WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICE

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Introduction to Women and Negotiating the Public Sphere

The South African public sphere is an arena affected by a multitude of conditions and ideologies that shape communities and democracy. This paper will discuss the role of citizenry and its effects from the standpoint of women in public office.

The definition of citizenry and how that is experienced is also another arena that has to be looked at through a gendered perspective as suggested by Nira Yuval-Davies in her article '*Women, Citizenship and Difference'* (1997). Citizenry is a state that is both active and passive respectively 'whether the citizen is conceptualized as merely a subject of an absolute authority or as an active political agent'. (Yuval-Davies 1997:15) Women over time have been able to move from being passive citizens, where even their right to vote was challenged, to being active citizens where they can partake in creating policy that helps govern the citizenry as shown by the examples above of the ANC Women's League. This move has always and continues to be contested.

The main collective this report has so far analysed is that of women's organisations and feminist movements and their role in helping women's become better rhetorical agents for stability, in other words looking at how women encourage notions of good citizenry. Yuval-Davies uses T.H. Marshall's (an influential theorist of citizenship in Britain) definition of citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community'. This is inclusive of civil, political and social rights and obligations. This enables us to do two things, firstly, link citizenship to membership in a community rather than to isolating it to just the state, as many definitions of citizenship do. Secondly, this aids in analysing the relationship between 'the community' and the state and how this affects people's citizenship. Yuval's argument is that this definition enables us analytically to discuss citizenship as a multi-tier construct, which applies to people's membership in a variety of collectives. (Yuval-Davies 1997:5)

Yuval-Davies uses the example of military participation and war to explain how the legitimacy of citizenry can be a gendered debate. If one connects the ideas of how one is sexed and the duties they are expected to perform as a result of this, it is easy to distinguish why women are not expected to participate in the military especially in combat. However, in the light of the pursuit equal citizenship, "some feminist organisations such as NOW in the USA, ANMLAE in Nicaragua, have fought for the inclusion of women on equal footing to that of men in the military, arguing that once women share with men the ultimate citizens duty – to die for one's country, they would be able to gain equal citizenship rights to those of men." The results of this campaign got women to fight in the Gulf War. Yuval argues that example failed in many ways to create equal citizenry because in the first instance, feminists have created pressure rather than advanced the rights of women, as women too have to leave their children to

their mothers for them to be looked after. Secondly, being involved in the military does not automatically equate women and men, because even in this institution women are treated differently than men, and are also subject to issues such as sexual harassment and the negation of their reproductive rights. Finally, Yuval points out that this argument "ignores the general social and political context of the military and its use (Yuval-Davies 1997:20).

This has links to the South African context, in that women were involved in the liberation movement both overtly and covertly in order to appeal to the nationalist concerns of the country at the time, and to also secure a future for themselves as active citizens, who rights and concerns were legitimate. The debates that surround 'women's issues' around the time of heated nationalist struggle I argue were one of the first steps made in asserting that the new government, was a government that catered to the needs of all of its citizenry and all the issues presented before it were important. These arguments were anticipatory strategies towards building future stability within the country. Unfortunately this was not the argument was neither clearly present nor was it understood, as these papers will show.

Considering Pragma-Dialetics 'A Fetschrift for Frans H. van Eemeren on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday'

Edited by Peter Houtlosser and Agnes van Rees (2006)

Chapter 19 'Gender Aspects Concerning the concept of "Strategic Manoeuvring"' by Brigitte Mral.

