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978-0-521-70490-8 - African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes
Aili Mari Tripp, Isabel Casimiro, Joy Kwesiga and Alice Mungwa
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African Women's Movements

Women burst onto the political scene in Africa after the 1990s, claiming more than one-third of the parliamentary seats in countries such as Burundi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Women in Rwanda hold the highest percentage of legislative seats in the world. Women's movements lobbied for constitutional reforms and new legislation to expand women's rights.

This book examines the convergence of factors behind these dramatic developments, including the emergence of autonomous women's movements, changes in international and regional norms regarding women's rights and representation, the availability of new resources to advance women's status, and the end of civil conflict. The book focuses on the cases of Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda, situating these countries in the broader African context. The authors provide a fascinating analysis of the way in which women are transforming the political landscape in Africa by bringing to bear their unique perspectives as scholars who have also been parliamentarians, transnational activists, and leaders in these movements.

Aili Mari Tripp is Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her publications include *Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalization and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania* (1997), *Women and Politics in Uganda* (2000), several coedited volumes, and numerous scholarly articles. *Women and Politics in Uganda* won the 2001 Victoria Schuck Award of the American Political Science Association for best book on women and politics in 2000 and a 2001 Choice Outstanding Academic Title Award.

Isabel Casimiro is the coordinator of the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique. She also coordinates the Woman's Program at the university's Center of African Studies and was formerly a member of parliament in Mozambique. She is author of *Paz na Terra, Guerra em Casa: Feminismo e Organizações de Mulheres em Moçambique* (2004) and other works related to the women's movement in Mozambique.

Joy Kwesiga is Vice Chancellor of Kabale University and former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University. She is the author of *Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience* (2002), and she coedited *The Women's Movement in Uganda* (2002) with Aili Tripp. Kwesiga was also a founding member of one of the leading women's rights organizations in Uganda, Action for Development (ACFODE).

Alice Mungwa is Senior Political Affairs Officer of the African Union Observer Mission to the United Nations. Prior to that, she served as Senior Political Officer of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Previously, Mungwa worked as a program officer for gender and development with the Africa Leadership Forum in Nigeria and with a Cameroonian women's nongovernmental organization.

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Acronyms

31DWM	31st December Women's Movement
AAWORD	Association of African Women for Research and Development
ACFODE	Action for Development
AMWIK	Association of Media Women in Kenya
APAC	Association of Professional African Women in Communications
AU	African Union
AWCPD	African Women's Committee on Peace and Development
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BAWATA	Baraza la Wanawake (Tanzanian Women's Council)
BLP	Better Life for Rural Women Programme (Nigeria)
BOMWA	Botswana Media Women's Association
CA	Constituent Assembly (Uganda)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFR	Collectif des Femmes pour le Renouveau (Cameroon)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNFC	Conseil National des Femmes Camerounaise (Cameroon)
CNU	Cameroon National Union
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
EASSI	Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States

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EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women's Association
ESOCAM	Evolution Sociale Camerounaise
FAMWZ	Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe
FEDIM	International Federation of Women Mozambique
FEMNET	African Women's Communication and Development Network
FGC	female genital cutting
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
ICCO	Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KANU	Kenya African National Union
LMWA	Lagos Market Women's Association
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy (Zambia)
MULEIDE	Mulher, Lei e Desenvolvimento, Moçambique [Woman, Law and Development in Mozambique]
MYW	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake
NAMWA	Namibian Media Women's Association
NCSLW	National Congress of Sierra Leone Women
NCWS	National Council of Women's Societies Nigeria
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NOVIB	Dutch affiliate of Oxfam since 1994
NUEW	National Union of Eritrea Women
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	overseas development assistance
OMM	Organização da Mulher Moçambicana
PNCDC	Provisional National Defence Council
REFJCI	Réseau des Femmes Journalistes de Côte d'Ivoire
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDF	Social Democratic Front (Cameroon)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLAWIM	Sierra Leone Association of Women in the Media

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SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation (Namibia)
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TANGO	Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
UCW	Ugandan Council of Women
ULA	Uganda Land Alliance
UMWA	Uganda Media Women's Association
UNDEFEC	Union Democratique des Femmes Camerounaise
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIP	United National Independence Party (Zambia)
UPC	Union des Populations du Cameroun
UPND	United Party for National Development (Zambia)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UWT	Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania
WCNU	Women's Cameroon National Union
WCPDM	Women's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WIN	Women in Nigeria
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Educational Trust
WLWM	Sierra Leone Women's Movement
WNC	Women's National Coalition (South Africa)
WPF	Woman's Parliamentary Forum
ZANU–PF	Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front

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Preface

This book offers an explanation for some of the most significant developments in Africa since the 1990s, namely the emerging visibility of women as political actors and the adoption of a new generation of policies advancing women's rights. We raise many questions that have rarely been examined in a comparative African perspective: Why have some countries been more likely to adopt these policies than others? Why have so many of these changes taken place in countries coming out of civil conflict? Why have so many partially democratic and nondemocratic countries introduced woman-friendly reforms? What difference does democracy make to the adoption of women's rights reforms? These are just some of the questions this book tackles.

