

Chapter 21

**The Making of “Gender
Diplomacy” as a Foreign Policy
Pillar in Kenya and Namibia**

Francis Onditi

INTRODUCTION

Can the “gender equality” norm stand out as a “game-changer” in shaping a country’s foreign policy and diplomatic engagements? African states, like many other nations globally, often influence regional and global processes through foreign policy tools such as trade, politics, governance, law, and defense, as well as international norms such as gender equality (Crapol 1994). Gender-minded international relations theorists interpret international system by drawing from salient issues that influence women-men power relations (Youngs 2004). On this note, feminist scholars have argued that issues such as the international political economy, women rights, and women empowerment can be effective instruments of moderating women-men power relations when they become part and parcel of a country’s foreign policy (Tickner 1992; Peterson 1992). Despite the fact that gender equality norms have existed since 1970s (Stevenson 2016), African nations are still bedeviled with divergent conceptual and methodological problems in an attempt to bridge the gender gap in their foreign policies. Moreover, in most developing societies, foreign policies are often a product of a historically and structurally male-dominated patriarchal system (Porter 2013). This, therefore, explains why there are fewer women diplomats.

The exclusive diplomatic space in Africa is partly attributed to the paucity of scholarship on the link between gender equality and diplomatic theory and practice. It is rare to find a well-articulated idea in the International Relations (IR) scholarship on how effective gender norms could be integrated in diplomacy. Classical liberal icons in the study of IR such as John Locke, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, Giuseppe Mazzini, and John Stuart Mill identify four fundamental principles and institutions that characterize liberalism;

individual freedom, political participation, the right to private property, and equality of opportunity (Doyle 1983). Among these norms, the “equality of opportunity” continues to inspire controversy and to stimulate enchantment (or disenchantment), and confusion in the public policy debate. But, the debate remains deficient as to whether the notion of “gender” means bridging the socioeconomic and political gaps or simply refers to creating space for women. Some have narrowed the debate to project “gender” as an extreme view of *feminism* (Offen 1988). Nevertheless, both perspectives present opportunities but also challenges for *rethinking* how states ought to *frame* their diplomacy considering the increasing importance of gender in the ever-changing global system.

Kenya and Namibia are typologies of “representative democracies.” Ironically, even though they hold regular elections (Adejumobi 2000), equality of opportunity is often fractured by the politics of machinations and bigotry, which further exclude traditionally marginalized groups such as women from mainstream decision-making processes. No wonder, the two countries have been classified among those experiencing chronic socio-economic inequalities (Melber 2014; Jerven 2011).

Kenya and Namibia have similar and varied histories of power bargain within dynamic internal, regional, and global geopolitics (Adar 2007; Adar and Check 2011; Okoth 2010). Since independence, both countries had to deal with several political, security, and economic fractures. For example, the Namibia’s Kasikili/Sedudu and Situngu Islands’ dispute (Government of Namibia 1991) with Botswana remains unresolved. In regard to political decolonization, the two countries are twenty-seven years apart. Namibia claimed independence on 21 March 1990, close to three decades after Kenya’s independence on 12 December 1963. Both countries experienced the transforming fabric of international society, as both countries at the end of the Cold War seemed to experience a decline in the importance of ideological considerations, both in domestic and foreign policies.

The political and socio-cultural evolution of both countries has been shaped by various regional and global actors and philosophies. Namibian foreign policy has been influenced by three fundamental actors: South Africa (the official policy’s formulator), the United Nations (advocating for the right of protection of the territory), and the South-West African People’s Organization (SWAPO), which represented peoples’ interest and the Ubuntu philosophy (Castellano da Silva 2016). Both countries apply the “Harambee” philosophy in their diplomatic relations. Although the Kenyan version of “Harambee” has been degazetted as a symbol of national unity and collective responsibility, it drew history from the Indian community’s power of collective bargain during the colonial era (Howell 1968) and sustained in the Kenyan society by the “African Socialism” philosophy of development (Government of Kenya 1965). In the recent past, the Namibian review of the

2004 *white paper* has incorporated the term "Harambee" as part of the country's seven international relations and cooperation pillars (Brown et al. 2016).

