Gender, Governance and Democracy

Strategies to Enhance Women's Political Representation in Different Electoral Systems
Drude Dahlerup

Women in Politics and Governance: Complex Challenges from Globalisation
Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco

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Preface

In the year 2005, Isis International-Manila (Isis-Manila) witnessed the consolidated shift of attention, energies and resources toward the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and the attempt to counter, if not, 'manage' the fast-rising state of global insecurity. As the world grapples and tries to keep pace with these developments, women now fear a backlash in the gains made toward their empowerment as women's participation and visibility in public spaces are gradually being curtailed. The low-key review of the status of women following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action a decade ago, was reflective of an environment where women's interests still remain remote from State agenda.

Global capitalism is writing its script on the bodies and lives of women and girls as it intersects with globalised media and ICTs. Spaces for women's interaction are increasingly shrinking as organisations and networks work to strengthen trans-regional feminist activism and inter-movement dialogue in challenging new and old manifestations of neo-liberal globalisation. Thus, Isis-Manila presents "Gender, Governance and Democracy", the inaugural issue of the we! monograph series.

The we! monograph series is Isis-Manila's trans-regional publication that visibly facilitates cross-border understanding and analysis on cutting-edge issues and current affairs. Its purpose is to promote a deeper and critical interrogation of the inter-linkages of global trends and the broader development agenda. An alternative platform that interrogates issues from a feminist standpoint, the we! monograph puts forward the voices of women scholars and activists. Further, it seeks to elevate feminist perspectives and analyses in an attempt to generate awareness on our common sites of struggles against patriarchy, corporate hegemonies, right-wing ideological regimes, and empire-building.

In this inaugural issue, the selection of cross-border exchanges between Asia and Europe proceeds from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Philippines' (FES) international conference Women Shaping Democracy: Progressive Politics Ten Years After the World Conference on Women in Beijing in October 2005, co-organised by the Southeast Asian Women's Watch (SEAWWatch) and Isis-Manila. Isis-Manila extends its appreciation to colleagues in SEAWWatch, WAGI and FES, in particular, to FES former Director, Beate Martin, and former FES Southeast Asia Regional Gender Coordinator, Anja Koehler. The engagements that took place in this conference served as the bases for this monograph series.

Isis-Manila is immensely grateful to its long-time partner Women and Gender Institute (WAGI), for collaborating in producing this monograph series. We are especially grateful to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Executive Director of WAGI, Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco who served as this

issue's guest editor. The direction setting and production of this inaugural issue was made possible through the coordination and leadership of an inter-generational editorial team from Isis-Manila and WAGI comprised of Anjani Abella, Marilen Abesamis, Maria Melinda Ando, and Aileen Familara. We also extend our appreciation to the always reliable and ever-ready Sonic 303 for the cover design and Lithwerke for lay-out and printing services.

This monograph series compiles six critical opinion articles in three (3) volumes, namely [1] Women in Politics; [2] Gender and International Trade; and [3] Peace and Security. The series reflect Asian and European perspectives on current debates on gender, governance and democracy.

A common thread running through these rich cross-border essays is the call for the construction of democratic and gender-sensitive differentiated democracies with economies based on solidarity and not on profit. As such, in the larger debate of re-claiming peace, nation building, and state building, all essays call for the promotion of gender justice and equity and re-affirm

that real development will not take place without the promotion of women's empowerment and recognition of women's pro-active participation in public spaces.

Indeed much is left to be done.

Raijeli Drodrolagi Nicole
Executive Director
Isis International-Manila

Introduction

The struggle of women to achieve parity with men in leadership and decision-making within the public institutions of states, politics and governments is an important arena of political action and discourse for contemporary women's movements. At the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW, Beijing 1995), there took place a global consensus around women's advancement in the public sphere through the institutionalisation of national machineries for women, as well as, the affirmation of the gender quota in policy and decision-making spaces. In response, a significant number of women's groups and individual feminists in the South took up the challenge of more strongly addressing and challenging male domination in politics — a struggle earlier started by sisters in the North.

What have we achieved since the Fourth World Conference on Women? The two essays featured in this monograph provide a glimpse of the continuing reflection and debates on women in politics and governance. The contribution from Europe critically examines the complex of possibilities and challenges linked to implementing the

strategy of 'gender quotas' in differentiated electoral systems in reference to the experiences of women in the Nordic and Scandinavian countries. The contribution from Asia focuses on the contradicted character of governance and politics that arises from the dynamic of globalisation, and points to its serious implications for Asian women entering politics or occupying government positions. While the first essay begins by addressing the problem of women's under-representation in politics, the other is introduced by flagging the question of whether women should at all be engaging with the state. From their contrasted experiential traditions and political contexts, together, the essays prompt women's movements everywhere to reflect on strategies and tactics in their struggle to make politics and governance more just and accessible to women.

The first essay is written by Drude Dahlerup. She explains the fast and incremental tracks to achieving gender balance in politics, defining the former as the 'affirmative action' route and the latter as the long struggle route against the complexities and layers of discrimination against women. She then explores in detail the outcomes and issues in implementing the gender quota system with respect to the proportional representation (PR) system, plurality-majority system, and in a system that combines both, scanning experiences across various countries. In ending, she reaffirms previous claims that the increased participation of women can never be fully guaranteed by the kind of electoral system that a society practises, however, also establishes that electoral gender quota is an important strategy for women's political justice and empowerment under the 'right circumstances'.

The second essay is written by Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco who presents a contradicted terrain of Asian politics and governance which she sees as resulting primarily from the contesting processes of a centralising trade

intensification process and a re-democratisation movement in the region. As these processes simultaneously interact and contest, women's advancement is also marked with persistent and new issues. She then interrogates women in politics by posing two questions: Who are the women and to whom are they accountable? In the process, she raises the complexities facing women who engage with the state and urges the women's movements to address more resolutely the inter-linking of economic justice and gender justice issues within alternative political spaces.

Across Asia and Europe, women are asserting and entering the halls of formal power. Through the gender quota, some feminists may be entering undemocratic political spaces while some undemocratic women may be benefiting from the expansion of democratic spaces. And as feminists participate in decision-making within government institutions and political parties, there is danger of de-politicisation but also opportunities for re-casting politics. These are issues that women's movements everywhere need to continually address and reflect on.