Summary

- Challenges the ideology of democracy (Mral 2006:223) "In a democratic sense dialectics and rhetoric have been taught as if every agent has the same right to speak; only he follows the rules." However the rules are not the same for men and women.
- Mral questions how to handle a situation where the one who wants to speak is not automatically given the opportunity nor are they invited to share the discursive community, like women so often experience.
- This paper makes a strong case by asking how women can be legitimised in public life when they are more or less from the start questioned as rhetorical agents.
- Three main questions are answered by this paper
    - What rhetorical agency do women have?
    - How is this expressed?
    - How is this challenged?
- Paper talks about the act of establishing initial ethos and the act of gaining credibility.
- Looks at how style (performance) influences credibility. Mral gives the example of Margret Thatcher, and how she almost had to engender a masculine personality in order to function and legitimised in public life.
- The paper looks critically at the media and the role it plays in creating and destroying rhetorical strategies for women who are engaged in public discourse. Particularly if we evaluate the influence of style, and how pathos is built and how logos is executed through the method of delivery.
- (Mral 2006:227) "At the end of the 19th Century, a woman in the public eye was regarded equal to a prostitute." We now have to assess how and if these attitudes have changed over time. The dilemma or rather the balance women have to strike in very tradition societies in needing to be seen and simultaneously not seen. Women also have to make sure they reinforce the idea that a man has to lead.
- Mral argues that women's strategies in public participation cannot be studied in isolation from cultural patterns and structures (Mral 2006:228).
- Highlights the common threads of all women who participate in public discourse. (Mral 2006:229), "nearly all parties with the exception of the most conservative ones claim to be feminist. A claim which broadly speaking means that they are for 'equal opportunity'. What is more interesting than the statements of politicians however is the public opinion, and common values and even prejudice concerning women's standing."

- Mral's paper also talks about how female politicians create virtue. She takes evidence from media events and came to the conclusion that "today's virtue for woman politicians is that they should keep both feet firmly on the ground. Be responsible, motherly, honest and not show-off. It is the art of being just right" (Mral 2006:228).
- Tackles the cognitive responses of viewers and people in society have in order to create a sense of connection with a public figure.

Discussion

Firstly, we need to tackle the issue of ethos and the challenges women face in creating it. As discussed by Mral, women's initial ethos has been historically weaker than men's. It is an ethos that has to be negotiated and carefully chosen, whereas for men it is automatically granted. This attitude also has to be contextualised in traditional societies like in South Africa. In essence, strategies that work well in Sweden and Germany cannot automatically be applied to South Africa. The paper does not look particularly at South Africa, but it raises the issue of needing to identify the stumbling blocks for South African women when they attempt to build credible ethos. How is the status established and maintained?

Building ethos, integrates succinctly with the attributes of virtue. This is interesting particularly for South Africa when you look at personalities of the women leaders, such as Manto Tshabalala Msimang, or Nosizwe Mdalala-Routeledge and Winnie Mandela or Albertina Sisulu. These women's public personas have been shaped pejoratively or positively by the influence of the media. South African's are able to assign to anyone of these women a title of 'villainess' or 'do gooder' and to juxtapose them. Albertina Sisulu and Winnie Mandela through their participation in the TRC have had virtues thrust upon them. They have either proved to live up to these virtues or failed against their measure. Manto Tshabalala Msimang or Nosizwe Mdalala-Routeledge have been studied through their roles in the Health Ministry, and their attitudes to HIV/AIDS policy and the care of children in hospitals.

On the other hand, male politicians have greater flexibility when it comes to displaying attributes of virtue and are forgiven far more easily if they fail to be virtuous. In fact in extreme situations this lack of virtue can be seen as strength in character. The implication is that this man can get the job done no matter the circumstances. For instance, former Vice President Jacob Zuma has a media personality that gives him unwarranted permission to dance in public, popularise war songs, joke and be unapologetic about his sexuality. One could argue that these exact antics would not be easily forgiven by the public if they were performed by a woman.

Mral argues that women in public life need to have a special sensitivity and decorum and this can be considered as manipulative; however there are reasons are given to justify this claim. One of which is because, women's voices have been suppressed for such a long time, that some of these attitudes have become ingrained psychologically in women, so much so that when they are in public they try to remove attention from themselves. For example, a female politician cannot be seen as attractive later on sexy. If we look at South Africa's current Vice President Phumzile Mulambo-Nguka, she is seen as motherly, wise, reserved, not as attractive or sexy.