In the recent past, the so called *super global influencers'* rivalry has expectantly influenced the outlook of the African defense/foreign policies (Schwab 2013, 124). In Namibia, for example, Russia contributed to sustaining the conflict through its military support for the SWAPO, thus giving SWAPO the capability to engage in, and sustain, armed struggle (Castellano da Silva 2016). Kenya, however, continues to endure unresolved internal and regional conflicts. President Uhuru Kenyatta's regime decided to remain mute on the *Migingo* Island's dispute with Uganda. However, the most critical threat for the country emanates from Al-Shabaab: Since the Kenya Defense Forces' (KDF) incursion into Kismayu, Somalia, in 2011, the militant group has fiercely reacted with deadly attacks against targets in Nairobi and particularly in the capital city Nairobi and north-eastern part of the country. In what David Anderson and Jacob McKnight describe as "the blowback," the KDF's invasion seems to have created another puzzle to Kenyan foreign and defense policy (Anderson and McKnight 2014).

During President Obama's regime, the state visit of the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, to Kenya, on 23 August 2016 demonstrated the enthusiasm of Western powers to continue their fight against terrorism and influence the Horn of Africa's peace and security architecture, with Kenya providing strategic dividends to this *global influencer's race*. Nevertheless, the complexity of Somalia's security could land Kenya into a vicious circle of war with Al Shabaab. In the current peace and security models, the notion of human security has received limited attention in policy. Yet, the effects of war reach far beyond the battle field to family life and other aspects of social relations (Blanchard 2003). Power relations between men and women are an important aspect of family life and social relations.

Social relations are an important epistemology in social sciences, thus, framing gender equality within this framework of ideas is key to a country's diplomacy. Although the gender question was coined in the 1970s (Alahira 2014), the consideration of gender as a foreign policy subject is relatively new in Africa. This chapter, therefore, examines "emptiness" of *gender equality* in diplomacy by framing the discourse within the Yaacov Vertzberge's classification of the *strategic foreign policy framing*: (1) symbolism; (2) beliefs and values; and (3) political cost assessment (Vertzberge 1998). Building on the theoretical framing of foreign policy, the foreign policies of the two countries are examined with respect to the five types of diplomacies (conference, personal diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy, public diplomacy and economic diplomacy) (Hanegraaff et al. 2016; Romih and Logozar 2014; Fiott 2011; Harrison 1981; Kingston 2016).

Although Kenyan and Namibian foreign policies apply most of the five types of diplomacy, gender equality is yet to gain the status of a "standard

norm” in the two countries. Thus, this chapter employs a gender lens to develop a thoughtful response to the question, *to what extent, if any, does diplomacy in the two countries highlight gender?* In efforts to address this question, I coin the concept *gender-responsive diplomacy (GERD)* as a belief and value system, to effectively support the reconstruction of a gender-responsive foreign policy conception in Kenya and Namibia.

FRAMING GENDER WITHIN THE FOREIGN POLICY PRAXIS

In any country, the art of *framing* a foreign policy affects individual and institutional policy preferences and choices (Garrison 2001). This in turn influences the public perception of a given policy, which in turn affects the implementation of diplomatic imperatives through what Jack Holland (2011) describes as “political possibility.” It is for this reason that IR scholars have pointed out the importance of *framing*, providing political and diplomatic mechanisms to leaders supporting their policy preferences and choices (Barnett 1999). Framing helps decision-makers to make sense of complex issues facing a nation that are far removed from the direct experience of the public (Dekker and Scholten 2017). However, Smith and Cornut (2016) argue that the influence of foreign policy on norms such as gender and women issues is a function of personality and culture of the discipline. Indeed, communicating complex foreign or defense policy information understandable by the general public increases the chances of such policies not only to influence public opinion, but the implementation of such policies (Schneider et al. 2010).

There are various forms of framing. In regard to *social relations* (including gender equality and women empowerment), international norms stipulate that the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of social affairs, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences. The Universal Declaration on Democracy draws from various global human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), guaranteeing the equality and freedom from discrimination, and the right of women to participate in public life on a basis of equality. Moreover, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) specifically calls for the adoption of policies and initiatives that promote women’s participation in decision-making at all levels. At the global level, one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) focuses on increasing the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women (Pogge and Sengupta 2015).

