Gender Representation in Political Election Campaign Songs in Bomet County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Generally women have always been typecast as incapable of tackling tough political issues in comparison to men. Despite this stereotype, they have been increasingly securing political positions from the grassroots up to the national level. The evolution of campaigning through which candidates can influence the perceptions of their image has enabled women to challenge the same stereotypes by engaging in strategies similar to those that their male counterparts use. However, research seems to lack adequate literature on the issue of gender representation and campaign strategies. This paper therefore addresses how gender is represented in political campaign songs during general elections in Bomet County. The broad objective of the study was to analyze and interpret how gender is represented in political campaign songs during general elections. The specific objective for this paper was to explain how political campaign songs present gender power relationships. A qualitative study interpretative perspective was adopted in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select Bomet County. The target population for this study consisted of 50 political election campaign songs that are usually sung in the entire Rift Valley region during elections. Purposive sampling was used to select 22 political songs that showed how gender was represented through analysis and interpretation. The instruments used for collecting data in this research were observations through watching and listening to audio and video recorded songs. Data collected was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Through this research it was found out that political campaign songs bestow higher position on men than women. The researcher recommends that a study can be done on femininity in relation to modern music.

Keywords: Kalenjin political campaigns, political campaign songs, gender and politics, masculinity and politics, feminism in elections, election political songs, gender and songs, gender and elections, campaigns and gender
INTRODUCTION

Smith (2012) explains that a study done by ‘National Women’s History Museum’ in America, shows that 35 women have vied for presidential seat but none of them has been elected. For example, in 2012, Barack Obama who vied for presidential seat became a winner with 51.01%. He used 4 songs during his campaign. ‘Think’ sung by Aretha Franklin, ‘The Rising’ and ‘We Take Care for our Own’ sung by Bruce Springste and ‘Only in America’ sung by Brooks Dunn. The second was Mitt Romney with 47.15%. He used 2 songs during his campaign ‘Born Free’ and ‘It’s America’ sung by Rocker Kid Rock and Rodney Arkins respectively. Women candidates were Jill Stem who became second last and Roseanne Barr who became last. They had no political songs.

Okoronkwo (2013) explains that presidential elections were done in Nigeria in 2011 and Goodluck Jonathan won with his campaign song ‘Goodluck Jonathan’ sung by Mars. Number two was Muhammadu and a lady called Ebiti Ndok became number 14 out of 20 with no political campaign song. During Ugandan general elections in 2016, Yoweri Museveni won, followed by Kizza Besigye and the last among many was a lady called Faith Kyalya (UCE, 2016). There were no songs identified.

During Kenyan general elections in 1997, Daniel Moi won, followed by Mwai Kibaki, Charity Ngilu became number 5 and Waangari Maathai was number 13 (DDDG, 1998). No songs were identified. In 2013, Uhuru Kenyatta became the winner followed by Raila Odinga and Martha Karua became no 6 (Commonwealth Observer Group. 2013). In 2017, Uhuru Kenyatta won followed by Raila Odinga. No lady vied for the presidential seat. Only three ladies succeeded in the gubernatorial seats for the first time in Kenya namely: Charity Ngilu from Kitui County, Ann Waiguru from Kirinyaga County and the late Dr. Joyce Laboso from Bomet County. Uchendu (2005) emphasizes that in post-colonial Africa, political masculinity consists of a quantitative dimensions, comprising an inflated male domination at the highest state positions. Maclaughlin (1990:155) in the Mulika Journal, claims the feminist concept is in fact political. It not only describes female gender but also her status and position in the society.

According to Kalenjin community, women and children are grouped together in one category in order to be guided and led. It is believed that for any political woman aspirant to be successful, she should join a strong party that is led by a powerful man. A certain artiste, the late Kipchamba Tapotuk sang that as a vehicle moves, there is no time whereby the rear wheels will catch up with the front wheels forever. To him, men are ahead of women in all aspects of life forever. Since the artistes of political campaign songs represent the relevant community, 22 recorded political campaign songs were analyzed and interpreted that were sung by sixteen artistes. These songs were sung during political campaigns for different seats such as for the president, governor, senator, Member of Parliament, women representative and member of county assembly. Therefore, the study intended to find out how gender is represented in political campaign songs during general elections in Bomet County.
METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a qualitative study interpretative perspective. Creswell (2009) emphasizes that a qualitative study is done through descriptions but not statistics. In this study, a qualitative approach was employed to verify and answer the main research question which was to identify how gender was represented in political election campaign songs in Bomet County, Kenya. Further, a qualitative approach is used to reveal the textual elements of communication and explore the meanings of underlying messages (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017).

