



Ahfad University for Women
**The Regional Institute of Gender,
Diversity, Peace and Rights**



**Project Title: The Introduction of the Quota System in Sudan and its
Impact in Enhancing Women's Political Engagement**

The Quota in Sudanese Electoral Law: Achievements or Challenges and Lessons Learned

Prof. Balghis Badri and Dr. Samia El Naggar

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Balghis badri

Sudanese women have a long history of political engagement and activism that can be traced back to the time of the British colonial rule and beyond. Sudanese women have gained the right to vote and be elected well before many countries in the region. However, the involvement of women in politics has remained limited. The long history of civil wars, the economic meltdown, the chronic instability in the country, dominant conservative culture , among other factor have contributed both positively and negatively to this.

In recent years a new momentum has developed whereby women are getting increasingly interested in politics and are making headways in achieving some of their long awaited objectives such as the quota. In the preparation for the latest general elections, 25% quota for a minimum women representation in legislative bodies at all levels (national, regional, state, local levels) in the Sudanese electoral law of 2008. The law specifies that the quota would be through an exclusive women party list through a state based proportionate representation system.

This paper intends to understand the process of adoption gender quota, the achievements and challenges related to the implementation of quota. .The specific questions that are to be addressed include: What is the nature and characteristics of the context within which the quota system was introduced? Why is the quota introduced? Who are the main actors in introducing the quota? What are the processes that have led to the quota adoption and enforcement?

The research *methodology* used was qualitative and in-depth interviews. The data was collected by using in-depth interviews with 80 of the activists from civil society organizations, government, parliamentarians and academia, man and women politicians, and experts in addition to international organizations actors. The interviews aimed to solicit the views of the different actors on discourses used and motivations for quota and to ensure their participation in explaining their views on the processes of quota adoption and implementation. Group discussions were also conducted for analysis of context, and in identifying the influences, challenges to women political participation and recommendations for improving future representation. Three workshops, each including 40 participants, were organized to discuss findings and analysis with some relevant actors. .

The main argument in the paper is that the quota has come in a post conflict, non-democratic context and was a result of continued efforts of actors who advocated for the quota for distinct and even contradictory motivations. The quota and debates surrounding its adoption provided incentives for women collective action and fostered recognition to the importance of women participation. The adoption and enforcement of the quota have helped in increasing number of women candidates and parliamentarian but tis influence for achieving the anticipated feminists' ends of women empowerment has not come through due to the form of quota adopted in election law and because most political parties boycotted election for non-democratic environment.

The paper contains five sections. After introductory section two contains the conceptual framework; section three analyses the Sudan context presenting the post-conflict dynamics,

Sudanese political parties, non-state actors, and women dynamics of women movements and feminism. Section four contains the adoption process of quota highlighting preparatory activities and advocacy campaign; section five notes the achievement, challenges of quota of quota implementation in addition to lessons learned. This is followed by last section containing concluding remarks and way forward for an effective gender quota.

2. Conceptual Framework

Women under-representation in politics have been addressed by different feminist scholars. Ann Phillips (1998) amongst the first to highlight this aspect mentioned that the call for increasing representation depends on three main arguments. One links the representation to the justice to be given to women and the other consider increased representation as an achievement of democracy “revitalized democracy”. A third argument was that increased representation enhances women’s interests. The three arguments were considered by Manshirdge 1999 as interlinked. Our study goes in line with these international arguments, yet it adds a new dimension of explaining the context of a quota within political Islamist governance. We will highlight the main findings as indicated on literature on the quota so as to compare and contrast to our case study of the quota in the Sudanese context.

Krook, 2007, noted that the adoption of candidate gender quotas is related to the women mobilization for quotas¹, political elites’ recognition for strategic advantages for pursuing quotas², existing or emerging notions of equality and representation³ and international norms and process of transnational sharing of experiences and knowledge. “These four ‘stories’ identify a range of local, national, international and transnational actors involved in individual quota campaigns, as well as numerous motivations that lead these actors to support or oppose quotas as measures for increasing the proportion of women in political office” (Krook, 2007, p 369).

The actors’ motivations for quota reform include: principled stands⁴, electoral considerations⁵: empty gestures⁶, promotion of other political ends⁷, extension of

¹ It is clearly evident in the experience of many countries that the initiative for quota is taken by *collective mobilization of women* who perceive quotas as an effective means for increasing women’s political representation. Women need to mobilize and advocate for quota as in most cases the political elites and decision-makers are mostly men.

² The *political elites* may pursue quotas for strategic advantages such as competing with rival parties, or to ensure that the women selected will not challenge the status quo. Sometimes the elites may intend to consolidate control over party representatives and political rivals and ‘to institutionalize procedures for candidate selection that enforce central party decisions’ (Krook, 2007, p 574) These tendencies are strong when political parties have been in opposition for long time or if suffering gap in membership².

³ The *existing or emerging notions of equality and representation* may take a number of different forms, however, depending on how quota provisions mesh with reigning political principles. These might include a search for democracy, creation of new democratic institutions or taking quota as an extension of other types of representational guarantees.

⁴ All the above narratives include principled stands. The women organizations concerns is to improve women representation; the political parties’ interest sometimes have concerns to promote women political access; the normative narrative argue that political parties adopt quotas to promote equality or redefine citizenship in more inclusionary direction; and the international and transnational actors aim to foster gender-balanced decision making.

⁵ Women sections in political parties often note the gains by women in other parties to advocate in their own parties for quota support. Advocates in addition highlight importance of quota as a tool for winning women votes.

⁶ The political elites may consider support of quota as ‘a relatively easy way to demonstrate commitment to women rights without necessarily altering the existing pattern of representation’ Krook, 2007, p 377

representational guarantees⁸, international pressure:⁹, transnational learning¹⁰: Krook, postulates that ‘the four narratives themselves appear to contradict one another as they highlight different actors and motivations for quota reform. ...As such, the four stories may in fact be dynamics that operate within the wider universe of quota campaigns rather than accounts that explain all cases of quota adoption. Alternatively, they may each form only one part of a larger sequence of events: women’s mobilization may precede and influence elite decision making, while international and transnational norms may affect democratic innovation at the local and national levels’ (Krook, 2007, p 374).

There are evidences from smaller number of experiences that feminists may not support the quotas considering it to be demeaning to women¹¹, political elites resist quotas due to concerns about electoral competition¹², the existing representational guarantees oppose quota adoption and the international actors block efforts to institute quotas. During the quota adoption they form alliances within and across locations. In most cases ‘alliance involve women in civil society and women in the state both sharing concern for increasing women representation; women in civil society who assume principled stands and men in state who respond to electoral considerations or make empty gestures promote other ends and extend representational guarantees as well as women in civil society who exert international pressure’ (Krook, 2007, p 379). We emphasize from Krook’s analysis here that the actors, their motivations for support or resistance are greatly shaped and influenced by wider context dynamics specifically prevalence of absence of democracy and level of commitment of politicians, men and women to gender justice.

The discussion of quota implementation revealed the effectiveness and impacts of quotas. According to Krook., 2007, the effectiveness of the quota in facilitating women’s access to political office is linked to the details of the measures themselves, the institutional framework in which it is introduced, and the impact of quotas stems from the balance of actors for and against implementation¹³. The account that relates the impact of quotas to how the quota

⁷ The political elites may pursue quota for different strategic advantages other than increasing women political participation. Some see quota as way to consolidate power over party representatives and political rivals, to centralize process of candidates’ selection and to ensure selecting women who would not challenge the patriarchal status quo within the party.

⁸ The quota is considered as extension to other guarantees given to other groups based on race, language, ethnicity, youth or occupation.

⁹ The influence of the international actors on party and national debates for gender equality and for compliance with international laws.

¹⁰ The quota proposals have their origin in the interactions of women groups across the national borders and mostly efforts are done to benefit from lessons learnt in such interactions in application of quota.

¹¹ However, not all women support quota as some women activists and political leaders with feminists perspective argue that quotas do not further the cause of female empowerment (Amar 1999; Huang 2002; Kishwar 1998). ‘This resistance takes on a variety of different forms, ranging from limited mobilization by grassroots women’s groups to active denunciations’ (....)