"No Freedom without the Women": Mobilization and Gender in South Africa,
1970-1992

Summary
- Looks at the move of South Africa from apartheid to majority rule, and how the new government is more likely to be held accountable by "urban popular movement, not movement based in the peasantry". This premise is then contextualised for the function of assessing gender-relations, and the evolving role of women in the public sphere prior to a post-apartheid South Africa.
- Article argues that industrialisation and urbanisation have affected black men and women {black here is defined as those who were previously disadvantaged or defined as 'non-white'} differently in that there are "Changes in the organization of work and family, coupled with changing forms of political organization, mean that a post-apartheid state is likely to face gender-specific demands, articulated by women who may not explicitly accept feminist labels but who may refuse to subsume questions of gender subordination under appeals to national unity" (Seidman 1993:293).
- The article puts South African women in the foreground of political change within the realm of gender relations.
- Like the other articles that challenge the practice of Female Circumcision, the idea that economic independence and migration, education, and the erosion of a peasant system has had a knock-on effect resulting in destabilising the male-dominated household archetype that other nationalist movements have reinforced.
- Highlights that the feminist movement shaped women's participation in liberation and created a space for 'gendered demands' (Seidman 1993:294) even though the feminist movement was contested and continues to be contested. Even so, women were now far more vocalised than in other countries that experienced the similar political situation.
- Seidman gives evidence for the contestation by women involved in the liberation struggle. For example look at the following quotes highlighted by Seidman from pages 296-297.
    o In 1989, a woman writing in the South African Communist party's journal insisted, "Our immediate task is the liberation of the black people, not raising gender-specific demands." [She viewed] attempts to politicize gender or family relationships as arising from "bourgeois" or "Western" feminism. Spokespeople for any of the major organizations struggling against white minority rule tended to suggest that "the woman question" was best left unasked.
    o In 1985, an ANC spokeswoman told the Nairobi Women's Conference, "It would be suicide for us to adopt feminist ideas. Our enemy is the system

and we cannot exhaust our energies on women's issues" (Work in Progress 1985, 31). In 1986, ANC activist Frene Ginwala slightly revised the theme but echoed its basic thrust: "Women's liberation in South Africa cannot be achieved outside of the context of the liberation struggle" (Ginwala 1986, 13). {Frene Ginwala became the Speaker of Parliament under the new ANC government}

- Looks at the role that COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) tried to play in reconciling women's issues together with the liberation movement. However, these issues were always hidden under the banner of "household responsibility". This was also the excuse supplied for women's failure to attend meetings. Seidman sees the attempts by COSATU to have a ""Resolution on Women" [as recognising] the "equal right of men and women to work," the sex-segregation of the labour market, and the dangers of sexual harassment on the job (COSATU 1985). Nonetheless, COSATU's education officer, Chris Seopesenge, acknowledged three years later that this had remained "a paper resolution," because "there is little sympathy for women's problems" within the labour federation's leadership (COSATU, 1988)." (Seidman 1993:304)

- Seidman, however, argues that by the 90s this attitude had changed, because there was a ""rhetorical shift reflecting growing awareness and acceptance of gender concerns." This was perpetuated by women who were now getting involved in broader array of organisations. As momentum gained this allowed women to gain a better footing within the organisation of COSATU to the point that, In 1988, when the labour federation COSATU held its first "women's conference," the debate around gender-specific demands had moved past maternity benefits and equal pay to focus more directly on how to organize women workers separately so that they could formulate and articulate their needs in an atmosphere less dominated by male unionists" (Seidman 1993:308).

- Women capitalised on the power of international organisations and their need to provide for the needs of women's organisations. This had not been an agenda previously up for debate in the public sphere.

- The paper looks at how the attitudes of the ANC Women's league changed regarding when women's issues should be integrated to the public sphere. Rather than waiting for the success of the liberation movement to take affect as the sentiment was before, "liberation activists have insisted on raising gender issues during negotiations toward majority rule." (Seidman 1993:312)

- The paper concludes by summarising the main movements' women in South Africa have made in the public sphere to get women's issues to be publicly debated. This issues range from how they are treated at home right through to how they are treated at work - primarily concerning quotas and sexual harassment. "As women activists organise a broad constituency for gender-specific demands, it seems increasingly probable that the demands they make on the post-apartheid state will seek to create an unusual degree of support for women's economic independence and personal autonomy." (Seidman 1993:316)

Discussion

This paper was published in 1993 at the cusp of South Africa's declaration of independence from apartheid regime and white rule. It gives a hopeful assessment for the future of gender empowerment in post-apartheid South Africa and supplies various justifications for this claim. However, the author looks at the patterns of how nationalist movements are known for "promises… to end gender based subordination," (Seidman 1993:292) and to improve the status of women prior to being politically victorious. However, in most cases these promises have been left unfulfilled. Seidman looks at the nationalist movements in China, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua and points out that even though there was political independence the subordination of women remained intact. This is further justified by claims made by other feminist authors such as Partha Chatterjee, and Nayereh Tohidi, who agree that "… [That] in anticolonial, or anti-Western struggles, nationalist leaders have avoided explicit challenges to gender subordination because they viewed the domestic arena as the source of an autonomous national identity that must be protected." The process involves taking women's issues of the agenda and these are replaced by the concerns of the nation. In essence here, the argument is that women have to reconcile themselves to being in a subordinate position for the sake of the advancement of the nation.