Anjani Abella and
Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco
Issue Editors

Strategies to Enhance Women's Political Representation in Different Electoral Systems

By Drude Dahlerup

In 2005, women occupied only 16% of the parliamentary seats in the world, while men had 84%. Notwithstanding efforts by women to claim seats in government, politics is still a heavily male-dominated arena (Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, Retrieved last February 15, 2006). Today, however, we see the emergence of new discourses of women's under-representation followed by many old as well as new strategies to change this under-representation.

It is a well-known fact that electoral systems based on proportional representation [PR] benefit women's political representation. On the average, the level of women's representation in parliaments is higher in systems that use PR than in plurality-majority systems[1] (Matland & Studlar, 1996; Norris, 2004). I will discuss why this is the case, and why it is difficult to construct a system that will work in a plurality-majority system. How can one demand, for instance, 30% women on the list in an electoral system with only one candidate per party? Because of such difficulties, the gap between the majority system and the PR system in terms of women's representation might increase even more with the new trend to use electoral gender quotas at candidate nominations.

The Beijing Platform for Action: Legitimising Gender Quotas

Women's movements the world over have attempted to give legitimacy to the controversial demand for gender quotas by referring to the landmark document that is the Beijing Platform for Action [BPFA]. We shall examine the varying discourses [with discourse hereby defined as interlinked constructions of meanings, which include perceptions of possible actions, but not actual actions].

Firstly, the Beijing Platform talks about 'discriminatory attitudes and practises' and 'unequal power relations' that lead to women's under-representation in political decision-making. This may be labelled a discourse of exclusion. Whereas previously the focus was on women's lack of resources or lack of will to participate in politics, attention is now directed towards those institutional and cultural mechanisms of

exclusion that prevent women from obtaining an equal share of positions in most political institutions. More importantly, in this new discourse, the responsibility for promoting change is shifted from the individual woman to the institutions themselves, which are expected to identify and correct the causes of women's under-representation.

Secondly, the demand for a minimum level of representation for women is being challenged by a new discourse of equal representation, often expressed by the term gender balance. The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) "50-50" campaign is a good example of this new discourse. The goal is no longer described as 'more women in politics' but rather as 'equal participation' and 'equitable distribution of power and decision-making at all levels'. Somewhat contradictorily, however, the Beijing Platform for Action also speaks of securing a 'critical mass', the latter often associated with figures of 20 or 30% women (Dahlerup, 1988 & 2005; FWCW, 1995: Art. 181 – 195).

Thirdly, affirmative action is suggested as a possible means to women's equal participation in political decision-making, although the controversial word 'quota' is not used directly in the BPFA. For governmental and public administration positions, it is recommended that the world's governments use 'specific targets and implementing measures…if necessary through positive action' (FWCW, 1995: Art. 190.a). Concerning elections, the BPFA urges governments to commit themselves to 'take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men' (FWCW, 1995: Art. 190.b). Political parties should 'consider examining party structures and

procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women' (FWCW, 1995: Art. 191.a).[2]

Even if its language is cautious, the BPFA represents on the whole a new discourse, focusing on exclusionary institutional practises, setting gender balance as the goal, and demanding that governments and political parties commit themselves to affirmative action.

This paper argues that if women are under-represented because of open or indirect mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination, then educating women is not enough, and may even result in little change if the institutions are not changed simultaneously. If the problem is not women's lack of resources, but lack of acknowledgement of those resources and experiences that women actually bring with them into the political life, then there is no need to wait for women to be more educated or experienced.

The 'Fast Track' versus the 'Incremental Track' to Gender Balance in Politics

In a previous article, we have identified two tracks to gender balance in politics (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Dahlerup, 2006). These current tracks consist in different assumptions about the women's movement's historical development, different problem identifications with regard to the causes of women's under-representation, and differences in choice of strategy.

The incremental track discourse sees the primary problem as women's lack of political resources relative to men. While this discourse recognises prejudice against women, it assumes that prejudice will eventually

disappear as society develops. Inherent in this view is a notion of gradualism, often embedded in an optimistic, linear view of progress.

In contrast, the fast track discourse rejects the idea of gradual improvement in women's representation. It even assumes that an increase in resources may not automatically lead to equal representation but to a backlash. Since exclusion and discrimination are at the core of the malady, this view sees the solution to be affirmative action. According to the fast track discourse, gender balance will not come about 'by itself.' The responsibility for dealing with the under-representation of women rests with political institutions. It follows from the understanding of women's under-representation, that measures like electoral gender quotas for the recruitment and election of female candidates are necessary. Progress for women will not come inevitably, without the intervention of significant institutions.

Electoral gender quotas represent 'the fast track' to equal representation of women and men in politics in contrast to 'the incremental track.' Behind the fast track model is a growing impatience among contemporary feminists with the slow pace of changes in women's position. Today, feminists are not willing to wait fifty to eighty years to achieve their goals. The notion of the fast track versus the incremental track is here presented as two discourses, but may also be used to characterise two different types of equality policies, and as an account of the actual speed of historical development in women's representation (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2003 & 2005). This distinction between the two tracks may be relevant for many other policy areas but has been developed with respect to gender and political institutions. The Beijing Platform for Action clearly represents the fast track discourse.

In 1990, the United Nation's Economic and Social Council endorsed a global target of 30% women in decision-making positions by 1995 (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 1995). This target is yet to be met. In 1995, only 10 per cent of the world's parliamentarians were women, and today it is only 16 percent.

The Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — have for a long time displayed the highest number of female politicians, consistently exceeding the 20 per cent threshold since the 1970s and 1980s. The rest of Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa are all close to the world average, while the figure for the Pacific is only 10.9% and for Arab countries 6.8% (Inter-Parliamentary Union Website, Retrieved last February 15, 2006). However, we find considerable variations within regions, and today developing countries like Costa Rica, South Africa, Rwanda and Mozambique have overtaken industrialised nations like the United States and the United Kingdom. The US House of Representatives has 15% and the House of Commons only 19% women within their respective bodies. Today, we are witnessing an interesting challenge to the Nordic countries, which, together with the Netherlands, used to be very much alone at the top of the world ranking in terms of women in parliament.

