

WOMEN AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN TANZANIA: EMPOWERMENT OR INCLUSION?

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Abstract

This article attempts to address one important question, which is, have women in Tanzania been politically empowered as a result of new democratic institutions and processes? More specifically, the analysis intends to establish whether or not broader political changes toward democratization in Tanzania have any effect on women's civic competence. The focus on civic competence stems from the fact that citizens' level of civic competence is regarded to be among the crucial factors influencing performance of democracy.

The findings of this article have shown that rather than being empowered to actively participate in influencing the policy-making process, women are largely reacting to the way these new institutions want them to behave, that is, being voters, members of political parties as well as members of self-help economic groups. As a consequence, women have yet to be regarded as agents of change by democratizing the existing institutions to reflect their needs and concerns.

1. Introduction

Women's disadvantaged position in political sphere has been widely observed not only in Tanzania but also throughout the world. In Tanzania, it has been evidenced that compared to men, women's level of civic competence is indeed very low. For instance, studies have shown that compared to men, a majority of women are politically less informed, do not follow news on public affairs, do not understand local and national political issues, do not participate in politics, and less likely to take action in case of violation of their rights.¹ In addition, women are widely under-represented in various organs of decision-making at different levels. For instance, among the 27 cabinet ministers, only 4 are women. Similarly, out of 24 permanent secretaries of various ministries, only 5 are women. Also, among the 26 regional commissioners and 95 district commissioners, only 2 and 12 of them are women respectively. Overall, women constitute only about 16 percent of senior civil servants in Tanzania.²

In recent times, however, there have been some tremendous changes geared toward advancing women's issues and concerns. The wave of democratization sweeping across

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many African countries seems to be creating political and economic space for women's empowerment. In Tanzania, several changes have taken place since the introduction of a multi-party competitive system in 1992. More than 15 political parties are on the scene engaged in various activities including recruitment and mobilization of electoral support as well as build their organizational capability. Two general multi-party competitive elections were held in 1995 and 2000, allowing voters to choose among different political parties and candidates. Also, the same period has witnessed an increasing number of civic associations ranging from policy advocacy associations to self-help economic groups. Indeed, 80 percent of all NGOs in Tanzania are women's organizations.³

In parliamentary representation, though still the minority, the number of women has also increased in recent times. In the case of elected members of parliament (MPs), the number has increased from one MP in 1985, 2 MPs in 1990, 8 MPs in 1995 to 12 MPs in the year 2000. In addition to this, more women have entered the parliament through a quota system which was introduced by the government in 1985. Through this system, women secured 21 seats (10.2%), 19 seats (8.4%), 37 seats (15.5%) and 48 seats (20%) of total parliamentary seats in 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000 elections respectively.⁴ This study sets to find out whether these broader political changes toward democratization have any effect on women's civic competence. That is, has the gender gap in civic competence been narrowed as a result of new democratic institutions and processes?

The focus on civic competence stems from the fact that citizens' level of civic competence is regarded to be among crucial factors influencing performance of democracy. As Robert Dahl points out, "if democracy is to work, it would seem to require a certain level of political competence on the part of its citizens."⁵ Civic/political competence is defined as "individuals ability to participate actively in the political system."⁶ Individuals civic competence is manifested through various ways including, voting, high level of political interest, information and knowledge, opinion formation and organizational membership. In newly emerging democracies like Tanzania, citizens' civic competence is only beginning to take its shape, influencing people's orientations, political institutions and processes, as well as democratic functioning.

The most important question here is why then do we care about gender factor in assessing citizens' civic competence in Tanzania? First, constituting more than half of the Tanzania's population, women do shape the nature of politics through voting. On average, about 48 percent of voters in Tanzania are women.⁷ As a significant part of the voting bloc in the country, women's level of political competence, especially as it relates to information about political parties, candidates and their programmes becomes an important determining factor not only on the composition of the government but also on the performance of the government. Secondly, women constitute a significant section of the population engaging in the production process. This makes it imperative to gauge their political orientation and attitudes towards various aspects in socio-economic and political spheres.

