Helpdesk Research Report: Gender and Elections in Afghanistan
Date: 04.09.09

Query: Please identify: i) literature on the barriers and opportunities for female participation in elections in Afghanistan; and ii) lessons learnt from gender work in other countries' elections commissions – particularly in fragile/conflict-affected countries and/or in Islamic countries – focusing particularly on women's political and electoral participation.

Enquirer: DFID South Asia Department

1. **Overview**
2. **Barriers to women's political participation in Afghanistan**
3. **Lessons learned – General**
4. **Voter identification**
5. **Electoral systems**
6. **Political parties**
7. **Quotas and reserved seats**
8. **Participation in parliament**
9. **Voter education**
10. **Voter recruitment**
11. **Additional information**

1. Overview

Press coverage around the recent presidential elections in Afghanistan emphasised the low turnout of women voters, highlighting the shortage of female staff at polling stations, proxy voting by male family members, and the threat of retributive violence against women voters and candidates as key factors. However, the academic literature is largely silent on these issues, both in the Afghanistan context and more generally. Deniz Kandiyoti (2007, see below) argues that relatively little is known about the *actual* dynamics of women's access to the polls and their opportunities to stand as candidates. Most studies of women's political participation focus on the problem of low levels of female representation in government. This stream of research considers the structural and cultural conditions that make it difficult for women to be nominated as candidates and to win political office, as well as the behaviour of female parliamentarians once in government.

This literature finds that there are many obstacles to women's equal participation in elections, including gender stereotypes, psychological and traditional barriers, and inequalities in education, training and resources. Also, political parties, ethnic groups or clans can often be dominated by men, leaving little opportunity for women to enter the political process through established political groups. Other barriers may be built into political structures, including certain types of electoral systems or candidacy restrictions based on educational qualifications or other factors.

In Afghanistan, some of the main issues relating to women's participation in the elections include:

➢ Disparity in voting registration rates for women in different provinces: In 2004, the UN estimated that in the south of the country, only 19 percent of registered voters were women. In Uruzgan province, this number was only 9 percent, in Zabul province 10 percent, and in Helmand Province 16 percent. In the 2004 presidential elections, only two percent of women voted in the elections Helmand province; in Uruzgan province only seven percent of women voted.

➢ The influence of men over voting choices: The practice of "family voting" is widespread. This involves women being led into polling booths by their husbands who effectively do the voting for them. The results of a major public opinion poll on the upcoming 2004 national elections, found that the participation of women would be heavily influenced by men. Seventy-two percent of Afghans believed that men should advise women on who to vote for (see Charney, 2004 below). In addition, militia commanders and warlords were expected to significantly influence voting in their territories.

➢ Separate polling stations: During the presidential election, although separate polling stations for men and women were set up, insufficient recruiting of female poll workers led election officials to staff some female polling stations with older men. Many female voters are thought to have stayed away as a result.

➢ Voter education: There are concerns that potential women (and male) voters do not understand the democratic process and their rights vis-à-vis elections. Some analysts note that women (and particularly those living in the rural areas) are being marginalised from voter-education projects because of both the logistic difficulties of reaching them and fears that involving rural women could upset conservative sensibilities in the provinces and impact the process of reconstruction. Women activists, particularly those who attempt to educate and mobilise women around issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment, also continue to face harassment, threats, loss of livelihood, and death. Kandiyoti (2007) warns against a predominant focus on civic education, however, arguing that the sociocultural constraints that keep women from voting or standing as candidates cannot be changed through the quick fix of training or civic education. She writes: "Longer-term engagement with local communities and a thorough understanding of the types of patronage networks that operate among men, between men and women, and among women themselves are essential. A fact that is sometimes conveniently overlooked is that women, however marginalized, more often than not share the same political culture as the men in their communities (including views about women's appropriate place and conduct). In the absence of an adequate time frame to devise well thought out and locally appropriate strategies, the rush to include women may backfire and inadvertently produce a hardening of attitudes in some communities.

➢ Women candidates: Social conservatism, security concerns and resource constraints have made it difficult for female candidates to campaign as well as to hold public meetings. Some reports find that although many women are interested in running for parliament, they hesitate because of insecurity, intimidation, threats, and a lack of faith in the integrity of the process. Human Rights Watch has reported women candidates (as well as female government officials and journalists) considering their candidacy, have collected the required 500 voter registration cards secretly, and self-censored their public comments to avoid harassment and abuse.

➢ Women in parliament: It has been noted that the mere presence of women in the parliament will not automatically give them influence on decision-making. Analysts argue that looking beyond the numbers and addressing issues of power when measuring participation is far more challenging.

Post-conflict societies often present additional obstacles to women's equal participation in elections, which also apply to Afghanistan:

> Entrenched military groups;
> Disproportionately large numbers of refugee and displaced women;
> Inadequate institutions for the protection and enforcement of women's political rights; and
> A lack of international or domestic investment in bringing women together as political players around common agendas.

Lessons learned

There is a large literature on lessons learned on women's political participation, including various case studies on post-conflict and Islamic countries. Therefore the resources included in this helpdesk report can only offer a brief snapshot of the discussion and debates. Some of the components which these resources identify as important to facilitating women's participation in elections are:

> The legal framework: A wide variety of laws can affect women's prospects for full participation in all aspects of an election. The most important is the election law, but laws relating to political parties, gender equality, gender-based violence, citizenship, personal status, the family, and identity documents for returnee and internally displaced persons can also have a significant impact. The type of electoral system in place can have a major impact on the number of women elected to office. More women are likely to be elected in countries with proportional representation (or party-list) systems than in countries with majority (or first-past-the-post) systems. The literature includes an interesting discussion about the appropriateness of single non-transferable vote (SNTV) systems, i.e. where citizens vote for individuals and not parties. Cheryl Benard (2008, see below) argues that, in Afghanistan, this benefited women candidates in that they did not have prior political affiliations and thus "blood on their hands" from prior party acts; and were able to successfully run as independents. However, Kandiyoti (2007, see below) highlights concerns prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections that the SNTV system, together with the provisions for seat reservations for women, might have resulted in female candidates being elected to office even if they ranked very low overall and lacked a majority of the votes. This could have carried the potential risk of breeding resentment against the election of female candidates who receive dramatically fewer votes than their male counterparts.

> Quotas: Many countries have adopted special measures such as candidate quotas or reserved seats to increase the number of women elected. When properly implemented, these measures have been especially effective tools for promoting women's participation in electoral processes and for advancing women's equality in post-conflict countries.

> Political parties: Political parties often control decisions about who will be nominated to run for office, which positions candidates will be given on party lists, and who will receive support during the campaign and after the election. Political parties may also determine the extent to which issues of special concern to women are given serious consideration in the work of the legislature. In order to ensure more balanced representation, political parties in many countries have adopted voluntary targets or quotas specifying a minimum number or proportion of women on their candidate lists. In some countries, this has become a legal requirement. Many political parties have established "women's wings". In some cases these have constituted a useful tool for the advancement of women, while in others they have led to the compartmentalisation or marginalisation of women within the party. In post-conflict situations, parties may be structured around military groups and leaders, leaving women seriously disadvantaged as political contestants.

> Voter registration: In almost all countries, voters must be registered and appear on voter lists to be eligible to participate in elections. Voter registration may be either "state-initiated", meaning that electors are automatically registered by local authorities on the

basis of residence or other records, or "self-initiated", meaning that constituents must take individual responsibility for registering themselves. Whatever system is used for voter registration, the lists should be compiled in a manner that is clear and transparent, and voters should have an easy way to check for mistakes and correct inaccuracies. In many post-conflict countries there are major problems with the voter lists because of the large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons; special procedures are required to ensure these citizens are not disenfranchised. Since women tend to make up the large majority of displaced persons in most circumstances, they will be disproportionately disadvantaged if this problem is not addressed.