¹² But quota may be met with opposition from party leaders and male politicians (Haug 1995; Huang 2002). They find that competition among parties may work. This is when parties are uncertain about electoral and do not want to risk losing constituencies traditionally won by males. (Green 2003; Randall 1982; Stevenson 2000)

‘Finally, some evidence suggests that elites do not always espouse quotas in efforts to consolidate control, but rather in response to internal party struggles initiated among the rank-and-file (Bruhn 2003; Caul 2001a; Krook 2002)’

¹³ For example some (such as Jones 1998), argue that the legislative quotas are more effective because they bind all political parties, and are enforced and monitored by state bureaucracies rather than simply left to party leaders’ decisions. While others consider that the impact of gender quotas is influenced by the wording requirement, sanctions and legitimacy of the quota. (Baldez 2004b; Htun 2002; Meier 2004)

measures fit the existing institutional frameworks focus on characteristics of the electoral system and the features of the political party system, as well as the characteristics of parties themselves.¹⁴ (Caul 1999; Htun & Jones 2002; Jones & Navia 1999). Furthermore, the quota impact depends on who are the actors, who support and who oppose quotas as well as their respective roles in guaranteeing or undermining quota implementation.¹⁵ (Araújo 2003; Costa Benavides 2003; Freedman 2004; Holli et al. 2006)

The different actors play a variety of roles in quota implementation. While various state and civil society actors support quotas and pressure elites to ensure their implementation, some women's groups and elites work to undermine the existing quota provisions and some party elites oppose quotas and obstruct its implementation and thus impact. Many citizens are not even aware of the existence of quota provisions, much less variations in their impact, thus diminishing the possibility for public oversight of the implementation process (Htun & Jones 2002).

The review of literature demonstrates that the quota adoption and implementation processes are influenced by a variety of factors, involve diverse categories of actors who have different motivations for pursuing quota. The prominent factors are the women mobilization, party interests/ advantages, emerging norms of equality and representation. The impact of quota is related to the details of the measure, rules of enforcement, electoral and party systems as well as role of the different actors. The cases show that there are positive effects as more women are participating and learning political practices, political parties are recognizing and changing candidates' selection procedures but there are limits as women elected may not be committed to women agenda and may have no influence on democratic process or justice objectives. All these are important considerations that will inform our framework. However, the latter will emphasize issues that are not elaborated adequately in literature visited. Our framework takes the quota processes as shaped by context dynamics specifically limited democratic process and the post-conflict dynamics. We will highlight the influence of Islamic political ideology on political decisions, women/feminists movement/s, electoral processes and political parties. In most of the quota discussions women are taken as one category, and

¹⁴ Examining how electoral rules facilitate or hinder the potentially positive effect of quotas on women's representation, they observe that quotas have the greatest impact in proportional representation (PR) electoral systems with closed lists and high district magnitudes (Araújo 2003; Caul 1999; Htun & Jones 2002; Jones & Navia 1999). Other scholars consider, to discern partisan dynamics that aid or subvert quota implementation. They argue that quotas are more likely to have an impact in party systems where several parties co-exist and larger parties respond to policy innovations initiated by smaller parties (Kolinsky 1993; Styrkársdóttir 1986), as well as in parties with left-wing ideologies where the party leadership is able to enforce party or national regulations (Caul 1999; Davidson-Schmich 2006; Htun 2002). Still others observe higher rates of implementation across all parties in countries where the political culture emphasizes sexual difference and group representation (Meier 2004)

¹⁵ Much of this literature focuses on political party elites as the group most directly responsible for variations in the impact of quotas since the effective application of quotas largely hinges on elites' willingness to recruit female candidates (Peschar 2002). Most accounts expose the ways that elites seek to mitigate quota impact through passive refusal to enforce quotas to more active measures to subvert their intended effect (Araújo 2003; Costa Benavides 2003; Freedman 2004; Holli et al. 2006). Many also mention other actors who play a direct or indirect role in enforcing quota provisions, including women's organizations both inside and outside the political parties who pressure elites to comply with quota provisions, distribute information on quota regulations both to elites and the general public, and train female candidates to negotiate better positions on their respective party lists (Camacho Granados et al. 1997; Durrieu 1999; Lokar 2003; Luciak 1998; Sainsbury 1993);

our aim is to reflect on roles of women of different ages, education and political history. Our framework will examine the impact of quota on transformation of candidates and political parties.

3. Sudan Context:

Political Context: Since independence in 1956, The Sudan has not witnessed political stability and was ruled mostly by military governments with very short periods of democracy as indicated in Box 1 below. Since independence, the country has been witnessing conflicts and rebellion of those in the marginalized areas of Sudan against the central government. These civil conflicts, started at the wake of independence in 1955 led by the Southern Sudan¹⁶. The conflict in the south continued till the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by the Government of Sudan dominated by National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People Liberation Movement (SPLM) in 2005 ending the longest civil war in Africa. While the conflict in the south was coming to an end other conflicts either continued or emerged.¹⁷ The on-going conflicts and the post-conflict situation have both led to adverse impact on the country at large; generating millions of displaced persons, refugees and resulting in the proliferation of landmines and underdevelopment across the country, especially in the war affected areas.

Box 1

Types of Governments that ruled Sudan since independence:
Elected government 1956-1958
Military government November 1958- 1964
Popular uprising October 1964.
Interim Government 1964 – 1965
Elected government 1965 – 1969
Military Coup May 1969- 1985
Popular uprising April 1985
Interim Government 1985- 1986
Elected Government 1986- 1989 Islamic Front Government
Declared by the Military Coup 1989-2005.
Government of National Unity after CPA 2005 till now.

¹⁶The rebellion continued till 1972 when a peace agreement was signed that ended an organized military opposition and gave Southern Sudan a self-rule system. The peace agreement was denied by the same central government that signed it in 1983. This resulted in another rebellion and military opposition led by the late John Garang who formed the SPLA/M that called for the re-making of Sudanese identity and rights of the marginalized; labeling women as “the most marginalized of the marginalized”

¹⁷For example, the rebellion of the people of Eastern Sudan led by the Beja against the central government continued, while a new and most devastating civil war erupted in Darfur. Both rebellion movements raised similar agenda against marginalization in development, power sharing, wealth sharing and identity. The NCP managed to end the Eastern block and signed an agreement with Beja Congress in 2007. It also signed a partial agreement with one of the Darfuri rebels in 2006, but that did not lead to peace.

The signing of the CPA was a turning point in the history of the country. The CPA included commitment for starting a democratic transformation leading to a general elections in 2010, enacted a new interim constitution that include a progressive bill of rights that recognized the rights of women among others, and gave the southerners the right for self-determination in a free referendum to be held in January 2011. The Interim National Constitution also led to the enactment of a new electoral law which opened up the opportunity for women to gain the right for a minimum 25% representation in the legislative bodies of the country.

Although the main political forces were not consulted on CPA, yet it was welcomed as it ended the long standing war in the South. Despite that the Agreement is not gender-sensitive many groups of women considered it taking opportunity of new constitution and law reform to push for rights for empowerment of women. The partners to the Agreement were not serious in the implementation of agreement and continued to neglect the initiatives of CSOs and the political forces for the constitution, political parties' law and delayed the electoral and the formation of election commission and mechanisms. Despite that, the non-state actors and the political parties in opposition with the support of the international community started some capacity building and civic education initiatives. In this context that activists, political parties, non-state actors, experts started their efforts for adoption of quota.

The conflict and peace context has led to two major dimensions in the Sudanese history after independence. One is the close engagement of the international community in the Sudan internal affairs whereby the CPA 2005 and 2007, agreements guarded by the international community in the forms of troops, funding, Monitoring and evaluation and two major missions to guard peace (UNMIS and UNAMID). This large foreign engagement in forms of military presence, funding, experts, organization, UN Resolution, and humanitarian assistance and policy interventions imbedded in the peace agreement to which African Union, UN and European countries were co-signors and guardians of their implementation. For example, there has been a substantial intervention in areas such as capacity building directed to issues of good governance, women empowerment and democratization. The second major outcome of conflict is an engagement of civil society and the political parties in opposition for ending dictatorship, achieving democracy and respect to fundamental human rights and freedoms. That was undertaken inside Sudan and outside Sudan by parties that worked from outside Sudan or Sudanese in Diaspora who formed NGOs or worked in alliance with other international NGOs.