In addressing these issues, the article uses survey data collected in 1994 and 1999.⁸ The 1994 survey was carried out only two years after the introduction of multi-party system in Tanzania. The 1999 survey was conducted seven years after the adoption of the multi-party politics in order to gauge peoples' political orientation and political competence. In order to assess the development of women's level of civic competence over time, a gender-based analysis will be done by comparing the findings from both the 1994 survey and the 1999 survey. However, a point of caution should be mentioned that the two surveys used different samples. Hence, the comparison should be tentative, enabling us to observe the general pattern and trends in the development of citizens' civic competence.

2. Theoretical Discussion

While feminists agree on the ubiquity of inequality between men and women, there is hardly a consensus about the origins of this inequality. Unlike other feminist theories, radical feminism attributes gender inequality to patriarchy created as a result of biological differences between men and women, and that women have always had a subordinate position in all societies.⁹ Other theories like liberal feminism, Marxist and Socialist feminism, as well as feminist political economy approach, situate the origins of gender inequalities in particular historical events. For instance to Marxist and socialists feminists, it is the development of capitalism that explains women's oppression in modern societies.¹⁰

To liberal feminists, the core of the problem lies not so much in the structures and institutions of the society but largely in the culture and the attitudes of individuals. In this way, gender roles are created as a result of socialization, which in turn produce different expectations of men and women.

Among these theories, it is the feminist political economy approach that seems to provide a good leverage in understanding the dynamics of gender inequality particularly in the third world.¹¹ The remaining three theories carry with them some serious weaknesses. Whereas the radical feminism is criticized for being too simplistic by reducing every aspect of gender inequality to patriarchy, the Marxist and socialist feminism face a problem of attributing gender inequality to economies and relations of production. Moreover, liberal feminism is accused of giving more focus on the individual and groups and ignore wider societal structures. As Williams argues, liberal feminism, "fails to question the inequalities of wealth and power embedded in the society."¹² According to the feminist political economy approach however, gender relations are conceptualized by looking at politics, economics, religion, culture and law as mutually constitutive and in turn creating inequality between men and women. As stamp points out, instead of focusing on economic features only, this approach analyzes the intricate inter-working of economic, political and ideological feature of the society.

Thus, by applying the feminist political economy approach, this article attributes gender inequality in Tanzania to complex networks of socio-economic, political and cultural

dimensions. Similarly, the article acknowledges the fact that women as a group are not homogeneous but rather comprising individuals with varied levels of opportunities and disadvantages. Furthermore, the literature on public attitudes has shown that part of the political behavior may be attributed to gender. The effect of gender as an explanatory variable seems to be intervened by other variables including education, socio-economic status, unequal opportunity structures, and other political and socio-cultural factors. It is this pattern of interaction of factors that seem to influence women's level of civic competence and their general attitudes towards politics.

3. Findings and Analysis

In this section, the findings from 1994 and 1999 surveys are analyzed and compared. The objective is to assess the main patterns and trends in women's level of civic competence. In order to establish the women's level of civic competence over time, the findings are analyzed by doing a gender-based comparison. The individual's level of civic competence is measured by the following variables or indicators:

- 1) Political participation measured in terms of party membership, voting, membership in civic organizations, and in decision-making at the local level.
- 2) Political information measured by one's exposure to news on mass media about public affairs.
- 3) Understanding of citizenship obligations and government responsibilities.
- 4) Political orientation towards political change from one-party to multi-party politics.

4.1 Political Participation and Gender Gap

Political participation constitutes an important element in enhancing citizens' civic competence. It is expected that as people participate, they tend to acquire and appreciate the values and practices of democracy. More importantly, it is through participation that citizens can have an opportunity to influence policy processes and outcomes. In this study, political participation is assessed by looking at whether a respondent is a member of a political party and a civic association. Also, individual's level of political participation is assessed by looking whether he/she participates in voting and in making decisions at the local level.

4.1.1 Party Membership

First, respondents were asked whether they are members of political parties (see table 1). Among the 3,066 respondents who reported that they belonged to political parties in 1994, about 55 percent were men and 45 percent were women. Thus, men outnumbered women by 10 percent. Gender gap can also be observed on the size of those who were not members of political parties. Whereas 57 percent of those who said they did not belong to any political party were women, only 43 percent were men.

Hence, less women than men were members of political parties and more women than men were not members of any political party.