➢ Voter education: Voter education includes the dissemination of basic information on voting rights, the political system, candidates and issues, as well as specific information on where and how to vote. It is especially important for voters to understand that each ballot must be marked secretly and privately. Situations in which one family member casts ballots for the entire family, or in which a husband and wife enter a voting booth together, are contrary to international standards, undermine individual independence, and negatively influence women voters. Voter education should include publicity encouraging people to vote, with campaigns targeted specifically at women as well as at men and women together. Special factors should be taken into account, including high rates of illiteracy and the types and the number of languages spoken in a particular area. Emphasis should be placed on the right of women to be elected. Carefully targeted voter education can help alleviate "double discrimination", which may occur when women are also members of disadvantaged ethnic minorities. Non-governmental groups and international organisations can often also make a valuable contribution by helping to develop gender-sensitive voter education messages. This involves promoting a positive image of women as leaders and politicians in order to encourage women's participation in the political process and challenge the traditional view of a society dominated by male leaders.

➢ Election administration: Election management bodies should operate independently, impartially and transparently. Boards at all levels should include women as part of their membership and leadership. Election management bodies should develop a clear policy on advancing women's electoral participation and take gender considerations into account in all aspects of their work. They can enhance women's participation by developing effective voter education campaigns, instituting simple procedures for voter registration, ensuring easy access to polling stations, establishing convenient polling hours, providing adequate security at polling locations, preventing intimidation, designing ballots and voting procedures that are clear and simple, making certain each person's vote is cast secretly, and providing balloting facilities for illiterate voters. An interesting article by Amber Maltbie (2009, see below) looks at the issue of segregated polling places and argues that while they seem sensible solutions they can sometimes backfire. This is for two reasons: (1) because the polling stations are segregated, they become sitting targets for militants willing to commit acts of violence; and (2) when a polling station closes because of violence, the opportunity to vote also closes to women. They effectively have no other opportunity to vote in that election.

➢ Election observation: Election observation is a valuable tool for enhancing the transparency of the electoral process and increasing public confidence in election results. It can be especially advantageous in post-conflict elections, in which the level of mistrust among contesting groups tends to be high. The presence of observers can serve as a deterrent to fraud and malpractice. In general, international observers should be able to impartially assess the quality of elections and to provide suggestions on how practices can be improved. Observers should also carefully assess the way in which the legal framework, political parties, election administration and other factors affect women's participation and how they can have a different impact on women than they do on men. Ideally, observer groups, and particularly national groups, should include equal numbers

of women and men. Specialised election observation efforts can be designed to focus exclusively on the role of women in elections.

On the role of religion, while conservative or negative attitudes to the role of women as voters and candidates are key issues in Islamic countries, they can also be found in non-Muslim emerging democracies. However, the literature finds that implementation of measures to address women's marginalisation, and the impact of these measures, depends greatly on the political and historical factors at play in any given context. A study by Aili Mari Tripp and Alice Kang (2008, see below) on quotas finds that when quotas and region were factored into their research model, Islam no longer appeared to act as a constraint on women's representation. In fact. numerous predominantly Muslim countries, such as Tunisia, Senegal, and Indonesia, have adopted quotas, raising rates of female representation in these countries.

---

2. Barriers to women's political participation in Afghanistan

Womankind Worldwide, 2008, 'Taking Stock: Afghan Women and Girls Seven Years On' Womankind Worldwide, UK
http://www.womankind.org.uk/upload/Taking%20Stock%20Report%2068p.pdf

This report offers a detailed assessment of the situation of Afghan women and girls over the past seven years and lays out gaps or areas of weakness, highlights strengths and achievements, and provides recommendations. It documents the following achievements in terms of women's civil and political rights:

➢ There are 68 women in Afghanistan's parliament (of 249 MPs), exceeding the 25% quota in place for women's representation.
➢ A 2006 survey found that 80% of Afghans supported women in parliament, suggesting significant changes in social attitudes towards women in politics.
➢ Women sit alongside men on provincial councils, representing women's interests at this level. However, it is not known to what extent female representatives hold meaningful power.
➢ A women's training centre has been established for women MPs with courses such as English, internet research, parliamentary procedure and initiating legislation. However, there are criticisms that the trainings are not well coordinated and do not meet the special needs of MPs — providing specific knowledge on key issues such as budget-creation, for example.
➢ There are at least 35,000 women employed in the national government.
➢ As of August 2006, 41.4% of registered voters were women.
➢ Women's *shuras* (local councils), part of the National Solidarity Programme and administered by the Ministry for Rural Development and Rehabilitation, are active throughout Afghanistan. However they are rarely taken as seriously in their authority or reach as the more established, traditional men's *shuras*.
➢ A 2006 proposed bill in parliament, which would have required women MPs to be accompanied by a *mahram-e sharaii* (male chaperone) when travelling, according to a conservative interpretation of sharia law, was defeated.

Charney, C., Nanda, R., and Yakatan, N., 2004, 'Democracy in Afghanistan 2004', Asia Foundation, USA http://www.asiafoundation.org/pdf/afghan_voter-ed04.pdf

This report presents the findings of a nationwide public opinion poll conducted in Afghanistan regarding the national elections which were to be held in October 2004. Some of the main findings related to women and political participation are as follows:

- 87% of Afghans believed that women would need the permission of husbands or fathers to vote in the coming elections. There was also general agreement that men should advise women on their voting choices (72%), again with majorities of both sexes agreeing. The survey found that between one in five and one in three women may not have been allowed to vote (pp. 63-65).
- Among women, 23% of those who said that they might not vote explained that they thought they would not be given permission (by their husbands or fathers) to vote. Other reasons reported by women for potentially not voting included: not understanding how the elections work (26%), not understanding politics (26%), personal reasons including illness and age (22%), not knowing enough about parties and candidates (7%), no interest (10%), not supporting any party (5%) and fear of violence or intimidation (3%) (p. 13).
- Almost one man in five (18%) said that they would not let their wife vote, and more than one-third of Afghan women (35%) were not sure if their husbands or male elders would give them permission. This was particularly so in the South (where 24% of men would refuse) and Northwest (with 32% of men). Refusal to allow wives and daughters to vote was voiced most often by illiterate men. However, many men responded favourably to arguments in favour of women voting. After hearing seven arguments in favour of women voting, almost one-third of the men initially unwilling to give their wives permission agreed to do so. Many of those men who continued to refuse to let their wives vote did not intend to vote themselves. The strongest arguments were:

    - Islamic scholars in other countries have approved voting for women.
    - Women will vote separately from men.
    - Everyone must vote for themselves.
    - Women are allowed to vote in other Islamic democracies.
    - If women in your community don't vote, it will lose half its votes and its candidate may lose the election.

Sultan, M., 2005, 'From Rhetoric to Reality: Afghan Women on the Agenda for Peace', Women Waging Peace Policy Commission
http://www.wraf.ca/documents/AfghanistanFullCaseStudy.pdf

This paper examines the effectiveness of the international community's commitment to women's rights. The study also provides an overview of women's initiatives and activities in Afghanistan, and examines the potential contributions of Afghan women to the struggle for peaceful and democratic change in their country.

Registration of voters:

- Disparity in voting registration rates for women in different provinces: In the south, the UN estimates that only 19 percent of registered voters were women, in Uruzgan province 9 percent, in Zabul province 10 percent, and in Helmand Province 16 percent. In the 2004 presidential elections, Helmand province only two percent of women voted; in Uruzgan provinces only seven percent of women voted.

Voting:

- Influence of men: "Family voting," is the practice of women being led into polling booths by their husbands who effectively do the voting for them. It is also unclear whether even those women who are registered to vote in parliamentary elections will be able to do so freely and fairly. The results of a major public opinion poll on the 2004 national elections, commissioned by the Asia Foundation and conducted by Charney Research (see below), raised serious doubts about this. The research demonstrated that "Afghan women's participation in the upcoming [October 2004] elections will be heavily influenced by men."

Seventy-two percent of Afghans believed that men should advise women on who to vote for. By extension, militia commanders and warlords are expected to significantly influence voting in their territories.

➢ Separate polling stations: During the presidential election, although separate polling stations for men and women were set up, insufficient recruiting of female poll workers led election officials to staff some female polling stations with older men.

➢ Voter education: It is also unclear whether potential women voters (or male voters, for that matter) understand the democratic process and their rights vis-à-vis electoral politics.