In Latin America, South Africa, and in many other developing countries, the extraordinarily high representation of women in Scandinavian parliaments has been used as an argument in support of the introduction of electoral gender quotas. However, this argument is misleading, since the real boom in women's representation in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden occurred in the 1970s and in Iceland in the 1980s, way before the introduction of quotas. Gender quotas were introduced when women already comprised 20

to 30% seats in these parliaments. Moreover, in the Nordic countries electoral quotas have always been voluntary, never a legal requirement, and are only used by some of the political parties at the centre and at the left (Freidenvall, Skjeie & Dahlerup in Dahlerup, 2006).[3]

Nordic countries come close to what we label the incremental track towards equal political representation for women and men. It had taken approximately sixty years from women's enfranchisement for Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to cross the 20% threshold and seventy years to reach 30%. This means that the Nordic countries, in spite of the high level of women's representation, can no longer be considered the model, or at any rate the only model, for increasing women's representation in the world today.

It has been argued that gender quotas only deal with the symptoms of women's under-representation, not its causes. From one perspective this seems correct. Gender quotas do not remove the many barriers that women are confronted with in society, be they prejudice against women or problems that combine work, family life, and political obligations. However, seen from another perspective, gender quotas do target exactly one major problem — political parties' selection of males as their candidates for election to a much larger extent, over women because of their own prejudice or in anticipation of voters' prejudice. Gender quotas in a way represent a jump over historical barriers to equality. They give the voters the option to choose women candidates, which they may not have had before [within their preferred party]. Opponents of gender quotas, however, argue that quotas violate the liberal principle of merit — let the best man [sic] win!

Are Gender Quotas a Discrimination against Voters? Against Men?

To answer the question of whether electoral gender quotas are in fact a form of discrimination against men, we must look at how political systems function. The gatekeepers to the political arena are usually the political parties because they control the nomination process. The role of voters is often not as decisive as it is often believed. Who will be elected is often decided by the nomination committees of the political parties — firstly, by selecting the candidates and secondly, by placing them in good or bad constituencies in terms of chances of being elected. Prior to the polls, the political parties usually know which seats will be 'safe seats' in the election. Thus, in all systems, it is important to examine who actually controls the nomination process. One of the reasons for the historically high women's representation in the Scandinavian countries is that women's organisations have consistently asked the question: Who controls the nomination process? Subsequently, they have demanded 50% women on the nominations committees.

The question of whether or not to introduce gender quotas is increasingly influenced by recommendations of international organisations. Today, we see electoral gender quotas being introduced in nations where women have been almost entirely excluded from politics, as well as in societies with a long history of female involvement in the labour market and in political life, such as the Scandinavian countries [using voluntary party quotas].

The introduction of effective quota systems represents a shift in approach, from 'equal opportunity' to 'equality of results.' However, since most quota systems specify the number of women and men to be presented to voters

on electoral lists, and not the gender distribution following the election, one might prefer to see electoral gender quotas rather as an example of 'real equal opportunity.' Women and men have an equal chance to present themselves to the voters, and in open list PR-systems as well as in majority systems, voters have the choice of voting for a female or male candidate.

Some consider quotas to be a form of discrimination and a violation of the principle of fairness, while others view them as compensation for structural barriers that prevent fair competition. Some see gender quotas as violating the principles of fairness, merits and individualism, others perceive quotas as an efficient way of attaining 'real' equality, that is, 'equality of results' (Dahlerup, 1998).

If we take the actual exclusion of women as the starting point, that is, if we recognise that many barriers exist to women's entry into politics, then quotas must not be seen as discrimination [against men], but as compensation for all the obstacles that women are up against. When all of these impediments are removed, quotas will no longer be necessary, it is argued. In this respect, quotas are a temporary measure — although it may take decades before all social, cultural and political barriers to female representation are eradicated. Today, the very concept of a linear progressive development toward gender equality is even challenged by actual experiences of backlash and standstill in women's representation.

Gender Quotas – A New Trend in the World Today

My book on electoral gender quotas, which is the first world-wide comparative analysis of the introduction of gender quotas in politics (Dahlerup, 2006), seeks

to analyse: 1) the quota discourses; 2) the actual quota rules [different quota regimes]; 3) the often troublesome implementation of quotas; and 4) the effects of quotas in both quantitative [numbers] and qualitative [empowerment] terms. In cooperation with International IDEA we have constructed the first world-wide website with information about countries in the world which are applying electoral gender quotas (see www.quotaproject.org).

In the last one and a half decade, 50 countries have introduced legal quotas, i.e. quota rules inscribed in the country's constitution or electoral law. In other countries, major political parties have introduced gender quotas for their list at public elections, i.e. voluntary party quotas. This is an amazing development, which challenges our previous theories that an increase in women's political representation follows from an improvement in women's education and access to the labour market.

Today we see the world record of Scandinavian countries being challenged by South Africa, Costa Rica, Mozambique, Argentina — not to speak of Rwanda, which now has the highest share of women in parliament in the world, placed at 48.8%. Gender quotas are part of the explanation behind the exceptional historical leaps in women's representation in all these countries (Dahlerup, 2006).

Table 1 shows the world ranking order in terms of women's representation. Three main features are revealed: Firstly, the Nordic countries, for so long on the top of the world ranking order in terms of women's representation, are now being challenged by several developing countries. Secondly, many countries which have more than 30% women in parliament make use of some kind of quotas, be they legal or voluntary

party quotas. Thirdly, most of the countries with the highest women's representation elect their representatives under the PR system.

Table 1. The Top of the World Rank Order of Women in Parliament

Country	Women in National Parliament (%)	Quota Type	Electoral System
Rwanda	48.8 (2203)	Legal quotas (C)	List PR
Sweden	45.3 (2002)	Party quotas	List PR
Norway	37.9 (2005)	Party quotas	List PR
Finland	37.5 (2002)	No quota	List PR
Denmark	36.9 (2005)	No quota	List PR
The Netherlands	36.7 (2003)	Party quotas	List PR
Cuba	36.0 (2003)	No quota	2 Rounds
Mozambique	36.0 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Spain	36.0 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Costa Rica	35.5 (2002)	Legal quotas (L)	List PR
Belgium	35.3 (2003)	Legal quotas (L)	List PR
Argentina	33.5 (2003)	Legal quotas (C)	List PR
Austria	33.3 (2002)	Party quotas	List PR
South Africa	32.8 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Germany	31.8 (2005)	Party quotas	MMP
Iceland	30.2 (2003)	Party quotas	List PR

Key Electoral System: Proportional Representation: List PR.
Mixed: MMP=Mixed Member Proportional.
Key Quota Type: Legal quotas: Constitutional (C) or Law (L).

