

Obstacles to Gender Parity in Political Representation: The case of the Ghanaian Parliament.

By

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A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

Memorial University of Newfoundland

September 2019

St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador

DECLARATION

I, Cheerful Tenu, wish to declare that this work is my own except for works cited and duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to determine the factors that may affect the representation of women in Ghanaian politics by focusing on women's representation in parliament, and in particular, elite attitudes about women's representation. The study first (1) analyses traditional (mostly Western) explanations for women's (lack of) presence in politics; and second (2) situates these explanations within the Ghanaian context; and third (3) examines data obtained from a survey of legislators in Ghana, to assess the role of elite attitudes about gender discrimination and the types of factors parliamentarians perceive to influence women's representation in politics in this country.

My analysis suggests that gender disparities in Ghana's politics stem from a combination of political, socio-economic and cultural factors, thus reinforcing the findings of the literature (Inglehart and Norris, 2003, p. 127; Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer, 2013; Norris, 1989; Shvedova, 2005). Furthermore, the results from the survey data suggest that cultural factors often become formidable hindrances to gender parity in Ghana's political democracy. Because of the role of culture in influencing women's presence in formal politics, the study recommends that further assessment is needed in order to better understand the potential of affirmative action (specifically, imposed quotas systems) to promote women's political representation in Ghana. As many studies of gender and politics show, without institutional change, the presence of women increases only very incrementally, even in places around the world where cultural factors may be less of a hindrance. This study contributes to the wider discourse on gender and politics by providing a framework for understanding the factors impeding Ghanaian women's efforts in participating in politics.

Keywords: Gender parity, politics, representation, women.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved late mother, Madam Rejoice Aken, who has remained my imaginary role model in all aspects. Mama! You were and still are to me, an epitome of strength, love, determination and courage. Thank you for instilling these virtues in me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to the Almighty God for giving me life, strength, courage and above all, the Grace of completion.

I am eternally grateful to my supervisor, Dr Amanda Bittner, for her patience and support throughout my graduate program. Dr Bittner! I truly appreciate your constructive comments, suggestions and provision of materials that have shaped this work. Your timely feedbacks have enabled me to meet my deadline of completion and I remain grateful for every opportunity you have provided throughout my graduate studies.

My sincerest thanks go to Dr Isabelle Cote of the department of Political Science and Dr Jennifer Selby of Religious Studies at MUN for agreeing to be my external examiners.

I am indebted to my family and friends who have been with me through it all. To my family, I am thankful for your love, encouragement, and support. Special mention is made of Mr. Emmanuel Kartey, Madam Dorothy Glave, Mr. Prince Adufutse, Mr. Nelson Parku, Mr. Bernard Anipa, Dr. Maame Gyekye Jandoh, Dr. Bossman Eric Asare, Dr. Isaac Owusu Mensah, Mr. Stevens K. M. Ahiawordor, Dr. Hassan Wahab, Mr. Newlove Osei-Asante, Dr Kwadwo Osei Bonsu, Mr. Michael Asamoah Boaheng, Mr. Gladstone Elorm Deklu. Words can't explain how grateful I am to you all.

To Seth, Alice and Benedict: I am eternally grateful for your prayers and emotional support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW.....CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN

UN.....UNITED NATIONS

NDC.....NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

NPP.....NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY

NDP.....NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

CPP.....CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY

GFP.....GHANA FREEDOM PARTY

GSS.....GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE

IPU.....INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

NL.....NEWFOUNDLAND

UNICEF.....UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

GWL..... GHANA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

GFW.....GHANA FEDERATION OF WOMEN

NCGW.....NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GHANA WOMEN

PNDC.....PROVISIONAL NATIONAL DEFENCE COUNCIL

DWM.....DECEMBER WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

MMP.....MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL

FPTP.....FIRST-PAST-THE-POST

PR.....PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

US.....UNITED STATES

UK.....UNITED KINGDOM

IRI.....INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

STEM.....SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS

GLSS.....GHANA LIVING STANDARS SURVEY

MSLC.....MIDDLE SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE

BECE.....BASIC EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

SHS.....SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SSS.....SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background

The number of countries that have had women leaders continues to increase, “but the list is still relatively short” (Pew Research Center, 2015), and even when women make it to power, they are said to rarely maintain that power for a long time. This under-representation does not bode well for women’s abilities to adequately participate in governance and decision-making processes and, thus, has negative implications for their socio-economic status. Evidence from the World Economic Forum (2014; 2016) shows that in the past half-century, 56 of the 146 nations (38%) have had a female head of government or state for at least one full year. In 31 of the 146 countries, females have led for five years or less, while in 10 countries, they have led for only one year. In addition to this, at least 13 countries have had female leaders who occupied government offices for less than a year (Pew Research Center, 2015).