Women candidates:

➢ Lack of security: The report highlights the example of Masooda Jalal who ran for president in the October 2004 elections. As a woman, she was barred from speaking at some venues with other candidates, received numerous death threats, and suffered from attempts to declare her candidacy un-Islamic and even illegal. Despite these challenges, she claims that her candidacy gained acceptance. The report argues that although many women are interested in running for parliament, they are hesitating because of insecurity, intimidation, threats, and a lack of faith in the integrity of the process. Human Rights Watch has reported women candidates (as well as female government officials and journalists) who are reconsidering their candidacy, are collecting the required 500 voter registration cards secretly, and self-censoring their public comments to avoid harassment and abuse.

Quotas:

➢ Quotas have ensured women a foothold in formal governing structures in Afghanistan. At the Bonn negotiations in 2001, less than 10 percent of the delegates were women. At each subsequent assembly of national leaders, however, their participation increased. Women comprised 12 percent of delegates at the Emergency Loya Jirga, 20 percent of the Constitutional Drafting and Constitutional Review Commissions, and 20 percent of representatives at the Constitutional Loya Jirga. Most importantly, Article 83 of the constitution guarantees Afghan women 25 percent of the seats in the lower house of parliament, the Wolesi Jirga, and almost 17 percent in the upper house, the Meshrano Jirga, or House of Elders. "In the long term, the effectiveness of women legislators will determine the extent to which their inclusion in formal governing structures serves the goal of broad, national women's empowerment. Building their capacity will be key." (p. x)

Bernard, C., 2008, 'Women and National-Building', Rand, Centre for Middle East Public Policy, Santa Monica http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG579.pdf

This comprehensive report relies on Afghanistan as a case study. Chapter Four, Governance and Women looks at the elections. The authors argue that learning from the 2004 Presidential elections, the 2005 elections for Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga (lower house) and 34 provincial councils were considered a big success for women in Afghanistan. Women's advocacy groups started early, identifying the problems and challenges the process was likely to create for women's participation both as voters and as candidates. Government and NGO-sponsored programmes conducted public information campaigns to encourage female voter registration; correctly identified physical safety and security as a major concern; created women-only voting stations staffed by female election workers and offered the highly publicised option of voter registration cards without the requirement of being photographed.

Table 4.1 on p. 67 lists some of the challenges faced, the solutions chosen, and their effects on the elections:

- ➢ Polling-station security: Polling centers were divided equally between male and female voters; 17 percent of international election observers and 38 percent of domestic observers were women. 44 percent of new voters were women; 43 percent of the electorate was women. This was up from 40 percent the year before (presidential election).
- ➢ Political parties: The single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) placed candidates as individuals, not as party list members. This capitalised on women's ability to not have prior political affiliation and thus "blood on their hands" from prior party acts; and so most women ran as independents.
- ➢ Candidates: 12 percent of Wolesi Jirga candidates and 8 percent of provincial candidates were women. 28 percent of Wolesi Jirga seats were held by women (6 more seats than the quota); only a combined total of 5 seats in 3 provinces will remain vacant because there were not enough female candidates.
- ➢ Voter registration: Barriers for participation were kept low, and women were educated on their right to become involved. Registration by women increased 35 percent in Uruzgan province and 23 percent in Helmand province.
- ➢ Voter education: Initiatives to include voter education for women were vital at the rural level; education was often most effective if classes were separated by sex. 35 percent of the 1,844 voter educators were women; 2.4 million women received some sort of civic education and outreach.
- ➢ Institutionalisation of efforts: The Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) was created. 220 of 830 small grants given were to women's groups, which reached 58,475 women throughout the country; a media unit, created to ensure that voters had an opportunity to make an informed choice, was used by 77 percent of women candidates.

Kandiyoti, D., 2007, 'Old Dilemmas or New Challenges? The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan', Development and Change, Volume 38, Number 2, pp. 169-199
http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/dech/2007/00000038/00000002/art00001?crawler=true

This article discusses the politics of gender in Afghanistan in the context of post-conflict reconstruction. The author highlights concerns that in the run-up to the presidential elections in 2004, there were signs that women were being marginalised from democracy-promotion projects both because of the logistics of reaching them and fears in some quarters that involving rural women could upset conservative sensibilities in the provinces and stall the process. Even so, the percentage of women voters registered (41.3 per cent) was impressive despite significant regional disparities (with the lowest registration levels in the south).

The author argues: "We know relatively little about the actual dynamics of women's access to the polls and their opportunities to stand as candidates. These appear to be routinely mediated by male gate-keepers who allow or disallow access. Women's chances of establishing an electoral base as candidates may also depend on the degree of patronage they receive from powerful political factions or male patrons and on their own membership in powerful lineages. Training and civic education, sponsored by various donor agencies, can only act as an adjunct to a more thorough understanding of the types of patronage networks that operate among men, between men and women and among women themselves, acting to create new political spaces." (p. 168)

The article also highlights concerns expressed before the parliamentary elections of September 2005, that the combination of the Single Non Transferable Vote (SNTV) system, where ballots are cast for individuals rather than political parties, with provisions for seat reservations for women, may result in female candidates being elected to office even if they rank very low overall and lack a majority of the votes. This could carry the potential risk of breeding resentment against the election of female candidates who receive dramatically

fewer votes than their male counterparts. In the event, a surprising number of women won their seats in their own right and did not need the quota provisions of the Constitution and election law.

However, women's political participation will not improve until women's access to education, health and security are addressed: "(I)n a context where the majority of women are unable to read or write, risk their lives in childbirth, have no access to roads, safe water supplies, schools or medical facilities, capabilities and rights are severely restricted. The most pressing task will be securing access to these basic entitlements that constitute the bedrock of any amelioration in women's lives and their capacity for participation." (p. 192)

Oates, L. and Helal, I. S., 2004, 'At the Crossroads of Conflict and Democracy: Women and Afghanistan's Constitutional Loya Jirga', Rights & Democracy, Montreal
http://dd-rd.af/documents/At%20the%20cross-roads%20of%20conflict%20and%20democracy%20-%20Women%20and%20Afghanistan's%20Constitutional%20Loya%20Jirga%20EN.pdf

Based on the authors' observation of the Constitutional Loya Jirga, interviews, literature review, and analysis of the Constitution, this report aims to assess the potential opportunities and obstacles to the achievement of women's rights in Afghanistan. Particularly relevant are recommendations for the elections provided at the end of the report (p. 57 onwards). Selected recommendations include:

➢ UNAMA, in collaboration with ISAF and the Afghan government must prioritise extensive DDR programmes in all provinces under the authority of warlords and private armies. Successful implementation of Constitutional provisions is dependent on the simultaneous DDR of all armed forces outside of the Afghan National Army (ANA).
➢ A well-staffed, fully-resourced unit should be established within UNAMA's department for Human Rights to coordinate civic education programming in rural areas in collaboration with the AIHRC. This unit should devise work methods which would make its programming accessible to rural women, for example, by using mobile units and collaborating with local grassroots organisations based in rural villages.
➢ UNAMA should send a large number of mobile voting units to all rural areas, so that women without the means of travelling to district electoral offices are able to vote. Staff should speak the local language of the area in question, so that they can inform people verbally about women's right to vote and the importance of voting in the election. In areas with a higher level of literacy, printed material should be distributed.
➢ UNAMA, in collaboration with ISAF, should have a strong presence in particularly insecure areas with a record of denying women the right to political participation, such as in Herat. Careful monitoring should take place to prevent intimidation and harassment of women voters, as well as of civil society actors trying to organise initiatives around the elections.
➢ The Afghan government should use its access to various forms of media to send a clear message regarding basic principles to be observed during elections, including the illegality of intimidation, threats and harassment, the consequences for such behaviour, the right of women to participate in all political processes on an equal basis, where to register complaints of intimidation, threats and harassment and other forms of human rights abuses, and information about "protected routes" to district electoral offices in areas where mobile voting units will not be available.
➢ The government should enforce punitive measures for individuals, political party representatives, or members of military factions who use intimidation tactics against women voters and women candidates. The ATA should publicly express a serious commitment to enforce punitive measures against those who violate women's rights to participate in political processes.