Source: International IDEA and Stockholm University (2005); official statistics.
Election day data, changes after the election are not included.

Different Types of Quota Regimes

Some confusion exists on what constitutes quota regimes. In the book, Women, Quotas and Politics (Dahlerup, 2006), we distinguish between two different dimensions of the quota systems: The first dimension focuses on who mandates the quota system, while the second dimension indicates the part of the selection and nomination process that the quota targets.

As for the mandate, legal gender quotas are mandated either by the constitution [like in Burkina Faso, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda], or by electoral law [as in many parts of Latin America, as well as in Belgium, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Serbia and Sudan, among others]. But quotas may also be decided for voluntarily by the political parties themselves, voluntary party quotas. In some countries, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Norway and Sweden, a number of political parties has had some type of quota. In many others, only one or two parties have opted to use quotas. However, if the leading party in a country uses a quota, such as the ANC [African National Congress] in South Africa, this may have a significant impact on the overall rate of female representation. Most political parties do not employ any kind of quota at all.

Concerning the second dimension, quotas may target the first stage of the selection process, the stage of finding aspirants, i.e. those who are willing to be considered for nomination, either by a primary or by the nominations committee and other parts of the party organisation. Gender quotas at this stage are rules that demand a certain number or percentage of women [or either sex] be represented in the pool of candidates that are up for discussion, such as the controversial 'women's short lists' in the UK.

The second stage is the actual nomination of candidates to be placed on the ballot by the party. This frequently used quota system implies that a rule [legal or voluntary] is installed according to which 20, 30, 40 or even 50% of the candidates must be women. This may also be formulated in a gender-neutral way, stating that no sex should have less than, for instance, 40% and no more than 60%.

At the third stage, we find quotas as reserved seats. Here it is decided that a certain percentage or number of the parliament or local council membership must be women. Increasingly, gender quotas are being introduced using reserved seat systems.

Table 2 shows variations in quota types when these two dimensions are combined, that is, firstly the question of mandate and secondly the question of where in the nomination process quotas are placed.

Table 2. Types of Electoral Quotas

	At What Level?		
Mandated by	Aspirants	Candidates	Elected
Legal quotas (Constitutional or electoral law)	n/a	Candidate quotas	Reserved seats
Voluntary party quotas	Aspirant quotas (Short lists)	Candidate quotas	Reserved seats (*)

(*) Informal agreements among political parties reserving a certain number of seats for women like in the case of Morocco

Now it is possible to show that certain types of quotas are more frequently used in some parts of the world, and why other quota regimes are preferred in other continents more than in others (Dahlerup, 2006).

Even if constitutional amendments and new electoral laws on gender quotas may seem to be powerful compliance measures, it is not evident that these methods are more effective than political party quotas in increasing the number of women in parliament. It all depends on the actual rules and the possible sanctions for non-compliance, as well as on opportunities that exist for quotas within the country. Concerning rules for nomination, the crucial issue is whether there are rules concerning the rank order on the list. A requirement of say 40% may not result in any woman elected, if all women candidates are placed at the bottom of the list. What matters is whether the nominated women are placed in a position with a real chance of being elected.

'Reserved seats' are found on the national and regional levels in countries like Rwanda, Pakistan, Jordan, Uganda and at the local levels in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and many other countries. A specific number of seats is set aside for women as in the Ugandan case, where a number of regional seats is reserved for women. The differences between the various systems should not be exaggerated. In a closed list system, quotas may, in fact, determine which of the candidates will be elected, but the number of seats to be awarded to each party is still for the electorate to decide.

In some countries quotas pertain to minorities based on regional, ethnic, linguistic or religious divides. Almost all political systems utilise some kind of geographical quota to ensure a minimum level of representation for

a densely-populated area, such as an island. This type of quota is usually not considered as controversial as a gender quota.

Quotas work differently under different electoral systems. Quotas are more easily introduced in PR and other multi-list systems. But even in a PR system, because of the few elected candidates, small parties and parties in small constituencies experience difficulties in implementing quotas without interference from the central party organisation.

Quotas may be introduced in democratic political systems, in those with limited democratic freedoms, or even in non-democratic or authoritarian ones.

Why Are Women Doing Better under the PR System?

The frequent use of various electoral systems does not correspond to general socio-economic or cultural factors. The same electoral system may be installed in very different countries, and very similar countries may use very different electoral systems. However, research on women in politics has tried to isolate the effects of the electoral system per se for the level of women's political representation, and the result is unambiguous. Women are more likely to be elected under proportional representation than under plurality-majority electoral systems. In 2000, the difference amounted to 15.4 versus 8.5% women in parliaments. In mixed systems, women have on the average a share of 11.3% (Norris, 2004, p. 187). However, the average hides the fact that in some PR countries women do worse than in some plurality-majority systems. Pippa Norris concludes that "although there is a strong and consistent association, by itself the basic type of electoral system is neither a necessary

nor a sufficient condition to guarantee women's representation" (Norris, 2004, pp. 187-188). However, focusing on structural variations, Pippa Norris shows that the differences between the outcomes in PR-systems versus plurality-majority systems are much more distinct in 'post-industrial' societies, whereas the differences between these two electoral systems in terms of women's representation are much smaller in industrial societies and minimal in poorer agrarian societies (Norris, 2004, p. 188).

The ideal test to isolate the effect of the electoral system, is to monitor those countries which operate a mixed electoral system, combining the PR system with constituency lists based on plurality-majority. Electoral statistics show that in these countries, women's representation tends to be higher among the part of the parliament elected under PR, than among those elected in single-member districts. This has proven to be the case in Germany and New Zealand, while the new Scottish parliament turns out to be an exception to this rule, because of the Scottish "Twinning system"[4] (Lundgren, 2005).