Despite its Islamic ideology, in recent years, the ruling (NCP) realized that its political survival depends on opening up and creating alliances with the civilian and military opposition groups including the secular SPLM. The NCP signed agreements with the opposition parties in a dual partnership or with the multi-party opposition alliance. It also tried to mobilize women and gain their votes, and to open up a limited yet crucial space for national civil society, media and international NGOs to operate. This dynamism opened more spaces for women and youth linked to the civil society, media or political parties to be

actively engaged and transparent in Sudanese public spaces and through use of multi-party spaces as well.

The right of self-determination which led to the secession in July, 2011 also triggered a new dynamism in which women also became actively involved. This engagement took place within a new polarization along separatists and unionist lines. That entire vivid and dynamic context briefly described is largely urban-based and mainly Khartoum- based led by the educated. Nevertheless, the conflict, diaspora as well as the post-southern Sudan conflict arrangement and the general political and socioeconomic dynamics have both constrained women and women movement and opened up new opportunities for women participation and engagement at both urban and non-urban marginal areas.

The election environment was very tense as the government delayed processes of enactment of laws, planned to be 2006, till 2008 and also delayed the establishment of Election Commission. In addition, the ruling party refused the opposition proposal to give responsibility to a national government to be responsible of the election and continued to dominate the political scene. The Election Commission was accused by the opposition parties to be lack independence and its decision was dominated by the ruling party. While the ruling party used all state resources and mechanisms it restricted other parties access to resources and use of state facilities. Accordingly some political parties after all preparations and campaigns withdrew from the election

Economic Context: Before secession Sudan was rich with resources, fertile land, water sources, oil, minerals and animal wealth. However, economic development policies continued dependence on agricultural production as major source of revenue until late 1990's when focus shifted to oil production neglecting agriculture. Oil revenues increased growth rate but has not been reflected on quality of life of people. The growing privatization contributed to increase in education and health services but the accessibility, affordability and quality remained critical problems to majority of poor and rural people. Unemployment specifically among youth was a problem. Poverty has become widespread in urban and rural areas with great variation among states¹⁸. Poverty triggered migration from poor states and rural areas to big urban centers. Efforts for poverty reduction are limited.

Social and cultural dynamics: As a result of Islamist policies and growing economic difficulties socially the society has witnessed great polarization between Islamist and secularists and between rich and poor with great variations within each category. The government policies were behind marginalization of many groups and certain regions. In addition there is some negligence to the rights of minority.

Cultural and ethnic diversity has not been well- managed thus conflict have been spreading between different ethnic groups over resources. But values and norms of male- dominance and subordination of women remained common cultural elements among different groups

¹⁸ For detailed explanation of economic situation see El Naggar et al, 2013.

challenged by agency of women seeking education and economic independence but their efforts remained limited with under-representation in decision making processes.

One important development for women in the last two decades is the increased number of educated women despite challenges of conflicts and poverty. The latter has pushed women to the market in petty trade activities in the informal sector. Although some managed to empower themselves socially and economically as indicated by their control of business and life decisions. However, the political engagement remained limited.

These political economic and socio-cultural dynamics shaped the factors which influenced quota adoption and implementation.

3.1. Political Parties:

The history of political parties goes to the 1940's. The limited periods of democracy have given very limited chance for political parties to experience election and ruling. UMMA party ruled through election twice/in opposition once, Democratic People Union ruled exclusively through election once and twice by election in coalition with Umma Party, Communist party gained seats in elected parliaments (3) seats in 1986, Islamic Front gained seats in elected parliaments 1986 (50 seats) currently divided into National Congress the ruling party since 1989 Coupe and the People's Congress in opposition since 2002. The Sudanese National Party, mainly representing Nuba Peoples, which was formed in the 1960s and gained two, seats in the 1986 elections. The Beja Congress in Eastern Sudan, which gained a seat in 1986 and was founded in the 1970s. The Congress is currently leading a war against the Ignaz government and finds support from the SPLA. The newly-formed (2001) Equality and Justice Party, which is mainly active in Darfour, as well as the newly-formed (2002) Sudanese Liberation Movement.

The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which was founded in the late 1970s by Dr John Garang and is mainly active in Southern Sudan.

From Badri, study of political parties in 2006, it is evident that principles of all political parties emphasize democracy, human rights and good governance. But no one included in its objectives gender justice. Some parties emphasize the sharia implementation. Consultation for research conformed that all parties are patriarchal and women remained excluded from political decision-making. However, the change for some political parties has come through the women struggle and when some parties, such as the Umma and Communist party, started to recognize women political participation and give them spaces in leadership positions. In others the struggle is still continuing for spaces and for gender mainstreaming. Historically the political parties showed concern for women but as voters as no party considered addressing constraints and challenges of women candidates in geographical constituencies.

3.2. Sudanese Non- State Actors:

An overall profile of the non-state actors is also needed to contextualize later Sudanese Women's Activism. Sudanese civil society can be considered active since colonialism. There were traditional middle range actors of conventional tribal chiefs and their councils, the Graduation Congress of 1930-45, which led to the evolution of Sudanese political parties, the

various Sudanese philanthropic and saving groups at the grass root levels, teachers as individuals and as associations or unions opening schools since the 1930's, and the private sector helping and contributing to the above groups' initiatives in an informal way or on individual basis.

Trade unions in Sudan were active and strong even before independence. They have been especially active in the North of Sudan to the extent of engaging in political resistance, and contributed to the overthrow of the military regimes of Aboud 1958 - 1964 and of May regime 1969 - 1985.

The trade unions remained active during democracies but their impact as an opposition ended in July 1989 after the coup of 30th June 1989 that dissolved them and later reformulated them to be pro-government; even their role for promoting or protecting their constituencies lapsed. Trade unions, more than all other non-state actors, need a democratic context to play a positive role to promote their constituencies, quality of work and living conditions.

The current civil society of NGOs, unions, and other groups is polarized between pro-government Islamist foundations, organizations, associations and unions. Others mainly hold a different perspective or are in direct opposition to the government's standpoints.

The NGO sector is also influenced by the political context. Under the May regime, such activities were curtailed and only scientific NGOs or branches of international ones such as the Red Crescent and Family Planning Association were allowed to register. However, by the end of the seventies a few NGOs were allowed to register and during the democracy of April 1985 - 89 several NGOs started to be established. However, after the short life of the democracy, the June 1989 coup dissolved all NGOs and after security screening few were allowed to re-function. It is only since 2000, due to the COTNO agreement and NEPAD agreement signed by the government of Sudan (GOS), that the GOS has started to allow NGOs to register. It has formed its own NGOs and hence has to allow others as well. However, a new formal body called the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) was established by the government in 2000 to control both registration and activities, and to monitor all NGOs as well as international nongovernmental organizations' (INGOs') activities. A ministry then was established in 2003 to control all civil society activities, especially those of a humanitarian or rehabilitation nature. The civil society Registration Act, Public Order Act and Security Act all restrict civil society activities. NGOs need permission to carry such activities as holding workshops and conferences and undertaking research (Grace Paolino - Oslo Forum 2005). The pro-government NGOs (GNGOs) usually establish parallel bodies as they were established first by the other category of NGOs, but GNGOs would generally be identified by the Islamic titles given to them. Hence, the scene is polarized as well by linguistic symbols.

One can broadly classify NGOs as Islamist pro-government NGOs (GNGOs) and secularist NGOs. Both include human rights, legalist groups, women's groups, peace-building groups, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, education, media and various other development groups, research, consultancy and charity groups, as well as networks. Religious groups affiliated

with various church or Islamic sects also prevail and are polarized too between those politicizing their work, pro- or anti-government. The civil society scene is vibrant though not united in vision and goals, and is diverse as well in its sources of funding and capacities. Yet NGOs remain primarily Khartoum-based and elitist in dialogue and largely do not reach the majority of the population, with the exception of the relief oriented NGOs. The religious and tribal groupings such as Sufist Islamic sects and churches are remaining greatly un-reached by the NGOs or other INGOs activities and themselves do not form a coherent body except for the Christian churches that became organized under the Sudanese Council of Churches. However, a few Sufist sects and tribal groups were recently reached by civil society actors during 2000, and in 2005 the government tried to organize the Sufists in a council for political purposes to give the government support.

The Women's Sectors in Political Parties: also are engaged in awareness raising, networking for advocacy on women's rights and with other NGOs on, training, limited grass roots organizational activities and mainly working within the party to gain leadership positions. They have the potential within a democratic context to undertake several responsibilities for women's rights, legal reform, electoral gender sensitive laws and increasing women's participation in political activities and party work so that women would not be marginalized.