Seidman also shows how these attitudes changed in South Africa, but that change was not a simple shift of mindset, but a 'rhetorical shift' that enabled an awareness of the power of investing in gender-relations. What is interesting to note is how women themselves justified a subordinate position for the sake of the liberation movement as highlighted by the quotes from some of the leadership in the ANC Women's League. "Our immediate task is the liberation of the black people, not raising gender-specific demands." In terms of looking at how women behave in the public sphere especially when under the leadership of men we begin to see some of the rhetorical instruments women use in order to justify the status quo that has been established by men and the role of patriarchal tradition. The quote also emphasises the role that women play in society, they are supposed to put themselves second, not for their good but for the betterment of others. A motherly role of sacrifice 'for the sake of the children' is a metaphor that is evoked, and is practised. This is the underlining ethos of that quotation.

Yet again the rivalry between African feminist ideology and Western feminist ideology is put to bear and this is at the risk of retarding fundamental issues that need to be addressed for women in South Africa. The implied resolution of this apparent dichotomy comes from women's organisations in South Africa realising that international community of donor agencies help empower their cause. A somewhat cynical view, but one that cannot be ignored as this money helped position women into a position of activeness as opposed to that of defence. Seidman further echoes this sentiment, "But international donors' interest in gender issues clearly helped make gender-specific programs more acceptable. As one community activist concluded, "Access to that kind of money does affect the way people think about issues."" (Seidman 1993:311)

- This article is a complex look at women and the role feminism played in South Africa and its effect on the public sphere. However, the interesting part is the way the author interprets these events as a feminist herself. Granted she is an outsider, (i.e. From Wisconsin America), she legitimises her position by stating the length of time she has been studying this dialogue between women and men within the complex nature of government structures.
- Highlights the surprising aspects of South Africa's transition to democracy there was an overlooking of the role of gender in the construction of a new state. Women activist played a pivotal role in the negotiations, elections and designing a new sate, women's participation was leading to new approached to policy making.
- Sees that whenever gender is discussed now it is always about women and how they are affected by transition, but women are never put in the role of agents thereby restricting "new gendered possibilities for political participation." (228)
- Presents the role of feminist activists in getting women in South Africa to be involved in shaping democracy and the contradictions that this group of women presented within their organisation and in public sphere.
- Article challenges the following questions in relation to the South African experience : pp228
    - When and how do gender differences matter?
    - What are women's interests?
    - How should they be incorporated in the state?
    - This article asks why and how gender issues became so prominent in the construction of a democratic South African state.
    - What difference it makes to the experience of citizenship for South African men and women?
    - Whether men and women experience democratic citizenship differently?
- The paper is a qualitative report based on interviews and informal discussions with a range of political activists; and articles published in newspapers, community publications, and feminist journals in South Africa. Seidman has also used direct quotes from published materials. The reasons Seidman gives for the way she conducts the research is important when looking at how women tend to give each other legitimacy especially if they have an agreed upon cause, this will be later unpacked in the discussion section. "It seemed unnecessary to rely on my notes and tapes when South African feminist activists are quite able to articulate their own ideas, in the format of their own choosing. In the 1990s, feminist activists in South Africa are generally self-reflective and very literate;

recognizing that fact, I think, makes it easier for observers to allow individuals to choose their own words." (Seidman 1999:290)

- Article concludes by, asking the reader to consider as an alternative to focusing on negotiations or elections, to verify and legitimise women's participation perhaps we must also look at how women in particular are mobilized as a collective identity during democratization. Also to look at how activists seek to build their vision of citizenship into the structures that will define political participation in the future. (Seidman 1999:304)

