



Helpdesk Research Report

Women in politics and the public sector in Tanzania

Anna Louise Strachan

14.10.2015

Question

Can you do a literature review on the engagement of women in politics and the public sector in Tanzania?

Contents

1. Overview
2. Women in politics
3. Women in the public sector
4. References

1. Overview

This report provides an overview of recent literature on women in politics and the public sector in Tanzania. The body of literature on women's engagement in politics in Tanzania is relatively small, consisting of a mixture of journal articles and government and NGO reports. The studies discussed in this review are predominantly empirical. In-depth analysis of women's political engagement is very limited.

There is very little literature on women's engagement in the public sector in Tanzania. The literature that has been uncovered while undertaking the research for this report tends to focus on broader gender issues in Tanzania, only briefly touching upon women's engagement in the public sector. No recent studies dealing exclusively with women in the public sector in Tanzania were found. This report therefore identifies a significant gap in the literature.

Key topics covered by the literature include:

- **Special seats for women:** A quota system was introduced in 1985 to increase the number of women in parliament. Two journal articles by the same author look at this system in detail, noting that it has resulted in the proportion of female MPs being greater than the Southern African Development Community (SADC) target of 30 per cent. It is argued that the greater

representation of women in parliaments has led to improved articulation of women's issues and in positive legislative changes for women. Despite this, there have been some calls for special seats for women to be abolished as some believe that they have served their purpose. However, a recent NGO report states there have been calls for the quota for female representation in parliament to be increased from 30 per cent to 50 per cent.

- **Women's roles within political parties:** A number of papers argue that while political parties make provisions for women's representation in parliament in their constitutions and manifestos, there is often little mention of women's roles within the parties themselves. Women do not tend to occupy leadership positions within political parties in Tanzania.
- **Women in local governance:** One empirical study finds that women's participation in local governance is determined by incentives, access to information, power relations, knowledge of Kiswahili and women's interest in local governance. It also finds that women's political participation at this level has no impact on policy changes. Another study argues that women landowners tend to have greater power in their marital relationships and that this in turn leads to an increase in their level of political participation.
- **Women's limited opportunities in the public sector:** Two reports state that women continue to be underrepresented in top-level positions in the public sector. However, they note that some progress has been made in this regard. One study finds that women are better represented in public education than they are in other parts of the public sector. However, the data used in this study dates back to 2006.

2. Women in politics

Women's engagement in politics has been increasing in Tanzania in recent years. This section looks at the different aspects of women's political participation in the country.

Special seats for women

Two studies by Yoon (2011; 2013) look at the impact of special seats on women's political participation and democratisation in Tanzania. Special seats for women were adopted in 1985 to increase the number of women in parliament. As a result, Tanzania met the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action's target of 30 per cent women's parliamentary representation (Yoon, 2011, p. 84).

According to South African NGO Gender Links' 2015 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, women's representation in the Tanzanian cabinet is 34 per cent. It notes that women's representation in the cabinet has increased at a faster rate in Tanzania than in any other SADC member state (Gender Links, 2015, p. 92). The same report states that Tanzania is planning on strengthening its constitutional quota for women's parliamentary representation from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. However, it notes that this is unlikely to be adopted before the country's 2015 general election (Gender Links, 2015, p.81).

A 2008 empirical study undertaken for the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the links between gender, corruption and poverty in Nicaragua and Tanzania describes the way in which special seats are allocated. Special seats are assigned on the basis of the number of votes a party wins in the parliamentary elections (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 120). Parties have their own internal systems for allocating these special seats. This report argues that the selection methods used by parties lack transparency and introduce the potential for corruption, including sexual corruption (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121). The report

argues that this undermines the integrity of female candidates. They also note that the process for selecting female representatives for special seats complicates women MPs' accountability to the female constituency, as their loyalty lies primarily with their party (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121).

Yoon's 2011 study, which is based on fieldwork in the Dodoma region, finds that the proportion of female MPs' contributions in parliamentary debates has increased significantly because of the increase in women's representation (Yoon, 2011, p. 88). It finds that better representation has also led to better articulation of women's issues, and to improved interactions between male and female MPs (Yoon, 2011, p. 88). Other positive outcomes of the adoption of special seats for women are positive legislative changes for women. Examples include a law protecting female employees and a law protecting women from sexual offences (Yoon, 2011, p. 90). The study finds that the increase in the number of women in parliament has gradually changed negative attitudes towards women in politics (Yoon, 2011, p. 90).