These global trends are reflected across Africa. Whereas some African countries have recorded a high number of women in politics, and in national parliaments specifically, many others have recorded the opposite. According to Aili Mari Tripp, “Rwanda claimed the world’s highest ratio of women in parliament in 2003 and today, Rwanda women hold 64% of the country’s legislative seats. In Senegal, Seychelles and South Africa, more than 40% of parliamentary seats are held by women, while in Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Uganda, over 35% seats are occupied by women” (2013). However, in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and The Gambia for instance, women hold 5.6%, 11.0% and 10.3% of parliamentary seats respectively (IPU, 2018). Scholars agree that women’s political representation is significantly lower compared to their male counterparts (Allah-Mensah, 2004; Bari, 2005; Shvedova, 2005).

The political situation for women in Ghana is no different. Awumbila (2001) finds that the number of women participating at the national level of politics is low, around 18%. Similarly, Ofei-Aboagye (2000) reports that at district-level politics, the number of women in leadership positions was not only low at 7%, but also most of them were appointed instead of elected. Sossou (2006) affirms that there are no legal obstacles to women's participation and representation in Ghanaian politics, nonetheless, there may exist formidable barriers.

Ghana's Constitution of Rights (1992) allows women the same recognizable rights as men in all spheres of life. This document prohibits discrimination based on sex, religion, gender, and ethnicity, however studies show that Ghanaian cultural norms, beliefs and practices such as gendered proverbs, and institutionalised patriarchy fail to promote the representation of women in politics (Odame, 2010; Sossou, 2011; Ghana Women's Manifesto, 2004, p.32). Moreover, the resistance women sometimes face from men or even other women in their communities based on these cultural norms and the demands of domestic duties required of a "typical" Ghanaian woman need not be overlooked. Sossou (2011) and Tsikata (2009) argue that these cultural norms and domestic duties leave the woman with less time to be interested in politics. Most of these cultural norms and beliefs are stereotypical and do not encourage women to contribute to critical decision-making processes, let alone take up leadership positions. On the other hand, men are seen as the head and natural leaders of society and thus are conditioned from the moment of birth to take up leadership positions, whereas women are conditioned to accept that their place is in domesticity or they are able bodies for men.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghanaian women constitute about 51.2% of the country's total population (2013), but these figures do not in any way reflect the power distribution between men and women, especially in political governance. Though the contribution of women to the socio-economic advancement of African societies has long been acknowledged (Manuh, 1998; Amu, 2005; Boserup et al,

2013), the IPU indicates in its 2017 report that, per the available information on Ghana's ministerial appointments, there were only 8 women out of a total of 46 ministers (constituting 17.4%). Evidence shows that women's representation and participation in politics does not only promote their rights, but also contributes significantly to socio-economic development by shaping policies that affect the needs of both men and women (Shvedova, 2005, p.17; Bari, 2005). A critical review of gender equality and equity (UNESCO, 2000) concludes that sustainable development is achievable in our various societies if we recognize the importance for both men and women as "complementary biological entities." Similarly, the Beijing Declaration (1995) states that, sustainable societal development can only be achieved through the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality. Some scholars also argue that the policies and politics of states affect the daily lives of women (Randall 1987, p. IX; Fraser and Tinker, 2004, p. 148).

Women's roles in traditional African societies were said to be devoid of stereotypes as women performed dual roles of managing functions both in the community and in the family. These dual roles are reflected in their co-dependency as observed by Clair (1994, p. 27), who states that there was a co-dependency and a balance that existed between men and women. While this thesis is not about colonialism specifically, or the impact that it may have had upon contemporary gender equality, it is worth noting that scholars indicate that things were different in the past (e.g. Clair 1994). I will explore this in some more detail in the second chapter, but a detailed analysis of the legacy of colonialism is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Tsikata (2009) explains that Ghanaian women have been very instrumental in the country's struggle for independence and their contributions have cut across the socio-economic and political life of the country ever since. She further adds that women have participated in policy-making towards women's issues and gender equity within the international system. Allah-Mensah (2005) also reiterates that, prior to independence, women had been involved in the

politics of the country in their positions as Queen mothers. Women have also been very instrumental in the country's historical struggle for independence. Women, including Sophia Doku, Ama Nkrumah, Hanna Cudjoe, and Letitia Quaye, have had their names registered in the country's historical records for their influential roles in Ghana's struggle for independence. These women were appointed as propaganda secretaries and tasked with the responsibility of organizing the women's League of the Convention People's Party (CPP). Their significant contributions eventually led to the first ever affirmative action bill, drafted in 1960, that allowed for ten women to be elected unopposed as Members of Parliament (MPs) (Allah-Mensah, 2004, p.15; modernghana.com, 2009).