How can we explain the difference in outcomes between the two electoral systems in highly industrialised or post-industrial societies? The most important factor seems to be the nominating party organisations' anticipation of voter reactions. When choosing its candidates for election, the party organisation tries to apply a vote-maximising strategy. However, factors such as consideration for the incumbent MP, fractions, and geographical units within the party are also important in the selection process.

In plurality-majority systems, the local party organisation has only one candidate, and in anticipating the reaction of the voters of their

constituency, the party in general prefers a 'safe' candidate. In most systems, a male candidate is considered safer than a woman, because he is believed to be able to attract more voters. In PR-systems in contrast, each party list has many names and consequently, the local party organisation will try to attract many voters by composing a list with a variety of candidate profiles to attract all types of voters: young and old, candidates from different geographical parts of the constituency, different occupations, and women as well as men. However, we have seen important changes in the composition of the party lists following a perception that different categories of people are considered an advantage.

As Diane Sainsbury has pointed out, the electoral system in itself cannot explain the increase in women's political representation over time in countries like the Nordic countries, where the increase in women's representation first took off in the 1970s, because all five Nordic countries had used the PR-systems all throughout the 20th century (Sainsbury, 1993). In my opinion, it is important to reformulate the thesis of the benefit for women of the PR system to read: The PR system is more open to change than the plurality-majority system, because it can include new types of candidates, such as women or immigrants, without replacing the old and well-known political profiles.

Quotas and the Plurality-Majority System – A Difficult Equation

How are the plurality-majority systems performing during this new period of introduction of electoral gender quotas? Is this a strategy which can help improve the bad record of majoritarian systems in terms of women's parliamentary

representation? Unfortunately not. It is very difficult to find a quota regime that will match a plurality-majority system. The obvious reason is that it is not possible to take for instance 30% of 1! When the political parties only nominate one candidate, both voluntary party quotas and legal quotas in the form of a minimum percentage of the nominated, evidently do not work.

Considering the categories in Table 2, at what level and mandated by whom are gender quotas in plurality-majority systems possible? Do we find any example of quota systems at all in majority systems? Please note that in general, gender quotas are not relevant for every category in Table 2. Legal aspirant quotas are not found, and seldom do we meet voluntary quotas in reserved seats system, Morocco's "Gentleman's Agreement" being a temporary exception. Quota countries are found in all four remaining categories. However, only a few countries operating a plurality-majority system have introduced gender quotas. Consequently, gender quotas are much more frequent in PR-systems (Matland in Dahlerup, 2006).

However, we do find some countries which have tried to solve the unsolvable equation of combining quotas and the plurality-majority electoral system. A few such examples are cited. It should be noted that only three of the categories in Table 2 are used by majority systems, since no legal candidate quota systems exist in majority systems, even if they are theoretically possible. One could, for instance, imagine a legal quota system, in which the parties must nominate a candidate from the under-represented gender for every free seat, following the withdrawal of the incumbent MP. Such quota measures are not in use in public election, but are known as an equality measure in appointments to positions in a sex-segregated labour market; however, these are always heavily contested.

Among the few examples of quotas in plurality-majority systems one can mention is India, where quota provisions for local elections reserve certain seats for women and, in combination, for scheduled castes. This system functions on a rotation basis, which means the elected women usually only serve one period, if they do not choose to stand for one of the 'free' seats in the following election. In Bangladesh, the reserved seats for women cover three constituencies [wards], which deprive the elected women a constituency base of their own (Rai, Bari, Mahtab & Mohanty in Dahlerup, 2006).

For election to the new Scottish parliament, quotas were introduced by the labour party. Here the problem of combining single-member districts and quotas were solved by 'twinning' two constituencies who taken together should nominate one man and one woman. This system resulted in women's representation in the Scottish parliament overtaking the Westminster parliament (Lundgren, 2005).

The conclusion is that it is in fact possible to combine the plurality-majority electoral system with some form of gender quotas, but only with some difficulty. If this combination is not developed further, the difference between women's representation in majority-systems versus PR-systems will increase, because gender quotas are no doubt an equality measure that will be used more frequently in the future in order to solve the problem of women's under-representation.

The focus of this paper has been the connection between electoral systems and strategies to enhance women's political representation, especially through electoral gender quotas. In general, electoral gender quotas turn out to be purely symbolic, especially if the chosen quota system does not match

the electoral system of the country, if no capacity-building is organised by the women's movement, and if there are no sanctions for non-compliance and no rules about the rank order of candidates. Quotas may also leave the elected women relatively powerless, unless other factors change simultaneously. However, electoral gender quotas can be, under the right circumstances, an important and more efficient strategy to increase women's political representation in numerical terms (Dahlerup, 2006).

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Endnotes

[1] *The 'plurality-majority system' is here preferred to the more common 'majority system,' because within the family of the plurality-majority system, only the Two Round System and the Alternative Vote system actually try to ensure an absolute majority for the winning candidate, while in the First-Past-The Post system as in UK, India, and the US the winner only needs a plurality of votes to win the constituency.*

[2] *Some of these formulations may in fact be found in the CEDAW convention from 1979. The convention recommends for states to adopt 'temporary special measures' (UN 1979: Art. 4). Also, the Interparliamentary Union, IPU, and other international and regional organizations formulated early on new claims for women's representation. However, it is the Beijing Platform that is most often referred to in the quota debate.*

[3] *Argentina, the leading Latin American country promoting quotas, used the argument that the Nordic countries did apply quotas by law, which in fact was never the case. (Oral communication from Mariá José Lubertino, president of the Instituto Social y Politica de la Mujer. Professor of Human Rights and Guarantees at the Universidad de Buenos Aires).*

[4] *"In the first elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales in 1999, the Labour Party used a system of selecting their candidates by "twinning" neighbouring seats. The "winnability" of the seats was taken into account, so that each pair would select one man and one woman. Under this twinning system, the members of the two constituencies come together for the purposes of selecting candidates. Party members have two votes - one for a woman and one for a man. The man and woman with the most votes is selected." (http://www.quotaproject.org/displayCountry.cfm?CountryCode=GB, Retrieved Last March 7, 2006).*

About the Author

Drude Dahlerup is a reputable author, researcher and academician on feminist theory and the women's movement who is particularly known for her work on women in politics and electoral systems. She is currently conducting a research project with International IDEA [Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance] in Sweden on "Gender Quotas in Politics – A Key to Equality" and is author of the book Women, Quotas and Politics — a groundbreaking book that documents and presents a global overview on the use of quotas based on research in major regions worldwide. Drude Dahlerup is also a professor in the Political Science Department of the University of Stockholm in Sweden.