➢ ISAF should mobilise peacekeeping forces to the least secure provinces and establish clearly-indicated protected routes for women who need to travel from neighbouring villages to vote in the electoral district office in their province. There should be a peacekeeping presence around all voting sites in the country and anyone found to be interfering with women trying to access voting sites should be apprehended and investigated.

Wordsworth, A., 2008, 'A Matter of Interests: Gender and the Politics of Presence in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul
http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=&task=doc_download&gid=5 18
This paper argues that in spite of the sizeable presence of women in Afghanistan's *Wolesi Jirga* (WJ), the representation of women's gender interests remains minimal. The author explores the possible reasons for this, and suggests ways in which these interests might be more substantively raised in the future. The practice of fast-tracking women into the legislature through affirmative action has, in some way, affected their perceived legitimacy in office. Women's gender interests have not been substantively represented in parliament and there are particular obstacles preventing women and men from raising these interests:

➢ Women's participation in the current context: Women's presence has been somewhat undermined by negative perceptions of the reserved seats system. Further, divisions between women have been starkly emphasised, countering assumptions that they would stand together as a consolidated bloc.
➢ The articulation of collective interest: Neither issues-based blocs nor collective political platforms have been strongly consolidated in Afghanistan's political history. The formation of parliamentary groups and issues-based blocs has been highly problematic, and has not resulted in the emergence of potential spaces for the substantive representation of women's gender interests.
➢ Representation of constituencies: The connection between Members of Parliament (MPs) and their constituents, and their potential to represent constituent interests (and by extension women's gender interests), is generally weak. Practical needs (in the form of service provision) are more highly prioritised, strengthening patronage networks and class divides.
➢ Executive indifference and intervention: Even when women's gender interests are raised in parliament, they very rarely become legislation. One reason for this is the lack of attention paid by the executive to gender issues. Female representation in the executive is extremely limited, there being only one female minister—the minister for women's affairs. This containment is highly detrimental to the raising of women's gender interests in other fields.
➢ International assistance: This is often based on assumptions about the needs of female MPs and assistance is given without an acknowledgement of the pre-eminence of patronage in the functioning of the legislature. As such, it creates unrealistic expectations on the part of both MPs and international actors.

The author makes the following suggestions as to how women's gender interests may be more effectively raised within parliament:

➢ Reserved seats: A reserved seats system should be identified as a temporary measure to compensate for past inequalities, and not a means through which to provide women with an unfair advantage.
➢ Issues based groups: The *substantive* representation of women's gender interests will require the institutional frameworks of solid issues-based groups or parties whose commitment to the representation of these interests is a key element of their policy platforms. Serious consideration needs to be given to how this could be achieved, given

that issues-based groups, in general, have not been successfully established in Afghanistan's political history to date.

➤ "Downwards" accountability: There should be an increased commitment to "downwards" accountability, on the part of international organisations, towards the recipients of programmes, as opposed to donors. Documents should be produced on a regular basis, intended for MP readership, detailing agencies' immediate plans for training and other forms of assistance.

➤ Mainstreaming of gender training: Training programmes should be streamlined to incorporate practical and immediately useful skills, such as the development of legislation. As such, gender should be fully integrated into all training sessions, in order to widen the application of a gender-sensitive approach and acknowledge that all parliamentary activities need to be considered in terms of gender equity.

➤ Harmonisation of legislation on women's rights: There is very little understanding of the various forms of legislation and treaty obligations that exist to promote women's rights. It is suggested that a compilation of these is made and presented to parliament. The forthcoming National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) may well address this and should be seen as a means to consolidate legislation promoting women's gender interests.

➤ Women in the Executive/Supreme Court: More women should be brought into the Executive and Supreme Court. Further, it will be necessary to ensure that women's participation at this level is not limited to certain "women's spaces," such as MOWA, as there is a danger that women's contained presence will act instead as a boundary to encase women's gender concerns within entities, unable to penetrate other areas of executive activity.

Media reports

Starkey, J. and Sengupta, K., 2009, 'Afghan women to miss out on vote in landmark election', The Independent, August 17
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/afghan-women-to-miss-out-on-vote-in-landmark-election-1773091.html

Mojumdar, A., 2009, 'Afghanistan: Vote may disenfranchise women', Eurasianet, August 17 http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav081709.shtml

Nawabi, M., Ahmadi, A. and Getz, V., 2009, 'Barriers and Opportunities for Women's Participation in the Election Process in Afghanistan', IFES Feature Story, May 13
http://www.ifes.org/features.html?title=Barriers%20and%20Opportunities%20for%20Women%25s%20Participation%20in%20the%20Election%20Process%20in%20Afghanistan

3. Lessons learned – General

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support in cooperation with the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, 2007, 'DPKO/DFS-DPA Joint Guidelines on Enhancing the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Electoral Processes', United Nations
http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-standards/DPKO-DFS-DPA%20election%20guidelines.pdf

The objective of these guidelines is to provide advice on measures that could be implemented in future electoral processes in post-conflict environments to increase the participation of women as voters, candidates, and electoral officials and to ensure that electoral processes have an equal impact on women and men. The areas addressed include:

- ➢ The legal framework: A country's constitution should guarantee the right of all citizens to participate in polls. Constitutions or electoral laws can be amended to create political space for women. This can be done, for instance, by issuing temporary special measures to ensure women's participation within political party structures or provisions to guarantee the representation of women in the parliaments of countries without political parties.
- ➢ Electoral management bodies: EMBs can play a key role in highlighting gender issues in elections by identifying obstacles that hinder the participation of women, and by conducting voter education programmes aimed at women and men. In addition, women should hold positions at all levels of the EMBs, from commissioners to polling station officials. At the policy level, women can ensure that regulations and procedures contain gender-sensitive provisions and at the field level, they can inspire trust and confidence in women voters.
- ➢ Women's political participation as candidates: Long-term capacity-building projects, however, can transform internal party structures into more democratic ones that favour the advancement of women within the party and their nomination as a candidate. To this end, synergy among agencies such as the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), UNDP, UNIFEM and other UN country team partners can play an important part in introducing affirmative action measures and in supporting debate within political parties on mentoring women as leaders. Training opportunities should also be created, including in the preparation and delivery of campaign speeches and in communication strategies and techniques. Training and sensitisation of the transitional or constitutional assemblies responsible for drafting constitutional or electoral law is also an important activity
- ➢ Voter registration: Objectives should include encouraging women to register throughout the country, removing obstacles that may prevent women from accessing registration centres, monitoring the percentage of women registrants by obtaining registration statistics disaggregated by sex, etc.
- ➢ Civic and voter education: Levels of illiteracy are often extremely high among women. This affects the ability of public information materials and outreach campaigns, for example, to address the needs of women effectively. It is important therefore that voter education teams: include women (if necessary comprising only women); present a message that women of all levels of education and the illiterate can understand; and deliver the message at appropriate, accessible venues. In addition, specific education programmes need to be designed and targeted at men.
- ➢ The electoral campaign: Measures should include providing women with support in establishing local and central political networks; developing a political programme; selecting campaign staff; securing campaign financing; and accessing media.
- ➢ The challenges and complaints process: If women candidates or political party officials are involved in a complaint proceeding or in another kind of court case related to the election, independent observers should carefully follow the matter and determine whether the case is handled differently to similar ones involving men. Other factors requiring appraisal are accessibility to the sites of ECCs, the gender balance among ECC officials, the level of confidentiality at all stages of the procedure (aimed at safeguarding the security of complainants), and provisions for illiterate complainants.
- ➢ Polling, counting and monitoring/observation: Provisions should be made for women with babies, pregnant women, women who are not permitted to travel long distances or do not have the means to do so, and for women who cannot afford to be away from the elderly, their children or livestock for too long.

For further UN guidelines on gender and electoral processes in post-conflict contexts, see also:

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2004, 'Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-conflict Countries', Report of the Expert Group Meeting, Glen Cove, New York, January 19-22
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/meetings/2004/EGMelectoral/EP4-Abreu.PDF

4. Voter identification

Maltbie, A., 2009, 'When the Veil and the Vote Collide: Enhancing Muslim Women's Rights Through Electoral Reform'
http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=amber_maltbie

This article looks at the challenge of fully incorporating the electoral rights of women who wear face-covering veils for religious reasons, while guarding against the threat of voter fraud. The author argues that in states with large or majority Muslim populations, the electoral code requiring women to lift their veils or provide photo identification to registrars prior to Election Day results in unintended voter suppression. This paper specifically addresses the experiences of Muslim women who wear a veil and are hesitant to, or outright banned from, unveiling due to religious and cultural norms at the voting booth, and assesses best practices and lessons to be learned. Additionally, this paper recommends a model electoral provision that balances the need for secure elections with religious rights.