The target population for this study consisted of 50 political election campaign songs that are usually sung in the entire Rift Valley region during elections. These songs were targeted since they provide the study with a better understanding of how political election campaign songs influence voting behavior.

The study adopted purposive sampling to select 22 political songs to be analyzed and interpreted. The videos to the songs were watched and properly listened to before the lyrics were written down. An interpreter was then used to translate all the songs from the target population into Kiswahili. Once interpreted, 22 political campaigns songs that were based on gender were selected for study.

For this study, observations were used to collect data through watching and listening to audio and video recorded songs. Observations were used because they would enable the collection of in-depth data concerning the issue under investigation from the audio and video recorded songs.

Data collected was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The reason for using qualitative content analysis was to explore the communicative characteristics of language with a focus on the content or contextual meaning of the text (Neuendorf, 2016). Furthermore, it is regarded as a flexible method for analyzing text data, that comprises three distinct methods, namely: the directed, conventional, and summative approaches (Crossman, 2018; Eliott, Forster, McDonough, Bowd, & Crabb, 2017; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this study, the summative approach to content analysis was used since it surpasses the mere counting of certain words; and involves latent content analysis, which enables the interpretation of content. It focuses on discovering the underlying meanings of words or content and interpreting the context of the word or phrase (Babbie, 2016). In addressing the research objective, the summative approach to content analysis was used to examine how gender is represented in political election campaign songs in Bomet County.

RESULTS

Gender Representation in Political Campaign Songs

Gender Representation through Masculinity versus Femininity Politics

In campaigning for various candidates, some songs were concerned with gender politics based on how one gender could perform better than the other. The issue of gender supremacy is clear in some of the political songs as indicated in the following song which was sung by a famous Kalenjin artiste the late Kipchamba Arap Tapotuk. He explains that as a vehicle moves, the rear
wheels will never catch up with the front ones. By this, he meant that men are ever ahead of women forever. The particular song is entited ‘Muren’ ‘Man’ and its lyrics are as follows:

Ng’al chebo kwonyik ko mokisibi mureno. Man should not listen to the words of a woman.
Ng’alekab kwonyik koter ak chebo murenik. Their words are different from those of men.
Ng’alekab kwonyik angot kisib kosurtos bik. The words of a woman can cause conflict amongst people.
Amun ng’alekwak ko ng’omnotet ne mi katam. Their words are believed to be from the left side of the brain.
Mwaat kong’eten keny kele indochin kwony mureno. It is believed from ancient times that a woman has to be led by a man.
Ng’omnotetab muren kosibi neutab ta. The brain of a man is believed to follow the right side of the brain.
Ko nebo kwonyik kosibi nebo katam. And that of women is believed to be opposite to that.
Kerke sochin ele kalit. Let women do what they want.
Mildoke kityo mukungonik ko one nebo ta kipkoi. For the rear wheels follow the fore wheels but will never catch up with them.
Ilén okot motoku mokere okwek. You as well can see this situation.

Similarly, in a song by Marion Chelang’at who is a singer that supported the Jubilee Coalition, William Ruto, the late Dr. Joyce Laboso and other candidates of the coalition, the issue of gender supremacy comes out. Specifically, the singer expressed both genders in her song. However, the male gender is portrayed as more powerful than the female gender. The song is sung as follows:

Kitindoi taitanyon kole inendet robe morik. We have our first born who said he will give support.
Situn ketilji. So that he also gets support in the future.
Kiwegun kongoi Samoei. We thank you Samoei.
Kole vijana, ‘igaske ii kirginyon kipkeleny tulwo. ‘The youth say, ‘Be proud our bull who can move a mountain’.
Kirginyon ne ingosil ke yebachin it. Our bull that is paid attention to when it cries.
Mongimuok, o mongimuok. Do not be threatened, o do not be threatened.
Amat oiywei kwanechon, ee mengimuok. Do not fear those other men, ee do not fear.
Ak omwochi Chemaluk chamat missing. And let Chemaluk know that she is loved.
Ndandan komoche chego ko malazima kirit. Even though we want milk, the presence of a bull is not required.
Kimoche tuguk che new. We want new things.
Ongele kiwole en Bomenyon Let’s say we shall bring change to Bomet.
Governor ko Joyce. Our governor is Joyce.

