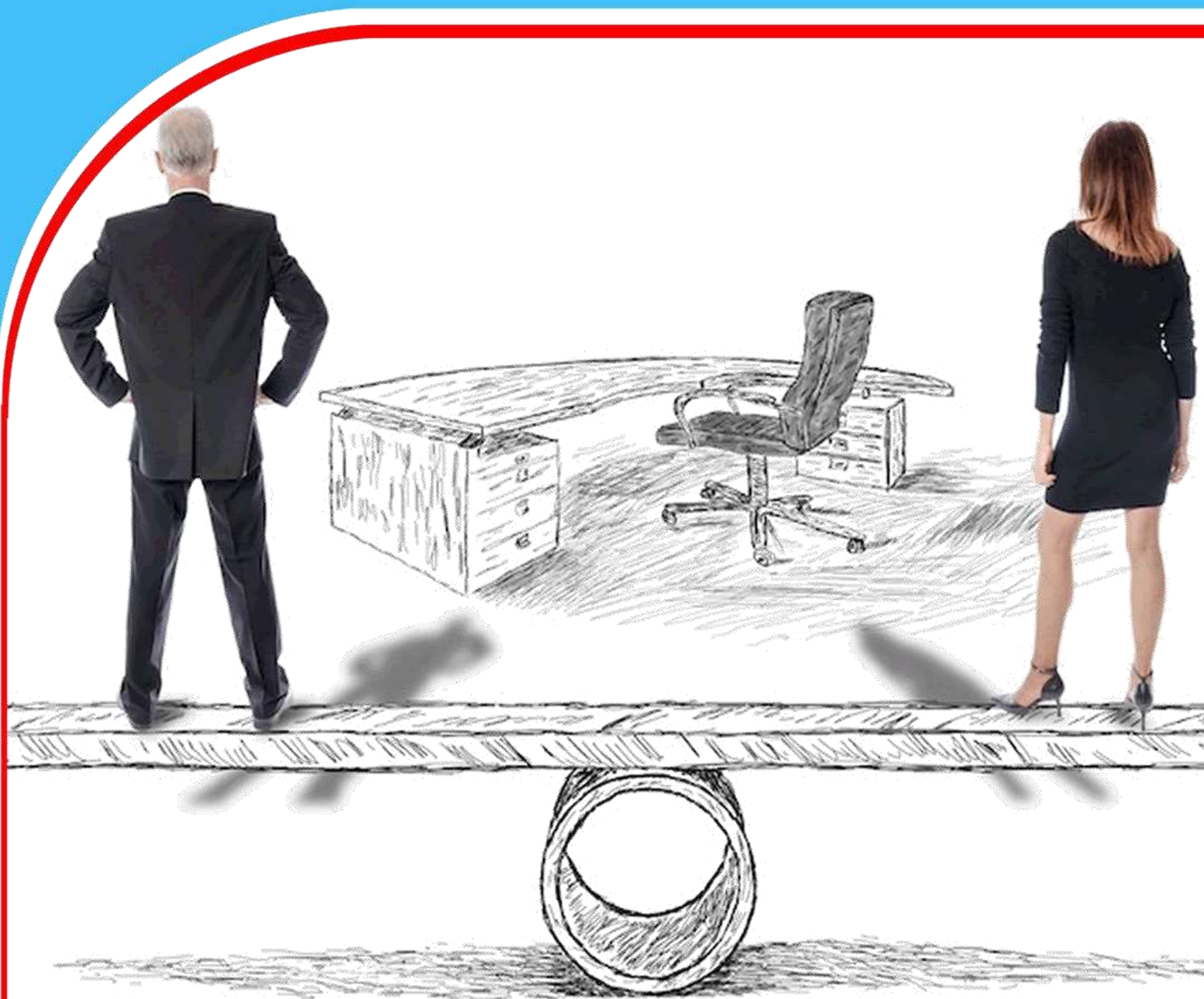


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**Influence of Social Protection on Women
Empowerment in Political Parties in Nairobi,
Kenya**

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Influence of Social Protection on Women Empowerment in Political Parties in Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of social protection on women empowerment in political parties in Nairobi, Kenya.