The Sudanese Women General Union: is basically government centered and led. Theoretically, it claims a large membership and ability to reach women all over Sudan with branches in every area. However, their resources, programmes and human capacities are much limited and hence they haven't impacted on improving the quality of life of Sudanese women nor would one expect that they can become an inclusive umbrella for women network due to a strict ideology which is synonyms to that of government hence of an exclusionist nature. They as an NGO but not an umbrella can function for service delivery on health, adult education and antipoverty if government availed funds separately through the Islamic Zakat fund which is currently male dominated in decision taking.

3.3. Evolution of Feminism in Sudan 1952-1989

The history of the modern Sudanese women's liberal movement can be dated back to the acceptance of women's elementary secular education in 1907 and their further tuition at the teacher training school in 1924. Even though they were few in number, those women worked as the first Sudanese teachers and opened schools in different parts of Sudan.

The most collective activist work of women was the establishment of the Sudanese Women's Union in 1951, which worked on education, requesting equal rights in the workplace, first from the colonials, and then from the national governments. Moreover, they were calling for equal political rights for voting and standing for elections. The Sudanese Women's Union (SWU) managed to get what they called for peacefully and relatively easily without being confronted by opposition. The male leaders of that time in politics and within executive positions had either secularist, nationalist or leftist agendas. They were influenced by a

regional context of appeals to justice, equality, socialism and freedom. (For further details see Abdel Aal 2003, Badri, H. 2004 and Ibrahim, F. 1968)

The union as the spearhead of the feminist movement in the period 1951-1970 was mostly coherent and showed solidarity. However, polarization along political affiliations started to divide them into 3 categories; the Islamists, the leftists and others who decided to support Nimir's military regime.

That division as well as the military rule of 1969-1985 silenced the civil society movement in general and negatively influenced the women's movement. Women who did side with the government became involved in political siding of the regime and were relegated to function to serve women in aspects of a home economics nature. The additional achievements in the labour laws of 1974 and 1979 were a follow-up to what were called for by the comprehensive SWU and by all activists during the democratic rule of 1965-1969.

In 1986 during democracy sixteen women's NGOS were registered and women's activists were negotiating issues of building a coalition umbrella for different women's civil actors including political parties. The most prominent achievement for the women's movement during the time 1986-1989 was the establishment of women's sectors in most political parties and representation of women in top positions in some political parties and in key ministries. However, the famine of 1984-86 and floods of 1988 overshadowed feminist claims to further rights and made them lose the opportunity of ratifying CEDAW, where Sudan ratified the two human rights covenants. However, the covenants gave women as well several rights as equal citizens.

Feminism in the academic is represented by the a few academics at Khartoum and Ahfad Women universities started to introduce a critical review of women's studies courses or women in development issues and to hold conferences to discuss such issues during the late seventies.

Another category of feminists was of civil servants, who worked with the feminists in academia mainly to bring forward the need to establish a women's administration or unit in important ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture. Several workshops were held to bring the issue for public discussions and the involvement of policy makers. The 1985 women's decade helped them to press for such representation of a women's bureau outside the ministry of social welfare or focusing only on children and women's reproductive welfare. Their struggle started in 1979 and came to fruition in 1987 during the democratic government. Moreover, UN agencies, women's sections and some embassies, mainly the Netherlands embassy, played a positive role to support women executives in civil service and those in academia in advocating and implementing their cause.

Feminism at the NGO level: The period of 1989-2005 was characterized by the rule of an Islamic political party holding power after a military coup that overthrew a democratically-elected government.

After the coup all NGOs were dissolved and had to register again in 1990. The 16 women's NGOs that were established during the democratic regime between June 1986 and 1989 needed to register again and go through security screening as many were considered affiliates of some political parties, and only a handful could continue their work. The period witnessed a decline of civil society activism till by 1993 a gradual process of revival started, when the government established the Women of Sudan Union in 1991. The government also founded the International Moslem Women's Union and the International Women's League with their headquarters in Khartoum. These are government-led and -funded organizations. Other non-government independent groups that were not allowed by the security to be registered as NGO's resorted to registering as non-profit companies. All non-governmental groups were working with some caution during that period, until the context became more hospitable as the government started to recognize the importance of the civil society potential and the international interest to collaborate with them rather than with governments. Hence, much space was opened and many pro-governmental NGOs were established, but many others that were considered "anti-government" or "independent" also got permission to register. The number of registered NGO's dealing exclusively with women's issues rose to 37 by 2003. There are five others registered as non-profit companies engaging in the same field. Besides those, six women's networks were established. Five of them were for peace, named the Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace Networks (SWEP); they started in 1998 and formally registered by 2003 and 2004. The sixth network is a "Women in Development" network, established in 2000. A regional network, the "Southern Initiative for the Horn of Africa" (SIHA), was also registered.

The NGOs undertake different activities; those NGOs engage in development or relief activities whether they are mostly pro-government/Islamist groups or other independent NGOs associated more with International NGOs and UN agencies. Others concentrate activities on income generation for women, credit, education, etc.

However, others work on issues of women's rights in general or in reproductive health in law reform, particularly family laws. These constitute a few NGOs and mainly non-profit companies. Some of them also work on issues of violence against women, mainly on FGM, early marriage or domestic violence or rape during conflict; others work on safe motherhood and girls' education, while most women Islamist NGOs concentrated their activities on teaching the Quran and mobilizing for holy war before the peace agreement was signed in January 2005. Many other not exclusively-women NGOs have women's desks or units and undertake similar activities to exclusively-women NGOs or target women with specific programs such as environmental NGOs, anti-poverty networks or human rights centres, HIV/Aids networks and population networks.

It could be noted that only those who engage in legal issues or violence against women have a discourse that includes issues of gender relations or addresses the structural causes of women's subordination. However, this is done modestly but with no reference to transnational feminist debates or discourses in the academia. Most are detached from such literature and debates. However, they all pose a potential for solidarity work on women's

rights and bettering the quality of the human development indicators of women or their engagement in politics.

The feminist scene in Sudan can be reviewed from a historical evolutionary perspective classifying it into time zones whereby a solidarity movement prevailed from just before independence to the early seventies. Lack of solidarity in the movement and increased polarization are characteristic to this date. The polarization could be made on the basis of standpoints between “Islamism” and “Secularism,” or on the basis of north-south regionalism. Others may classify the polarization on a generational gap or on the strategies and/or programs used. Moreover, an understanding of what feminism is all about and how it is defined and what are the goals “they” strive to achieve could also be a base of classification.

4. The Adoption of the Gender Quota:

The adoption is a process characterized by women mobilization for quotas, political elites’ recognition for strategic advantages for pursuing quotas, existing or emerging notions of equality and representation and international norms and process of transnational sharing of experiences and knowledge. (Krook, 2007) For Sudan the process of quota adoption has evolved historically and its momentum has been greatly shaped and influenced by aspects and development of the feminists’ movement which in turn has been greatly enhanced or constrained by context dynamics specifically by limited democratic space in the country.

The main findings from the responses of the diverse national actors emphasized that there was a history for the demand of affirmative action to enhance women participation in legislative bodies, in top executive bodies and in the high level delegations representing Sudan. ‘That history started in a strong way since the preparation for the Fourth International Conference held in Beijing in 1994 as those from the civil society, academia and government delegations who attended the conference discussed the need for 30% representation to comply with Beijing recommendations’ The demand was replicated by the women in exile, especially those of political parties in what was named as the Asmara Principles for Regaining Democracy signed by political parties in exile. The momentum was then picked up again in the late 1990’s by the Sudanese Women Initiative for Peace, currently renamed as Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP) which came as result of collaborative efforts of the different groups of the civil society supported by the Netherlands government. SuWEP had exerted tremendous efforts to bring into force a high voice for women. In the group meeting at Maastricht, Netherlands in 2000 they had a declaration which emphasized that at least 30% quota of women representation at all levels was demanded. That demand continued to appear in all women activists’ literature, being part of conferences recommendation, workshops debates and women’s delegations interactions This culminated itself in the donors’ international conference held in Oslo in May 2005 after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 that ended the civil war. Women groups in Khartoum prepared a strong pre-conference paper which in the analysis of Sudanese women needs and achievements underscored the need for at least 30% quota representation in

legislative, executive bodies and delegations as part of what is known as the “Women Minimum Agenda”. (Badri, 2005)

The CPA included as part of one of its protocols, a new constitution to be developed, a new electoral law and fair elections to be held. The Sudanese women various actors took advantage of that historic moment to push their demands into a reality. They demanded a 30% quota in the interim -constitution but that did not materialize. However, one article on the need for affirmative action was included in the Interim National Constitution of 2005 (Article 32) which provides for: *Rights of Women and Children 32 (1) The State shall guarantee equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits. (2) The State shall promote woman rights through affirmative action. (3) The State shall combat harmful customs and traditions which undermine the dignity and the status of women. (4) The State shall provide maternity and child care and medical care for pregnant women.*

However, at the Southern Sudan regional constitution a 25% quota was stipulated. That was an asset for Sudanese women activism to build on it to demand the inclusion of a quota at the electoral law as the elections will be nationwide.