Another type is *elite framing*. Public understanding of root causes of social relations problems and the exploration of alternative solutions can be shaped by elite framing (Schneider et al. 2010). In a social setting, frames provide political and cultural magnification of ideas and policies that bring together a broad movement. Issues surrounding gender disparity may be framed through various medium of communication: slogans, historical analogies, stereotypes, or visual images. On the contrary, in political contestation, political elites framing can also be narrowly used in favor of individual causes (Galston 2010). After discussing the praxis of framing, this chapter develops a richer understanding of what *strategic framing* is and how it can influence development of gender-responsive foreign policies in Kenya and Namibia. The three dimensions of strategic framing with hefty influence on how policies of a country are shaped include: (1) cultural symbolism; (2) personal beliefs and values; (3) political cost assessment.

Cultural Symbolism

Historical sociologists argue that culture does not necessarily provide values for action, but it shapes habits, skills, beliefs, and styles that people use to construct strategies of action (Swidler 1986). In policy environment, there are two major models of cultural influence. In "settled cultural periods," culture independently influences action only by providing resources for people to draw lines of action. In "unsettled cultural periods," explicit ideologies directly govern action (Keesing 1974). This implies that ideologies are subjected to competition: The most resilient one survives. However, the debate on the effects of natural ideology and biological differences between men and women seems to have collapsed, following the emergence of the *women's empowerment movement* (Alahira 2014). This is because the notion that the biological nature of women forms part of the family bond and should be sustained within the family institution remains controversial in development discourses (Asoka 1994).

Foreign policy, like domestic policy should be framed in the context of broader political, economic, cultural, technological, and legal environment (Kraft and Furlong 2010). In the politics of policy formulation, these institutional arrangements influence approach and methods, promoting or forcing one's own political view among people, during the negotiation with other political subjects, making laws, and exercising force, sometimes engaging in ideological warfare against adversaries (Birkland 2006; Anderson 2006; Weimer 2005).

In spite of these potential threats to policy asset, in theory it is expected that when an issue such as gender is perceived as a national interest and stakes are high, leaders protect such a policy from failure when either subjected to

legislation or national debate (Schofield and Goodwin 2005). For instance, although women have made giant progress in political leadership in some countries such as Rwanda (63.8%) and South Africa (42%) leading on the number of women in national parliaments (Luhiste and Kenny 2016), this gain is, however, threatened by weak institutions and clouds of cultural practices (Caul 1999). Therefore, it is clear that historically the appointment of women to high political positions has been a male-centric realm within a patriarchal structure (Offen 1988).

The outcome of this cultural cleavage is that allowing women in positions of power has traditionally been seen as threatening male-domination and as a sign of self-weakness, as all women were believed to employ “honey-trap methods” to “lure male diplomats to sexual seduction” (McCarthy 2009). This exemplifies the hierarchies within diplomacy where deeply seated attitudes override professional abilities of women to serve as diplomats. Some scholars have observed that family-related issues have far-reaching implications on whether women succeed in foreign relations.

Personal Beliefs and Value Systems

Advocates of this conception contend that the popularity of any belief or value system is attained through familiarization (Schofield and Goodwin 2005). For instance, the United Nations Entity for Gender and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), through its economic empowerment initiatives, puts women at the heart of African economies by investing in their ability to move beyond livelihoods to build and own assets, creating wealth and business leadership in various sectors. As illustrated by various initiatives being implemented by UN Women, it is evident that framing women’s economic empowerment as a significant contributor to economic growth is a positivist construction. Thus, it is plausible that value dimensions are not fixed, but depend on external stimuli and context, and sometimes global development trends shape value systems. This therefore puts framing in relation to cultural issues at the center of beliefs and value systems (Schofield and Goodwin 2005). To this extent, the more broadly a frame appeals to various ideational elements in the belief system (for example, “gender” as opposed to “women”) or life experiences of beneficiaries, the more it will resonate with the need to mainstream gender equality in country’s foreign policies.

If the framing effort is linked to only one belief or value, it is vulnerable and it may be discarded for the lack of solid justification as a development issue. For example, the campaign for women’s empowerment has largely succeeded, because it was framed to project a gender equality lens (both men and women) beyond a *feminine* chauvinistic approach. Indeed, scholars have echoed that the likelihood of a policy meriting political storms is high, if

the frame resonates with deeply and widely held beliefs and societal values (Stone 2002; Birkland 2006). Thus, the conception of this chapter espouses reconstructing diplomacy not narrowly from a feminine optic, but broadly as "gender equality," hence, *GERD*.