Women in Politics and Governance: Complex Challenges from Globalisation

By Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco

Women's exclusion from the state as citizens and as political agents has been a long running issue within women's movements everywhere. Several feminists from the South have characterised the relationship of the women's movements with the patriarchal state as ambivalent (Taylor, 2000), ambiguous (Shaheed, 1997), complex and contradictory (Vargas, 2000).

This relationship is particularly perplexing, to say the least for "… while the state is correctly seen as patriarchal and clearly biased against women, much of the movement's activism is, in fact, addressed to the state and carries a definite, albeit unarticulated expectation that the state will, or should, or must, support women's rights and equality" (Shaheed, 1997). Worse, the relationship sometimes shows a dangerous trend towards de-politicisation: "The question is whether we have this critique any longer – of patriarchy, the state or the UN – or whether we are only interested in being included in the system" (Khan cited in Antrobus, 2004).

But there is nothing ambivalent, ambiguous or contradictory in the consensus reached by 189 countries in Beijing when they pledged to promote the equality of women in decision-making and in strengthening national machineries for enabling women's co-equal governance with men. Section G on "women and power and decision-making" of the Beijing Platform for Action [BPFA] supports the advancement of women's participation in public leadership and governance. Central to this commitment is the goal of achieving gender balance in political representation and decision-making [see Dahlerup in this series]. The responses from the women's movements are widespread and varied. Women's actions in many parts of the South expand into issues relating to women's citizenship and issues of democratising power relations at all levels (Vargas, 2000). Some of the more prominent responses included the following: monitoring projects pressuring governments to keep their promises in Beijing; women's participation in electoral politics and entry into political parties as well as assumption to appointive government positions; lobbying for laws protecting women from all forms of violence; strengthening of national machineries for promoting women's equality in governance; and the promotion of various gender mainstreaming strategies

particularly in development and anti-poverty programmes. Putting these responses in a perspective, Antrobus writes:

> *There is also no gain saying the fact that women need the state. This is especially true for women in the South. The dilemma for women's movements in the South in relation to the state is that on the one hand, the majority of women lack resources and therefore must depend on the state to provide the basic services essential to women's multiple roles; on the other hand, women must be careful that these dependencies are not used to reinforce traditional roles within the family. (Antrobus, 2004)*

Ten years after Beijing, the overall sense coming out of several studies in the Asian region is that the goal of state transformation through women's equality in decision-making is far from being achieved. Doubts have been even raised on whether there has been a real movement. Worse, a backlash and a reversal of earlier gains have been noted, linking them with the emergence of a more difficult political climate and challenging economic environment. These put into question current notions and strategies for women's entry into politics and governance (APWW, 2005; FES & SEAWWATCH, 2005; ISIS International-Manila, FES and SEAWWATCH 2005).

Strange Bed Partners: Trade Intensification and Democratic Politics

In the past "politics and governance" was understood in relation to the sovereign state. However, globalisation [by which is meant the rapid integration of global production and markets in recent years] has altered not only the conventional functions of national governments but more fundamentally the nature of the nation-state or what it is all about. Nowadays, governance has expanded to include global, regional and sub-national spheres. Despite claims to the contrary and the hype about the "free

market juggernaut" (Sen, 2005), national governance is alive and strong. In Asia, some states may be politically beleaguered, public administrations weak but there are states that refuse to wither away. Some Asian states with authoritarian governments had been the prime movers of modernisation in the 70s and 80s which enabled Newly Industrialised Countries [NICs] to emerge (Francisco and Fong, 1999). Some Asian governments may have lost much of the charisma and power that their past dictators enjoyed but these governments, nevertheless, continue to play a central role in re-structuring their economies and societies along trade intensification thus giving credence to what some have claimed that states [and therefore, national governments] remain relevant in globalisation although their primacy and [their] actual capacity as [actors] is being altered (Held and MGrew [2000] in Encinas-Franco, 2006).

Today Asian states govern within a context in which global and regional institutions foremost of which are the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) wield tremendous influence in the domestic sphere. These global institutions do so within a formal global agreement meant to coordinate policy direction and negate inconsistent advise given to governments (Floro and Hoppe, 2005). Two decades earlier, the IFIs managed entry into domestic policy and programme formulation through their structural adjustment programmes. But it was the trade-finance linkage, or more specifically, the need for regulatory frameworks that could provide market stability and predictability for capital's expansion, and especially to avert market failures such as the devastating Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, that finally led to the agenda of 'good governance' in the reform and development packages of the IFIs, the United Nations, and the donor community (Encinas-Franco, 2006; Bakker and Gill, 2003).[1]

In this period of trade intensification, governments now rarely speak of 'import substitution,' or 'government owned corporations,' or 'local content and equity.' Rather they speak enthusiastically of the need to 'liberalise the economies,' 'remove barriers to trade,' 'attract foreign investors,' or 'export human resources.' Governments are not only changing their language, they are also changing laws and codified regulations. Even Constitutions are being re-negotiated to 'harmonise' them with new global trade rules. Legal guarantees of patrimony, self-sufficiency or the social function of property are now superseded by terminologies such as 'national treatment,' 'most favoured nation,' or 'right of ownership for foreign individuals or corporations.' One socially progressive provision found in the Philippine Constitution, among others, is expected to be amended in ongoing efforts by the current administration at charter change.[2] The provision is premised on the state's duty to promote justice and has been the result of long years of struggle. To quote: "The use of property bears a social function, and all economic agents shall contribute to the common good. Individuals and private groups, including corporations, cooperatives, and similar collective organisations, shall have the right to own, establish, and operate economic enterprises, subject to the duty of the State to promote distributive justice and to intervene when the common good so demands" (Philippine Constitution Article XII, Section 6).