Voter ID laws are a crucial element in the consolidation of emerging democracies. More than 100 countries use voter identification laws to guard against electoral fraud. They are used at two points during the electoral process: first, during the registration phase, and again when the voter intends to cast a ballot. They provide a mechanism to address voter impersonation, multiple voting, vote-buying, and other such practices.

There are various modified identification methods used for women who wear either the burqa or niqab. This includes dipping the female elector's finger in indelible ink, unveiling in front of a female polling station official to be compared with a photo identification card, providing for segregated polling stations, or in the case of Kashmir, requiring no more than the presentation of an ID. States are not limited to using just one technique, and depending on the degree of corruption in a particular context, a state may combine any number of identification requirements. Palestine, for example, requires a female elector to be 'inked,' present identification, *and* unveil, and includes an explicit provision that if the woman attempting to vote fails to meet any of the above requirements, she is prohibited from receiving a ballot. The law also states that a female polling official should confirm the elector's unveiled face, and only creates an exception for the occasion that no woman is working as a polling station official. In Pakistan, the election code is silent on the issue of gender-specific polling stations and does not mention voter ID requirements. However, the Pakistan Election Commission organises separate polling stations and provides female-only personnel in each location to encourage higher participation rates by women.

The concept of segregated polling stations, with dedicated female staff members, seems a reasonable solution where women and men are used to not interacting in public. However, this practice has backfired in some cases. Segregated polling places can result in double-barrelled setback for women voters. Because the polling stations are segregated, they become sitting targets for militants willing to commit acts of violence. Also, when a women's polling station closes because of violence, the opportunity to vote also closes to women. They effectively have no other opportunity to vote in that election.

The author makes three main recommendations:

➤ The voter identification requirement should be codified as a unique provision in the country's election code. By leaving the promulgation of voter ID regulations in the hands of local election management bodies, inconsistency and confusion can result, (as when a competing Shari'a court issues a contrary decision).

- A requirement that female electors unveil is recommended for the legitimacy it imparts to the government. The experience in Kashmir points out the negative consequence of not incorporating an unveiling requirement.
- The mechanism for identifying female electors should not be designed in such a limited form that when unavailable (i.e. the closure of a polling station) women are completely denied the opportunity to vote, but nor should the mechanism be so all-encompassing that it overwhelms women (i.e. the photo-voter roll experience of Yemen).

The author concludes by proposing a model electoral provision describing how an elector must identify themselves in order to vote.

5. Electoral systems

Powley, E., 2003, 'Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition', Hunt Alternatives Fund
http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/10_strengthening_governance_the_role_of_women_in_rwanda_s_transition.pdf

This article highlights that following the 2003 parliamentary elections, women held nearly 50 per cent of the seats in Rwanda's parliament, the highest level of female parliamentary representation in the world. This was a result of innovative structures and mechanisms that were designed to include women and open avenues for greater public participation in local and national governance. These include:

- A parallel system of women's councils and women-only elections guaranteeing a women's mandate for all elected bodies
- A triple balloting system guaranteeing the election of women to a percentage of seats at the sector and district levels
- The Ministry of Gender and Women in Development and gender posts within other government and ministerial structures, at all levels

As a result women have been shaping decisions and influencing policy-making. Examples include the inclusion of marginalised groups in decentralised structures; the implementation of national and community-based reconciliation efforts that reach the grassroots; participation in the drafting of the new national consultation; creation of a tripartite partnership among civil society, the executive and legislative bodies; and formation of the first cross-party caucus in parliament which works on issues such as land rights and food security. The authors make the following recommendations:

- The international community must acknowledge the progress made in Rwanda on women's inclusion, and allocate resources to further these efforts. In particular, the new structures must be funded; members of the women's councils must be salaried; and training should be provided to strengthen women's skills in leadership and governance.
- International donors should draw on the Rwandan structures as models for the inclusion of women in other post-conflict societies.
- The presence, participation and progress of women in governance structures should be considered a key indicator by which the international community measures good governance and democratisation processes.

Majed, Z. (ed.), 2005, 'Building Democracy in Jordan: Women's Political Participation, Political Party Life and Democratic Elections', International IDEA, Stockholm
http://www.idea.int/publications/dem_jordan/index.cfm

This report is one of the outcomes of a project aimed at discussing democratic reform in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen. The aim of the project has been to contribute comparative analysis and information on good practice. The project focuses on three interconnected themes seen as entry points to help establish a reform-oriented agenda: electoral system reform; the political participation of women; and the development of political parties.

The report finds the women's participation in public life is constrained by certain obstacles:

➢ A difficult historical legacy: The 30 year old ban on political parties meant that the parties were unable to develop their role as representatives of concerns to the legislature. This especially impacted women who had no legal body through which to communicate their interests to the legislature during this time.
➢ The tribal factor: Tribal representatives are often opposed to addressing women's issues. Women candidates are often ridiculed by tribal leaders and elders and they frequently have to give up advocating for women's rights in order to maintain tribal support. In addition, the SNTV system gives tribes a strong ability to secure victory for their candidates, and they usually prefer men over women. The SNTV system also means voting for individuals over political parties, which holds back the political development of the country.
➢ Candidates' financial capacity: This plays an essential role as women are clearly disadvantaged in this area. Candidates rarely stand on the basis of party platforms and this strengthens the tribal and clan dimension of political participation.

The report makes various recommendations:

➢ Reform of the electoral legislation should include a review of the SNTV system.
➢ An independent national body for election supervision that includes representatives of political parties should be established.
➢ Redistricting should be carried out so that the number of seats allocated to a particular district is in proportion to the size of the population.
➢ Each voter could be given two votes – one in the individual electoral district and a second for a nationwide party list, which would include the names of female candidates, as well as candidates from minority groups, thus removing the need for quotas.

For reports on the other countries in the project, see:
http://www.idea.int/publications/browse/gender.cfm

Larsersud, S. and Taphorn, R., 2007, 'Designing for Equality: Best-Fit, Medium-Fit and Non-Favourable Combinations of Electoral Systems and Gender Quotas', International IDEA, Stockholm
http://www.idea.int/publications/designing_for_equality/upload/Idea_Design_low.pdf

This report argues that besides political, socio-economic and psychological reasons that create obstacles for women entering politics, one important variable influencing the likelihood of women being elected to the national legislature is the electoral system used in a country. It provides an overview of the 'fit' of the various electoral systems with different kinds of quotas and assesses how increased women's representation can be achieved under different combinations of electoral systems and quotas. It aims to serve as a reference tool for those who work to increase women's representation in politics, and to highlight the variables at play, the choices to be made and the likely implications of these choices for the representation of women. The report concludes with the following key points:

➢ The country context needs to be taken into account. When designing the 'rules of the game', a holistic view should be taken in order to see the ways in which different elements can act to complement each other and avoid gaps or contradictions. The

different combinations of electoral systems and quotas work quite differently and therefore the electoral system and the quota to be used must be considered together instead of separately.

➢ Importing wholesale solutions directly from the existing literature and/or the experiences of other countries may not be appropriate. Both electoral systems and quotas can be modified and adapted to suit the specific context in which they are implemented.

➢ When designing electoral institutions, it is highly advisable to include as many stakeholders as possible in the discussion, design and implementation phases in order to reach a broad understanding of the problems at hand and thereby achieve the greatest possible legitimacy for the provisions adopted.

➢ The use of gender quotas can significantly increase women's participation in politics, but it is important to keep in mind that quotas can often be treated as a ceiling for the nomination of women candidates. For example, a quota stipulating that 30 per cent of candidates should be women is unlikely to result in a higher percentage being nominated, and thereby in effect sets a ceiling to women's political representation. In order to increase the representation of women, it is therefore important to work on many different fronts at the same time, of which electoral systems and quotas are only two.