Political Cost Assessment

Strategic decision-making processes result in political interventions and are driven by several factors: the control of financial allocations, the control over key appointments, and the veto power. The weight of strategic decision-making, therefore, demands consistent accountability in policy formulation processes, as part of the broader societal processes—political, cultural, and economic diplomatic pillars (Nye 2008). This implies that likelihood of promoting GERD within the Kenyan and Namibian foreign policy will partly depend on its consistency with existing norms, policies, and legislations (Sabatier 2007; Kingdon 2003). Hence, the success of GERD will not necessarily occur as a natural process, instead deliberate efforts are required through consultations or even symposia, drawing actors from diverse backgrounds. There are examples that epitomize the art of both *public* and *conference diplomacy*: The 1994 global symposium on "culture and gender analysis" is said to have added value to international relations discourses and practices (McEnaney 2012). Linkages between culture and gender had been raised in 1979, by Akira Iriye (1979). In 1990, Emily Rosenberg reiterated that gender analysis could provide even deeper understanding of cultural assumptions from which foreign policies spring (Rosenberg 1990).

Like many other countries in Africa, the Kenyan and Namibian foreign policies have become more assertive due to globalization, which has significantly impacted the country's defense policy. Globalization processes have produced new transnational non-state security threats. Hence the defense policy has become more forceful to accommodate these new security concerns. In foreign affairs, both countries present various faces to the international community. In global terms, external policy has been markedly radical in nature and characterized by a strong sense of morality and idealism. Rarely does a major Kenyan foreign policy statement fail to contain some allusion to inequalities in the contemporary international order or some reassertion of the desirability and the attainability of a peaceful and just international community of nations. However, the country's foreign policy has often been governed by rather more conservative and legitimist thinking, notably where any radical departure from the *status quo* is contemplated. It would appear that where foreign policy issues touch directly on primary Kenyan interests—say, national security or territorial integrity—the overt radicalism of Kenya's broad international policy is subject to considerable restraint.

In this section, the *strategic framing* has shaped the way the problem and issues were identified and linked to the evolution and formulation of public policies. The following section builds on the theoretical principles examined to assess the model of diplomacy applied by the two countries and in turn explores alternative policies for GERD in Kenya and Namibia.

THE GENDER “EMPTINESS” IN THE FOREIGN POLICIES

At the center of the debate whether gender issues matter within the parlance of diplomacy is the “why” question. For both Kenya and Namibia, the question lingers on why such progressive countries that have attained standards of living typical of a mid-level economy (MIC) anchor their foreign policies on some of the emerging global principles and norms that have had such a resilient history of survival through internal and regional fractures, but evade to address the question of gender disparity. The forces gender-responsive diplomacy in the two countries can typically be categorized into macro, micro, structural, systemic, and historical, but at all levels the various factors are contested.

First is the problem of unequal access to developmental opportunities. The independence of Namibia in 1990 did not necessarily usher in equal opportunities for all: The country had inherited a society characterized by segregation, vast urban and rural poverty, a highly skewed distribution of wealth, unequal access to land and natural resources, and dramatic inequalities in the quality of education and health services rendered to its various ethnic groups (Government of Namibia 2004). The country was thus left at independence with a huge skills deficit and a slew of social imbalances to be resolved. Although, in 2004, the government of Namibia launched a national development strategy spanning to 2030, a pervasive atmosphere of intolerance on matters relating to culture, religious practices, political preference, ethnic affiliation, and differences in social background still persists. The country established links with a number of United Nations (UN) bodies, African Union (AU), South African Development Community (SADC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Frontline States (FLS), and the Ovambo People’s Organization (OPO) (Castellano da Silva 2016). But these structures do not benefit from the unique perspectives, values, and abilities that come with women’s full participation at all levels of decision-making, particularly in diplomatic fields. In Kenya, women’s struggle to occupy diplomatic spaces has been downplayed by the same factors; flawed democracy accompanied by politics of machination, which limits women’s presence in political positions.

Secondly, how to resolve the dichotomy between constitutionalism and inter-state power relations among elites? The article 96 of the Namibian Constitution (1998) highlights the country's foreign policy objectives as follows: "The State shall endeavor to ensure that in its international relations to: (i) adopts and maintains a policy of non-alignment; (ii) promotes international peace and security; (iii) creates and maintains just and mutually beneficial relations among nations; (iv) fosters respect for international law and treaty obligations; and (v) encourage the settlement of international dispute by peaceful means." In a rather suspicious regime's reinforcement of *status quo* through instruments of foreign policy in Namibia, between 1990 and 2005, the high legitimacy of the Namibian state in the post-independency and the initial economic growth were combined with the assured prominence of SWAPO in power, using the symbolic leadership of Sam Nujoma.