This study sets out to account for the continued low rates of women in formal politics in Ghana and to identify the various obstacles contributing to the problem.

1.1.RESEARCH PROBLEM

Women's political participation has been identified internationally as an important indicator of the political and socio-economic status of women (Shvedova, 2005, Bari, 2005, Dahlerup 1988). As a result, individuals and world organizations have been making efforts to empower women to achieve adequate representation in mainstream politics. According to an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) report (2017), world democracies have made substantive progress in promoting the number of women in national parliament, increasing the global average from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 22.1 percent in 2015. The 2019 IPU report estimates that, with regards to the world average, women make up 24.3% of the total number of parliamentarians in the single/lower houses. Averaging across upper houses (Senate), women constitute a total of 24.1% and in both houses combined, women make up 24.3%. While the level of progress world-wide is slow, some countries have really increased the presence of women in formal

politics. For instance, Rwanda implemented the quota system which mandates 30% of parliamentarians to be women. This quota system has enabled Rwanda to record the highest number of Women Members of Parliament (MPs) in the world as at 2018; out of 80 parliamentary seats women in Rwandan parliament occupies 49 seats (61.3%) (IPU, 2018). This is an example that often surprises the general public, given Rwanda's history of genocide and war—most do not anticipate that it has such progressive women's representation, and this example is often cited as one that highlights the role of institutions as transforming a society's politics rather than waiting for culture to lead to change.

The Ghanaian government has also taken steps in recent years to provide women with opportunities to take on the challenges of leadership. Ghana introduced the National Gender Policy (2015), established a Ministry for Gender and Social Protection (now called Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection) in 2001, and is a signatory to many international protocols on gender equality and women's empowerment, like the MDGs, SDGs, and CEDAW. The government also created the National Commission on Women and Development in 1975, today known as the Department of Women. The commission was established to ensure that the objectives of the UN Decade for Women and those of the International Women's Year were achieved in Ghana. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection works hand-in-hand with national and international organizations to promote and protect the rights of women. According to Awumbila (2001), these programmes were enacted to enhance women's self-esteem and to ease them into actively participating in the development of their communities. Odame (2010) notes that, the efforts of Ghanaian women themselves towards participation and greater representation cannot be overshadowed as they have formed groups and organizations over the years to fight for the rights of women. She cited examples of active women organizations such as the Federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the 31st December Women's Movement

(DWM), which advocate for the enactment of laws to protect the rights of women in the country and help improve the living standards of women.

Whereas Rwanda, Senegal, Mozambique, South Africa and other developing countries seem to be making progress in achieving greater representation of women in politics, Ghana has not been able to sustain any substantial increase in the representation of women in its governance and decision-making processes. The percentage of women in each of the administrative sectors of the political economy is not encouraging. Out of a total 275 parliamentary seats, for instance, women occupied as few as 13% in the most recent elections (2016 General Elections). The National Gender Policy report states emphatically that, "at the highest level of Government, women make up 29% of Ministers and 22% of Deputy Ministers" (2015). The document further explains how the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) report in 2013 reiterates that, in the Judiciary, only 29% of the Supreme Court Judges and 25% of High Court Judges were women. In the civil service, 24% of Chief Directors were women. Further, at the local government level, only 14 of the 170 Municipal Chief Executives (MCEs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs), representing 8.2% were women (National Gender Policy, 2015). The National Gender Policy (2015) was created by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, under the auspices of then-president, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama with a theme entitled, "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment into Ghana's Development Efforts".