Methodology: The study used a descriptive survey research design. The study used primary data which was largely be quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data was analyzed using content analysis. Qualitative data was presented in continuous prose form. On the other hand after quantitative data is obtained, it was prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and keyed into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software for analysis. The statistics generated included descriptive statistics. The particular descriptive statistics included frequencies and percentages while the particular inferential statistics included correlation analysis and regression. Correlation analysis was used to establish the association between the variables. A multiple linear regression model was used to test the significance of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Results: The study found that social protection has a positive and significant effect on women empowerment in political parties in Nairobi, Kenya.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study also recommended that advancing the participation of women in devolved governance structures requires serious consideration by putting in place policy measures and interventions that would further this cause since equal gender participation is enshrined in the Constitution. In addition financial support from government, sponsors and family should be provided to women in politics. These can be achieved through development of fundraising skills to strengthen one's financial base for the political campaign.

Keywords: *Social protection, Women empowerment, political party*

1.0 INRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Political parties are the most important institutions that affect the political participation of women. In most countries they are responsible for candidate recruitment and selection, and decide on which issues are placed on the policy agenda. How women participate in political parties or how political parties encourage and nurture women's involvement is key determinant of their prospects for political empowerment. Because of the influential nature of political parties on women's political empowerment, civil society organizations (CSOs),

international organizations and development assistance providers have heightened their focus on the role of political parties (Ballington *et al.*, 2012). Globally, women remain sidelined from the structures of governance that determine political and legislative priorities. In the world's parliaments, women hold 19 percent of the seats up from 16 percent in 2005. The proportion of women ministers is lower, averaging 16 percent. The proportion of women heads of state and government is lower still and has declined in recent years, standing at less than 5 percent in 2011 (Ballington *et al.*, 2012).

However, women's representation and participation in politics has been an uphill task throughout the world. Since pioneering work of women and development in the Third World, studies continue to confirm her finding that women are not equal beneficiaries with men of the fruits of so called modernization and development. Campbell (2010) agrees that across the world there seem to be barriers to women's participation than it is to men. This is demonstrated by underrepresentation of women in the political cadres. In cases where women get a chance to lead, they are often seen as ersatz men Margaret Thatcher of Britain as Iron Lady or Golda Meir of Israel as the only man in the cabinet (Campbell, 2010).

In addition one of the main obstacles to women's representation is found in the process of candidate selection. Without mandatory quotas the number of women enlisted as candidates by political parties has invariably been much smaller than the number of men. The number of women actually elected by a political party may reflect bias on the part of the electorate, but the number of women selected as candidates gives a good indication of whether or not a party is gender biased. A few political parties have recently introduced more democratic procedures into the processes of selecting their candidates. In Mexico the PRI, the PRD and the PAN have been using direct elections for selecting their candidates, and in Brazil the PT has had direct elections since 2001. However, participatory forms of candidate selection have not been the norm. The tendency is that the leaders of political parties will select their candidates employing criteria that are far from clear (Tremblay, 2012).

In South Africa there was a percentage drop of female representation in Parliament between 2004 and 2009, and a further drop to 10% in 2014. In addition the percentage of female ministers has been dropping since 2004. Also, female ministers tend to be appointed in "softer" portfolios in the social sector, such as Health, Education, a Social Welfare. The number of female deputy ministers is, however, on the rise. After 1994, Cabinet was dominated by men, at 60%. Looking at provincial government departments and structures, the GCE found that the numerical balance of women appointments was generally being met, but not necessarily because of gender mainstreaming programmes and targeted interventions, but rather in a bid to meet Employment Equity (EE) targets. While an increasing number of departments were therefore appointing women, this was not happening at the level of seniority required. Many government departments were found to be operating without clear gender-mainstreaming strategies and programmes with clearly defined objectives. Where gender-mainstreaming was focused on, it was generally as part of a "basket" of functions, such as disability, the youth, the elderly, and those with HIV/Aids or TB (Morna & Makaya-Magarangoma, 2013).