The direction of Kenya's foreign policy is very much consistent with "economic growth" as a key principle of its foreign policy. However, much of it still reflects imperatives that had their origin in the colonial period. Notably, these included close political and economic ties to Britain and institutional and economic links with neighbors within the arrangement of the East African Community (EAC). The protectionist approach to Northern Kenya created circles of confrontation with Somalia over the largely Somali-populated territory in the region. As in other matters, Kenyatta was the controlling voice in the formulation of foreign policy, which reflected his moderation, caution, and pragmatism and emphasized African solidarity and Kenya's reliance on the West for technical assistance and investment.

Thirdly, like Namibia, Kenya seems to have no comprehensive foreign policy instruments on rogue states such as North Korea. For example, a recent failure to understand the full meaning of various UN Security Council Resolutions against North Korea does not necessarily pose real threats to both countries, but it may project the two countries naïve on matters of importance in international relations. For Namibia, it carries more weight as this tended to indicate that Namibia's diplomats at the UN were not in a position to advise the government in Windhoek. Also, it could have been that warning signals were ignored for political reasons. If this was the case, such an approach was inadvisable since Namibia's position with "historical ties" with North Korea was incompatible with positions that the international community, as expressed through the UN Security Council, was taking. Such a scenario—in which Namibia received bad international press—could have been avoided if Namibia had a clear foreign policy toward countries such as North Korea and, in particular, UN resolutions relating to the leader, Kim Jong-un.

A fourth factor relates to the two countries' stand on the condemnation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), particularly the Court's power to act against serving presidents. Despite resource and capacity related

limitations to the administration of justice and effective prosecution within the ICC (Gozde 2016), the impunity of African leaders casts serious doubts on whether a replica of ICC in Africa would deliver justice (Moffett 2015). The Namibian third President Hage Geingob expressed “hard” reservations against external institutions dictating how African states should be governed. Strong sentiments were particularly directed toward the International Criminal Court’s intervention in Kenya’s 2007/2008 post-election violence indictments. In a speech at the 2014 AU summit, President Geingob argued, “When one creates something to be an asset but later on it becomes an abomination, you have the right to quit since it has ceased serving its intended purpose” (Brown et al. 2016, 2). At the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), the President appeared to suggest that immunity from prosecution should be extended to former African presidents, as well as serving ones: “We should respect African former leaders, why should we humiliate our former presidents, and more so, the sitting ones? A president is still a president” (Brown et al. 2016, 7).

Similarly, both the Kenyan and Namibian Ministers in charge of international relations and cooperation have in separate occasions pointed out that an *African Criminal Court* would be a preferred option for dealing with gross human rights abuses on the continent. This is a good point, but progress toward setting up African human rights tribunals and courts has been woefully slow. Any proposed withdrawal from the *Treaty of Rome*, which set up the ICC, should be considered carefully, particularly in view of the disproportionate exposure of women and girls to effects of war and sexual and gender based abuse. Furthermore, the Namibian “Harambee Plan” espouses commitment to cooperation with international actors, at the same time “remaining a respectable and trusted member of the international community.” But perhaps more fundamentally, the debate over whether or not to stay in the ICC should be seen through the prism of both countries’ Constitution and particularly their commitment to human rights. Withdrawal from the ICC will have wider ramifications on whether the two countries will remain committed to norms and protocols that serve to protect and promote gender equality. The ambivalence in Kenya’s foreign policies, especially during President Uhuru Kenyatta’s regime, can probably be best explained by examining separately the basically domestic pressures toward a hostile radical policy internationally and toward a more cautious conservatism within the EAC.

The fifth litmus test for the two countries is on human rights issues. For example, during Namibia’s two-year stint on the UN Human Rights Council, which ended in 2016, painted the country as passive on issues of human rights. Namibia’s Constitution is precise on human rights, however its diplomatic arm at the UN seems to have built the image of a neutral nation on

such issues as violation of human rights and sexual abuse by security forces. The principle of neutrality is always viewed with suspicion, as it does not necessarily improve diplomatic relations. In response to the criticism of inactivity on the Human Rights Council, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, explained that: "Namibia, as a matter of principle, does not participate in country-specific United Nations agenda items since we believe that the highly selective and subjective naming and shaming of certain countries is not conducive to international cooperation and collective process." In 2015, during US President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya, his host, President Uhuru Kenyatta, was hesitant on stating the country's policy on human right issues, particularly in regard to how security should handle political dissidence and demonstrations.