The issue of gender parity continues to arise anytime there is a debate on the topic of women's low political representation, and how it affects the decision-making processes of a country, and this problem is a global phenomenon. Studies show that great gender disparities exist in political participation and representation all over the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, p. 7; Ballington, 2008, p. 1). The UN Women's Report (2014) also

estimates from a study conducted on 38 countries that women make up less than 10% of parliamentarians and Ghana is in no way immune from this problem of gender inequality in political representation. Much of the literature that seeks to explain women's representation is based on research conducted in other regions around the world, and very few studies have assessed the factors explaining women's presence in politics in the Ghanaian context, including traditional explanations in the literature or other obstacles contributing to the underrepresentation of women in Ghana.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

This paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors account for the gender disparities in political representation in Ghana?
2. What are Ghanaian legislators' perceptions of the factors hindering gender parity in Ghana's political democracy?

To answer these questions, this paper will assess the factors that account for the low number of women in politics as identified by scholars in global politics while applying this lens to the Ghanaian context. Recent studies in global politics have shown that women's low representation in politics stems from various factors including political (Shvedova, 2005; Norris, 1989; Inglehart and Norris, 2003, p. 127; Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer, 2013) socio-economic (Chant, 2006; Pearce, 1978; Waylen, 2007; Shvedova, 2005) and cultural factors (Bari, 2005; Peprah et al, 2018; Lawless & Fox 1999, 2010; Shvedova, 1998). Since most of the explanations provided are Eurocentric, the study will focus on examining how these explanations hold in the Ghanaian context.

The study will also assess data from a survey of members of the Ghanaian parliament in order to develop an understanding of legislators' attitude towards the factors hindering gender parity in Ghana's political democracy. Studies have shown that parliamentarians' attitudes often "lead" the attitudes of the public and are more progressive than the average citizen, and that citizens will defer to legislators (e.g. Brookman and Butler 2015). We should expect, therefore, that understanding elite attitudes will tell us something about the culture and beliefs of Ghanaians, and the likelihood that the average citizen will care about or embrace women's representation.

This study argues that the existing gender gap in Ghana's political system cannot be explained from a single standpoint and that political factors (including electoral systems, quotas, and the roles of political parties), socio-economic factors (feminization of poverty arising from class, income, occupation and women's dual burdens), and cultural factors (patriarchy and customary cultural norms) all together play significant roles in limiting the number of women in politics. I argue that even though the existing gender gaps in Ghana's political system may have emanated from multiple factors, cultural narratives may pose the most formidable threat, as seen through the types of observations made by legislators.

1.3.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY

Kunovich and Paxton's model of Women in Politics states that in order to better understand women's presence in politics, it is important to understand the multiple points of contact for women in the political system. These multiple points of contact have been categorised into structural, political and ideological system-level factors that all together interact to influence women's inclusion in political parties, the selection of women as candidates as well as the election of women as officials. Gender equality and women's presence in politics can be

understood only if we consider multiple factors that intersect to create barriers to representation by women.

This thesis considers the concept of gender equality in political representation as measured by the proportion (high or low) of women in Ghana's national parliament. According to Lorber (2001), Gender inequality takes many different forms depending on the socio-economic, cultural and political organization of a particular society. In this context, gender inequality in political representation considers the unequal number of women in the activities associated with the day-to-day administration of a state. It specifically considers the ratio of men to women represented in Ghana's national parliament.

Gender inequality will be defined, in this context, as women's representation (political representation) below 15% of the legislature according to data obtained from the IPU. Studies show the proportion of women below 15% of parliament is considered a tokenistic representation (IPU, 2019; Myers & Ann, 2016; Zamfirache, 2010). The IPU is often referred to by many scholars (Owusu-Mensah, 2017; Shvedova, 2005; Paxton and Kunovich, 2003) for data on the number of parliamentary seats occupied by women each year. Here, awareness of study participants to the existence of gender inequality in parliament will be used as a measure of low representation of women.

1.4.STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis will proceed as follows:

Chapter Two reviews the broader literature on gender and politics with much focus on literature that deals with women's mandate to run as parliamentarians while relying on the theoretical lenses identified in the previous chapter. It provides a historical overview of women's political participation and representation in Ghana. This chapter also explores the various socio-