During the CPA implementation, the quota adoption process changed as diverse groupings of actors with different motivations emerged and different discourses were voiced in advocacy. The momentum for quota had changed from being one of the demands to being the main issue of the movement.

4.1. Actors for the Quota Adoption:

Identifying actors in quota process would be significant in marking how historical path of women's movement is accommodating new actors and thus wider support and how contextual developments allow or constrain inclusivity of diverse actors in political arena and diverse interests groups in social spaces.

In the research interviews the respondents identified several categories of actors including civil society organizations (CSOs), the political parties government institutions independent national institutions and the international community These are broad sets as they involve actors with diverse interests/ motivations and agenda for women. These broad categories include women and men in the CSOs¹⁹, and networks, women sections in political parties, women in political parties’ forum and the activists in the universities²⁰ and research institutions. The youth are marked as actors as they are recently recognized as important category in all major political processes. The state actors include national women

¹⁹ Such as Gender Center, Salma, Sudanese Organization for Development and Research, Women Initiatives, Sudanese Union, Sudanese General Union, South Sudan Women Peace Group State, Alam, Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies.

²⁰ Specifically University of Ahfad for Women and University of Khartoum

machineries, national leaders and all the relevant institutions such as Ministry of Justice, Ministers Cabinet and National Constitution Review Commission, Political Parties Council and National Legislative Council. The public and media/ communication institutions are also to be considered as main actors. The international actors included the UN agencies, the international organizations and embassies and some regional forums. The different actors have been working together creating alliances and coalitions in various ways within and across civil society, the state and the international spheres.

Actors Motivations: The diverse actors in quota campaign have different principled stands. For most women activists the motive is the increased representation of women and others are looking beyond numbers to loud voices of women who can initiate laws and policies or influence reforms for women's benefits. However, for some women groups the quota is one of the means to promote gender- sensitivity of expected democracy and multi- party rule²¹. Some women activists are involved in international and regional groups' debates and forums²² and that engagement motivate them to work for improved women representation. The international community is for principles of gender equality and women empowerment as emphasized by international conventions and agendas.

The political parties have also different motives. Those who are for principles of women rights and equality were those who have initiated integrating women in their party institutions such as Umma Party²³ and Popular Congress Party²⁴. Otherwise most of the political parties are for quota for some electoral consideration, to follow other political parties and to secure women not as candidates but mainly voters as historically they proved to be influential in elections. Some of the political parties are concerned with the increased women political participation but very few have perspective for equal gender representation. Many political parties supported as a response to the international pressures for commitment to women empowerment and gender equality. As noted by a women political leader in interviews 'some political leaders were in support for quota just to gain support of women or absorb pressures from women groups' or "to demonstrate commitment to women rights without necessary altering the existing pattern of representation' (Krook, 2007, p 377). It is therefore an 'empty gestures' motivation as the quota measures have not been accompanied by changes in the parties' institutions and internal policies which in most parties remained male dominated. These motivations have become very clear during candidates selection processes as indicated by some candidates. ¹

It is evident that although some feminists are leading the process of the quota campaign, 'the adoption of quota does not always stem from principled concerns to empower women in

²⁸ See Badri, 2007

²² Gender Center participated with paper on quota in an Arab forum 2004 and some activists and politicians were supported by Fredrich Ebert to participate in discussion on quota experience in Germany, 2006 and 2008.

²³ See Badri, 2006

²⁴ Focus Group Discussion 12/2/2013 including members from National popular Party.

politics. Rather most quota policies are the result of combined normative and pragmatic motivations, pursued by varied but multiple groups of actors who support reform for various and often conflicting reasons' (Krook, 2008: 355).

4.2. Getting prepared for the Campaign:

The consultation for the research confirmed that the concern for the quota dated back Beijing Platform of Action 1995, when participants from Sudan considered adopting recommendations for the 30% quota at all levels of representation. The discussion of Peace and post conflict recovery by Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace²⁵ in Maastricht, 200 recommended 30% quota. In 2003 Ahfad University for Women had lecture by an international expert on quota. Gender Center prepared a conceptual framework in 2004 for quota and presented it in regional and national fora. Forums were organized by different organizations in collaboration with women in political parties discussing quota during preparation of Interim National Constitution (INC) and Political Parties Law. But the influence of this motion was not very strong as INC came with no reference to quota. While the political parties neglected women issues.

The formulation of a draft election law in 2006 by the Peace Center University of Khartoum with support of UNDP, the limitations of efforts for influencing the INC and the Political Parties Law for a gender quota, the variations of motivations of the different actors some of the women activists mobilized women from different civil society organizations, political parties and academia with the support of some of active international organizations to discuss how to advocate for a gender quota in election law. These remained scattered activities until 2006 when the Peace Center University of Khartoum prepared a draft election law and started advocating for it. The law neglected women issues and that raised concerns of women activists and politicians of risks of their marginalization in election process. Thus they soon decided to start raising their voices and act as pressure group for a positive discrimination in election law. But they realized that prevalent culture of male dominance in political domain necessitate preparation to bring influence. They noted the need to be organized and well-informed and vocal with strong arguments and discourses. Thus several workshops were organized with different groups of women and men discussing the importance of quota. In 26/11/2006, a meeting involving 150 participants including women politician, activists and men supporters was organized. The draft law was presented by the Peace Institute and a paper on what is quota and why it is important for Sudanese women was presented. At the end of the meeting the women agreed to delegate a small *Group* (hereafter referred to by Advocacy Committee)²⁶ to lead advocacy for quota. The Advocacy Committee included representation from Umma party, NCP and activists from North and South of Sudan. They were to lead the negotiations with the Constitution Review Commission leading consultation on the electoral law, the two ruling political parties namely the National Congress Party and Southern Sudan

²⁵ SUWEP is a network formed in 1995 by initiative of some CSOs and supported by Netherland Embassy to advocate for end of war in South Sudan and peace in all parts of Sudan. The initiative had conducted a range of activities, capacity building for different skills, for a in Sudan and regional and international ones.

²⁶ The Committee included : Balghis, Badri, Ahfad University, Filista Pay, Florence Fracisa and Mary Jotu from, South Sudan Women Group for Peace and Development ; Zainab Abbas, EU Commission; Maria Abbas, Fredrich Ebert Foundation.

People Liberation Movement. Other women politicians negotiated inside their parties. The *Group* decided to advocate and lobby for quota among the political parties and the CSOs to generate a wide support. Women in political parties worked within their parties to prepare mindsets for positive discrimination. This was an important process to help women empower themselves with information on quota effectiveness and experiences in different countries and its relevance to the Sudanese contexts. Several papers²⁷ were written by experts²⁸ to guide the discussion. The intensive meetings, awareness raising, workshops etc, process started July 2007 and continued till the end of the election in April 2010.

In this connection it may be important to note that although there were women from the ruling party engaged with the civil society organizations in the preparation for the campaign yet the Directorate of Women and Family Welfare in the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security had an isolated initiative²⁹. The Minister of Social Welfare and the latter formed a technical committee composed from lawyers and activists, affiliated to the ruling party, and the latter formed sub-committees to identify gender gaps and based on the findings recommended 25% for participation of women in commissions and localities and all executive bodies. The committee also recommended that the quota should be included in the constitution. This has never been shared or announced to women in general as the Directorate work mainly with Islamist groups, and usually neglect/does not recognize initiatives of non-Islamist.