In Namibia and Kenya alike, structural constraints sought to be overcome by policies to strengthen the state and by the adoption of a liberal political-economic model that could contribute to the external support. A unitary state was built, with separation of power and a less presidential political system. For Namibia, the foreign policy continued as a combination of the revisionist pro-activity from the time of the national liberation, given the political preeminence of SWAPO (now a political party), the acceptance to the international context, and the use of globalization and political liberalism forces in its favor. The long-serving political structures in most African countries shaped the observed patriarchal nature of diplomacy characteristics associated with "manliness," which advances only the interests of men. The hegemonic masculinity is a representation of society's ideal of how male behavior should be (Connell 2005). In reality, its function is to legitimate the social ascendancy of men over women in all aspects of life.

It is clear that the low representation of women in diplomacy is a global issue. It therefore benefits to have foreign policy drivers set up networks and open conversational programs for women diplomats and other advocates of gender empowerment. This could help create conducive environments for exchanging experience, discussing social issues, encouraging confidence in conducting diplomacy, and coming up with solutions to serve women's interests from a female perspective. In his analysis of "how to succeed as diplomat today," Saskia Knight, notes that the survival of women in diplomacy will depend on their ability to adapt and be resilient, tactful, polite, and yet intentionally ambiguous.

Most importantly however, a diplomat is first and foremost a civil servant and must possess common sense (Knight 2013). Rueyling Tzeng's studies identify some of the reasons given for not involving women in international relations occupation as: (a) they are not motivated to pursue such positions; (b) they are unqualified in terms of rank, specialization, or education;

(c) concerns about the physical safety of female managers, who would be required to travel between and within underdeveloped countries; (d) concerns about women's general ability to cope with isolation and loneliness in a foreign country; (e) spousal career issues; and (f) severe gender prejudices, especially in developing countries (Tzeng 2006). This situation has been used to legitimize the exclusion of women from diplomatic spaces, signifying a problem beyond sexual and social relations to politics and diplomacy, and therefore fixing the problem of gender "emptiness" in diplomacy must cast focus on the five dimensions of diplomacy: (1) conference diplomacy; (2) personal; (3) parliamentary; (4) public; and (5) economic.

MAINSTREAMING "GENDER DIPLOMACY" IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK

Women's rights are a matter of development as well as international relations (Barr 2004). Feminist scholars have hinted that securing equal rights for women is a long quest for changing hearts and minds in countries where women's second-class citizenship has been a given for centuries (Charlesworth 1992). The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009 said that engendering all aspects of life is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. The former Secretary of State reiterated that, "No country can get ahead unless its women are accorded their full rights and afforded the opportunities to participate fully in the lives of their societies" (Centre on Public Diplomacy 2009). As demonstrated by this section, the overemphasis of economic diplomacy seems to have "trapped" the two countries in the "middle" of political patronages, bigotry, and erosive effects of gender-biased macro-economic frameworks. I shall discuss five types of diplomacies in the two countries: conference diplomacy, personal, parliamentary, public, and economic. In each case, I shall discuss how they can be employed by the two countries to mainstream gender in their foreign policies.

Conference diplomacy rose from global problems during the nineteenth century (Winham 1998), but aligned to state's interests, mainly great powers, in particular, in an international setting. Within this setting, there are processes that mark diplomacy: initiation, preparation, negotiation for decision-making, and implementation (Riitberger 2006). Although this framework dominated diplomacy until 1970, conference diplomacy has evolved and now diplomats in conferences seek to gain common grounds and interests in a multilateral setting. The reason for this is primarily the growth of global problems, which are exacerbated by globalization (Etang 2009). In turn, global conferences have extended the UN system not only to enfranchise new actors, but also to take a fresh look at old problems. Conference diplomacy can be defined as

that part of the management of relations between government and of relations between government and intergovernmental organizations that takes place in international conferences (Kaufmann 1996). The main actors are the delegation, as a representative of its government; the secretariat and its executive head; the presiding office; and various groups of governments often acting through a single delegation.