Discussion

This paper looks at arguments presented in the 1990s, from women who now define themselves as feminists even though during anti-apartheid campaigns, they avoided raising gender issues publicly "because they feared creating internal divisions in an already embattled anti-apartheid movement; moreover, some women said that in townships, they faced physical threats from male activists if they raised questions such as reproductive rights" (Seidman 1999:291). This is important when we look at how women in South Africa have had to historically negotiate their entrance into the public sphere. There is an assumption that the male activists would play the role of protectors, and encouragers for these women, but ironically the women most feared these men. What this paper does not explicitly discuss the details of why men had this reaction, but it is implied in both Seidman's papers that the issue of nationality came before the concerns of women as reproductive members of society. The links of nationality and reproductive rights were seen as mutually exclusive. Still to this day I would argue that these aspects are seen as mutually exclusive. Women are unable to argue the point that their reproductive labour permeates into every other aspect of how they perform as citizens and nation builders.

Seidman looks at how women in South Africa first began to tentatively negotiate the public sphere and create legitimacy the following quotations illustrate this process;

- First, South African intellectuals began to discuss the ways in which apartheid had treated Black women and men differently and to consider how women's needs might thus differ from those of men during reconstruction. Increasingly, feminist intellectuals, mainly women, began to argue that unless gender concerns were considered during the course of democratization, new political institutions would re-create and reinforce inequality (Hassim 1991; Hassim, Metelerkamp, and Todes 1987; Horn 1991;Serote 1991). (Seidman 1999:292)
- Second, antiapartheid activists began to develop separate women's forums, hoping to increase women's participation in the grassroots movement against apartheid. Women whose husbands objected to their political activities might feel more comfortable going to all-women meetings, it was argued; moreover, women might speak more freely if no men were present and could thus gain valuable experience and confidence in public speaking. These forums represented the first explicit recognition within the democratic opposition that women and men might have somewhat different agendas. In a highly politicized environment, women mobilized within separate women's groups often analyzed their lives not only in terms of race and class but also in terms of gender inequalities (Seidman 1999:293).

The argument that is implied by the first quote is about the powerful role of the intellectual. Not everybody has access to the public sphere until they have been endorsed by some person or organisation. Intellectuals fulfil the role of endorsing ideologies and agendas of the disempowered to be heard and validated. In fact it could be argued that in the South African example, women who managed to appeal to an ethos of intellectual merit first had an easier time to integrate themselves in public life. This is how feminist activists managed to vocalise and empower their agendas. They were intellectuals first who appealed intellectually to the plight of women.

The article also looks at how the ANC, now the governing party changed its rhetoric slogans to incorporate women or rather gender dynamics for the new South Africa.

- o "After its unbanning in 1990, ANC slogans increasingly demanded a "nonracial, democratic, and nonsexist South Africa," and ANC meetings increasingly involved some discussion of what that goal might entail…" (Seidman 1999:292)

There had to be gradual consent from those who where the elite, who began to appreciate the role that women would play in the new democracy. Seidman gives evidence of this and how other authors such as Fidela Fouche, feminist author of "*Overcoming the sisterhood myth. Transformation*" also had similar interpretations. (Seidman 1999:293)

- o "Gradually, the principle of gendered representation at the national negotiations for democracy became accepted within the country's political elite. As national negotiations proceeded, women activists grew increasingly visible across the political spectrum, and women activists of all political views began to agree that gender issues should be taken up during, rather than after, the transition, insisting that women's voices be heard-although generally acknowledging that those voices would be multiple and often contradictory (Fouche 1994,79)."

Seidman discusses that the process of creating a quota system for women representatives was not so much as a negotiation between men and women, but rather that in "March 1993 in a little-publicized event, women ANC activists stormed the negotiation chambers, blocking talks until women were literally given places at the table" (Seidman 1999:294). Amazingly, all parties participating in the negotiation process accepted a gender quota-a decision that reflected the extent to which women on all sides had already raised issues of gendered representation in the construction of democracy. As a result Fifty percent of each two-person team had to be female; thus, half of the negotiators who finally accepted a provisional constitution and set the elections in motion were women- a composition that had real implications for the kinds of institutions created under the new constitution."