The outcomes of the process of raising awareness and debates among activists and women politicians had two significant results: a consensus for the importance of the quota as a measure to improve representation of women and well-constructed arguments/discourses that were used for advocacy. These arguments were presented in media, workshops and meetings with the constitution commission, with groups working on drafting the electoral law, and UN agencies. The discourses reflected the diversity of actors and their motivations. We can summarise the arguments/discourses as follows:

A human-right discourse: Women have equal rights as men according to the international conventions and regional agreements that Sudan is committed to. Women have proved that they deserve to be given their rights as they are increasingly shouldering diverse responsibilities in everyday life of the society; they have been managing community relationships and maintaining families and communities even in critical situations. Women have proved their capacities (more of girls in universities, in civil service, as farmers, increasing number of female headed household, women in the informal sector in cities etc.). Also, women as judges in Sudan and previous and current women holding of ministerial and legislative position were highlighted. They need to be empowered by their rights recognized and respected. The political participation is a basic right.

²⁷ See 'Women' Journal by BBSAWS, Special Issue on Election , 2008, Vol 34

²⁸ Few among them are Professor Balghis Badri, Tayseer Al Nourani and Neimat Kuku contributed several papers in different workshops;

²⁹ Interview with Mawahib, Director of Directorate of Women and Family Affairs, in 2011.

Increased participation and challenge to cultural barriers: Arguments based on women's need a quota as the only way to guarantee their participation and increase their representation to overcome the socio-cultural context where women are considered as incapable on political issues. Further, some view politics as a dirty game and male women engage with men and make women forsake their main reproductive roles. Hence, without a clear quota such a patriarchal ideology cannot be overcome. The quota will make parties obliged to accept women as candidates by force of law. Also men have to vote for women candidates and accept them in parliament in relatively large numbers which can lead to future gender mainstreaming and equality.

Religious (Islamic) discourse has to be complemented indicating women's role in politics during various Islamic times, especially during the early prophet times and also the equality principles in Islam. Women in different Islamic era have participated in politics. .

Previous quota experienced in Sudan and countries in the region: Sudan experience of having a quota system before, graduate quota in 1968 and 1986, and during the one party system rule 1974-1985 of a 10% at local level. Further, other countries experiences of different quota system were highlighted as well as indicating the advantages for women, political parties and Sudanese people for increasing women's participation at the legislative bodies.

Public Good discourse: It was argued that women parliamentarians will push more for social welfare policies, change in laws to be more women friendly especially in family, criminal and land rights laws and for engendering the national budget and government policies. Furthermore, women parliamentarians will influence legislative assemblies and executives for achieving the minimum agenda they have agreed upon before the elections.

Alliances in parliament: Moreover, the argument highlighted was that a diversity of women representing different political parties in parliament will lead to more alliance both in parliament as a women caucus and to linkages and dialogue with civil society and women politicians outside the parliament to create an alliance that can put pressure to achieve the women minimum agenda.

Good governance and democracy discourse: Here the effectiveness of quota for good governance and participatory democracy was slightly presented. The quota would promote accountability of the women parliamentarian to gender equality priorities.

The discourses demonstrated diverse understandings and justifications as to the importance of the quota. It is apparent that the discourses ensured a relevance to the different groups avoiding important justification related to CEDAW as it is resisted by Islamists. The religious discourse focused on Islam and neglected religious diversity. Mainstreaming of minority rights and religions in discourses and feminists agenda remained a problem of the women elitism and activism.

4.3. The Advocacy Campaign:

The first meeting for the Advocacy Committee was held with the group of experts of the Peace Institute, University of Khartoum³⁰, to influence them to incorporate the quota in their draft before submitting it to the National Constitutional Review Commission, which according to CPA, was responsible for taking initiatives for such laws. The meeting was challenging and some of the experts resisted the idea of the quota but they agreed to discuss it later among themselves.

The most important meeting of the *Advocacy Committee* was with NCP election person. He accepted the idea of quota and promised to support it within the party but refused the mixed list system of man and a woman. This is a success for the *Advocacy Committee*, realizing that NCP had previously resisted the quota during preparation of Interim-National Constitution. One respondent noted: ' we succeeded because the group was very clear at that time as to the quota system and its effectiveness in ensuring improved representation for women'. Another reason is that the NCP was trying to ensure that it Islamist approaches were not against general demands and was more progressive than international conventions.

In partnership with the 'Women in Political Parties Forum', the Advocacy Committee and other activists organized a workshop for some notable journalists. They were given a background on quota and strong arguments to its importance for Sudanese women political participation. The journalists responded positively by writing in support of gender quota and they encouraged many young journalists to contribute to the advocacy. In addition, several radio and television programs³¹ were organized debating the importance of the quota for women representation.

The majority of the active political parties were very supportive for gender quota. In the workshop conducted with political party leaders, all political parties accepted a quota on principle and some asked for 50%, others 40%, other 35%, others 10% few said 7%. This is the 'empty gestures' reefered to above as these encouraging percentages are not supported by decisions for engendering internal part structures and practices. The main political parties that influenced the political life in Sudan at that time reached a consensus of 25% as agreeable and to be in line with South Sudan constitution.

The meeting with National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRW) was fruitful as after the meeting a question on gender quota was added to the questionnaire addressed to the political parties at the beginning of processes of consultation with them. In addition, the NCRW supported by the international community, organized workshops involving politicians, parliamentarians, experts to discuss the gender quota and its importance and was

³⁰ The Peace Center was supported by UNDO to discuss Election Laws and come out with guidelines /draft law to discussed with CSOs and presented to the relevant official institutions.

³¹Radio program Saloon Hawaa interviewed Alsir Alsaid who gave elaborate information on importance of quota.; The TV program interviewed Sara Nugdalla,UMmma Party, Siddig Yousif, Communist Party and Gandour , NCP on debate on quota.

assisted by some of the women activists. One workshop was organized on 18th March, 2007, including presentation of three papers. Although no one of the Advocacy Committee or activists leading quota advocacy was among presenters or discussants, yet thanks to one of the presenters who just put the Advocacy Committee recommendations. It was important to mention this as it shows Islamist officials continued avoidance/reluctance to recognize and cooperate with secular groups even when there are common agenda. These raising-awareness or consultation sessions were done during the process of consultation for the Election Law to minimize the resistance to the gender considering that the prevalence of stereotypes to women n political participation are still prevalent among many decision- makers.

The women movement accepted at this stage the 25% quota. A cleavage happened with what seemed a united demand by all women on how to apply the quota in the law. The women in opposition, whether in parties, civil society or academia supported the quota to be included as part of the proportionate representation system (PRS). Hence, the PRS list will hold 40% of parliament and 60% of seats to be elected through geographic constituencies. The recommendation of the opposition was that a list, including men and women, was to be developed by the political parties or by independent candidates. The list was to include 25% women who will be put in an alternate order from top of list. Hence, the list will include 25% women and 15% men both in one list so as to achieve a gender mainstreaming strategy, women to be given a priority and more representation in a list that includes both gender, which will make a breakthrough in mindsets and practice. That was the logic of engagement of the women activist in opposition and SPLM party as well. The government party (NCP) suggested the application of a separately 25% women list to be only a political party list. The other list 15% can include women if the party wishes. Their logic is that the system will guarantee that women will have their full representation and cannot be overruled or marginalized by parties if women are part of a joint list.

Beside the collective activities by the different women organizations and the delegated *Advocacy Committee*, the women activists and politicians continued their advocacy efforts on the individual level and within their parties, within their communities and in all official interactions. The collective as well as individual efforts have important outcomes that need to be highlighted. To note some of the activities undertaken: Workshop on women role in election organized in 2007 by the Women Union; Consultative meeting on women and Election: Quota, organized by Gender Center, 2007; Forum of Gender Center and Women in Political Parties Forum organized 2007; Forum on ‘women rights in elections’ by Women Initiative in 2008; Demonstration against separate women list in front of National Legislative Council in Omdurman in 2008 organized by Salama; Training for women candidates from 11 political party conducted by Sudanese Organizations for Research and Development, 2010.

5. 1. The Achievements:

The quota campaign is considered fruitful and had important achievements identified by the research respondents as follows:

Discourses on gender –equality: different discourses on women political participation and quota impacts were not only diverse but included challenge to the traditional gender understanding and stereotypes. These discourses were a mould of feminists, Islamic and international perspective that were used strategically by Advocacy Committee and thus found no resistance from most conservative decision-makers reached. Putting these perspectives together helped in building trust and bridging the differences among the diverse Islamist and secular activists/groups.