While Namibia's foreign policy is strongly bilateral, anchored on regional and economic thrust and focus, the Kenyan foreign policy is narrowly defined, emphasizing economic diplomacy. The Namibian emphasis on the post-Cold War context that shaped much of the country's foreign policies prepares the country for bilateral relations. The Namibian foreign policies' inclination toward external forces, and particularly with the Republic of South Africa, presents opportunities for the country to lobby and advance for structural and political changes, which are necessary not only to overcome subordination, oppression, and coercive power relations but also to instigate transformations in formulation of foreign policies. It is unlikely that the skewed Kenyan foreign policy may not benefit from the opportunities presented by structured conferencing initiatives. Both foreign policies seem to overemphasize "economic diplomacy" as the preferred tool for advancing the interests of the states. The two countries justify this monolithic approach by reiterating the crucial role of socio-economic development in sustaining peace and stability. Although this approach to development of foreign policies has succeeded mainly in countries emerging from conflicts, lessons from progressive economies, particularly MICs that apply integrated approaches, tend to develop resilience by using other facets and tools of diplomacy.

In Kenya and Namibia, even though women have begun to achieve inclusion in political leadership, female diplomats continue to experience prejudice and discrimination based on their gender. During the 2017 African Union's election of the Chair, even though not directly attributed to gender discrimination, the Kenyan and Zambian candidates failed to secure the seat amid patronages and inter-state suspicion. In this context, gender is a structural power relation that rests upon a central set of distinctions between different categories of people, valorizes some over others, and organizes access to opportunities, rights, responsibilities, authority, and life options along the lines demarcating those groups (Offen 1988). In parliamentary democracies, such as Kenya and Namibia, these structural factors are perpetuated by systemic factors that see diplomacy as a product of patronages and clientele, hence denying women opportunities to excel in international relations (Holland 2011).

The idea of parliamentary diplomacy "parlomacy" is not new (Devin 1993; Rusk 1955). The United Nations General Assembly is, in essence, parliamentary diplomacy, but parlomacy is not simply about international congresses.

There is a number of parliamentary actors that do parlomacy: individual parliamentarians, political parties, local parliaments or assemblies, national parliaments, regional parliaments, and international parliaments. In general, there are three major parlomacy categories: (i) parliamentarians; (ii) political parties; and (iii) parliaments (be they local, regional, or international) (Götz 2005). National interests are linked to international relations and global identity. Images of a nation, including its human rights records and adherence to global norms on issues such as gender equality in the world can be drawn upon to mobilize the “national identity dynamic” with government and opposition groups drawing upon, creating, and manipulating images for their own ends in a struggle for political power. The assumption here is that political elites manipulate a socio-psychological dynamic related to a conception of national identity, which is itself determined by the external environment. In other words, the conception of the national self is linked to perceptions of the external other. Foreign policy and diplomacy can be viewed as the means to ensure the objective of defending the national interest, hence, simultaneously strengthening national identity and dignity to different groups including women and girls. Foreign policy also provides, as Philip Muehlenbeck (2016) has put it, “the specific instrument par excellence at the disposal of elites hoping to mobilize the population of a legally-recognized nation state towards legitimation and political integration.”

In respect to societal identities, Adewale Banjo (2009) identifies four reasons explaining the significance of foreign policy in mobilizing the domestic society. First, national interests are universally shared by all members of the society, transcending other cleavages based upon ethnicity, religion, culture, or class. Hence political groups are provided with the most potent force for ensuring the society achieves GERD. Second, foreign policy provides a political discourse to escape from objective verification. Unlike specific economic or social policies, foreign policy, designed to defend national interests, is removed from the same standards of immediate or short-term tests that can easily lead to failure. Third, foreign policy is often more emotional, as an issue affecting the society, but it is often far more remote in terms of its impact on individuals. As an emotive issue, the public will always react favorably to policies enhancing the national interest, and negatively to policies seen as undermining it. Finally, foreign policy of a country facilitate much more readily than domestic policies opportunities for the emergence of strong and charismatic leaders, who, wrapping themselves in the national flag and the rhetoric of national identity, portray themselves as the only effective defenders of the national idea. Traditionally, the parliament role in the conduct of foreign affairs has been limited to the control of the executive power in pursuance of foreign policy (Aust 2007). There are some cases of best

practices in the emerging role of political entities that Kenya and Namibia could reflect over in reshaping their diplomacy to achieve GERD.