6. Political parties

Ballington, J. and Matland, R.E., 2004, 'Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes', Paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on "Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries", United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), January 19-22, Glen Cove, New York
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/meetings/2004/EGMelectoral/EP8-BallingtonMatland.PDF

In most legislative systems, political parties are the main vehicle through which candidates are elected to parliament. They have therefore, perhaps the most strategic responsibility in democracy – to prepare and select candidates for election and to support them in positions of leadership and governance. The main argument of this paper is that political parties cannot claim to be democratic unless they are inclusive and representative of the population they represent. Therefore, the candidates that parties send to parliament should include a cross-section of society. However parliaments remain mostly male dominated. This paper focuses on the process of candidate selection by political parties, highlighting the particular obstacles that women face in this process. The electoral system type, the influence of culture, party organisation and rules, the pool of women candidates, and election campaigning can work against women securing a political party nomination. In light of these challenges, special measures that can compensate for these have been highlighted, including providing incentives to political parties to nominate more women through public funding, and through the application of more direct special measures, such as electoral quotas.

The author argues: "It is apparent that in many instances quotas have contributed to an increase in the number of women in parliament. However, it is not the quota in isolation, but how it interacts with the type of electoral system, the nature of women's movement and how the laws have been drafted and enforced. Quotas will not be successful when introduced as a single measure. In the short terms they may provide women with visibility within the party, but alone they do not equate to internal party democracy. They lay the groundwork for the achievement of gender equality within these institutions, but how this leads to democracy with the party is a question of political will and commitment of party leadership." (p. 9)

Basu, A., 2008, 'Women, Political Parties and Social Movements in South Asia', in Goetz, A-M., 'Governing Women: Women's Political Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratization and Governance Reform', Routledge
http://www.routledge.com/books/Governing-Women-isbn9780415956529

A limited preview is available from Google Books:
http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=r3vqaU6AM54C&oi=fnd&pg=PA87&dq=women+participation+election+islamic+countries&ots=F7i5WhPjOs&sig=ANWt6MdSTWy4zn_Ty9YPRocsY9Q#v=onepage&q=women%20participation%20election%20islamic%20countries&f=false

This chapter looks at the relationship between women, political parties and social movements. The author highlights the following key points:

➢ Differences between political parties: In terms of their positions on gender equality, there are important differences between political parties. Leftist parties are most likely to commit themselves in principle to gender quality, but less likely to be effective in terms of including women in leadership positions. Women's movements are also most likely to seek to form alliances with these parties. Nationalist parties have been particularly effective at mobilising support through gendered appeals.

➢ Women as individuals and not as groups: Women's participation in politics is, however, based on their individual capacity, and not as members of a group that is discriminated against. The author argues: "Women's participation in party politics further undermines their sense of collective identity. Not surprisingly, those women who have achieved power in South Asia do not owe these positions to political parties. Nor have parties addressed gender inequality" (p. 107)

➢ Social conservatism towards women: The attitudes of political parties towards generally mirror social ideas and trends prevalent in most South Asian societies. The role of social movements is important in countering these: "The normative commitment to relegating women, particularly, middle-class women, to the private domain of home and family and excluding them from party politics is pervasive throughout South Asia. Political parties have generally accepted these views and functioned as the gatekeepers of male-dominated systems of power. These patters have generally only been challenged when women's movements are strong enough to pressure parties to represent women and women's interests better." (p. 107)

➢ The role of women's movements: In South Asia, women's movements have played an important role in bringing the issue of gender to the forefront of the political agenda. However, they have paid relatively less attention to the issue of political parties. One area that movements across the region have been active is in calling for the reservation of parliamentary seats for women at the national level.

➢ The role of electoral systems: In general, the more democratic a country's institutions and practices are, the greater the opportunities for women to achieve representation through the party system. The author finds that: "Pakistan is at one end of the continuum. Democracy has been intermittent, the military and organized religion have played active roles in politics, and civilian political parties are weak and compromised. As a result, the women's movement has not sought alliances with parties and has for the most part located itself outside, and often in opposition to, the state. India is at the other end of the continuum. A long history of democracy, numerous and varied political parties, and regular, open elections have ensured that political parties have to seek women's electoral support. Although this has often resulted in expedient appeals to women's interests, it may have also increased women's awareness of their own electoral leverage" (p. 108)

➢ The role of civil society: The growth of civil society that accompanies democratisation also results in the growth of conservative parties and movements. For example, in Bangladesh, the growth of NGOs committed to women's rights has been accompanied by a growth of organisations of Muslim clerics who are critical of what they consider to

be westernised NGOs. "Indeed, in all South Asian countries, right-wing groups, often ethnic and religious in character, have an enormous capacity to mobilize women's movements while undermining women's advancement." (pp. 108-109)

7. Quotas and reserved seats

Ballington, J. and Dahlerup, D., 2006, 'Gender Quotas in Post-conflict States: East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq' in Dahlerup, D. (ed.), 'Women, Quotas and Politics', Routledge, London/ New York, pp. 249-258 http://www.routledge.com/9780415429689

A limited preview is available at Google Books:
http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=H8kkYXBKSXYC&oi=fnd&pg=PT5&dq=electi ons+women+afghanistan&ots=ZfHlUAreh1&sig=cNrDKnS4I9f4sMFTiO9lEnVN7NU#v=onepa ge&q=elections%20women%20afghanistan&f=false

This chapter aims to examine whether the political empowerment of women in countries such as East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq is possible through the introduction of quotas, and what roles can be played by the international community. The authors aim to explore whether the international community has displayed any real commitment to the issue of including women in post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and if so, whether empowerment can come from 'above'.

The chapter highlights the cases where quotas were adopted as a result of differing influences:

➢ Domestic pressure: In South Africa and Mozambique, a home-grown and organised women's movement which consisted of political women and women from civil society lobbied the ruling parties to adopt gender quotas. Quotas were then voluntarily adopted by political parties rather than having to be legislated for.
➢ International influence: The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action which called for governments to take steps to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making fora has provided a central lobbying platform. In East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq, while women's groups have been key to the discussion around implementing gender quotas, the role of the international community, primarily through the Coalitional Provisional Authorities in Iraq, the Transitional Afghan government with UNAMA in Afghanistan and UNTAET in East Timor, has also been influential.

Dahlerup, D. and Nordlund, A., 2004. 'Gender Quotas: A Key to Equality? A Case Study of Iraq and Afghanistan', European Political Science, Volume 3, Number 3, pp. 91-98
A draft version of this article is available at: http://gip.undp.vrl3.com/wp-content/uploads/file/gender_quotas_key_to_equality_dahlerup_etal04.pdf

This article presents the main perspectives of the Stockholm-based research project "Gender Quotas – A Key to Equality?" and analyses recent developments in Afghanistan and Iraq, countries which illustrate the new trend in demands for gender quotas even in strictly male-dominated societies. The authors aim to explore the question - how has it been possible to place the disempowerment of women on the agenda in these post-war countries where the state-building processes are dominated by external forces?

The focus of the study is on the discursive controversies surrounding the introduction of quotas; the quota provisions themselves; the implementation process of various quota systems in various electoral systems; and the effects of the introduction of quotas on women's political representation, in both quantitative (the number of women) and qualitative terms (political empowerment of women).

There are three main conclusions:

➢ "Firstly, the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate a general trend in the world today, which is that, in times of fundamental restructuring of the polity, there will be demands for active measures to achieve a gender balance in parliament. Often, these will be in the form of a demand for gender quotas. This happens even in traditional patriarchal societies like Afghanistan and Iraq.
➢ Secondly, in Afghanistan and Iraq as elsewhere, the demands for women's political empowerment, or even for a gender balance in politics, have been initiated by women's organizations.
➢ Thirdly, common to all countries is that there is extensive co-operation between national and local women's organizations and international feminist groups. The recommendation on quotas by the UN women's conference in Beijing in 1995 is a useful tool, especially when translated into the national discourse of restoration and democracy. Whether these groups will find support for their demands depends on the context and the ruling forces of the country concerned, to which women seldom belong." (p. 9)

Bylesjo, C. and Seda, F. S. S. E., 'Indonesia: the Struggle for Gender Quotas in the World's Largest Muslim Society' in Dahlerup, D. (ed.), 2006, 'Women, Quotas and Politics', Routledge http://www.routledge.com/9780415429689

A limited preview is available at Google Books:
http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=H8kkYXBKSXYC&dq=Women,+Quotas+and+Politics&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=lbqvSoXrLMHRjAeN-5HlBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4#v=onepage&q=&f=false

This chapter aims to explore whether the quota provisions enacted in Indonesia in 2003 had an impact on the number of women nominated and elected in the April 2004 general election. What was the reaction by the political players towards the quota? What strategies were used to reach the goal of increasing the number of women in parliament?