Gender quota in Election Law, 2008: The Election Law enacted in 2008, had an article stipulating 25% gender quota. Compared to the previous law this is considered as success as it ensured the increase in number of women in parliament with a percentage that exceeded their number in any previous parliament.

Coalition of Diverse Categories: One important outcome was the experience of women working together bridging the diversity of their political differences and variations in their principled stands related to gender equality. The quota campaign led to more networking among the women of civil society and in political parties for capacity building and debates related to the quota and that reduced the tension which used to be between them based on whose responsibility is advocacy and capacity building in the political space. Generally it can be said that the culture of solidarity was maintained by many groups as indicated in the participation in the consultations for the new post-referendum constitution. Although the Islamist women soon went out of alliances and supported their party's decision, yet many of them maintained their linkages and cooperation with other political parties and CSOs such as during constitution building and engendering constitution initiatives.

Concern among political parties for political engagement of women: To fulfil the 25% the political parties have been active in advocacy for quota and some exerted efforts to attract women candidates to compete for seats in the Legislative Assembly. Some political parties had come together to compile joint lists and **3 lists were formed from alliances of five political parties.**³² The alliances between civil society and political parties had opened space for political parties to recruit women from civil society and from faith based organizations and traditional leaders' families in their list so as to gain voters. This led to the new involvement of females of these categories in direct politics. Manal Wadei explained that 'The campaign for the quota has enabled reaching the Coptic women and community with information on quota and urging them to get engaged in politics'. This is to be considered important as the Coptic remained a neglected minority in most women initiatives and mobilization. Amna Dirar confirms the positive impact on women political participation. 'The quota encouraged the political parties in Eastern Sudan to consider electing women although political participation of women in this region is almost lacking'

The Women Common Agenda was debated and discussed among feminists and non –feminists actors and a declaration was issued in 2007, which emphasized the importance of legal reform, establishment and sustainability of peace and justice, commitment to fulfilment of

³² See

MDGs; enhancement of women public participation and development of basic institutional framework for women empowerment and gender equality³³.

Tremendous increase in women aspirants as well as candidates: The candidates number reached 2887, selected from larger number of aspirants. The impact of the quota would be best realized if we note that those elected in geographical constituencies were only 53 and in previous elections the women candidates have not reached 20. The impact is not only in number but the major transformation happened to many of these women candidates, their families and communities as they have to overcome profound cultural and social barriers as well as economic constraints.

The visibility of political engagement of young women and men: Some young men and women participated in discussion and debates on quota, capacity building of political parties and were involved in quota campaign. There were as well some very young women candidates, two of candidates interviewed were recent university graduates.

Media involvement: The media received some capacity building to engage in the campaign and was involved in awareness raising³⁴ though their role was rather limited compared to many civil society groups. The journalists had a more active role than television and broadcasts, as some journalists did great efforts in writing educative articles and conducting debates on gender quota as noted above.

Effective support of the international community: During their involvement in peace negotiations and implementation of CPA, the international community continued to emphasize the gender equality and the importance of improved representation of women. The international community gave support for i) the capacity- building initiative for women politicians and the establishment of Women in Political Parties Forum one of the actors in quota adoption process; ii) the drafting of the Election Law by the Peace Institute, University of Khartoum;. iii) advocacy process for quota; vi) a project for capacity building of men and women in political parties which also emphasized the women participation and representation v) participation of men and women in regional and international dialogue on women political participation and quota issues.

Change in Local Governance Law to include a gender quota: After the election some parliamentarians in Khartoum State Legislative Assembly found that the local governance

³³ We Sudanese women declare that the Women Common Agenda for Future Activism, advocacy and lobby in parliament and through other means to be focused in these main areas: Legal Reform: to include reform or new laws to be in acted that would enhance women equal access to resources; reform of the family law for Moslem people, labor law, penal code to include eradicating all forms of violence against women; The establishment and sustainability of peace and justice through the promotion of a culture of peace, respect to diversities, enacting the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions of 1325, 1360; The social and Human Development focus to include making basic education free and compulsory, to reform the curriculum at all educational levels, to earmark budgets to make it possible to achieve all the MDGs; Enhancing women's public participation in decision making positions particularly at civil service and political parties through having a quota of at least 30%; and Developing an institutional framework to guarantee that women empowerment and gender equality are mainstreamed in policies, budgets, assessment system and to maintain systematic follow-up and scientific evaluation.

³⁴ For example the presentation by Alsir Alsayed in Saloon Hawaa program in Radio and the television debate led by political parties leaders, Sara Nugadalla Siddig Yousif and Siddig Yousif

law had not mentioned quota and they advocated and lobbied and the law was amended to include a gender quota of 25%.³⁵ The implementation of this quota will be in the coming election of the locality legislative assembly.

5.2.Challenges:

The Election Law has stipulated a *separate list for women for political parties*. This was refused and resisted by the leaders of the campaign, who were advocating for proportional representation with mixed list of women and men. Afaf Abdel Rahman, noted ‘the political parties’ quota deprived independent women opportunity to be elected’. The separate women list would continue marginalization of many groups and would jeopardize opportunities for gender mainstreaming in political parties. According to Mawahib Mohamed, ‘the Quota got substantial number of women to legislative assembly but failed to maintain diversity of women politicians that have capacities and needed loud voice to represent rights of women’. ‘The closed list does not help selecting among women as the list is taken on total In addition it constrains multi-party and multi-ethnic representation’ (Kuku, 2009, p15)

The quota advocacy and capacity building was undertaken mainly in the Khartoum State. But very limited efforts reached the other states. Even, when some awareness-raising or capacity building was undertaken at the state level, it was dominated by the urban elites of the states and rarely reached the rural communities.

There are housewives selected to represent some politically important groups who have no active women. The challenge is that even in Khartoum the category of housewives in the rich and poor groups was neglected in quota orientation and advocacy and remained deprived from all feminists and activism agenda. Many of them voted but with no basic knowledge on quota. Therefore there is elitist bias as well as class bias.

Although most actors interviewed confirmed that there were no resistance the form of the quota approved clearly indicate the resistance of ruling party to empowerment of women and its ‘empty gestures’ motives. .

There had been profound dependence on the support of the international community for the capacity building and campaigning and thus the political parties had not owned the process of capacity-building to be able to evaluate and replicate it.

The laws restrictive to women and freedoms continued as public order, security and media laws were not reformed.

For most political parties the candidate selection process was undertaken without efforts for gender mainstreaming to ensure that the criteria for eligibility were gender-sensitive.

The 30% quota demanded by women found no support despite women visible roles and the 25% was taken as a ceiling and not a minimum. This is a challenge as it indicates that

³⁵ Interview with Mathaba, from Democratic Union Part and a parliamentarian in Khartoum State Legislative Assembly.

decision-makers and political parties are not yet ready to open up the political space for women.

How are the achievements and challenges influenced by wider political, economic, social and cultural context?

The factors that enhanced the achievements related to the quota are interrelated and interlinked and are a result of historical contextual dynamics and post- conflict environment. The respondents interviewed noted the achievements of the quota as influenced by many factors including awareness of activists, their agency, organized advocacy and political parties support and their recognition of importance of women as voters, involvement and support of some male activists, pressure and support of the international community. One important factor was that the ruling party was very careful to present a progressive image of Islam and thus would not resist quota which was approved by partners, SPLM in the South Sudan Constitution and it is an international measure used by many countries.

The challenges were due to several contextual factors. According to Howeida Atabani ‘one of the constraints to the quota is the presence of an adamant totalitarian rule’. The ruling party continued to dominate all state resources and used them for its campaign while giving no support to other political parties and resisted changing restrictive laws. Accordingly to some political parties the environment was not conducive for a fair election and thus they boycotted the election.

The challenges were also influenced by the rift between elite women who led the quota campaign and the citizens in general and thus the quota campaign has not reached the neighbourhood in urban areas and excluded rural women. That was apparent in demonstration in front of National Legislative Assembly organized by women activists and politicians to influence for mixed list. In fact the demonstration also showed the weak support of males of the political parties despite commitment of leaders to the mixed list.

The women in the ruling party have not kept momentum of solidarity and supported their party against the demands of women because the allegiance is for political party more than women question and because the ruling party as many other parties remained patriarchal.