The male gender is also demeaned in a song sung by an artiste called Ben Bii. In this song, he supported the late Dr. Joyce Laboso who vied for the gubernatorial seat in Bomet County in the 2017 general elections. He told the people of Bomet County to wake up because it is a new beginning and change is required in that county. The change was to receive the late Dr. Joyce Laboso as the governor. 'Dr. Joyce Laboso, Bomet County, Motherhood and Work' was the title of Ben Bii's song. His aim was to support this candidate in this race in the following manner:
Gender Representation through Politics of Patriarchy

Male domination over the presidency is expressed clearly in some of the political campaign songs for presidency. In 2017, no female candidate vied for the presidential seat. Therefore, in the following song by Jeremiah Kosgei, the male gender was identified. In his song, he requests Ruto to support Uhuru Kenyatta as he leads Kenya as the president until Uhuru’s term comes to an end and then he succeeds him. It was predicted that the president of Kenya will be a male for many years. He explained that Ruto was asked to take Uhuru to meet the Kalenjin elders (men only) to get blessings in order to be a good Kenyan president for many years. Because literature and communities are engaged, such songs address the lives of community members, their movements and their beliefs. Refer to the song:

Kiwegun kongoi Samoei en kasetab it.  
Bokokyin Uhuru kotwoisiok.  
Si ngemi tai ko likwobit sumenyon.  
Kongoi mising Samoei Arap Ruto.  
Kongoi mising nyiganenyon.  
Bar ng’etundo ko rose.

We thank you Samoei for listening to us.  
Leave it to Uhuru to lead  
So that there may be light.  
Thank you so much Samoei Arap Ruto.  
Thank you so much our hero.  
One who kills a roaring lion.

Elsewhere, a group of women known as Chama Cha Mashinani (CCM), showed the power and success portrayed by Isaac Ruto who was contesting for the gubernatorial seat in 2017 general elections. He was competing against the late Dr. Joyce Laboso for the seat. He was initially the governor of Bomet County for five years since 2013. Ras Wageni explained that Isaac Ruto fought for the rights of the people of Mau. He is their father who cannot be threatened by an animal skin which in this case was a female candidacy. The artiste showed the power, potential and consistent position of Isaac Ruto who was contesting for the gubernatorial seat in the Bomet County. The group sang as follows:

Kongoi kirginyon.  
Ne ingosil koitu tuguk gaa.  
Weche kongoi Kalenjin en tononeng’ung.  
Kiiyan otonose ak bikab Kenya komugul.

Thank you our dear bull.  
When he demands, he receives immediately.  
Kalenjins are thanking you for your consistency.  
You have accepted to stand with other people in the whole of Kenya.  
We thank you our hero Isaac Ruto for our Mashinani party.  
When you spoke, the people of Mau got their rights.  
You cannot be threatened by an animal skin.  
We thank you our father.
Gender Representation through Gender Potential in Political Campaign Songs

The potential of men in politics is also highlighted in some campaign songs. Through the song sung by an artiste known as Sweetstar Aaron Rotich, we get this explanation. The singer was supporting the NASA coalition that was led by Raila Odinga in the 2017 general elections. The coalition made up of many parties, was powerful and was competing against the Jubilee Coalition. The potential of the male gender is portrayed in this song. It was sung as follows:

*Sauti ya NASA e NASA Tibim.*
*Baba Raila e Raila Tibim.*
*Kalonzo Musyoka Wiper NASA Tibim.*
*Mudavadi NASA NASA Tibim.*
*Isaac Ruto Mashinani NASA e.*
*Orengo, Kidero NASA NASA e.*
*Wetangula, Ntutu Narok e NASA Intuita Lala.*
*Hassan Joho Governor Mombasa NASA e.*
*Zakayo Cheruiyot Kuresoi NASA e.*
*Mochesanen emenyon leyiye, NASA Tibim.*

*The voice of NASA e NASA Tibim.*
*Father Raila e Raila Tibim.*
*Kalonzo Musyoka Wiper NASA Tibim.*
*Mudavadi NASA NASA Tibim.*
*Isaac Ruto Mashinani NASA e.*
*Orengo, Kidero NASA NASA e.*
*Wetangula, Ntutu Narok e NASA Intuita Lala.*
*Hassan Joho Governor Mombasa NASA e.*
*Zakayo Cheruiyot Kuresoi NASA e.*
*Do not mess with our country, it’s only NASA.*