The authors find that the key actors in the struggle for increased gender equality and gender quotas were civil society organisations (CSOs), journalists, academics, political parties and parliamentarians. The major Muslim women's organisations such as Muslimat, Fatayat, Aisiyah, etc. were also deeply involved. The authors argue: "Even though Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world the issue of a gender quota was not a religious issue with support decided among different religious groups. It was an issue that was supported or resisted along cross-party and cross-religious lines […] The dividing line was neither political nor religious but gender-related with almost all the women activists and women politicians working together to promote the gender quota, while the male members either reluctantly gave their support or did not support at all" (pp. 260-261).

The chapter describes the implementation efforts which included:

➢ Massive capacity building programmes by CSOs working with political parties at local and national levels.
➢ Targeted workshops for women to increase their understanding of the electoral system, including the preparation of tools and manuals
➢ Constant lobbying of political parties emphasising their responsibility in implementing quota provisions. The authors argue that the responses fro the parties' leadership differed and did not follow a political or religious pattern.

The authors note: "The lobby work generated an increased cooperation between both women outside and inside the political parties as well as women within the party body. A network of

senior and junior women party members was established in which the senior women shared their experiences with the junior members with the aim of providing sufficient knowledge for becoming a candidate and later an elected MP. The cooperation with the international organizations also inspired the women by providing comparative knowledge and strategies to enhance the networking, both within and outside the country. This cooperation was questioned by the opponents of the quota provision system, who criticized the local movement for bringing 'foreign' ideas to the Indonesian political agenda." (p. 262)

Tripp, A. M. and Kang, A., 2008, 'The Global Impact of Quotas: On the Fast Track to Female Legislative Representation', Comparative Political Studies, Volume 41, Number 3, pp. 338-361 http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/41/3/338

This quantitative study aims to examine what accounts for female parliamentary representation. It shows that the introduction of quotas has helped overcome constraints on women's representation posed by economic underdevelopment, cultural influences, and even electoral systems. The authors also argue that the introduction of quotas offers the most explanatory power for women's representation today, together with electoral systems that allow for greater candidate turnover (i.e., party-list proportional representation systems). The majority of studies explaining women's legislative representation prior to 2000 focused on electoral systems, cultural considerations, and the strength of leftist political parties. Since the mid-1990s, however, an increasing number of countries have introduced gender quotas, which this article incorporates into older models in cross-national multivariate analysis.

On the influence of religion on women's representation, the author argues: "Religiosity and countries with predominantly Islamic populations have been said to be at odds with improving women's status in previous studies. Yet when quotas and region are factored into existing models, Islam no longer appears to act as a constraint on women's representation. Numerous predominantly Muslim countries, such as Tunisia, Senegal, and Indonesia, have adopted quotas, raising rates of female representation in these countries. Similarly, Catholicism loses significance as an explanatory factor when societal attitudes toward egalitarianism are considered." (p. 358)

GSDRC Query: Haider, H., 2008, 'Helpdesk Research Report: Quotas for Women's Representation in Africa', Report for DFID, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD515.pdf

The vast majority of the literature and experts surveyed note that Africa has achieved greater success than other regions in increasing the representation of women in decision-making bodies. The adoption and implementation of quota systems in many African countries has been integral to this development. This success with quota systems, in turn, is attributed to:

➢ strong and active women's movements, which lobbied for quotas and greater participation of women in politics;
➢ regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that have adopted gender balanced representation within the organisation; set quota targets for member countries; and actively monitored the progress of these countries in reaching them;
➢ opportunities in post-conflict and transition societies, which allowed for advances in women's representation.

It is important to note that women's movements have also been important in pushing for more balanced representation in regional bodies; and for lobbying them to adopted quota policies. Women's movements maximised on the openings in transitioning societies as well – pushing

for the representation of women in peace negotiations and institutionalising greater women's representation in new constitutions.

Further resources are available from **The Quota Project**:
http://www.quotaproject.org/index.cfm

Reserved seats

Norris, P., n.d., 'Implementing Women's Representation in Afghanistan's Electoral Law: Options for Reserved Seats', Center on International Cooperation/ Harvard University
https://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris/Acrobat/Afghanistan%20electoral%20law%20Norris.pdf

This paper examines the role of reserved seats in ensuring that women have a voice in the future of Afghanistan. The author argues that if women are appointed to reserved seats, by party leaders or other bodies, then this process may give some women visibility without real power. Where reserved seats use direct elections, however, women members of parliament are likely to maintain their independence and have full legitimacy derived from democratic processes of selection. Examples of how reserved seats for women candidates have been implemented through direct (popular) election are Pakistan and Morocco:

➤ Morocco: 325 seats are elected by a first-past-the post system, 295 seats are filled from single-member constituencies and 30 seats are directly elected from a women-only national constituency. The women candidates with the highest share of the popular vote in the national constituency are elected to parliament. In the 2002 election, five women won from single-member constituencies in addition to the 30 reserved seats, making a total of 35 women out of 325 MPs, or 10.8 percent of seats occupied by women. This is the highest proportion among Arab states and the comparable figure for the proportion of women in the previous parliament was 0.6 percent.

➤ Pakistan: Seats are reserved for women in both the lower house of the parliament (60 of 342 seats, or 17 percent) and in the provincial assemblies (also 17 percent). 33 percent of the seats in lower-level councils are also reserved for women, leading to the inclusion of over 40,000 women in elected office. The use of reserved seats at local level has been found to lead to the inclusion of more women from poorer backgrounds and younger women. In the 2002 general elections for the National Assembly, Pakistani citizens voted for a legislative candidate in each of the 272 single-member districts by the first-past-the-post system. The total share of the vote won by each party was calculated for each province. Then the sixty reserved seats for women in the National Assembly were divided among the parties according to their total share of the vote won in each province. The parties nominate which women candidates enter the National Assembly through reserved seats. Critics suggest this may undermine the independence and legitimacy of these women members. Nevertheless, in the general elections of 2002, 12 women won seats in the national parliament from generally contested seats, in addition to the 60 reserved seats, making for a total representation of 72 women out of 342 seats, or 21.1 percent.

8. Participation in parliament

Ballington, J. and Karam, A., 2005, 'Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers', International IDEA http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2005/Women_in_Parliament.pdf

The main objective of this Handbook is to provide a comprehensive overview of the processes relating to women's participation in parliament, and to highlight some concrete

strategies to enhance women's effectiveness in parliamentary structures. It aims to answer the following questions: What are the major obstacles women confront when entering parliament? What are the different ways of overcoming these obstacles and in which structural and political contexts? What are the mechanisms and strategies women can use to influence the parliamentary political process?

Key themes include:

➢ the effect of socio-economic and cultural biases and overcoming the challenges in winning election to parliaments;
➢ the central role that political parties and electoral systems play;
➢ increasing women's access to decision-making bodies through the use of special measures such as quotas; and
➢ looking beyond the question of numbers to enhancing the effectiveness of women politicians in transforming the institution of parliament and effecting policy changes.

Chapter 5 of the Handbook focuses on how women can make an impact on the political process once inside Parliament. The authors suggest a three-pronged strategy which consists of learning the rules; using the rules to bring about change; and changing the rules When it comes to changing the rules, women MPs need to consider:

➢ the establishment of national machinery to support women's causes and to monitor the implementation of policies and recommendations;
➢ changing the candidate selection rules for their parties, especially with regard to leadership positions;
➢ the establishment of mechanisms within parliament which would give women MPs priority in areas where they are under-represented or less vocal than their male counterparts—such as giving women MPs the opportunity to speak first, and instituting quotas in different committees in parliament;
➢ providing special incentives for initiatives outside parliament which sponsor and support women's issues and women's representation (e.g. women's leadership training schools, media programmes on women politicians); and
➢ expanding legislation to include emerging issues of interest to women.