This book is one of the first to document the dramatic changes in women's mobilization and women's impact on politics across the continent in the 1990s. There are a few superb country studies (e.g., Britton 2005; Fallon forthcoming; Hassim 2006; Steady 2006; Tamale 1999) and some regional studies (Geisler 2004). An important edited volume by Gretchen Bauer and Hannah Britton (2006) examines women in African parliaments. There is a very small but growing literature on the subject in journals that focuses on aspects of the changes described in this book in one country or context (e.g., electoral quotas for women, women and land concerns, and female genital cutting). Our book brings many of the pieces together and tells a much bigger story about overall changes in women's movements and their political impact after the 1990s. Our inclusion of Francophone and Lusophone cases is particularly important since little has been written in English regarding these countries.

Africa is a continent of vast cultural, linguistic, economic, political, and ecological diversity of which we were acutely cognizant in writing the manuscript. In our effort to identify general patterns and trends in

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sub-Saharan Africa, we recognize that sometimes this comes at the unavoidable cost of overlooking important particularities of various regions, countries, and locales. There are trade-offs involved in telling a larger story. For this reason, we focus on the cases of Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda and examine the differences among these countries while situating them in a broader sub-Saharan context. These countries provide us an opportunity to compare women's movements and gender policies in countries representing the British, French, and Portuguese colonial legacies.

As a scholarly study, this work is unique in that it draws on the expertise of four scholars, several of whom were early leaders of the new women's movements in their home countries. They have also been active within international women's movements. They have observed these transformations both from within and from an academic perspective. The authors have been engaged in policy making as parliamentarians (Casimiro), in advising and engaging government agencies (Kwesiga) and donors (Tripp), and, at the pan-African level, working for the African Union (Mungwa).

Aili Mari Tripp has extensive engagement with the issues touched on in this book. She coordinated the planning and writing of the manuscript, which had an auspicious beginning at the beautiful location of the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center on the shores of Lake Como in Italy. Tripp is Director of the Women's Studies Research Center and Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She lived in Tanzania for fifteen years, and after 1987 she carried out extensive research in Uganda and Tanzania on women and politics and women's movements in both countries. She is author of *Women and Politics in Uganda* (2000) and editor of *Sub-Saharan Africa: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Women's Issues Worldwide* (2003). She also coedited *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights* (2006) with Myra Marx Ferree and *The Women's Movement in Uganda: History, Challenges and Prospects* (2002) with Joy Kwesiga. Tripp has published extensively on women and politics in Africa and women's movements in Africa. She coedits (with Kathleen Dolan) the journal *Politics & Gender* of the Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association. She also coedits, with Stanlie James, a book series on women in Africa and the diaspora for the University of Wisconsin Press.

Isabel Casimiro was a member of parliament in Mozambique (1994–9), and, as an historian and sociologist, she has been a Research Associate at the Center of African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique. She was instrumental in the creation of Cruzeiro do

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Sul–Instituto de Investigação para o Desenvolvimento (Southern Cross–Institute for Research and Development). Dr. Casimiro was also co-founder and first coordinator of Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) and Fórum Mulher (Women's Forum), the leading women's network in Mozambique. She has been a leader of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) and Mulher, Lei e Desenvolvimento, Moçambique (Woman, Law and Development in Mozambique, or MULEIDE). She is author of *Paz na Terra, Guerra em Casa: Feminismo e Organizações de Mulheres em Moçambique* (Peace on Earth, War at Home: Feminism and Women's Organizations in Mozambique) (2004) and many other works related to the women's movement in Mozambique.

Joy Kwesiga is Vice Chancellor of Kabale University and former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University in Uganda. She served as chair of the Department of Women and Gender Studies and headed up a Gender Mainstreaming Division at Makerere. Kwesiga was a founding member of one of the leading women's rights organizations in Uganda, Action for Development (ACFODE). She published a book, *Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience* (2002), and coedited another book with Aili Tripp, *The Women's Movement in Uganda* (2002). Kwesiga has published extensively on gender mainstreaming, women's movements, and other gender-related concerns in Uganda.

Alice Mungwa is Senior Political Affairs Officer of the African Union Observer Mission to the United Nations. Prior to taking this position, she served as Senior Political Officer of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She brings to the book her knowledge of women's movements in Cameroon and Francophone Africa as well as perspectives of transnational mobilization from the African Union vantage point. Previously, Mungwa worked as a program officer for gender and development with the Africa Leadership Forum in Nigeria and with a Cameroonian women's nongovernmental organization (NGO). The views expressed in this manuscript belong to the authors and should not be attributed to any institution with which the authors are affiliated, including the African Union.

The book draws on original fieldwork in Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups carried out by the authors in their home countries. We also draw heavily on a systematic analysis of African media reports and commentary from LexisNexis. We utilize pamphlets, newsletters, Web sites, and other unpublished documents. The book also draws on the small but growing secondary literature available on the subject.