Although both countries advocate for "economic diplomacy," like many other developing countries, the realignment of this approach to a gender-responsive macro-economic framework still requires more to be done. The measure of economic growth for most nations globally remains gross domestic growth (GDP), for the good reasons that this is the only way to maintain objectivity of the measure of growth. However, the inequalities and persistent underdevelopment in the south continue to dominate academic debates and policy discourses (Teixeira et al. 2016). The debate to adjust development policies to focus on promoting social well-fare and creating opportunities for the most disadvantaged people-women and children (Sen 1999; Kabeer 2005) is often deconstructed. Yet economic growth conservatives admit that the reliance on surveys and administrative data is imperfect and incomplete (Braun 2011; Moulton 2015). The irony is that amid this controversy, inequalities being witnessed in the face of traditional economic development models continue to impoverish women and girls, excluding them from sustainable income, access to market, and participation in lucrative international trade and other wealth creating opportunities.

Kenya and Namibia are classified as Lower-middle income country (L-MIC) and Upper-middle income country (U-MIC), respectively. However, despite this economic prospect for the two nations, the narrative of "trickle-down economics" seems to be perpetuating inequalities. Some scholars have faulted this approach as being nothing but a corrupt scheme designed to cheat the public for the purpose of enriching a few billionaires (Aghion and Bolton 1997). Perhaps, this explains why despite the signs of "Africa rising" economically and infrastructural development, the gap between the economic growth and poverty reduction continues to widen (Odhiambo 2011). The continued exclusion of a section of the society such as women from growth and distribution opportunities has led scholars and civil society groups to agitate for change in the models of development being applied globally (Ferraro 1996). This debate is more pronounced in the global south, particularly Africa where the situation is exacerbated by socio-cultural barriers against women (Rustad 2016).

In progressive democratic societies, the art of diplomacy goes beyond the traditional foreign ministry and its officials in overseas missions. A more useful concept is the "national diplomatic system" (NDS) (Hocking 2007). This concept better captures the diverse and complex nature of coordinated diplomacy. Economic diplomacy may be driven by the foreign ministry, but it involves those with economic responsibilities and interests

inside and outside of government at all levels of governance (Romih and Logozar 2014). In Kenya, for instance, integrating international trade and foreign affairs fits well within the NDS structures, rendering the diplomatic processes an integrator of a compounded diplomacy. That is, making the ministry of foreign affairs and trade work with diverse partners—government departments, business actors, and civil society groups—to deliver on the diplomatic goals.

The Kenyan system has followed some of the emerging best practices from Australia, Canada, Fiji, and Mauritius; these countries have merged their trade and foreign ministries into one department as a bureaucratic way of integrating diplomacy. However, Namibia has followed suit of the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic, who have kept the two ministries distinct but have created new joint bodies to coordinate and facilitate integrated diplomacy. In this chapter I have consistently argued that a holistic approach to diplomacy and empowering women must capture the nuance, subtlety, and complexity of culturally differentiated meanings. Sally Engle Merry has provided a more accurate framework for human rights activism—the normative underpinning for empowerment strategies (Merry 2009).

CONCLUSION

Like any other nations in the world, Kenya and Namibia pursue their national and international interests through various diplomatic tools in order to sustain their foreign policies. Analysis has revealed that *economic diplomacy* is overly emphasized by the two countries. Economic diplomacy as conceived by Kenya and Namibia is a “realist” one, concerned with the absolute economic agenda in diplomacy. Economic realism, however, is not “healthy” for a state seeking to attain equality. In fact, dominance of economic diplomacy is found to entrench patriarchal systems that edge off women from accessing key opportunities and facilities within foreign relation engagement. Nonetheless, if Kenya and Namibia adopt the nuanced approach to diplomacy they will recognize that diplomacy cannot be compartmentalized into separate economic and political activity and that an integrated approach affords them a diplomatic strategy guided by clear structures for coordination. A coordinated diplomacy will enable the two countries to build policy networks drawn from several government ministries, civil society, and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) advocating for gender and women empowerment movements, which will eventually lead to advancement of GERD. The need for the two countries to promote GERD is premised on the understanding that, in the twenty-first century, globalization has caused indispensable interdependence; thus, the increased number of national and systemic players within diplomatic

tools and potent integrating (without disrupting) GERD within the existing Kenyan and Namibian foreign policy framework.

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