deny women married to noncitizen men the right to pass their citizenship to their offspring. The constitutional challenge by lawyer/activist Unity Dow against the Citizenship Amendment Act – and subsequent victory – led to the mobilisation of large numbers of women. This created the political momentum that Emang Basadi sustained.

The Unity Dow case crystallised Emang Basadi's belief that Tswana customary law, common law and the statutes that express it oppress women and must be rejected in favour of women's equal rights. Emang Basadi published a women's manifesto in the run up to the 1994 elections. The manifesto spelled out the economic, legal, political and educational status of women in Botswana. Specifically addressed to political parties and government, the manifesto laid out women's demands for redress, thus setting an agenda for negotiation during the political campaigns.

Emang Basadi developed a longer term strategy for sustained political mobilisation. It included the following components: a voter education programme to increase support for women; training women as potential political candidates to increase the number of women able to contest elections and represent their parties; lobbying for transformation of political party structures, particularly the women's wings. In the run up to the 1994 national elections, there seemed to be some congruence between Emang Basadi's campaigns and those of the leading opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF). Some Emang Basadi members were also active in BNF. Emang Basadi, frustrated by the Botswana Democratic Party's resistance to changing the citizenship law after Dow's successful court challenge, moved into a more oppositional stance toward government (Dow 1999; Selolwane 2004).



The Women's Manifesto for Ghana

The idea for the manifesto came up in 2003 ahead of the 2004 general elections. It was shaped by the outcomes of a national gender machinery study conducted by NETRIGHT in eight African countries. NETRIGHT is a coalition of organisations and individuals who agreed that the absence of a common platform to struggle for gender justice was a problem. The manifesto process was spearheaded by ABANTU for Development, as a member of NETRIGHT, under the Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana.

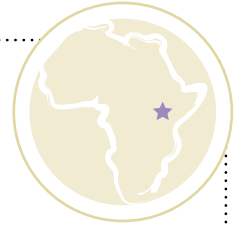
The coalition held several meetings and consultations with women's organisations, grassroots formations and policymakers. This included a meeting of District Assembly women from all the 110 districts of Ghana. Apart from fleshing out regional specificities, the meetings also detailed some of the demands for the manifesto and sharpened analysis of certain problems.

The process of drafting the manifesto, which was broad based, led people to question and make demands on the government to provide certain advancements for women. These included increasing representation of women in politics, policy and decision making levels, and in public life in general. People have become more conscious, perhaps through the process, about government's responsibility, and the need for government to comply with its local mandate.

Regional consultations were held by NETRIGHT and spearheaded by ABANTU for Development, two in each region, one for civil society organisations and another for government agencies. These affirmed the broad support for the manifesto. The manifesto addressed ten themes to do with women's rights and meaningful inclusion:

1. Economic empowerment
2. Land
3. Social policy and development
4. Politics, decision making and public life
5. Human rights and the law
6. Discriminatory cultural practices
7. The media
8. Conflict and peace
9. Special needs
10. Institutions with a mandate to promote women's rights.

(See the Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004; and Mama 2005).



The Kenyan Women's National Charter, 2012

The charter was developed collaboratively by a group of organisations and individuals committed to ensuring that women contribute to the national agenda ahead of the elections. It has 16 articles which focus on:

1. Elimination of discrimination against women
2. Right to dignity and respect
3. Realisation of freedom from sexual and gender based violence
4. Family and equality in marriage
5. Access to administrative justice and equal protection before the law
6. Effective representation of women in leadership and governance
7. Realisation of economic and social rights
8. Realisation of women's employment and welfare rights
9. Sustainable development and women's economic empowerment
10. Gender equality in opportunity and access to education and training
11. Reproductive and health care rights
12. Culture and women's empowerment
13. Special protection of elderly women and women with disabilities
14. Role of the media in promotion of women's empowerment
15. Rights and responsibilities of women in promotion peace
16. Mechanisms and strategies for realising gender and women's rights.

(Kenya Women's National Charter, 2012).

Main lessons about manifestos

There are three main lessons to take forward around manifestos developed by women's movements.

1. The commonality of issues across West, Southern and East Africa. This illustrates consensus on the underlying factors that sustain patriarchy and, in turn, women's exclusion from state building.
2. It is evident that for manifestos to have an impact, the women's movement has to engage political parties directly. Emang Basadi's oppositional stance towards the ruling party and an overt, albeit informal political alliance with a progressive opposition party, ultimately shifted national dynamics in its favour through the national party's review of the citizenship act.
3. It is important to identify a political party aligned to the political demands being made, especially when the manifesto proposes radical changes. Based on their experiences of mobilising for and developing the Women's Manifesto of Ghana, Tsikata and Mensah-Kutin (Mama 2005) argue it is not enough to develop the manifesto but you also have to find a channel for its implementation.

Five key messages

In many respects, it can be argued that women have benefitted from reformed institutional and procedural arrangements designed to include them in the state. The broadening of political platforms in the 1990s created space for the formation of new nonpartisan lobbying, civic education and leadership training organisations. This, in turn, encouraged women to run for office. Women are now considered a constituency with special interests who need to be represented in policymaking (Hassim 2005).