Gender Representation through Gender Voting Patterns

The issue of how gender and voting was used in some of the campaign songs. To be specific, political campaign songs were also used to urge all genders to vote for their preferred candidate as illustrated in a song by Titus Kosgei. He was supporting Nathan Kirui who was contesting for the Bomet East parliamentary seat. The song was sung as follows:

*Kongoi Bomenyon, Bomet ne lel, kongasis ne lel.*
*Ne koger kole kikochin ra chito nyiganet ne to koming in, Nathan Kirui.*
*Chepyosok, boisiek ak vijana, ongebirchi kura Nathan Kirui.*
*Chitab maendeleo kijanayat ne nomeke ak kasit.*

*Thank you our Bomet County, a new Bomet, the new east, Bomet East.*
*Which has agreed to vote for a new candidate, our young hero, Nathan Kirui.*
*Women, men and youths, let us vote for Nathan Kirui.*
*Who advocates for development and is well capable of performing his duty.*
*People of Bomet East, the new Bomet, agree that a young man should lead.*
*He is the son of Simba. His father's name was Simba.*
*The youth, women and men are pleased with this.*
*He is an economist.*
*Youths will get jobs, women will do businesses and practise agriculture.*
*Let us vote for Kibet Kirui Nathan.*
*Let us all vote for him.*
*Let us all be present then.*
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Similarly, political campaign songs appreciate all genders for voting for a specific candidate. This is exemplified in a song by Tapnyole Rotich who supported Mr. Kimutai in Chepalungu

Gender Representation through Leadership Traits in Political Campaign Songs

Political campaign songs represented both genders well by indicating the preferred character traits of a male leader. This idea is confirmed in a song sung by an artiste named Kachwes Rotich who Richard Cheselet for the member of county assembly seat in Olol Masani Ward.
Similarly, the preferred female leadership traits were sung in a song by Sogers Mekenyo. This singer praised a female candidate known as Luisa who was vying for the MCA seat in Segemian Sub-county.

*Kongoi Luisa inyon ne kokiyan koik MCA en Segemian.*

*Ongebirjin kura Luisa kityo.*  
*Kongoi chepset lug chepset lug ak kobor.*

*Kongoi Luisa chemaluk inyon.*  
*Ne kata luge kiyoki.*

*Kongoi cherib gaa koyabai kolu logoi, kolu chepyosok ak kolu boisiek.*  
*Amun ingoyaba tany kokosu.*  
*Kiritoret logokyok ikochi basari.*

*Kibirun Luisa.*  
*Ongibwat mama.*  
*Momo kit neu mama.*

Thank you very much our Luisa whom we’ve accepted to become the MCA of Segemian Sub-county.  
*Let us only vote for Luisa for MCA in Segemian.*  
*Thank you one who goes to war, who goes to war and emerges victorious.*  
*Thank you our Luisa whose milk never depletes*  
*Instead of depleting, its amount increases.*  
*Kongoi kamenyon, kongoi koaba tany kot kekei.*

Thank you our dear mother, thank you who milks the cow to provide milk.  
*Thank you our home guard who milks and gives the milk to children, women and men.*  
*For when she milks, a lot of milk is obtained.*  
*You have greatly helped our children by giving them money.*  
*We shall vote for you Luisa.*  
*Let us remember our mother.*  
*No one is like a mother*
DISCUSSION

Gender is represented in some of the songs through masculinity versus femininity politics. The issue of gender supremacy is clear in some of the political songs as indicated in a song which was sung by a famous Kalenjin artiste the late Kipchamba Arap Tapotuk. He explains that as a vehicle moves, the rear wheels will never catch up with the front ones. He meant that men are ever ahead of women forever. Refer to his song entitled ‘Muren’ ‘Man’. These findings align with those of Millet (1978) which reflects on the concept of ‘sexual politics’. She uses this concept to illustrate how gender stereotypes play a role in the social structure of the patriarchal system from economics to social, natural to religious.

The male gender is also demeaned in a song sung by an artiste called Ben Bii. In this song, he supported the late Dr. Joyce Laboso who vied for the gubernatorial seat in Bomet County in the 2017 general elections. He told the people of Bomet County to wake up because it is a new beginning and change is required in that county. The change was to receive the late Dr. Joyce Laboso as the governor. 'Dr. Joyce Laboso, Bomet County, Motherhood and Work' was the title of Ben Bii’s song. These findings concur with a study by Wafula and Njogu (2007) which explain the feminist theory. In the study it was established that this theory is based on a significant impulse as well as the desire to fight for a woman's liberation from cultural, religious, social, political and economic shackles that have in time developed from masculinity ideologies (Wafula and Njogu, 2007).