However, the same study also finds that there have been calls for the special seat system to be abolished in recent years. One reason cited for this is that they were supposed to be a temporary measure to increase the number of women in parliament, and have now served their purpose (Yoon, 2011, p. 90). A second study by the same author notes that many special seat MPs have held their seats for more than two terms. This reduces opportunities for other women to gain political experience through the special seat system. As a result, the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi's (CCM) National Executive Committee will bring into force a new policy limiting special seat MPs to two terms in 2015 (Yoon, 2013, pp. 146-147).

The same study also notes that special seat MPs are often viewed as inferior to other MPs, as the former are not elected by the public. This means that many special seat MPs are keen to compete for constituency seats instead (Yoon, 2013, p. 147). In the 2010 elections, three special seat MPs won constituency seats (Yoon, 2013, p. 147). One study argues that the special seat system has 'eroded the competitive power of women in the basic democratic system' (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121).

Political parties

There is consensus in the literature on the lack of gender equality within political parties in Tanzania. A 2011 paper argues that Tanzania's electoral and political systems marginalise women in intra-party and inter-party competitions (Babeiya, 2011, p. 94). Another more recent qualitative paper states that no political party has achieved gender parity at the decision-making level (Tenthani, 2014, p. 6).

One study suggests a number of reasons for male dominance in political parties. These include the way in which political parties are organised (for example: the existence of old boy networks and military type command systems), a lack of support for female party members from the party leadership, women's lack of political networks, gender-biased social and cultural norms, women's lack of political experience, and financial constraints (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121). Financial constraints are discussed in slightly more detail in another paper, which argues that money is often used to garner support during elections, and that as women tend to have a weaker financial base than their male counterparts they find it harder to mobilise the resources required to win elections (Babeiya, 2011, p. 94).

One report also mentions political parties' lack of a gender agenda in the context of male dominance within them (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121). A report by International IDEA on political parties and gender in Africa shows that Tanzanian political parties' constitutions and manifestos do include gender provisions, although these do not necessarily relate to the parties themselves. However, it argues that as the Constitution of Tanzania stipulates a 30 per cent reserved seats quota for women in elected decision making positions, it is expected that political parties in Tanzania will comply with this quota by starting to

put it into practice within their party leadership and decision-making positions (International IDEA, 2014, p. 60).

The report provides an overview of political parties' gender provisions:

- **Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA)** – CHADEMA's constitution states that the party will ensure that the rights of women are protected and promoted. However, the International IDEA report states that it does not explain how this will be implemented (p. 60). The party's 2010 manifesto outlined a number of measures to improve women's welfare, and called for the establishment of a Women's Council of Tanzania to promote women's rights throughout the country (International IDEA, 2014, p. 44). However, women's representation in key decision making bodies within the party is less than that of men (p. 60).
- **Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)** – The ruling CCM's constitution broadly refers to equality but makes no specific mention of gender-based representation in political leadership and processes (IDEA, p. 44). However, CCM's 2010 manifesto included promoting women's political participation as one of its objectives. It also stated that it aims to achieve 50 per cent women's representation in all elective bodies by 2015 (International IDEA, 2014, p. 44). However the International IDEA report notes that CCM sets a lower target for women's representation in the party's internal leadership and decision making positions (International IDEA, 2014, p. 60).
- **Civic United Front (CUF)** – CUF's constitution states that it aims to promote and protect the rights of women. The party's 2010 manifesto stated that if elected it would adopt affirmative action measures for women to enable them to participate in decision-making bodies in political, managerial, administrative and other leadership positions. It also stated that it would enact laws to severely punish anyone found guilty of using their office to harass or discriminate against anyone because of their gender (International IDEA, 2014, p. 45).
- **National Convention for Construction and Reform–Mageuzi** – The NCCR-Mageuzi's constitution includes a specific provision on gender equality. It also provides for the right of all party members to elect and be elected to all leadership positions. The party's 2010 election manifesto called for women's representation in all elective bodies and administrative posts to stand at 50 per cent. The manifesto also stated that if elected, a woman would hold one of the top government positions¹ (International IDEA, 2014, p. 45).

One paper argues that women in Tanzania tend to support the ruling CCM. It suggests that the reason for this trend is the CCM's electoral success, which means that it has the largest proportion of special seats for women.² This in turn means that supporting the CCM can be a good option for educated women who are keen to pursue a career in politics (Babeiya, 2011, p. 94). The study also suggests that political parties tend to target women in rural areas by giving them gifts as a means to win their support. It argues that this is because women are more likely to register as voters than men (Babeiya, 2011, p. 94). The latter point is made by a number of other papers and reports on this topic (see for example: Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, 2012, p. 36).