economic, political, and cultural factors that may be preventing women from becoming actively involved in the law-making processes as explained in existing scholarships. The political factors will address the role of political parties, quotas and the nature of the political system, the socio-economic factors will also address the feminization of poverty (class, income, occupation and dual roles) and illiteracy. The discussion of cultural factors looks at gendered proverbs, patriarchy and women's perception of politics. Chapter Two also focuses on situating these explanations in the Ghanaian context.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology of the study which includes the research design, case selection, and data collection. The fourth chapter focuses on the findings and provides a descriptive statistical analysis of the data. The final chapter summarizes and concludes the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The presence of women in parliament impacts on the socio-economic and political fibre of nations all over the world. As a result, elective politics serves as a favourable barometer for measuring democracy, equality, and equity. The extent to which women can register to vote and be voted for, campaign, and take part in national decision-making processes, occupy positions such as party coordinators, and electoral administrative staff represents an indicator of inclusive democracy. The more women participate in politics through these various means, the more acceptable their place in politics and public life becomes. Several scholars argue that women have potential which can be tapped to meaningfully enhance the socio-economic and political development of nations (Lawless & Fox, 2010; Shvedova, 2005; Bari, 2005). For instance, Bari (2005) agrees that women's social and economic contributions promote societal development, leading to several efforts by governments, complemented by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), multilateral organizations, women groups and individuals at all levels to actualize these. The theoretical frameworks guiding this thesis also recognise that "the important contributors to women's high parliamentary representation came from a combination of socio-economic, cultural and institutional factors interacting with women's mobilization and party activism" (Galligan, 2007, p. 561, as quoted in Zamfirache, 2010, p. 179). Yet certain barriers seem to impede gender equality in political representation as women are less represented in the ranks of politics and this is a fundamental challenge to modern democratic governance in Ghana.

According to a press release by the IPU, "the number of women in national parliaments has only increased by 0.1 percentage point from 2016", representing 23.3% to 23.4% globally

(2018). Available data as of January 2019 also shows a slight increase of 0.2 percentage points (i.e. 24.1% to 24.3%) since 2018. It is also estimated that globally only 7.2% of Heads of State and 5.7% of Heads of Government are women, only 19.1% of Speakers of parliament are women, and only 18.3% of government ministers are women (IPU, 2019).

Table 2.1 provides a statistical representation of the number of women in national parliaments both globally and by regions of the world as of January 01, 2019.

Table 2.1: Women in national parliament as of 2019, by Region of the World.

	Single house or lower house	Upper house or Senate	Both houses combined
World average	24.3%	24.1%	24.3%
Regional Averages			
Nordic countries	42.5%	-	-
Americas	30.6%	31.3%	30.7%
Europe (Nordic countries included)	28.6%	28.0%	28.5%
Europe (Nordic countries not included)	27.2%	28.0%	27.4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9%	22.2%	23.7%
Asia	19.9%	17.4%	19.6%
Middle East and North Africa	19.0%	12.5%	18.1%
Pacific	16.3%	36.0%	18.4%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), “Women in National Parliaments”, Data accessed 01 January 2019, <http://www.ipu.org>.

Significant improvement has been made in most of the regions especially the Nordic countries where women’s representation averages 42.5% in parliament whereas many others continue to lag as demonstrated in the table (IPU, 2019). Even though women are earning recognition in both international and domestic politics as they are attaining key offices in governmental and multilateral institutions compared to a century ago, there is still much to be done when it comes to the current state of women’s representation in politics. While Ocran (2014) indicates that women constitute a significant proportion of the world’s population, Bari (2005) suggests that

by virtue of the dual roles played by women in both productive and reproductive spheres, their socio-economic contributions amount to more than half compared with those of men. Nonetheless, neither their population nor socio-economic contributions to societal development seem to correlate with their political representation.

Similar trends are reflected across the African continent as some countries seem to be making significant progress whereas others lag. For instance, Eileen Sirleaf- Johnson of Liberia and Joyce Banda of Malawi are among the few women to have occupied the highest political office as heads of state. Using the United Nations (UNs) 30% gender quota as a scale of measurement, some countries (Rwanda, South African, Senegal, Mozambique, and Ethiopia) have achieved the 30% representation of women in their respective parliaments whereas others (e.g. Nigeria, Benin, Mali, and Botswana) continue to lag behind (IPU, 2019). Tamale notes that, “African women remain grossly under-represented in the institutions that make decisions for the nation” (2000, p. 8).

Ghana’s situation is not exceptional as the political roles of Ghanaian women have witnessed different levels of growth since independence. According to Allah-Mensah, “Women’s political roles in Ghana have grown and expanded steadily since the drafting and launching of the 1992 constitution” (2004, p. 25) but whether this is effective in terms women’s substantive representation is a matter that needs to be analysed. Statistical data from the IPU (2019) shows that there are currently 36 women in Ghana’s parliament out of a total of 275 parliamentarians. As of August 2018, there were 9 women ministers out of a total of 38 (Akpah, 2018). Only two women (Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings and Akuah Donko) have ever attempted to run as presidents in the history of Ghana and both have failed in their respective attempts in the 2016 elections. Whereas the former was successful in the nomination process, the latter was disqualified based on incomplete application.