Table 1: Gender and Party Membership in 1994 Survey (Percentages and Actual Number of Respondents in Brackets)

Gender	Not Members	Members	CCM Members	Opposition Members
Men	43.0 (719)	54.9 (1684)	54.2 (1573)	67.3 (111)
Women	57.0 (954)	45.1 (1382)	45.8 (1328)	32.7 (54)
Total	100 (1673)	100 (3066)	100 (2901)	100 (165)

Another important point to note from table 1 is that, more women belonged to the ruling party (46%) than to the opposition parties (33%). Indeed, men were more likely to be members of the opposition than women. Among the respondents who said that they belonged to opposition parties, 67.3 percent were men and only 32.7 percent were women. In general, men outnumbered women in terms of party membership in the ruling party and the opposition by about 8.4 percent and 34.6 percent respectively. The gender gap is four times bigger in the opposition membership than that of the ruling party membership.

In any case, this survey was done only two years after the introduction of a multi-party system in the country. As a result, the newly emerging opposition parties were yet to mobilize significant support among the general population. With the majority of women still lagging behind in terms of political information about the new parties, women were less likely to join political parties of which they had very little or no information about.

This is evidenced by the fact that compared to men, a majority of women in the sample (61%) reported to have a low level of political information about the new political parties.¹³

Five years later, the pattern of party membership seemed to have undergone remarkable changes as far as gender gap is concerned as table 2 shows.

Table 2: Gender and Party Membership: 1999 Survey

Gender	Not Members	Members	CCM Member	Opposition Members
Men	50.1 (349)	50.2 (810)	49.9 (715)	52.2 (95)
Women	49.9 (348)	49.8 (804)	50.1 (717)	47.8 (87)
Total	100 (697)	100 (1614)	100 (1432)	100 (182)

As table 2 clearly indicates, the 1994 observed gap in party membership between men and women seemed to have disappeared in 1999. Women joined different political parties in more or less the same number just as men. The percentage of those who reported that they belonged to political parties was equally divided with 50 percent men and about 50 percent women. The same trend could be observed for the non-party members category. A half of the respondents who reported that they did not belong to any political party were men (50.1%) and a half of them were women (49.9%). Figure 1a and 1b show the picture more clearly.