In Uganda the laws and policies have provided more opportunities for women to run for elective office. Gender policies (Uganda Gender Policy, 2007) that promote gender mainstreaming in all government ministries and districts local governments are making it mandatory to have women in positions of leadership. More gender sensitive population that is beginning to appreciate the positive roles that women are playing in leadership. This has been

enhanced by good female role models in leadership for example the Speaker of Uganda's 9th Parliament. In addition young population that is more accepting to women in leadership. More than 70% of Uganda's population is made up of youth. Their attitudes towards women in leadership are more liberal than their predecessors (Robinson & Friedman, 2007).

In Tanzania Women exclude themselves from participating in politics because of the oppressive culture which make them to be convinced that politics and leadership is for men. Drop-out due to pregnancy and truancy in primary, secondary and high schools. This leave many women with less competence compared to men. Women are subjected to sex corruption to win appointment position within political parties. In addition election management leaves room for corruption and vulnerability for sexual violence (Sumari, 2007).

In recent years in Kenya, there have been a number of major improvements to the legal and policy framework with regards to discrimination. The introduction of a new Constitution in 2010, with a strong focus on equality, a much improved right to non-discrimination, and special provisions on the protection of rights for particular groups vulnerable to discrimination is welcome. Similarly, the enactment in the last ten years of two specific anti-discrimination acts (on disability and race) and an Employment Act with generally robust equality provisions means that legal protection from discrimination has been significantly enhanced (Fennell & Arnot, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement

Women's engagement in political leadership is a global concern because in virtually all societies leadership is gendered masculine. They are less involved in political leadership. However, though the situation of women continues to improve in most countries, Kenya inclusive, women are disadvantaged in political participation and decision making precisely because their numbers are comparatively lower (in decision making positions) than those of men. In addition Women's wings' of political parties have rarely provided the essential incubating ground for women leaders, for female solidarity in parties, and for feminist policy proposals. Instead, Women's Wings are commonly captured by the spouses of male leaders and have developed a species of female sycophancy. Clearly, if the concern is to bring gender equality perspectives into politics and public policy, a focus on packing public space with female bodies is misplaced unless supported by efforts to bring gender issues into the many other spaces where political interests are formed. It has also been observed that political parties have rarely assigned priority to gender issues or promoted women as candidates for office without being formally obliged to do so. Proof of the stubborn resistance of parties to women's leadership is their unwillingness to introduce internal leadership quotas (Kabeer, 2005).

Kamau (2010) posits that equal political participation of both genders is one of the critical pillars of good governance which entails freedom of expression, freedom of association among other fundamental rights. Nyakwaka (2012) also notes that Kenyan women constitute a vital national resource whose ideas, creativity and concerns for social cohesion can help bring about positive change in all spheres of the society. However, despite the fact that women play an important role in the society, women in Kenya have been marginalized and underrepresented in organs of decision making and in political parties of the country since independence. Kenya's Constitution offers a framework to address this historical marginalization. Even though a number of women have made great strides in politics in the country, women representation is far below the minimum one third public service requirement of Article 27(3) of the Constitution of Kenya. The marginalization can be

attributed to traditional beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes which depict women as being inferior (Kivoi, 2014). In addition, despite subscribing to international commitments to empower women, Kenya still lags behind in terms of women representation in politics and decision making in East African region (Kamau, 2010).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of social protection on women empowerment in political parties in Nairobi, Kenya.

2.0 Empirical Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was introduced in 1958 by the sociologist George Homans with the publication of his work "Social Behavior as Exchange" (Karen & Erick, 1958). He defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons (Homans, 1961). The theory emphasized the individual behavior of actors in interaction with one another.