Following her dissatisfactions with her previous party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Nana Konadu broke away to form her own party called the National Democratic Party (NDP) and contested the 2016 elections. Akua Donkor, a cocoa farmer with no formal education, on the other hand, has been disqualified on two attempts (2012 and 2016). Whereas she attempted to run the 2012 elections as an independent candidate, she attempted that of 2016 with the formation of her own party, the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP). In both instances, she failed to make it pass the nomination process, some suggest this was due to her lack of education (Frimpong 2015; Ghanaweb, n. d.).

Table 2.2: Presence of Women in Ghana’s parliament since independence¹².

	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
# Women Candidates	23	53	95	104	103	133	136
# Women Elected	16	18	19	25	18	29	35
Total N seats in parliament	200	200	230	230	230	275	275
% Women in parliament	8.0	9.0	9.5	10.9	7.8	10.5	12.7

¹ The data was compiled from various sources that usually show differences in figures (plus or minus 1). This, however, does not imply that any of these sources are producing the wrong figure. The period of compilation usually affects the data. Data produce right after an election will show different figures from one generated a year after that same election. The discrepancy in the numbers is explained in terms of factors such as the death of a candidate, boycotts and by-elections. For instance, while the IPU records a total of 199 seats out of the 200 seats of which included 18 elected women in the 2000 parliamentary election, the table below displays a total of 19 women. The IPU explains that, “the election to fill the last seat was postponed due to the death of a New Patriotic Party (NPP) candidate” (<http://archive.ipu.org>). The postponed election later resulted in the election of one extra woman bringing the total to 19 as recorded later by Allah-Mensah (2004).

² Retrieved from multiple sources (Allah-Mensah,2004, <http://archive.ipu.org> , <http://www.ec.gov.gh>.)

Table 2.2 gives the total number of parliamentary seats in Ghana and reveals the percentage of seats occupied by women since the beginning of the fourth republic. It also displays the total number of women candidates in each period and the number of women who were elected.

The available literature on women in politics in Ghana is not very comprehensive, and the bulk of the literature on the topic of gender and politics is Eurocentric or based on the United States (Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer 2013; Lawless & Fox, 2010; Norris, 2000; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). In addition, whereas most Africanist scholars focus on the impact that political parties, governmental policies and the economy have on women's political representation, few of them focus on the cultural narratives or the interconnectedness of all these factors in relation to women's low representation in politics (Bari, 2005; Pephrah et al, 2018; Sossou, 2011; Tsikata, 2009).

This study begins to fill these gaps by reviewing works that provide explanations for women's participation and representation in politics globally, with the aim of expanding the literature on the topic and situating these traditional explanations in the Ghanaian context. This thesis also pays close attention to explanations provided by Ghanaian legislators on the factors hindering gender parity in Ghana's political system, as these individuals provide a window into the culture of the country's citizens, and will help us to better understand the state of attitudes about gender equality where data on citizen attitudes are not available. This chapter will first provide a critical overview of the Ghanaian political system from the pre-colonial era to present, with the aim of providing some background on the trajectory of women's political representation in Ghana, then it will provide an overview of the theoretical framework, followed by an assessment of the traditional explanations for women's lack of presence in politics, situating these explanations in the Ghanaian context.

2.1. OVERVIEW OF GHANA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM SINCE INDEPENDENCE.

An attempt to understand the current place of women in Ghana's political system requires that we pay special attention to the history of women in politics in Ghana. In analyzing the history of women in Ghanaian politics, the study benefits from scholarship developed by several Africanist scholars who provide critical perspectives on the history of Ghana in general and Africa as a whole. As observed by Allah-Mensah, knowing the past is very crucial to understanding the present and predicting the future which altogether "completes the cycle of analysis" (2004, p. 11). The historical analysis of women's place in Ghana's political system can be best classified into three broad categories: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era.

2.1.a. PRE-COLONIAL ERA.