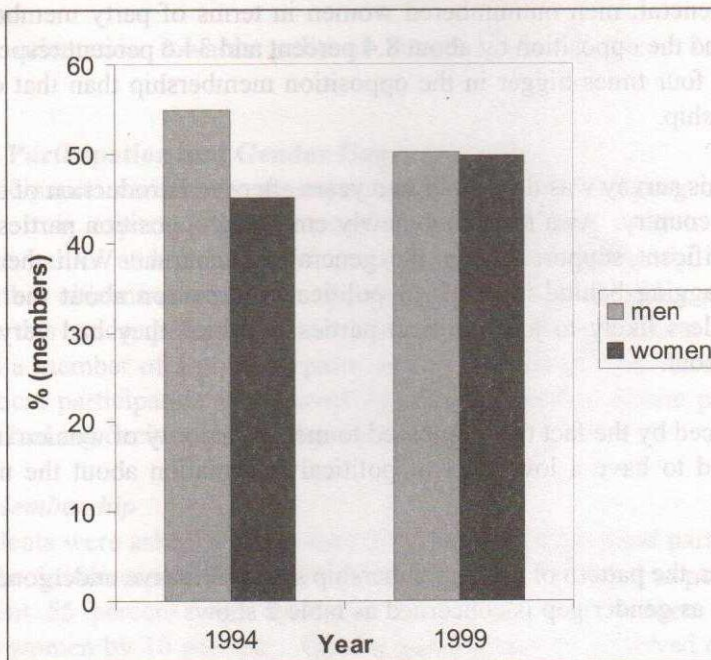


Figure 1a: Gender and Party Membership

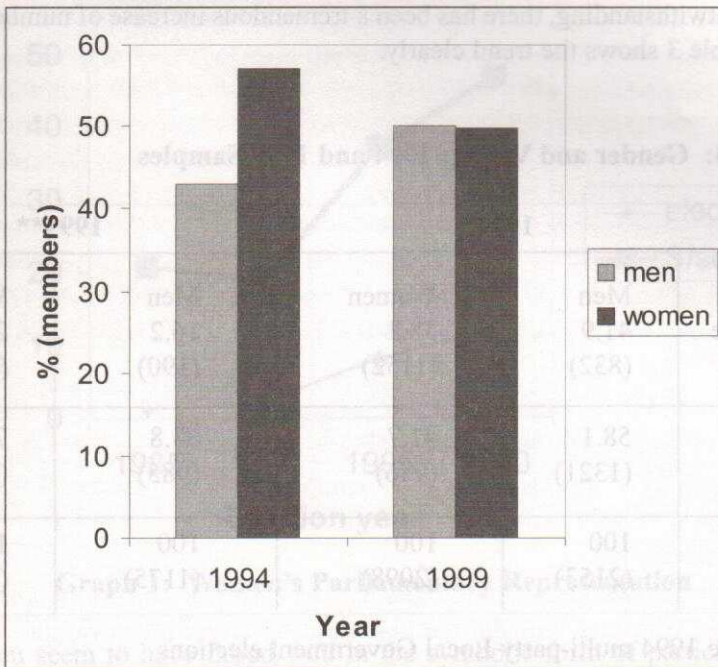


Figure 1b: Gender and Non-Party Members

Moreover, more women (50%) just as men (49.9%) reported that they belonged to the ruling party, CCM. Also, the gender gap in membership to the opposition parties was increasingly narrowed. Whereas in the 1994 sample, men outnumbered women in joining opposition political parties by about 35 percent, in the 1999 sample, women lagged behind men by only 4.4 percent.

This change in party membership could be attributed to the subsequent changes that were taking place in the country's political landscape. As already stated, the period between 1994 and 1999 witnessed a high degree of intensity in political parties' campaigns, mobilisation and consolidation. In addition, the 1995 general multi-party elections did play a role of introducing and publicize different political parties, candidates and their programmes to the public. Efforts by various non-governmental organizations in providing civic education to the public particularly women could be one of the contributing factors to the increasing number of women as members of political parties. Considering their numeric electoral support, women were strategically targeted by various political actors to join political parties as members and as voters.

4.1.2 Gender Gap and Voting

The same pattern can be observed with regards to voting trends. In general, women tend to vote less frequently than men. In Tanzania, while constituting a slight majority of the population, on average, women form 48 percent of total voters. However, the

gender gap notwithstanding, there has been a tremendous increase of number of women as voters. Table 3 shows the trend clearly.

Table 3: Gender and Voting: 1994 and 1999 Samples

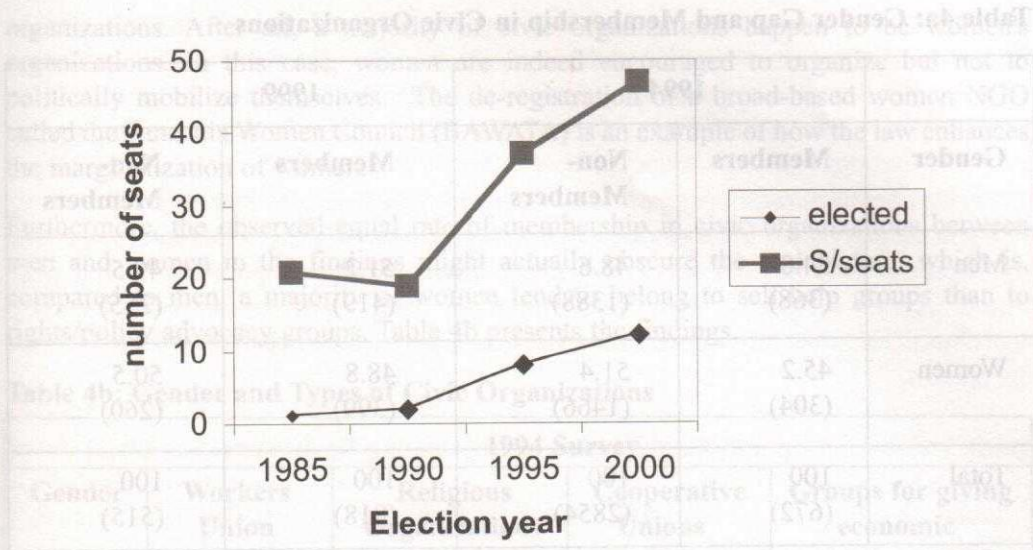
	1994*		1999**	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Did not vote	41.9 (832)	58.3 (1152)	16.2 (190)	24.6 (288)
Did Vote	58.1 (1321)	41.7 (946)	83.8 (985)	75.4 (882)
Total	100 (2153)	100 (2098)	100 (1175)	100 (1170)

* Voting in the 1994 multi-party Local Government elections

** Voting in the 1995 multi-party general elections.

Whereas 58 percent of women respondents did not vote in the 1994 local government elections, only about 25 percent of them reported that they did not vote in the 1995 general elections. That is to say, more women did show up for voting in the 1995 elections. As table 3 indicates, more than three-quarters of women respondents said that they exercised their rights to vote in the 1995 general elections.