¹ Examples cited are the positions of President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the National Assembly.

² The way in which special seats are allocated is described on pp. 2–3 of this report.

Tanzanian Women's Parliamentary Group (TWPG)

In 1997, the Tanzanian Women's Parliamentary Group (TWPG) was formed to encourage effective parliamentary participation among female MPs, to increase women's representation in parliament and to increase women's capacity to mainstream and monitor gender equality in parliamentary affairs (Yoon, 2011, p. 87). The TWPG only receives a brief mention in the literature on women's political engagement in Tanzania. It is however discussed in slightly more detail in a summary of a meeting on women in politics in Tanzania held at Chatham House in 2012. The TWPG is non-partisan, and according to Tanzanian MP and Chairperson of the TWPG Anna Margareth Abdalla, speaking at the aforementioned meeting, it was formed in a bid to combat the perception that women are more likely to lose elections (Chatham House, 2012, p. 2). Abdalla states that the TWPG is in favour of proportional representation, as it believes that the current first-past-the-post election system is biased against women (Chatham House, 2012, p. 2).

Politics at the local level

A paper produced for a conference on women's participation in politics in Tanzania and Malawi states that there is a larger gender disparity in women's representation in Local Government Councils than there is in women's representation in parliament. The data used in the paper dates back to 2000 and puts the proportion of women district councillors elected that year at 3 per cent (Tenthani et al, 2014, p. 5). However, Gender Links' 2015 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer states that women's representation in local government stood at 34 per cent in 2015.

One empirical study based on fieldwork in Kondoa Local Authority, Dodoma region in Tanzania finds that women's participation in decentralised local governance is low (Misafi, 2014, p. 87). The study finds that women's participation is usually limited to physical presence. Moreover, it finds that participation is determined by incentives, access to information, power relations, knowledge of Kiswahili and women's interest in local governance (Misafi, 2014, p. 87). The study concludes that women's participation in local governance has no impact on policy changes (Misafi, 2014, p. 87).

Another study, based on fieldwork in northern Tanzania, finds that landownership amongst Maasai women is related to power within their marital relationships. It is argued that this predicts individual agency, in turn resulting in increased women's participation in political meetings. The paper contends that when women have access to structural resources they gain power in their marital relationships and this makes them more likely to become engaged in political participation and decision-making (Grabe, 2015, p. 1). The study aims to provide evidence for the socio-psychological dimensions of women's political participation (Grabe, 2015, p. 8). The author highlights some of the limitations of her methodology, stating that it was not possible to account for women's initial interest in political activity, or for whether women with more progressive husbands were more likely to become landowners (Grabe, 2015, p. 16). The author emphasises the importance of sound methodology when investigating women's political participation (Grabe, 2015, p. 16).

3. Women in the public sector

There is very little recent literature on women's engagement in the public sector in Tanzania. The available literature generally consists of broader studies on gender, which look at women in the public sector as a sub-topic. This literature generally provides basic data without providing any form of in-depth analysis on this topic.

South African NGO Gender Links' 2014 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer notes that there is limited data on women's representation in public services in the community's member states (Gender Links, 2014, p. 91). Similarly, one study notes that while the Gender Unit of the President's Office in Tanzania collects and publishes gender disaggregated data to enable the number of women in decision-making positions in the public sector at the national, regional, and local levels to be monitored, data are not available on a consistent basis (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 118).

A 2012 Gender Diagnostic Study carried out for the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children in Tanzania states that at the time of writing 29 per cent of female public sector workers were in leadership positions. However, the 2014 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer states that 29 per cent of all public service employees are women. In terms of senior positions in the public service, it states that 18 per cent of all permanent secretaries are women³ (Gender Links, 2014, p. 91). The 2012 Gender Diagnostic Study notes that the 2003 Public Service Regulations state that 'where a man and a woman are equally competent, preference should be given to a woman' (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, 2012, p. 35).

When breaking down the public sector into categories, there is even less data available. According to Gender Links there is no data available on the representation of women in the Tanzanian military (Gender Links, 2015, p. 277). However, an earlier report by the same NGO does note that there are women in the Tanzanian armed forces, and that they are not discriminated against in the armed forces' recruitment policy (Gender Links, 2014, p. 284). The report also notes that the Tanzania Police Reform Programme includes gender mainstreaming (Gender Links, 2014, p. 284). It finds that women make up 19 per cent of the police force (Gender Links, 2014, p. 286). The same figure is cited in the NGO's 2015 report, which also discusses the Tanzania Police Female Network (TPFNET). TPFNET mapped gender and children's desks at police stations in Tanzania in 2012/2013. 417 such desks have been established, but their quality varies considerably (Gender Links, 2015, p. 287). It is not clear to what extent the desks are staffed by female police officers. The report does not provide figures for Tanzania on women's representation in the prison services, highlighting the lack of data available on women's representation in prison services in the majority of the SADC's member states (Gender Links, 2014, p. 288).