Moreover, governments are re-structuring through strategies of right-sizing, out-sourcing, devolution, and privatisation of public utilities. Poverty reduction strategies no longer talk of 'people' but of 'human capital.' Government subsidised programmes are being overtaken by income transfer strategies while long-term social protection, instead of being treated as a state obligation is now widely viewed in government as "direct consumption

and therefore unproductive" (Cook, Kabeer, and Savannrat, 2003). Finally, governance reforms related to trade and finance management have privileged the executive branch of government and created a special place within it for technocrats, often without adequate political check and balance from the legislative and judicial branches. DAWN calls this phenomenon as the "marketisation of governance" (Taylor, 2000).

This 'marketisation' or the hyper-consolidation of governance around intensified trade began at a time when Asian women were also actively seeking entry into politics and governance, buoyed by strong women's movements linked to the resurgence of democratic movements and re-democratisation processes following the fall of dictatorial regimes.[3] On the one hand, across Asia and other regions in the South, forms and institutions of governance patterned after capitalist-based democratic practises in coloniser countries were easily accommodated by trade intensification that was also a global political and economic project of these former colonisers. On the other hand, democratic demands by social movements that were honed in struggles against colonialism, dictatorships and 'elite democracy' were taking advantage of restricted democratic spaces to create 'counter publics' (Frazer, 1997) to raise issues of rights, social justice and substantive political participation. Among the democratic demands of women's movements are gender equality in all spheres of the public and the private, an end to discrimination and violence against women, sexual and reproductive health and rights, personal autonomy and freedoms. The phenomenon of "people power" in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia was an expression of the new democratic and progressive forces that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of these groups and networks have grown in strength and actively pushed for the expansion of the democratic space within their countries.

They contribute to the creation of more participatory and inclusive political ethos and practises, and continue to be a part of new regional networks of resistance against corporate-led globalisation and their push for states to follow more socially oriented paths of development.[4]

The tensions rising from the interaction of forces between, on the one hand, state-led integration of domestic economies into a single global market economy and, on the other hand, the democratic mass movement resistances to such consolidation, mark an important context for understanding the terrain in which Asian women in politics and governance find themselves. The broader scenario also includes disturbing indications on the overall status of women in the Asian region. The persistence of poverty among women is a key issue and includes as well the widespread practise of sex selective abortion in India and China, the emergence of a 'new poor' among women (and men) in East Asia, increased trafficking in women, the persistent high incidence of maternal mortality and women's illiteracy and malnutrition in some countries, the increasing number of 'losers' among women producers from trade liberalisation, the increased workload of women as a result of state withdrawal of social support, and the backlash reaction to Asian women's newly guaranteed rights and their social assertions, including the raping of women in communal conflicts and withdrawal of reproductive health services.

Re-examining Women in Politics and Governance

The movement for women's equality in decision-making and politics aims at the re-distribution of formal power and decision-making between women and men. The target of raising the proportion of Asian women decision-

makers to at least 30% is a benchmark used by lobbyists that call for the institution of quota systems or allocated seats for women in institutional bodies, such as, political parties, parliaments, national governmental agencies or ministries, local government units, and courts. Passing legislation that allocates seats for women called gender quotas, and engaging in electoral politics are the leading modes for reaching the quantitative goal. Ten years after Beijing, the quantitative target remains elusive as ever, with results showing no progress but instead reflecting erratic behaviour if not stagnation and regression (FES and SEAWWATCH, 2005). The exception is South Asia where ordinary women have managed to capture seats in the panchayat [village level] winning as much as 80% but even in such situations, women's participation in higher level politics echo the trend found in Southeast Asia (ISIS, FES and SEAWWATCH, 2005).

Given the broad context just presented in the previous section, two key issues are raised with regard to Asian women's entry into politics. The first is the question of: "Who are these women?" Except for grassroots women who have been elected to village councils in South Asia, by and large, women in political parties and national governance are middle-class educated women. Political and ideological differences exist among them. Some of these women reflect a class-based elite democracy orientation and are often reluctant to push for change while others, particularly those who have been involved in democracy struggles and human rights issues in their countries show more progressive political ideas. The divide is, however, not as straight-forward as it might seem. In Southeast Asia, some women politicians from traditional elite-controlled political parties who do not question unequal economic relations have been instrumental in pushing for legislation that address various forms of violence against women as well as women's

access to reproductive health services. On the other hand, a few women parliamentarians who radically challenge class and ethnic-based injustices committed by the state seem less interested on anti-VAW [violence against women] and reproductive and sexual rights legislation. In the Philippines, women parliamentarians associated with the new smaller parties have done much to move a democratic and social equality agenda that simultaneously address "economic and gender justice" (Sen, 2005) issues within their parties and in the broader realm of politics and governance.[5] Women in Left parties in South Asia have similarly done so (Basu, 2005). Further contesting in politics are emerging women leaders from broad-based political parties such as those associated with religious-based parties and within some patriarchal-nationalist movements who promote socially progressive economic agendas tainted with ultra-conservative views on women and gender relations that come either from religiously and politically defined communitarian dogma.

The second key question is that of accountability. As Basu (2005) has queried: "To whom are these women accountable?" Within the region, there are hardly feminist or women's political parties except in the Philippines where two small women's parties have emerged. There is no unified regional women's movement but instead a tapestry of diverse women's movements.[6] National women's groups are divided along class, ethnic, and ideological lines and locked in contesting claims for recognition and positions within the public sphere. Sometimes, they are incapable of working together.

Meanwhile, individual women who become members of political parties are expected to "toe the party line" and those who are appointed to government positions including seats in the national women's machineries, have to act "consistent with the national policy." Being with the mainstream of

governance, women in politics become vocal proponents of 'soft' development and welfare issues framed by the principles of 'temporary special measures,' 'affirmative action' and other catch phrases within the mainstream they have learned to flow with.