The findings show however that even when women participate in elections, they do that not as candidates but largely as party members and voters. With the electoral competition getting stiffer as a result of the new multi-party system, it has proved to be increasingly difficult for women to secure various elective posts. It should be noted that although the number of women MPs has been increasing over the years, it is the number of special seats women MPs rather than that of the directly elected MPs that has significantly increased.¹⁴ Graph 1 shows the trend more clearly.



Graph 1: Women's Parliamentary Representation

Thus, women seem to have fared well in the symbolic form of participation, which makes them express their support towards the prevailing political system. This support is expressed largely through voting for either the ruling party or the opposition. With regards to instrumental form of participation, which is geared toward obtaining a specific policy outcome, the findings from both surveys indicate that women still lag behind in terms of having adequate tools such as political information in order to influence policy process.¹⁵

4.1.3 Gender Gap and Membership in Civic Organizations

Joining civic organizations is one indicator of the existence of civic competence among the citizens. A strong and active network of civic organizations can actually create a vibrant civil society which can play a 'watch dog' function in making the government responsive to peoples' concerns and demands. As Harbeson points out that civil society can be an agent of change, a broker between government and society, a regulator of the processes of participation and a representative of particular interests.¹⁶

During the 1994 survey, only two years after the adoption of plural politics in Tanzania, membership in civic organizations was still very low. About 58 percent (2854) of all the respondents reported that they did not belong to any civic organization. Clearly, this was a reflection of the impact of a single-party rule regarding freedom of association, whereby all independent civic organizations were either suppressed or co-opted into the ruling party structures. Of the few that said were members of civic organizations (17%), about 55 percent (368) were men and 45 percent (304) were women. Hence, men outnumbered women by about 10 percent as table 4a indicates.

Table 4a: Gender Gap and Membership in Civic Organizations

Gender	1994		1999	
	Members	Non-Members	Members	Non-Members
Men	54.8 (368)	48.6 (1388)	51.2 (419)	49.5 (255)
Women	45.2 (304)	51.4 (1466)	48.8 (399)	50.5 (260)
Total	100 (672)	100 (2854)	100 (818)	100 (515)

Table 4a further demonstrates that the gender gap between men and women was very narrow for those who said they did not belong to any civic organization. In the 1999 sample, the gender gap in membership in civic organizations seemed to have been greatly narrowed. As the findings in table 4a show, men outnumbered women by only 2.4 percent. Again, the percentage of those who were not members was equally divided between men (49.5%) and women (50.5%). It is interesting to note that gender does not seem to be the explanatory factor among those who did not belong to civic organizations.

In general, it is important to note that membership in civic organizations rose significantly from about 17 percent in 1994 sample to 72 percent in the 1999 sample. Indeed, about 1500 NGOs were registered during the same period. As already mentioned, many of these NGOs are women's organizations dealing with gender related issues. Activities of these gender-based NGOs range from running income-generating projects, raising public awareness on gender issues, lobbying for gender-sensitive policies, to pressuring the government to be responsive to gender issues and concerns. A few of these organizations have managed to influence national policies by pressing the parliament to enact gender-sensitive bills, e.g. the Sexual Offense Act of 1998, the Land Act of 1999, etc. In addition, gender based organizations have been on the forefront in pressuring the government to provide for increased freedom and autonomy for civic associations to function properly.

Despite their increasing number, some of these NGOs face various obstacles which tend to negatively affect their operations. The current law regarding registration and functioning of civic organizations tends to somehow perpetuate the already existing gender gap in civic competence even further. The law prohibits any registered civic organization from engaging in a 'political' arena. While the law makes no reference to gender, its applicability seems to have adverse effects to women-based civic

organizations. After all, a majority of civic organizations happen to be women's organizations. In this case, women are indeed encouraged to organize but not to politically mobilize themselves. The de-registration of a broad-based women NGO called the Tanzania Women Council (BAWATA) is an example of how the law enhances the marginalization of women.