Leadership in pre-colonial Ghana has been described as one with gender parallelism (Stoeltje, 2003). In the pre-colonial era, women were an integral part of the country's indigenous political system known as chieftaincy. Women played active roles which most often complemented that of their male counterparts or were parallel to that of the men (Prah, 2003). Women in pre-colonial Ghana, for instance, occupied positions as queen mothers or queens and warriors depending on the part of the country or ethnic group she belonged. Women were also actively involved in subsistence farming and petty trades which were the main economic activities of the time. Stoeltje (2003) argues that, like queens or queen mothers, women ruled in prominent ways and their roles were very significant to the continuity of their various administrative units. Women's political roles in pre-colonial Ghana included but were not limited to presiding over their administrative regions, installing chiefs (enstoolment), being responsible for the welfare of women and domestic affairs in their domains, and conflict resolution. Afisi (2010) notes that

gendered occupations were absent from pre-colonial Ghana and this paved the way for both men and women to perform complementary roles which were equally regarded important. Amadiume points out that “among the Ashanti of Ghana, the female joint ruler with the king has powers greater than those of any man. Her court, from which she rules in female matters is separate from the king’s and she is the custodian of consecrated royal stools and participates in the royal ancestral cult and some other rituals” (2015, p. 187-188).

Colonial institutions, however, led to the collapse of the powers of many female traditional leaders. This may also have contributed to the continuous low representation of women in contemporary politics. As pointed out by Amadiume (2015), western prejudices considered men alone capable of the day-to-day administration of the country, thereby relegating women to the sphere of domestic tasks. One study shows that the colonial leaders “aggressively ignored” the roles of queen mothers and women leaders in Africa when they introduced their own system of administration (Stoeltje, 2003, p. 1). For instance, Amadiume (2015) finds that “it was under church and colonial rule in Nnobi that women suffered a reverse in their economic and political power” (Amadiume 2015, p. 141). British imperialism in Nnobi (a town located in Anambra state of Nigeria) led to the ban on the Ekwe title (a title for women leaders). Consequently, women loss a prescribed and guaranteed position at the centre of local governance. “Today there are no titles in Nnobi available for women” (Amadiume, 2015, p. 148), he further adds.

According to another study, “European administrators imposed a legal and cultural apparatus that undermined women’s traditional bases of power; women became politically and economically subordinated and marginalized” (O’Barr & Firmin-Sellers, 1995, p. 189). Any attempt to investigate the contemporary gender gaps in Ghana’s public administration may be heavily flawed if the pre-colonial era is eliminated from the assessment, but more research is needed to assess the impact of colonialism on women’s representation in contemporary Ghana.

2.1.b. COLONIAL ERA.

The colonial political system was such that the goal of education of women was towards becoming good wives for the colonial masters or the educated local husbands who were privileged to serve in the colonial administrations. Tsikata (1999, 76) argues that the colonial era shares the blame for women's marginalization in politics and public life in Ghana. To her, the educational system had a negative effect on women with the kind of courses forced on women. These overt biases in the educational system had multiple effects on women's ability to take up leadership positions. According to Allah-Mensah (2005), whereas men had the opportunity to take courses that equipped them for governance, women received the opposite. Manu (1991) in support, argues that the education given to girls during the colonial period placed emphases on good behavior and skills such as needlework and cooking. This form of training, according to her, was aimed at making the girls better wives for emerging educated men who were made up of clerks, teachers and a few professional men.

To Pepera (1993), the political role of women became effective and substantive during the struggle for independence as women participated in the anticolonial struggle and boycotted policies, such as taxation which were implemented by the colonial masters. The road to independence was neither rosy nor smooth. The struggle for Ghana's independence required the efforts of all citizen and of course women. Evidence shows how women such as Yaa Asantewaa; the queen mother of Ejisu in the Ashanti Empire led the Ashanti rebellion (known as the war of the golden stool) against British colonialism (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997). Many benevolent and mutual associations, credit unions and market women's voluntary groups also sprang up and have been recorded in Ghana's historical literature for their great support for Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in general (Tsikata 1999, Allah-Mensah, 2005).

Women have been praised for their significant organizational skills which were valuable in the prelude to independence. Allah-Mensah (2005) affirms that women were efficient organizers who had the skills to rally thousands of people together at the shortest possible time. Tsikata (1989, p.77) explains that these skills went outside the boundaries of the CPP and spread to other political groups involving women, through the formation of women's groups: the Ghana Women's League (GWL) and the Ghana Federation of Women (GFW), later merged to form the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW) in 1960. The subsequent political hiccups (especially the military overthrows) in the history of Ghana eventually led to the fading away of most of these vibrant women groups (Tsikata, 2009). Though other new women's groups sprung up in the history of Ghana's politics, they have not been as vibrant as compared to those formed in the first Republic. For instance, though there exist women's wings within political parties in Ghana, Allah-Mensah (2009) notes that they are usually formed to persuade women to vote for the dominant men within the parties. Women in Ghana's contemporary politics, therefore, do not seem to have the strong organization needed for political mentorship and support. Tsikata (2009) explains that most of the women's organizations that sprung up in the 1990s were highly influenced by political structures and thus were not effective in promoting women's rights. Instead of the women's organizations championing a neutral front for women's rights, the political structures "influenced their choice of issues of struggle, their analysis and their approaches" (Tsikata, 2009, p. 186).