However, this move was met with much scepticism from other female activists, as noted on page 294;

- o Who do the women now in the talks really represent? Many are loyal to their parties, not to women. And many of those parties are not gender-sensitive at all. So can we really say that women are represented in the talks? (Mthintso 1993, 32)

A women's caucus was created were women did manage to agree on most issues. It comes to the forefront that women had to act as a group in order for their needs to be addressed this is highlighted by the following quote from Nozizwe Madlala, who at the time was an ANC feminist and had recently become a Member of Parliament. She concluded that the most urgent task was "for women to organize themselves into a strong mass-based women's movement," which would monitor the new government's policies. (Seidman 1999:300)

The struggle for emancipation depends on one key tool: organization. . . . We cannot assume that the government will automatically be sympathetic to our demands as women. In fact, we will have to apply our united power to make sure the government heeds them. (Madlala 1994, Building a women's movement. *Work in Progress* no. 96 (suppl.pp6))

This article when framed within the discourse of rhetoric and how women conduct themselves in public life, we see the groups and mobilisation are rhetorical tools in creating pathos and ethos for women in South Africa. Many of the arguments presented in this paper are an appeal to values and choice, making them both epideictic and deliberative arguments used in order to gain legitimacy in the public sphere.

Government Documents on Gender in Public Sphere
Gender Maintstreaming initiative in the Public Service
Website: www.psc.gov.za
http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2007/psc_gender_mainstream_initiatives.pdf
Date Accessed: 9/7/2007

Summary

This paper is a comprehensive study done by the government on the access and mobility women have within government structures, this report was published in November of 2006. The report was both quantitative and qualitative assessment of government departments, where women's involvement was not only assessed according to their position in the department, but also according to racial and income categories in each province. Nonetheless it should be noted that this is not just about setting targets and setting policy. The paper calls to challenge attitudes about gender empowerment and to create a new culture of accommodation for our differences that are in line with the constitution and international standards.
Gender mainstreaming is defined as:

> "*Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.*"(PSC 2006:5)
> From UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007.

- Issues discussed include sexual harassment and how its outcome is negotiated between perpetrator and victim.
- Recruitment - including what type and the actual percentage of women who have been recruited and the targets that still need to be met.
- Promotion - the policy, women in positions of senior management, targets that are meant to be achieved and how upward mobility is negotiated.
- The provision of child care facilities at work.
- Women's involvement in executive positions and the process of decision making.
- Management skills of men and women - An interesting finding stated in the report has implications for not how women are viewed but how they act as rhetorical agents in public life;

> "There was no uniformity of responses to the question about differences between male and female managers across the departments. Some men and women agreed that male managers were better to work for as they were more predictable and less moody than female managers. What was most significant was that the majority of women said that when women are in leadership "they do not support other women; they do not encourage mobility of other women and generally behaved more like a man than men did". However this argument was

countered by many female managers who said that it was harder for women to be managers as it was sometimes expected that women had to act like men.

In a number of departments where gender mainstreaming was receiving more attention than in other departments, it was significant that the Director-General or Head of Department was a woman. Staff members ascribed the commitment to gender mainstreaming in these departments to the women in leadership positions." (PSC 2006:39)

The report acknowledges that there has been an improvement of women's access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections as much as the other papers have implied and proved. This report states that there is a strong representation of women in the national, provincial and local legislative branches of government and in some governments departments. However, the hurdle that needs to be overcome is that there seems to be a culture instilled within Public Service institutions to be more responsive to women civil servants and their needs - even though there are women in senior managerial positions.

The report finds that, "In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard." (PSC 2006:54)

Women and the challenges of Public Deliberation.

Iris Marion Young in her essay, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy" (1996) presents an argument to show that there is a difference between democracy and deliberative democracy. On the one hand democracy is purely the "outcome of successful completion of ideas and coalitions for the self-interested voter. Individuals or interest groups determine and vote for policies that will best serve them". In this case democracy is just seen as a functional measure towards an end, but it is a definition that does not supply an explanation for how one is convinced about a policy so much so that they vote for it, nor does this definition illustrate what democracy is really about – differing opinions contesting each other publicly for an individual vote. It is here that Young provides us with the definition of deliberative democracy, which is "one that conceives of democracy as a process that creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions. Democratic processes are orientated around discussing this common good…participants in deliberation do not rest until the 'force of a better argument' compels them all to accept a conclusion" (Young 1996:120-121). The question that arises then is, whether or not women engender a better way of presenting compelling arguments in deliberative democracies and what are the tools they use to do this.