Furthermore, the observed equal rate of membership in civic organizations between men and women in the findings might actually obscure the real picture, which is, compared to men, a majority of women tend to belong to self-help groups than to rights/policy advocacy groups. Table 4b presents the findings.

Table 4b: Gender and Types of Civic Organizations

1994 Survey				
Gender	Workers Union	Religious Organizations	Cooperative Unions	Groups for giving economic assistance (self-help groups)
Men	67.8 (80)	43.6 (51)	67.4 (89)	38.6 (39)
Women	32.2 (38)	56.4 (66)	32.6 (43)	61.4 (62)
1999 Survey				
Men	62.2 (51)	47.6 (80)	53.8 (56)	44.1 (60)
Women	37.8 (31)	52.4 (88)	46.2 (48)	55.9 (76)

As table 4b indicates, in both surveys, more women than men reported that they belonged to self-help economic groups and to religious organizations. On the contrary, more men than women said that they belonged to workers' unions as well as to cooperative unions. Although the overall membership in trade unions and cooperatives has declined in recent years, men still seem to constitute the majority of the current membership. A number of factors can explain this trend. First, a majority of those employed in the formal sector are men and therefore more men than women happen to be the members of trade unions. Second, more women than men were reported to be members of self-help groups. This might be due to the fact that, with the increasing economic difficulties associated with the effect of structural adjustment programmes, women have been forced to engage into various income-generating activities to make

the ends meet. Also, inability to secure formal employment among many women has instead compelled them to join the informal economy. However, unlike self-help groups, workers' unions and cooperatives are strategically located to influence public policies either through strikes (for the case of workers' union) or collective bargaining.

4.1.4 Gender Gap and Participation in Decision-Making at the Local level

The gender gap on the level of participation in decision-making at the local level was significantly wide in both surveys. Unlike other avenues of political involvement where women seemed to have fared relatively well, participation in influencing decisions at one's locality, seemed to have been largely a men's domain. Table 5 shows the pattern.

Table 5 Gender Gap and Participation in Influencing Decisions at the Local Level

Participated in influencing decisions in your locality?	1994			1999		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Yes	71.4 (1057)	28.6 (424)	100 (1481)	60.7 (635)	39.3 (410)	100 (1045)
No	42.0 (1352)	58.0 (1902)	100 (3254)	44.5 (450)	55.5 (561)	100 (1011)

In the 1994 sample, whereas three-quarters (71.4%) of the respondents who reported that they had participated in influencing decisions in their locality were men, only about one-third (29%) of them were women. Indeed, men outnumbered women by about 43 percent. While the rate of participation seemed to have increased among women by about 11 percent in the 1999 survey, women still lagged behind men by a substantial percentage of about 22 percent. Note however that the size of those who said they have not participated is also quite high among men and women as well. Yet, women still constituted the majority in the 1994 survey (58%) and in the 1999 survey (55.5%). The low level of meaningful participation among women is exacerbated by their poor economic base. As the 1999 survey shows, among those who said they did not have any source of income, 34 percent were men and about 66 percent were women.

4.2. Gender and Political Information (Media exposure)

Individuals' level of media exposure to public affairs is used as a measure of political information. However, it is important to point out that being exposed to media communication does not always ensure retention of ideas. Despite of this limitation,

media exposure is one important means that introduces an individual to political messages. The findings from the two surveys indicate that women are still lagging far behind men in their rate of exposure to political communication. In the 1994 sample, only about one-third of the respondents who said they follow news on public affairs regularly were women. Instead, a majority of respondents who reported following news regularly were men, constituting 66 percent of this particular category. In addition, as table 6 shows, women constitute a majority of those who reported that they never follow accounts about political affairs (61%).