In addition to the concrete suggestions to enhance impact outlined in this section of the Handbook, further general areas of need have also been highlighted, including:

➢ general awareness-raising, particularly amongst rural women;
➢ impact-based research and training for women;
➢ understanding the critical role of the media in shaping discourse and action;
➢ constant positive discrimination which would enable women to increase their numbers in the political arena, as well as amend laws (or introduce new ones) to encourage women's participation - such as quotas for women in different areas of public involvement and the allocation of specific funds to promote women's participation;
➢ concerted and impact-based positive action on the part of governments, women's organisations, and other public and interest-based organisations; and
➢ constant caucusing and networking between MPs and outside organisations and interest groups working for the enhancement of women's position generally.

Devlin, C. and Elgie, R., 2008, 'The Effect of Increased Women's Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda', Parliamentary Affairs, Volume 61, Number 2, pp. 237-254 http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/61/2/237

This article aims to contribute to the debate on whether a higher level of women's representation in parliament leads to a different style of parliamentary politics. The authors highlight that to date, most studies have focused on Western cases, and the results have been mixed. Women do add new dimensions to the policy agenda, but there is little evidence that their increased representation changes policy outputs. The little work that has been conducted outside the Western context confirms the mixed nature of these findings.

In this article, the authors examine the impact of increased women's representation in the Rwandan parliament from 2003 to 2006, and particularly women's effect on the culture of parliament; their impact on the policy agenda; and the impact on public policy outputs. Their conclusions include:

➢ Women considered themselves to have a greater concern with grassroots politics.
➢ The only change that 'automatically' accompanies an increase in female representatives is a change in parliament's 'social climate'.
➢ A change in the working hours or calendar of parliament has not materialised in the Rwandan example, and there has been no change in the lack of childcare facilities in parliament.
➢ The solidarity of women parliamentarians has resulted in often quite prominent women's issues being raised more easily and more often. A gender agenda is now also perceived to be 'guaranteed' by the presence of more women.
➢ In the area of policy, a significant impact has not been seen. This may be because many of the most significant gender-related laws were passed before the large increase in women's parliamentary representation occurred
➢ "An increase in the number of women in parliament may be uninfluential in comparison with a government commitment to develop legislation that promotes women's rights. On the other hand, the changes that have occurred in the political culture of the Rwandan parliament and the working relationship between its male and female deputies would have been difficult to impose by fiat. All told, the evidence from the interviews suggests that they were the result of a long process of normalisation arising from the increased numbers of women in parliament."

GSDRC, 2008, 'Gender Equality in Parliamentary Strengthening and Electoral Support', Helpdesk Research Report for AusAid, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD563.pdf

Many countries around the world have recognised the under-representation of women in politics and started to adopt measures to help women enter politics and national legislatures. However, most of the research to date has focussed on explaining the process of women's entry into politics, rather than whether and how they can make a difference once they enter parliament. Some of the key areas for supporting gender equality in electoral assistance programmmes include: the legal framework, electoral management bodies, political parties, voter registration, civic and voter education, the electoral campaign, and polling, counting and monitoring/observation.

Some of the most common obstacles to the entry of women into parliaments include:

➢ Lack of political party support
➢ Lack of coordination and support networks between women MPs and other public organisations
➢ The dominance of male-oriented norms and male-dominated structures which work against women's public participation
➢ Insufficient mobilisation of media support
➢ Lack of large-scale leadership-oriented training and education for women
➢ An electoral system that is not conducive to women's participation

> ➤ The lack of quota reservations. Whilst quotas can contribute to an increase in the number of women in parliament, it is the interaction of quota systems with other factors in a particular country, such as the type of electoral system, the legal environment, and the nature of women's movements, that is key.

9. Voter education

Sengupta, A. et al., 2007, 'The Sada Says "We Women Have our Rights"', International Communication Gazette, Volume 69, Number 4, pp. 335-353

This study analyses Voice for Humanity's (VFH) *Sada* initiative to promote women's rights, citizen participation and civic education during the Afghan parliamentary elections in 2005. A qualitative assessment was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how Afghan women, in particular, utilized the *Sada* device — a solar-powered digital audio player (similar to an MP3 player). The findings of this study suggest that projects such as this can play a powerful role in promoting women's rights. The findings reiterate that information dissemination, spurred by a suitable technology, can lead to family and community dialogue which, when coupled with a more enabling environment for women's concerns, can contribute to women's empowerment and realisation of women's human rights.

Gender Links, 2005, 'South African Gender, Elections, and Media Training Report', Gender Links, Johannesburg http://www.genderlinks.org.za/item.php?i_id=64

This report is an account of workshops conducted by Gender Links and the Southern African Media Services Organisation (SAMSO) in seven Southern African countries that held or were expected to hold elections in 2004 and 2005. The countries are: South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Mauritius. Details of what happened in each country are provided under the country chapters.

The following are some of the objectives of the series of workshops:

> ➤ Promoting gender awareness and skills of the media by running training courses on gender and democracy for media practitioners.
> ➤ Measuring the extent to which SADC governments were honouring their commitment to achieving 30 per cent women in decision-making positions in government, and to increase media coverage of this issue.
> ➤ Helping the media to understand how gender equality is integral to citizenship, democracy and freedom of expression.
> ➤ Identifying key gender issues in the elections in these countries and to share the findings of the GL study: "Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics".
> ➤ Identifying issues of concern by women in politics in their dealings with the media and vice versa.
> ➤ Building relationships between women in politics and media decision-makers and practitioners.
> ➤ Empowering women politicians with practical skills to deal effectively with the media
> ➤ Assisting the media in thinking through the gender dimensions of their election coverage.

For further information on voter and civic education, please see the brief below:
International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, 2009, 'Consolidated Response on Women's Political Participation in Traditional and Conservative Societies'
http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/2009%2003%2015_consolidated_response_women%20in%20traditional_societies_FINAL_2.pdf

10. Voter recruitment

Blaydes, L. and El Tarouty, S., 2009, 'Women's Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment', Middle East Journal, Volume 63, Number 3, pp. 364-380 http://www.stanford.edu/~blaydes/Voters.pdf

This article explores the extent to which gender considerations impact voter recruitment strategies in Middle Eastern elections. In particular, we examine women's electoral participation in the 2005 parliamentary elections in Egypt in an effort to understand how women's political participation can lead to certain types of economic and political empowerment. Based on an examination of voting behaviour, we find that clientelist voter recruitment tends to empower women economically rather than politically as elections provide an opportunity for disadvantaged women to sell their vote to local vote brokers or offer their vote to a local patron in exchange for a future payoff. In contrast, women who vote for Islamist candidates may be able to increase the influence of their political support by creating common knowledge about the popularity of their candidate and by reducing the effectiveness of government repression.

11. Additional information

Author
This query response was prepared by **Seema Khan**. For further information please contact seema@gsdrc.org.

Contributors
Najia Zewari, UNIFEM Afghanistan
Julie Ballington, IDEA
Kristen Haffert, National Democratic Institute
Lauryn Oates, Independent Consultant
Vic Getz, International Foundation for Electoral Systems
Theresa de Langis, UNIFEM

Websites visited
Google, Google Scholar, Eldis, Siyanda, Global Expert Finder, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Clingendael, Ace the Electoral Knowledge Network, iknowpolitics.org, Eldis, Reliefweb, Afghan Gender Cafe, National Democratic Institute, Rights & Democracy, UNDEF, EISA, Chr Michelsen Institute, UNDP, UNIFEM

About Helpdesk research reports: Helpdesk reports are based on 2 days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues; and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.

Need help finding consultants?
If you need to commission more in-depth research, or need help finding and contracting consultants for additional work, please contact consultants@gsdrc.org (further details at www.gsdrc.org/go.cfm?path=/go/helpdesk/find-a-consultant&)