Parliamentary debates, or arguments in courts are not simply free and open public forums in which all people actually have the right to express claims and give reasons according to their own understanding. Speech that is assertive and confrontational is here more valued than speech that is tentative, exploratory, or conciliatory. In most actual situations of discussion, this privileges male speaking styles over female. The growing literature claims to show that girls and women tend to speak less than boys in speaking situations that value assertiveness and argument competition. When women do speak in such situations, moreover, they tend to give information and ask questions rather than state opinions or initiate controversy. Deliberation is a competition. Parties aim to win the argument, not to achieve mutual understanding. (Young 1996:123)

Lynn Sanders (1992), in a paper "Against Deliberation" a paper presented at a meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1992; she cites studies that show in juries men talk considerably more than women and are leader more often. Jane Mansbridge (1991) cites studies that show that female legislators speak less than their male counterparts and that in public meetings women tend to give more information and ask questions, while men state opinions and engage in confrontation.

Young highlights the influence that cultural politics has played in society, particularly in the case of America and how deliberative democracy worked in an unequal society. That is they were racially segregated and women still had not negotiated much of the political clout that have gained now. It is in this society that research found that the delivery of the speech also forms part of its argument. The aspects of delivery fall in to the categories of 'articulation', 'literal language over figurative language' and 'body expressions'. Accordingly, audiences seem to assume that there is an opposition

"between mind and body, reason and emotion. They tend falsely to identify objectivity with calm, and absence of emotional expression". This formula of public address was reiterated in apartheid South Africa, where the occurrence of all forms of public address or debate within the arena of government/judicial institutions were given by a privileged class; specifically, "white middleclass men who [were] more controlled, without significant gesture and expression of emotion." They functioned in creating a mould or an archetype of what deliberation should look like. If you were going to deliberate and if you chose not to do it in this way you as a speaker diminished the ethos and the pathos of your speech.

This argument reduces public deliberation to one that is ethnocentric and gender biased. This is a point Young echoes from other authors such as Charles Henry and Anthony Cortese, who debate ethnicity and the deliberative styles of African-American politics. "The speech culture of women and racial minorities [in South Africa it would be all those who were considered none white] tends to be more excited and embodied, more valuing the expression of emotion, the use of figurative language, moderation in tone of voice, and wide gesture." In essence, in order to build ethos, women and the less privileged are asked to put aside the expression of their experience, or their claims of entitlement or interest must be put aside for the sake of common good whose definition is biased against them. (Young 1996:126)

Another obstacle women are faced with when delivering a public address in government/judicial spheres, is that their audience is mostly male. So if they are to construct a speech in a way that is supposed to relate to the audience and appeal to the particular attributes or experience of the audience, by virtue of being a woman, some of these experiences have a diminished meaning. The challenge is for the speaker to relate her own particular location in relation to the audience, how is that achieved when the audience is mostly male? How do women get and keep attention in public deliberation? How do women become persuasive without involving seduction?

In order to answer these questions, one needs to look at the methods women have used to change public perception and garner support for their causes. According to a report done by the UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2005), since 1995 there has been an increase in women's visibility and impact on public life internationally and the proportion has reached 30% or more. The idea is that women in office "can change the culture, practice and outcomes of politics to respond better to equality concerns." This increase in participation has been measured by looking at the electoral systems of various countries, and those with electoral systems based on proportional representation "tend to return assemblies with a higher average of woman politicians than those with plurality/majority systems." This alone is not the determinant but other factors such as

1. Affirmative Action (presence and type) – works in boosting the numbers through the use of quotas. Parties adopt quotas as a result of pressure from women members. Or it may be a required mandate by law.
   - Reserved seats for women – however these may function in reducing the legitimacy of the women who fill them
2. Party systems and ideologies.
3. Presence of women in the executive.
4. Responsiveness of the bureaucracy to women's interest.
5. Women's interest in a wide variety of civic associations.
6. The myth of voter hostility. – There appears to be less resistance among voters to female candidates, "Since 1957 female candidates have enjoyed a

consistently higher success rate than male candidates; on average a woman is twice as likely to be elected as a man." (UNRISD 2005:155)

Efforts by women to cause this effect has included mobilisation, through female collective action or women's movements. Women have managed to create linkages with other associations whose principle agendas lie in various fields such as the environment, peace, globalisation and human rights thus strengthening their legitimacy.