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We structure the book by building on the framework provided by Louise Chappell in *Gendering Government: Feminist Engagement with the State in Australia and Canada* (2002). She divides policies into legal/constitutional, electoral, and bureaucratic groupings. We find this approach useful in allowing us to examine the extent to which the various arenas have been utilized by women's movements in Africa. We include one additional arena – namely, peace building (Chapter 8) – because of its importance in explaining how women activists contributed to the resolution of major upheavals to advance their agendas. Peace building and involvement in peace negotiations are critical moments of influence for women activists, as they have laid the basis for further changes in women's political representation and woman-friendly policies in the postconflict context.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A central claim of the book, outlined in Chapter 1, is that autonomous women's movements are one of the most important determinants of the new gender-based policies adopted after 1990 in much of Africa. Other determinants include changing international norms and influences of global and regional women's movements, the allocation of new government and donor resources to implement reforms related to women's rights, and the diffusion of female-friendly policies as a result of the influences of multilateral bodies such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth organization, regional bodies such as the African Union, and subregional institutions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The end of a significant number of conflicts after the mid-1980s also created important political opportunities for women's movements. The conjuncture of all these developments created the right synergy for the emergence of many of the dynamics described in this book.

The book starts with an examination of the roots of contemporary women's activism (Chapter 2), first looking at precolonial ideologies of political motherhood and the historic continuities in the use of tactics such as shaming and grieving. We look at the impact of colonial policies on civil society and female education and the legacies to which these policies contributed. Another influence on contemporary movements came from the role of women in nationalist movements and the wide variety of economic and women's rights issues for which women fought in those struggles for independence. Finally, the chapter highlights the role of women under post-independence one-party rule, looking at both the constraints and possibilities

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for mobilization. It concludes by describing the early beginnings of the new women's movement, starting with the 1980s.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the factors that gave rise to the new women's mobilization after the 1990s. We focus on (1) international influences and the diffusion of ideas and strategies across Africa with respect to women's rights; (2) the influence of international donors; and (3) democratization and political liberalization. These factors were important because they shaped the ways in which the movements sought policy changes, the kinds of issues that they took up, and their levels of success.

We contrast characteristics of the new women's movements with the earlier pre-1990 organizations in Chapter 4. This chapter looks at the importance of associational autonomy and heterogeneity; the interest in building ties across ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation; the advocacy nature of many of the new organizations in contrast to the developmentalism of earlier associations; the emergence of new coalitions and networks; and the active involvement of men in supporting various women's rights causes. The chapter then identifies some of the challenges that these new organizations face from the state, from donor relations, and from problems of internal institutional weakness.

Chapter 5 examines the impact of women's movements on constitutions that have been rewritten since the 1990s as well as on legislative reform. It first engages the broader literature on policy reform to examine existing theories of why some reforms are adopted more easily than others and contrasts these with African cases, suggesting that laws pertaining to the clan and the family are harder to pass than laws relating to women's political representation, employment, labor, and citizenship. The former laws tended to be regulated by customary law, often under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities. The chapter goes on to examine legislative changes in the areas of domestic violence, family law, and land rights.

The electoral arena is another important area where women are making strides, especially in legislative elections. They are also making gains in the executive branch as ministers, vice presidents, and even, in the case of Liberia, as head of state. Women are increasingly forming and heading political parties. Chapter 6 starts out with a description of some of the constraints that women face in running for office. It then explains the dramatic increases that we are seeing in the number of women in African legislatures by looking not only at the role of women's movements but also at the impact of quotas, the end of conflict, and pressures from regional bodies such as

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the African Union, SADC, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Chapter 7 examines the ways in which women's movements have engaged the state bureaucracy, starting with the national machineries and the eventual formation of ministries of gender/women. The chapter takes a critical look at some of the approaches that have guided the work of national machineries, from various women in development (WID) and gender and development (GAD) approaches to gender-mainstreaming approaches. The role of the women's movements is explored in relation to the cases of gender mainstreaming in Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda. Gender budgeting policies are analyzed as an example of gender mainstreaming.

In Chapter 8, the book investigates women's activism in the context of peace building. The chapter shows how the peace and women's movements in Mozambique and Uganda were linked and how they represented key moments in women's activism in conflict and postconflict contexts.

Finally, Chapter 9 ties the threads of the book together and returns to a discussion of the case studies in light of the general findings. It situates African women's movements in a global context to discuss the ways in which these trends in Africa are part of global trends but also how women's movements in Africa have influenced developments in the rest of the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We owe a major debt of gratitude to the many who have helped us along the way to bring this project to fruition, including the Rockefeller Foundation, the University of Wisconsin–Madison's International Institute's Transnational Feminism Research Circle, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. We also are grateful for the assistance that we received from Cambridge University Press and especially Lewis Bateman and the anonymous reviewers. Georgina Waylen provided invaluable feedback and encouragement with the final draft. The manuscript is a product of many dialogues and interactions with countless scholars and activists throughout Africa, all of whom have influenced the final product. And finally, we are most grateful for the help provided by research assistants Sara Burnes, Emma Condon, and Anne Fishback.

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