Social exchange theory views exchange as a social behavior that may result in both economic and social outcomes (Lambe, Wittmann & Spekman, 2001). Social Exchange Theory has been generally analyzed by comparing human interactions with the marketplace. Under his perspective every individual is trying to maximize his wins. Burns (1973) stated that once this concept is understood, it is possible to observe social exchanges everywhere, not only in market relations, but also in other social relations like friendship. Social exchange process brings satisfaction when people receive fair returns for their expenditures. Unlike economic exchange, the elements of social exchange are quite varied and cannot be reduced to a single quantitative exchange rate. According to Stafford (2008), social exchanges involve a connection with another person; involve trust and not legal obligations; are more flexible; and rarely involve explicit bargaining.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Marmot *et al.*, (2008) conducted a study on social protection and the empowerment of girls and women. The study argued that the growing interest in this area of social policy is an opportunity to explore how social protection programmes can act as catalysts for women's economic empowerment by addressing the particular vulnerabilities women face. Social protection includes social insurance, social assistance and livelihood promotion. Contributory social insurance is generally not viable for people living in poverty or working in the informal sector, as they do not have the means to make the required contributions. Thus, for low-income and middle-income countries, where women tend to be concentrated in low paid formal and informal employment social assistance and livelihood promotion are critical social policy tools. Without an increase in workers' wages it will not be possible for more women to participate in contributory social insurance schemes that can guarantee their access to unemployment benefits and pensions. The key issues guide will therefore focus on social assistance programmes and livelihood promotion while recognizing that these programmes are most effective in supporting women's empowerment when internationally agreed labor rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

Suguna (2006) conducted a study on empowerment of rural women through social protection. Besides reducing poverty, social protection has great potential for promoting women's economic empowerment and reducing gender inequalities. Nevertheless, the contribution of current social protection schemes to these development goals is still limited. When women are designated transfer recipients, social protection schemes can facilitate their access to resources and promote their role as decision-makers in the household; however, these outcomes do not happen automatically. For example, cash transfer schemes require complementary services to ensure that women cash recipients maintain control over their own incomes and decision making capacity. Asset transfer schemes need to take into account women's capacities, needs and aspirations in terms of resources and skills development. Similarly, public works programmes need to improve women's skills and promote employability after completion of the programme. The design of social protection schemes requires an integrated approach, linking with other livelihood programmes and social services, so that these can lead to sustainable poverty reduction. Finally, changing mindsets and perceptions about women in social protection policies and programmes is needed, not only to protect women's roles as mothers and care takers, but also to promote their economic empowerment.

Babajanian (2012) conducted a study on social protection and its contribution to social cohesion and state building. Social protection has been theoretically linked with social cohesion and state-building in several agency reports and academic publications with the assumption that it can make a positive contribution towards strengthening social cohesion and building state capacity and legitimacy. This study found that social protection affects social cohesion and state building.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey research design. The study population was 275 executives in all the 55 registered political parties in Nairobi, Kenya. The sample size was 90 executives in all the registered political parties in Nairobi, Kenya who were selected using simple random sampling. The study used primary data which was largely be quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data was analyzed using content analysis. Qualitative data was presented in continuous prose form. On the other hand after quantitative data is obtained, it was prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and keyed into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software for analysis. The statistics generated included descriptive statistics. The particular descriptive statistics included frequencies and percentages while the particular inferential statistics included correlation analysis and regression. Correlation analysis was used to establish the association between the variables. A multiple linear regression model was used to test the significance of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The results revealed that majority of the respondents who were 55% indicated that they were between 36 – 45 years, 33% indicated that they were above 45 years, 9% indicated that they were between 26 – 35 years while only 3% indicated that they were between 18 – 25 years. In addition majority of the respondents who were 67% indicated that they were married, 20% indicated that they were single, 7% indicated that they were separated while only 6% indicated that they were divorced. The respondents were further asked to indicate their

highest level of education. Majority of the respondents who were 64% indicated undergraduate as their highest level of education, 22.1% indicated tertiary college, 8.1% indicated post graduate, 4.7% indicated secondary while only 1.2 indicated primary education. The respondents were further asked whether they hold any position in the party. Majority of the respondents who were 87% indicated no while only 13% indicated yes. The respondents were further asked to indicate the number of years they have been in political position. Majority of the respondents who were 60% indicated more than 10 years, 26% indicated 6 to 10 years, 9% indicated 4 to 5 years while only 5% indicated less than 3 years. This implies that most executive members and party members of the registered political parties in Kenya had been in political position for many years and thus had good information about women empowerment in political parties.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of social protection on women empowerment in political parties in Nairobi, Kenya. The results revealed that majority of the respondents who were 81.40% (57.0%+24.4%) agreed with the statement that social protection programmes can act as catalysts for women's empowerment. The results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 84.90% agreed with the statement that social protection empowers women to join political parties. The results also revealed that majority of the respondents who were 76.8% agreed with the statement that Changing mindsets and perceptions about women helps in empowering women. The results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 86.1% agreed with the statement that social protection schemes can facilitate their women access to resources and promote their role as decision-makers and thus they can be motivated to join political parties.