The creation of national gender machineries designed to provide a bridge between different sectors of the state has made the state more amenable to women's lobbying and advocacy (Hassim, 2005: 22). However, most national machineries are under resourced and dependent to a high degree on donor funding (Tsikata 1989).

Gender mainstreaming expertise within the state is also poorly developed. As a result, many gender equality gains are in those areas where policy addresses women as a category – for example, termination of pregnancy and maternal health; while those aspects of policy where structural shifts are key, remain harder to define (Walker 2001; Albertyn and Hassim 2003; Hassim 2004).

There are five key messages that can be drawn from this primer:

- 1.** Expanding democratic space for women has demanded different approaches. The most prominent are political projects encouraging women's representation in national parliaments, transforming electoral systems, introducing quotas – among other mechanisms – to break political blockages. This work has led to the creation of the necessary minimum conditions but does not necessarily dismantle structural inequalities.
- 2.** The review of manifestos and constitutional quotas shows that including women into existing policy frameworks without questioning whether the overall policy directions are appropriate for poor women, or how new areas of policy or lawmaking can be placed on the agenda, can reverse existing progress.
- 3.** Even though women's centrality to the state is consistently assured, women are also relegated to the margins by equating changes in gender relations with aspirations to western cultural imperialism. As a result, women who are active participants in nationalist and political movements are compelled to articulate their interests within the parameters of cultural nationalism – sometimes censoring or silencing the radical potential of their demands (Kandiyoti 2011).

The censorship of radical feminist demands has led to the creation of formal processes designed to embed gender demands as part of broader efficiency and development goals thus taking gender out of the realm of politics and into the technical realm of policymaking challenges (Hassim 2004: 18).

4. The tension between feminists working on the margins of the state and those who work within the state lies in the area of tactics and demands. Gradual approaches to transformation are perceived as evidence of compromise whilst feminists working within state systems view them as hard won gains that must be secured. Scholars such as Salo (2005) argue that it is not an either or situation. It is important to recognise the multiple ways in which working within difficult bureaucratic systems within governments has produced the necessary traction for larger demands. Both approaches – working on the margins and outside of the patriarchal state, and working within it – can be mutually reinforcing.
5. The democratic reversals across the African continent have led to a sharper focus on governance models given that regular elections, constitutions and multiparty politics have not necessarily produced substantive change dividends for women. For women's rights defenders working daily to support women in politics, pushing for reforms of discriminatory laws and working in governments, these tensions are not new. However, they require fresh reflection on how much inclusion compromises the greater structural objectives, which forms the basis for women's rights movements' demands on the state.

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PART 2

Overview

This primer, *Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa* sets out to assess the different ways women's participation in governance has been assured in Africa, the challenges evident in promoting women's participation in governance, and lessons learned.

It traces women's quest to participate in governance processes from the colonial period and notes that women's priorities were subsumed under what was perceived to be broader nation building priorities.

The primer argues that constitution making in post independence Africa solidified the patriarchal state and women's relationship to it. Where progressive policies for women's citizenship rights were pursued, as in countries of North Africa, this was done more for reasons of political expediency.

In recent decades, a number of African countries have adopted progressive constitutions that have been made possible, in no small measure, through the force of women's advocacy and global alliance building. The primer reviews a number of tools for promoting the increased representation of women, namely quotas, electoral systems and political parties.

The primer concludes by reflecting on some lessons. These include a recognition that an increased representation of women in governance does not automatically translate into a reversal of structural inequalities. The lessons also include calls for the pursuit of a transformative development agenda by women, a redefining of the quest for gender equality as a political priority, and the building of alliances between feminists working within mainstream state structures and those outside.

Discussion guide



We hope the following discussion questions assist in deepening clarity and insights on *Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa*:

1. The paper is primarily focused on a review of women's participation in political governance. How does a review of women's participation in political governance inform our understanding of their participation in other sectors of governance, including economic and security governance?
2. Building the capacity and influence of civil society in the post colonial period has been an important part of strengthening democratic governance in Africa. To what extent have women's organisations benefited from this process?
3. In seeking to address structural inequalities in the modern post colonial state, emphasis must be placed on transforming leadership practices. To what extent have women in political leadership been advocates of transformational leadership? What factors and conditions enable them to champion this cause rather than to serve as defenders of the status quo?
4. The state is presented as an expression of men's interests. What kind of state did nationalist movements inherit from colonisers? How did the colonial order contribute to the erosion of women's political influence in post colonial states?
5. The primer sheds light on the limitations of post colonial constitution making processes for advancing women's rights. Are these limitations equally evident in post conflict societies, or do post conflict contexts offer better opportunities for gender responsive constitutional reform processes?
6. What clout and influence do the women's wings of political parties have? Can they serve as engines for transforming political parties into institutions that promote principles of gender equality and women's leadership?