5.3. Lessons Learned:.

- ✓ Women campaigns for quota can only be effective in a democratic environment.
- ✓ For the quota to be effective women politicians must challenge the patriarchy in political parties.
- ✓ Capacity building for women in political parties is important in the context with prevalence of political illiteracy and male dominant culture to ensure adequate supply of women for implementation of the quota
- ✓ Excluding grass-root women from quota campaign and raising- awareness is likely to constrain effectiveness of quota.
- ✓ Women in political parties need to build rapport and trust with some constituencies to be able to compete

- ✓ Alliances and coalition formed during the quota campaigns should keep momentum for gender equality and justice
- ✓ Women in political parties would not be empowered for effective representation unless they are able to balance their allegiance to the party and to commitment to gender justice.

6.1 Concluding Remarks

The quota adoption in Sudan had come as a result of women mobilization, political elites' recognition of advantages of quota and international equality norms as well as regional and international sharing information experiences. The advocacy process brought together a diversity of actors with different motivations including feminist agenda for increasing women political participation to influence legislative changes, to follow trend of other political parties or gaining satisfaction of women and their support as voters. Despite the consensus of actors on importance of quota yet the form of quota approved, demonstrates that the main motivation for ruling party is not empowerment of women but empty gestures. This goes in line with analysis of Krook 2008 that actors have diverse and contradictory motivations.

The quota has resulted in tremendous increase in the number of candidates. Considering contextual cultural and economic limitations, the numerical increase note agency of women in extending or crossing barriers and creating new spaces However, the quota has not been effective in bringing feminists agenda to reality. This is because the form of quota adapted in the law was to serve purpose of the ruling party with no consideration to its contributions to substantive representation of women. The women of the ruling party supported their party and against all feminists. This is expected and in fact in all political parties, women politicians do not go against party decisions to stand for women issue. .

However, the findings of the research confirm quota experiences of other countries as one important impact is the tremendous increase in the number of women aspirants/candidates. This goes in line with contention of Krook, 2006 and 2007 and Zarteg, 2009 that quota speeds up the process of women engagement in politics. However considering that the political parties have not no objectives for gender justice or feminists agenda for women development then the effect of the Sudan quota reform is 'equality of opportunity' and not 'equality of results' as explained by to Dahlerup,, 2007. Her conclusion is that' most forms of gender quota regime – contrary to what is commonly believed among both quota opponents and quota advocates- is just a step towards providing real equality of opportunity rather than equality of results'. In the case of Sudan we can say it is a very limited step for substantive legislative changes in women participation and situation.

The proliferation of thousands of women as candidates can be considered a breakthrough of boundaries of the closed spaces to look for power and this affects the gender gap in political practice. The use of gender quota enhanced the presence of women within parties and parliament and this has 'the potential to disrupt entrenched practices within politics and reduce gender gap between men and women in how they participate in politics even in

contexts of decreased democratisation’ (Messing- Mathie, 2012, p15). This is more evident at the state level where hundreds of women were elected even from most conservative communities. ‘The political engagement and involvement that is derived from small scale political participation at the local level, is deemed as a crucial step in the development of a politically active citizenry, regardless of the democratic development of the country in question.’³⁶ (Messinh-Mathie, 2012, p13) This findings is evident in the case of young candidates interviewed who received capacity building for campaigning and this helped them to campaign in rural areas for state lists, gaining the support of some of their families and resistance of men and women from other competing parties.³⁶.

The mobilization helped women and male supporters to create alliances/coalitions across ideological differences and generated new discourses of on why women are under-represented (Dahlerup, 2009), cutting across different feminist perspectives. Thus the quota has made a breakthrough in the history of the divided women movement/s.

Despite that the discourses used considered gender justice and equality, it has neglected diversity aspects of Sudan and thus in the mobilization for quota the category of housewives from different socio-economic classes as well as women in states and rural areas has neglected and thus they are marginalized from opportunities of political empowerment and participation in campaign. To Krook, 2008, this is one of the trends generated by wider political contexts to undermine the feminists’ broader impacts of gender quota.

Daherup 2009, discussed the issue of quota contribution to democracy in her discussion of women in Arab parliament. She explained that ‘the political parties are gatekeepers for quota as they control nomination process. ‘By demanding formalization of and transparency in the process of nomination electoral gender quotas may contribute to processes of democratization all over the world’ (Dahlerup, 2007, p). Messing- Mathie, 2012, noted that the quota is one of many mechanisms necessary to ensure that ‘the transition of democratic freedoms is equally distributed, not only between men and women, but among women’. (p 20) The form of gender quota and the environment of election in Sudan were unlikely to promote democracy. However, the case of Sudan is best explained by Hassim, 2005, who examining the impact of quotas on democratisation in Sub- Saharan Africa, concluded ‘quotas can have profoundly negative effects on deepening democracy when adopted in contexts where the key institutions of democracy and human rights are weakly developed or absent and where elected political actors are weakly accountable to electoral constituencies. Quotas may fast-track women’s representation but they do not fast –track equality of democracy’. (Hasim, 2005, p 3)

6.2.The Way Forward for Effective Parliamentary Representation:

Recognizing the quota achievements and challenges and overall dynamics and constraints, the research interviewees and participants suggested some recommendations:

³⁶ Interview with

- ✓ The feminist women movement need to have a clear vision and statement for an engendered state of equal citizens and that the quota justification to be publicized as it has an activist agenda.
- ✓ There is need to work for creating sustained participatory democracy and link with members of parliament.
- ✓ Transparent and fair election is needed so that good representation of women from different parties in the parliament to be achieved which is an asset
- ✓ The integration of a quota in both the constitution and electoral law will guarantee that women representation in parliament will be increased and sustained.
- ✓ The electoral law has to indicate clearly that a quota of at least 30% seats in parliament for women to be included in a clear way that cannot be misinterpreted or used as 'glass ceiling'. The law should clearly emphasize the joint lists of alternate order for females – males.
- ✓ The political parties' law should prioritize gender mainstreaming in all parties' institutions and that may entail strengthening women positions within the part and party base to be able to compete on geographical constituencies. All political parties are to consider capacity building for women members to effective politicians and parliamentarians.
- ✓ The quota of a joint list of both genders needs to be stipulated clearly in the political parties' law to ensure the commitment of the parties for a balanced number of men and women candidates put alternately.
- ✓ The representation of diverse categories of women is crucial. The electoral by-laws and party registration by-laws may consider how to deal with representation of different categories. Though the representation of women from different parts of Sudan was guaranteed to a great extent by making the national election to be state-level based, however, that would not guarantee that various women categories will be nominated as candidates or win the elections. A class bias and elitist professional bias can take place. New formula needs to be discussed to guarantee wider women categories representation and of quality diverse experiences.
- ✓ Confidence in networking and solidarity to make women achieve their demands need to be enhanced. Networking and engagement of civil society groups with parliamentarians should be considered as mandatory to guarantee that electoral programmes are achieved and common agenda implemented. Networking between diverse groups and link with parliamentarians should be considered even if they are of different opposition blocks.
- ✓ There is a need to more work on criteria for selecting candidates at party level and grass roots. Community participatory involvement at selection level to be undertaken in the future. This can be achieved when local level elections are done before state and national level elections. That will bring in more local level engagement; Competition within party for selecting candidates to be the practice. Grass roots engagement in selecting candidates. Capacity building that will have better impact on selection at both state and national level.

- ✓ Competition for selection of candidates to be a phase before the list is finally developed. That needs more work of capacity building at community level and more of resources availed.
- ✓ Focused training to parliamentarians on parliament procedures, by-laws, the different specialized committees of the parliament is crucial. Exchange of visits with other parliaments in sustained democratic countries is needed.
- ✓ National tour visits at different states, meetings with different women categories and groupings of various non-state actors is fundamental if participatory sustained democracy is to be achieved.
- ✓ Training on ICT skills and development of interactive website for parliamentarians will be an added value.

. With or without gender quotas, political parties should adopt action plans for recruiting an equal number of women and men as candidates for 'winnable' seats and, in general, for making party politics more inclusive.

2. Tools for gender monitoring of nominations and elections should be developed.
3. Multiple measures, such as capacity-building programmes, should be developed and applied.
5. If gender quotas are applied, they must be compatible with the electoral system if they are to be effective.
5. Explicit rules about the implementation of gender quotas, such as rank-ordering rules, legal sanctions for non-compliance (legislated quotas) and a 'contract' with the local party organisations (voluntary party quotas) are needed.
6. In the case of legislated quotas, institutional bodies should supervise the implementation. Money should be provided for further research on the implementation and effects of gender quotas.

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