One study notes that women generally hold the lower positions in public services. It finds this to be true even in sectors which it describes as female dominated, such as healthcare. The study uses data from 1995, which shows that 7-15 per cent of doctors, dentists, and pharmacists were female, while 79-99 per cent of nurses, health attendants and maternal aides were female. It does not provide more recent statistics but notes that there has been little change in the situation at the time of writing (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 121). Similarly, another study notes that the majority of women in the public sector work as secretaries, nurses, midwives, telephone operators and teachers. It attributes this trend to women's low level of education (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, 2012, p. 37).

One study finds that women's engagement in public education in Tanzania is greater than in other parts of the public sector. It notes that in 2006, 47 per cent of teaching staff (excluding higher education) were female. 42 per cent of inspectors were female. In the administration of the education sector, 56 per cent of the staff were female (Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008, p. 135). More recent data on women's representation in public education was not found during the course of the research undertaken for this report.

³ This figure is not comparable to the figure for women in leadership positions provided in the 2012 Gender Diagnostic Study, as the latter looks at women in all leadership positions, not just permanent secretaries.

4. References

- Babeiya, E. (2011). Multiparty elections and party support in Tanzania. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 47-1, 83–100. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021909611418309>
- Chatham House. (2012). *Building inclusive democracy: Gender and political decision-making in Tanzania (Meeting summary)*. London: Chatham House. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/181679>
- Gender Links. (2015). *SADC Gender protocol: 2015 Barometer*. Johannesburg: Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance. Retrieved from: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/sadc-research>
- Gender Links. (2014). *SADC Gender protocol: 2014 Barometer*. Johannesburg: Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance. Retrieved from: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/sadc-research>
- Grabe, S. (2015). Participation: Structural and relational power and Maasai women's political subjectivity in Tanzania. *Feminism and Psychology*, 0, 1-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0959353515591369>
- International IDEA. (2014). *Political parties in Africa through a gender lens*. Stockholm: IDEA. Retrieved from: <http://www.idea.int/publications/political-parties-in-africa-through-a-gender-lens/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageID=61801>
- Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, The United Republic of Tanzania. (2012). *A national gender diagnostic study in Tanzania: Final report*. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children. Retrieved from: <http://tanzania.um.dk/en/~media/Tanzania/Documents/Gender%20Equality%20and%20Womens%20Empowerment%20II%20Final/Gender%20Diagnostic%20Study-Final.pdf>
- Misafi, H.P. (2014). Women's participation in decentralized local governance: the case of pastoral and non-pastoral women in Kondoa local authority, Tanzania. *Afrika Fokus*, 27(2), 87–97. www.afrikafokus.eu/file/65
- Seppänen, M., & Virtanen, P. (2008). *Corruption, Poverty and Gender: With case studies of Nicaragua and Tanzania*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Retrieved from: <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentId=130591&nodeId=15445&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>
- Tenthani, K., Kafuko, B., & Madsen, H.L. (2014). *Women in political parties: WIP approach and experiences*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy. Retrieved from: <http://dipd.dk/dipdpublications/>
- Yoon, M. Y. (2013). Special seats for women in parliament and democratization: The case of Tanzania. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 41, 143–149. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.05.005>
- Yoon, M.Y. (2011). More women in the Tanzanian legislature: Do numbers matter? *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29(1), 83–98. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2011.539011>

Expert contributors

Bella Bird, World Bank

Mi Yung Yoon, Hanover College

Suggested citation

Strachan, A.L. (2015). *Women in politics and the public sector in Tanzania* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1286). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

About this report

This report is based on four days of desk-based research. It was prepared for the UK Government's Department for International Development, © DFID Crown Copyright 2015. This report is licensed under the Open Government Licence (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence). The views expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GSDRC, its partner agencies or DFID.

The GSDRC Research Helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of key literature and of expert thinking in response to specific questions on governance, social development, humanitarian and conflict issues. Its concise reports draw on a selection of the best recent literature available and on input from international experts. Each GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report is peer-reviewed by a member of the GSDRC team. Search over 400 reports at www.gsdrc.org/go/research-helpdesk. Contact: helpdesk@gsdrc.org.