It is rare to find women politicians and appointed women officials critically engaging with the state on the linkage of women's issues with 'hard' development issues, such as, policies and programmes on finance, monetary and trade management. With the spate of capacity building programmes in the region, attention has shifted focus on gaining skills in the technical aspects of gender mainstreaming aimed at ensuring that women participate in and benefit from growth-oriented national development programmes that do not address unequal wealth and power arrangements. These women politicians have turned their attention away from the clamour of women's movements for the state to address more directly issues arising from the impact of trade intensification policies on the poor. And when they listen, they rely on the language of technically oriented advocates who translate 'political' demands into 'technical' inputs, processes, and outcomes. The 'technicalisation' of women's equality, empowerment and gender justice issues has become a familiar terrain for women. Economics and hard development issues now look even more distant and even more incomprehensible.

Given all these considerations, women in politics and governance by a combination of both historical and social circumstances and default are simultaneously burdened with competing accountability claims — from multilateral agencies that expect them to produce sound surveillance of their government's national development and anti-poverty plans, the party in power which appoints them to official positions, the political parties where

they belong, to the women's networks with their multiple demands. How have women in politics and governance responded to these competing claims as they determine which gender justice and economic justice issues to support or not to support? This essay argues that the questions posed in relation to women's participation in politics and governance need to be more directly addressed by women's movements. Clearly the issues are complex, their interrogation requiring a situatedness within a diverse set of political and cultural realities, and as argued by this paper, improved cognisance is required of the changing and contradicted socio-political terrain. One question worth asking is: How do women in politics and governance negotiate for gender and economic justice through governance institutions that "emphasise the technical and quantitative over the social and human components" (Bakker and Gill, 2003).

It is of strategic value to anchor such interrogation of women in politics and governance within the discourse and politics of the women's movements. After all, placing women in political positions and leadership in governance constitutes but a piece of what is political. Politics and governance are not just about 'governments,' 'states,' and 'elections.' These encompass broader questions of 'voices,' 'identities,' 'parity,' 'justice' and 'social change.' The public space is not just the governmental or the inter-governmental spaces but includes several "subaltern counter publics" (Frazer, 1997). Democracy after all is about the contests of political ideas and utopian visions by social groups that engage with one another in open and enlarging spaces.

Conclusion

The essay has presented a brief critical reflection on women in politics and governance within complex political and governance terrains in Asia where the dynamics of trade intensification and re-democratisation converge and contest. It has touched on a number of issues that women's movements need to take a fuller understanding of, such as, the political significance, potentials and risks of diverse groups of women entering politics and governance; the rise of new political parties and movements and their relationship with issues of democracy, gender justice, and economic justice issues; the technicalisation of gender mainstreaming; the persistence of women's issues of women's poverty and discrimination; the backlash reaction against women's visible social assertions. The essay begins with the re-articulation of the dilemma of women's movements and feminists in their engagement with the state and ends with a call for progressive women's movements and feminists in the region to re-claim and re-position the discourse on women's entry into governance and politics within the broad-based women's movements struggle for both economic and gender justice. The essay reiterates what DAWN has repeatedly articulated: "Our engagement with the state is one that is simultaneously an act of cooperation but also of maintaining critical distance." It is a difficult but necessary balancing act. (Taylor, 2000 and Sen, 2005).

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Endnotes

[1] *The UNDP has twice broadened its governance discourse from a narrow focus on 'sound economic management' to encompass citizens' rights and participation (Jayal [2003] in Encinas-Franco, 2006). However, Bakker and Gill (2003) see this as a limited and weak attempt at democratisation.*

[2] *The administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has formed a Constitutional Committee to begin drafting a new charter for the country. The idea of a charter change was first envisioned under the presidency of Fidel Ramos [1991-1997] whose government fast-tracked the liberalisation of the Philippine economy.*

[3] *For specific contexts and strategies related to Asian women's engagement in politics and governance, two readings are informative: Basu, Amrita (July 2005)"Women, Political Parties and Social Movements in South Asia", UNRISD Occasional Paper Number 5. Geneva; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung & South East Asia Women's Watch (2005) Gaining Ground: Ten Years Afte Beijing. Manila: FES and SEAWWATCH. Also, the collection of papers presented at the Women Shaping Democracy: Progressive Politics Ten Years After the World Conference on Women in Beijing. Conference co-sponsored by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Isis International-Manila and SEAWWATCH. Manila, October 24 – 25, 2005.*

[4] *In the World Social Forum, Asian activist networks are one of the most prominent. There are several region-wide networks, including the Asian Social Movements, Asian Social Forum, and Asian anti-war movements.*

[5] *In post-dictatorship Philippines, there is an existing party list system that led to reserved seats in the lower house of Congress for marginalised groups, women included. In Thailand and Indonesia, newer forms of political parties have also emerged similarly challenging the age-old control of politics by elite-dominated parties.*

[6] *The diversity of women's movements was recognised by Peggy Antrobus who nevertheless adopted the singular global women's movement for the title of her book. She writes in her introduction: "I welcome this opportunity … to write about the process through which the movement has been transformed over forty years from a rich diversity of local movements into an international women's movement and finally into a trans-national or global movement" (Antrobus, 2005, p. 1).*

About the Author

Josefa 'Gigi' Francisco is Southeast Asian Regional Coordinator of the Development Alternatives with Women for the New Era (DAWN) — a network of women scholars and activists from the economic south who engage in feminist research, analyses and discourse on the global environment. She is Coordinator of the Asia Gender and Trade Network (AGTN) and is Executive Director of the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) in Miriam College, an all-women's college where she is also a faculty member of its International Studies Department. Formerly a member of the board of Isis International-Manila, Gigi Francisco is Guest Issue Editor of Isis' first monograph series on gender, governance and democracy.

Women Talk

In line with Isis International-Manila's commitment to understanding and 'reinterpreting notions of power', its video, "WOMEN TALK: Challenges to Masculinist Politics," captures the salient point of the in-depth studies of five Southeast Asian Countries on the issue of political justice for women. The studies are featured in a research project and are presented in the book "Gaining Ground? Southeast Asian Women in Politics and Decision-Making, Ten Years after Beijing." The research project and book are collaborated on by the Southeast Asian Women's Watch (SEAWWatch) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

Both the video and the book highlight the need for creative strategies in the light of the strong resemblances that run through the project's country studies, and that despite the differences in contexts among countries, the emerging regional scenario is not encouraging and, in fact, point to very real and serious concerns.

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