On a five point scale, the average mean of the responses was 3.99 which mean that majority of the respondents were agreeing with most of the statements; however the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 0.88.

Table 1: Social Protection

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Dev
social protection programmes can act as catalysts for women's empowerment	3.50%	2.30%	12.80%	57.00%	24.40%	3.97	0.89
Social protection empowers women to join political parties	2.30%	2.30%	10.50%	59.30%	25.60%	4.03	0.82

Changing mindsets and perceptions about women helps in empowering women	8.10%	3.50%	11.60%	53.50%	23.30%	3.80	1.09
Social protection schemes can facilitate their women access to resources and promote their role as decision-makers and thus they can be motivated to join political parties	0.00%	3.50%	10.50%	54.70%	31.40%	4.14	0.74
Total						3.99	0.88

The respondents were further asked to give their opinion on whether the Kenyan society had embraced social protection of women. Most of the respondents said that the Kenyan society has embraced social protection of women.

Table 2: Social Protection in Kenyan society

Responses	Number
Kenyan society has embraced social protection of women.	57
Kenyan society has not embraced social protection of women.	29
Total	86

4.3 Inferential Statistics

Inferential analysis was conducted to generate correlation results, model of fitness, and analysis of the variance and regression coefficients.

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 below presents the results of the correlation analysis. The results revealed that social protection and women empowerment were positively and significantly related ($r=0.350$, $p=0.001$). This implies that an increase in social protection leads to an improvement in and women empowerment

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

		women empowerment	Social Protection
women Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
Social Protection	Pearson Correlation	.350**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

The results presented in table 4 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. Equality rule, human rights, social protection and non discrimination were found to be satisfactory variables in women empowerment in political parties. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 55.1%. This means that equality rule, human rights, social protection and non discrimination explain 55.1% of the variations in the dependent variable which is women empowerment in political parties. This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory.

Table 4: Model Fitness

Indicator	Coefficient
R	0.742
R Square	0.551
Adjusted R Square	0.529
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.22128

In statistics significance testing the p-value indicates the level of relation of the independent variable to the dependent variable. If the significance number found is less than the critical value also known as the probability value (p) which is statistically set at 0.05, then the conclusion would be that the model is significant in explaining the relationship; else the model would be regarded as non-significant.

Table 5 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variables are good predictors of performance. This was supported by an F statistic of 24.872 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05significance level.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.871	4	1.218	24.872	0.000
Residual	3.966	81	0.049		
Total	8.837	85			

Regression of coefficients results in table 6 shows that social protection and women empowerment were positively and significantly related ($r=0.19$, $p=0.023$).

Table 6: Regression of Coefficients

	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.13	0.108	1.197	0.235
Social Protection	0.19	0.082	2.322	0.023

Thus, the optimal model for the study is;

$$\text{Women Empowerment} = 0.13 + 0.19 \text{ Social Protection}$$

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study also concluded that without increase in workers' wages will not be possible for more women to participate in contributory social insurance schemes that can guarantee their access to unemployment benefits and pensions.

The study also concluded that women generally are not involved in making decisions, as gender roles within the family are based on patriarchal values and this has led to lack of women empowerment.

5.2 Recommendations

The study also recommended that advancing the participation of women in devolved governance structures requires serious consideration by putting in place policy measures and interventions that would further this cause since equal gender participation is enshrined in the Constitution. In addition financial support from government, sponsors and family should be provided to women in politics. These can be achieved through development of fundraising skills to strengthen one's financial base for the political campaign.

The study also recommended that men should be taught that women have power to lead with all due respect observed. In addition women empowerment programs for women to participate in politics should be put in place. This can be enhanced through development of political professionalism and power of incumbency retention rate. In this connection both women political incumbents and election losers must soldier on in electoral politics so as to acquire the necessary political experience and/or to entrench themselves in various political structures. Women politicians therefore need to be more persistent and professional in their attitude towards politics and learn to accept electoral defeat as a temporary setback and a good learning experience rather than a permanent knock out.

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