Gender is represented well through politics of patriarchy in some of the political campaign songs. Male domination over the presidency is expressed clearly in some of the political campaign songs for presidency. In 2017, no female candidate vied for the presidential seat. Therefore, in the following song by Jeremiah Kosgei, the male gender was identified. In his song, he requests Ruto to support Uhuru Kenyatta. It was predicted that the president of Kenya will be a male for many years. Elsewhere, a group of women known as Chama Cha Mashinani (CCM), showed the power and success portrayed by Isaac Ruto who was contesting for the gubernatorial seat in 2017 general elections. He was competing against the late Dr. Joyce Laboso for the seat. Ras Wageni explained that Isaac Ruto fought for the rights of the people of Mau. He is their father who cannot be threatened by an animal skin which in this case was a female candidacy. These findings are supported in a study by Frosh et. al (2004) in which it explains that a man is associated with the highest power, consistency and as being a community competitor. The findings also agree with another research by Uchendu (2005). In his study, Uchendu (2005) explains that a man is desirous to be authoritative, to protect the weak, to be consistent, to have high dignity in the society, to be intelligent and wise and not showing any emotion. The same results go hand in hand with a study by Aswani et. al (2014) who explain that gender-based capabilities have caused men to possess greater capacity in the resources of the society. A man is entitled to more rights than a woman in various aspects of the masculinity-based society.

Gender is also represented in the political songs through expression of the male gender potential. Through the song sung by an artiste known as Sweetstar Aaron Rotich, we get this explanation.
The singer was supporting the NASA coalition that was led by Raila Odinga in the 2017 general elections. The coalition made up of many parties, was powerful and was competing against the Jubilee Coalition. The potential of the male gender is portrayed in this song. It was sung as follows. The findings align with those of a study by Lombard (2003). In this study it was indicated that a real man, should be hardy, and characterized by rationalizations, wisdom, logic and the brains if he has no physical and muscular power (Lombard, 2003).

Gender is also represented through the voting patterns illustrated in some of the political songs. Political campaign songs were also used to urge all genders to vote for their preferred candidate as illustrated in a song by Titus Kosgei. He was supporting Nathan Kirui who was contesting for the Bomet East parliamentary seat. These findings agree with research by Habermas (1977) in which it was revealed that language is a code that owns and defines the moral and administrative relationships of the society. The language is used in the legalization of the society potential relationships. In addition, the language bears the history and social ideologies. Another study by Tannen (1990) supports these findings. In the study, it is discovered that men use language so as to improve governance and dominance in the society (Tannen, 1990). They show power and use speech as a means of acquiring the wanted results. Their speeches are not intended to create any social connections, but to pass the message that shows power, governance and dominance.

Political campaign songs represented both genders well by indicating the preferred character traits of a male leader. This idea is confirmed in a song sung by an artiste named Kachwes Rotich. He supported Richard Cheselet who was vying for the member of county assembly seat in Olol Masani Ward. These findings concur with a study by Kimmel (1997) in which it the masculinity theory is defined. In the study, the theory defines specific characteristics that a man should portray (Kimmel, 1997). Further, the theory is built especially with a man's capacity and success, the capacity to be defined and determined in different ways. It is an important aspect of the view of male gender strength.

CONCLUSION

This study has succeeded by indicating that most singers, females and males supported masculinity. By explaining that a man is like fire, can kill a roaring lion or defends borders indicates a lot of his courage, strength and ability. These are physical characteristics required in difficult situations like war. Because those songs focused on politics, it means that politics itself is associated with war and therefore requires a person with such qualities. Politically, it means that men will get chance to hold to power. They establish themselves and maintain their domination becoming wealthier and wealthier at the expense of women. Politically, women are not given enough space by the society to be at the same level with men. These results indicate that the society promotes masculinity.

Due to the results of this study, here is the conclusion. Political campaign songs reveal the societal history, ideology and attitudes towards female and male gender. Several songs gave the male gender a higher status than the female gender. Men are expected to take care of the less fortunate in the society. From the way gender is represented in the political campaign songs, many male candidates vied for different political seats. This conveys that there is a male
domination at the highest state positions. Some of those male candidates were contesting to remain in the same seats to maintain the status-quo. For that matter, the society should be educated through literature about the ability of the female gender and gender equality in politics.

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