In Southern Africa, much progress has happened for enabling women to participate in politics. "The SADC Gender Declaration was a regional success for women lobbies even though only a few SADC member states will be able to meet the target of 30 per cent representation of women by 2004." (Geislar 2004:214)

Assessing Women's Political Effectiveness

UNRISD report notes that "Women legislators are divided on a lot of issues, including those connected to their party, class, ethic group or religious affiliations, and their legislative impact in the area of gender equality can therefore be uneven" (UNRISD 2005:162). This division is a pattern that has also been noted by various other researchers on this topic, for instance Gisela Geislar in her book "Women and the remaking of politics in Southern Africa: negotiating autonomy, incorporation and representation."

However, before we begin to unpack her arguments. I find it of concern that the mere process of recognising and critiquing of this pattern has an effect of making women ubiquitous. It can be agreed that women tend to work as collectives to get their agenda recognised, but this does not mean that they are not individuals who all have separate beliefs and ideas. This is in stark contrast to men who are allowed to be individualists and renegade and maintain their authority. If women try to separate themselves from a group, they are rendered emotional and ineffective.

Geislar points out that "antagonisms between women politicians and women's movements [are] dominant in newly independent states. Using South Africa as an example she argues that there are many women leaders who exchanged activism for parliament in 1994. Their departure has left a void in grassroots leadership and they have become more distanced to ordinary women. Women's movements have become disappointed by politicians who seem to have put party loyalty above 'sisterhood'. Whereas, the female politicians have "dismissed the expectations of the women's movement as unrealistic, suggesting that they [politicians] represent the party rather than a particular lobby…women continue to have a hard time rising in the party ranks at the best of times, and being a gender advocate is considered a liability." This often means that they tone down whatever feminist beliefs they might hold (Geislar 2004:212).

Although quotas and mandates help in creating mobility for women to be in policy-making positions that promote women's concerns, their effectiveness in ensuring that policy is translated into new patterns of service delivery directly impacts the reputation and the standards that bureaucrats and officials are held to account. Accountability is assessed on several factors that include:

- The ideological environment and its openness to gender concerns
- Institutional leadership positions to which women are elected or appointed once in office
- The responsiveness of political parties to gender-equity concerns

- The relationship between politicians and women's movements
- The capacity of public institutions to implement policies to regulate private providers so that they respect national gender equity goals.

Women who have feminist agendas within parties and government have to be able to sustain pressure on the leadership or else risk being sidelined. As noted by the UNRISD Report, in South Africa, within the ANC where feminists have a significant presence both in the leadership of the parliamentary party and among the grassroots membership, the party's commitment to gender equality can never be taken for granted. ANC women leaders had this lesson pressed home when, in 1998, the financial allocation for their Domestic Violence Bill was sidelined by ANC in favour of a new arms deal" (UNRISD 2005:157)

Women rarely become heads of state but it is common for them to become deputy heads or speakers of parliament. Beyond this, it is rare to find women in powerful ministerial positions such as foreign affairs, defence, finance, trade and industry and justice and labour. Women tend to be relegated seemingly feminine ministries such as arts and culture, health, education, family affairs, social affairs and women's affairs.

To conclude this section, there are many dynamics that need to be considered when women approach the public sphere. One could suggest that they perform a kinder way of public life because they are put in ministries that deal far more with domestic seemingly none threatening issues, rather than being put in ministries that are traditionally viewed as masculine and tough. Women also have to negotiate the idea that they are usually forced to work as a collective that needs to lobby their agendas or policies. If they do not work as a collective it threatens the impact of that policy or the policy reform. I would also like to suggest that by having to lobby and work with the community, women have to talk differently they need to convince more people to support their ideas. They position themselves in such a way that a community not only empathises with them, but the community sees itself through their actions, thereby conceding to the agenda because affects them personally. By-laws and legislation and quota systems also enable women to be representatives for their communities. However, it is not always a united agenda or a united group there are fractures with the coalitions, thus affecting policy making and implementation.

Geislar G, (2004) '*Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: Negotiating Autonomy, Incorporating and Representation.*' Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. Printed Spain by Grafilur Artes Graficás.