Table 6: Gender Gap and Political Information (Media Exposure)

Gender	1994			1999		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Following accounts of political affairs on media						
Regularly	66.2 (676)	33.8 (345)	100 (1021)	66.7 (518)	33.3 (259)	100 (777)
Occasionally	53.8 (996)	46.2 (855)	100 (1851)	47.1 (377)	52.9 (424)	100 (801)
Never	39.2 (712)	60.8 (1106)	100 (1818)	37.0 (284)	63.0 (484)	100 (768)

The 1994 pattern of exposure to political communication seemed to have persisted even in the 1999 sample. As table 6 demonstrates, in both surveys, the rate of regular media exposure among men respondents is twice the size (66%) that of women (33%). Moreover, more women (63%) than men (37%) reported of not following accounts of public affairs at all. Indeed, the percentage of women who reported not following political affairs has slightly increased by 2 percent only from about 61 percent in 1994 to 63 percent in 1999.

In addition, men outnumbered women in the rate of exposure to political communication even after the control for the effect of education. For instance, in the 1994 sample, among the male respondents with secondary education, 41.4 percent of them reported that they watch news regularly. For female respondents with the same level of education, only 13.7 percent said they follow public affairs regularly. Similarly, within the same level of education it was women rather than men who constituted the majority of those who never followed accounts about political affairs.

Despite the low level of exposure to political communication through media among a majority of women, there are variations among women themselves. For instance, among the women respondents in the Mainland sample, about 37 percent (374) reported that they never follow accounts of political affairs on media. In Zanzibar however, two-thirds of women respondents (61%) belonged to the category of those who said they never follow accounts of political affairs on mass media. Indeed, variations among women might be attributed to factors such as education, socio-economic status, socio-cultural factors or surrounding political context.

4.3 Gender Gap and Understanding of Citizenship Obligations and Government Responsibilities

Making evaluative judgments about the performance of the political system requires knowledge about citizens' rights and obligations as well as responsibilities of the government and other institutions. In the two surveys, respondents were asked whether they know their obligations as citizens. Similarly, they were also asked on their understanding about ways or means of which the government ought to be responsible to its citizens and on how to make the government accountable for its actions.

It is important to mention that in both surveys, respondents' understanding of their obligations as citizens and of the government's responsibilities was remarkably high. About 77 percent of the respondents in the 1994 sample, and 74 percent of the 1999 sample reported that they understand their obligations to the state/government. It is interesting to note however that understanding of citizens' obligations seemed to be somehow different in those two periods. For a significant majority of respondents in 1994 survey, to bring about development and to protect the country were the most cited obligations. In the 1999 sample however, paying tax and act in accordance with the law were the most cited obligations. Indeed, paying tax was not mentioned at all in the 1994 sample. This variation might be attributed to a changing political and economic system from a single-party and state-led economic system, which emphasized on the role of collective volunteerism in national building and patriotism to a multi-party, liberal-market system which puts emphasis on private-run economy, individual responsibility, and the rule of law.

Despite the foregoing encouraging picture, the gender gap on the understanding of citizens' obligations remains significantly wide. Men constituted the majority of those with knowledge about obligations and duties. Table 7a and 7b show the pattern clearly.

Table 7a: Gender Gap and Knowledge About Citizenship Obligations

Citizens' obligations to the state?	1994			1999		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Do not know	31.1 (321)	68.9 (712)	100 (1033)	35.2 (219)	64.8 (403)	100 (622)
Do know	55.9 (1891)	44.1 (1494)	100 (3385)	55.1 (977)	44.9 (796)	100 (1773)

Table 7b: Gender and Knowledge About Government Responsibilities

How can the Government be responsible to its citizens?	1994			1999		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Do not know	25.6 (244)	74.4 (710)	100 (954)	34.6 (257)	65.4 (485)	100 (742)
Do know	56.5 (2224)	43.5 (1712)	100 (3936)	56.8 (939)	43.2 (714)	100 (1653)

Furthermore, more women than men belonged to a group of the respondents who said they did not know their citizenship obligations as well as the government responsibilities to its citizens. Indeed, this is another area where women seemed to have consistently lagged behind men in both surveys. Time factor does not seem to have narrowed the gender gap in any significant way. For instance, as table 7a indicates, among those who did not know of their citizenship obligations, women constituted 69 percent and 65 percent in the 1994 and the 1999 sample respectively.

Moreover, there seemed to be an interaction between respondents' level of exposure to political communication and their understanding of citizenship obligations and government duties. For instance, among the women respondents in the 1999 sample, who said they did not know of their citizenship obligations (65%), 50 percent (202) of them are those who never follow up accounts about political affairs on media. Thus, having inadequate knowledge of both citizens' obligations and government responsibilities makes it difficult for the majority of women to actively participate in decision-making or challenge the abuse of power.

In general, the findings seem to present an ambivalent picture as far as women's empowerment is concerned. Rather than providing an arena for women's participation in decision making in their localities as well as understanding of their rights, obligations and public affairs, the ongoing democratization process has largely facilitated the inclusion of women into the mainstream form of participation namely, joining political parties and voting. Thus, on the one hand, there is an encouraging story of a significantly reduced gender gap in terms of party membership and voting pattern. Membership in civic organizations also shows women join them just as men do. On the other hand however, despite of the move towards democratization, the findings have shown that women still lag far behind men in terms of participation in decision-making at the local level, the extent of media exposure to political communication, and in terms of knowledge or understanding of citizenship obligations and government responsibilities. It is in these areas where the gender gap between men and women is still significantly wide.

Furthermore, while they have increasingly become members of various civic organizations, the findings have shown that, unlike men, a majority of women do belong to self-help income generating groups. Rather than focusing on influencing political decisions in their local communities, a majority of women's groups find themselves pre-occupied with 'bread and butter' issues. Indeed, the more they get involved with solving immediate economical problems, women are likely not to have ample time to follow accounts of political affairs either through watching television news, listening to radio broadcasts, reading newspapers or attending public rallies and meetings.

4.4 Conclusion

As stated earlier in the introduction, this study intended to address the question on whether broader institutional changes accompanying democratization process have indeed enhanced women's level of civic competence. As the study's findings have demonstrated, rather than empowering women to actively participate in influencing the policy process, the trend clearly shows that women are reacting to how these institutions want them to behave, that is, being voters, members of political parties as well as members of self-help economic groups. As a consequence, women have yet to be regarded as agents of change, that is, democratizing the existing institutions to reflect their needs and concerns. They have yet to find new ways of 'doing politics' as Waylen puts it, in order to be politically empowered.¹⁸ This can only be achieved when women as a popular movement starts to induce and inform institutional changes to reflect their concerns and broader democratic demands.

Endnotes

1. Ruth Meena (1997), "Gender Difference in Political Orientation" in S. Mushi, et. al., *Tanzania's Political Culture: A Baseline Survey*.
2. UNECA study on Governance in Tanzania (2001), "Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability", p. 30-31. See also Legal and Human Rights Center (2004), *Tanzania Human Rights Report 2004*, p. 42; United Republic of Tanzania (2004), *The Economic Survey 2004*, p. 104
3. Aili Mari Tripp (2000); "Political Reform in Tanzania: The Struggle for Associational Autonomy," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 200.
4. TEMCO (2000), *The 2000 General Elections in Tanzania*, p. 130-132.
5. Robert Dahl (1992); "The Problem of Civic Competence". *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 4, p.45.
6. Samuel Mushi, et. al. (1997); *Tanzania's Political Culture*, p. 11.
7. TEMCO (2000), *The 2000 General Elections in Tanzania*.
8. Both surveys were conducted by the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Dar es Salaam. The 1994 survey comprised about 5000 respondents drawn from all the regions in Tanzania. The 1999 survey consisted of about 2400 respondents drawn from 20 regions of Tanzania.
9. Michael Haralambos and Martin Holbon (1991), *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*; see also Pat Williams (2000), "State Women and Democratization in Africa" in O. Nnolli, *Government and Politics in Africa*.
10. Haralambos and Holborn (1991), op. cit., p. 549.
11. P. Stamp (1989), *Technology, Gender and Power in Africa*, P. Williams (2000), op. cit.
12. Pat Williams (2000), op. cit., p. 665.
13. In the 1994 survey, respondents were asked to mention five names of political parties and their respective national leaders.
14. The constitution of the United Republic provides that women MPs must constitute between 20 - 30 percent of total number of MPs. With the introduction of the multi-party system, the special seats for women are apportioned to political parties in relation to the number of seats won by each political party.

15. For a discussion on symbolic and instrumental participation, see Margaret Conway (2000), *Political Participation in the United States*, CQ Press, Washington, D.C.
16. John Harbeson; et. al. (1994), *Civil Society and the State in Africa*.
17. Andrew Kiondo (1999), "The History and Current Status of Civil Society in Tanzania". A conference paper.
18. Georgina Waylen (1996), *Gender in Third World Politics*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.