2.1.c. POST-COLONIAL ERA.

On March 6, 1957, Ghana became the first African nation of the Sub-Sahara to attain independence (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Odame, 2010; Owusu-Ansah, 2014). After Ghana's freedom from colonial rule, Nkrumah set the tone for reforms in Ghana via an extremely determined structure and economic growth plans (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). The initial days of Nkrumah's rule saw vast developments in standards and organizational improvements, including progress in health, education and mainstream politics. The immediate post-independent period created avenues for women's empowerment and representation in politics. Nkrumah rewarded women for their hard work and resilience during the struggle for independence by inaugurating the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW). Allah-Mensah (2004) explains that the CPP government developed policies that encouraged the participation of women in politics and public life, enabling few women to occupy parliamentary positions. She further explains that the Women's Movement was inaugurated by Dr Kwame Nkrumah on September 10, 1960 as the only organization under which all Ghanaian women were to be organized to help achieve government's post-independent socio-political and economic developmental policies. History has it that in 1960, Nkrumah also introduced an affirmative action Bill which received the governor-general's assent and was passed into law (Nkansah, 2009; Nketia, 2010; Tsikata, 2009). Allah-Mensah (2004) states that this bill has, to date, remained the first and ever quota system in the history of Ghana to have allowed for 10 women to be elected unopposed as Members of Parliament. She emphasizes this point by stating that, in consonance with the affirmative Bill, "Ghana is noted for being one of the first African countries to introduce a quota system for women" (2004, p. 15).

The overthrow of the CPP government in 1966 was a major blow to the little success made in promoting women's representation in politics (Nketia, 2010; Tsikata, 2009). From 1966 until the elections in 1992, Ghana experienced a series of coups and unstable regimes and this did

not create any substantive avenue for women to participate in politics (Tsikata & Seini, 2004). In the 1969 election, only 1 woman was elected as a member of parliament out of the 140 representatives in the National Assembly. This number increased to 2 through a by-election in 1970. Also, though the 1979 elections predicted an improvement in the women winners, the proportion was less than 5% (Nkansah, 2009). Nkansah reports that out of the 140 elected representatives in the legislature, only 5 were women (2009, p.34).

Evidence shows how military regimes and women's political participation at the time were very incompatible (Allah-Mensah, 2004, Tsikata 2009). According to Allah-Mensah (2005), the military regimes created an environment that was neither conducive for women's groups to mobilize for political action nor individual women to stand for elections. This period was characterized by abuse of women in many forms. Those who attempted to defy the military regime were beaten in marketplaces, raped and killed in public (Nketia, 2010; Prah, 2004).

After several military-civilian turnovers in Ghana's political history, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) allowed for a transition into a democratic rule and adopted a new name; National Democratic Congress (NDC) to contest the 1992 general elections (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Frimpong, 2015; Oquaye, 1995). The PNDC now NDC formed the women's group known as the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM). Though the group was supposed to have been neutral, there was wide evidence of political infiltrations as women were not presented with equal opportunities to compete for political positions (Debrah, 2005, Allah-Mensah, 2005). Under the guise of advocating the welfare of Ghanaians and the deprived, the 31st DWM was said to have rather grown into a powerful organization that mobilized the mass support for the NDC. Debrah (2005) emphasizes that funds were diverted to the operations of the DWM to the starvation of legitimate government institutions that were set up to promote women's affairs.

There is enough evidence supporting the fact that, many of the women who had some political experience to contest and “even win the district level elections held in 1988 and subsequently in the 1992 general elections” were all politically linked to the DWM (Allah-Mensah, 2004, p.17; 2005; Frimpong, 2015). Allah-Mensah further states that, it was not surprising the “majority of the women parliamentarians were National Democratic Congress (NDC) members with strong links to the 31st DWM. In other words, the 31st DWM created some political opportunity for women’s representation in politics at the local and national level” (2004, p. 17).

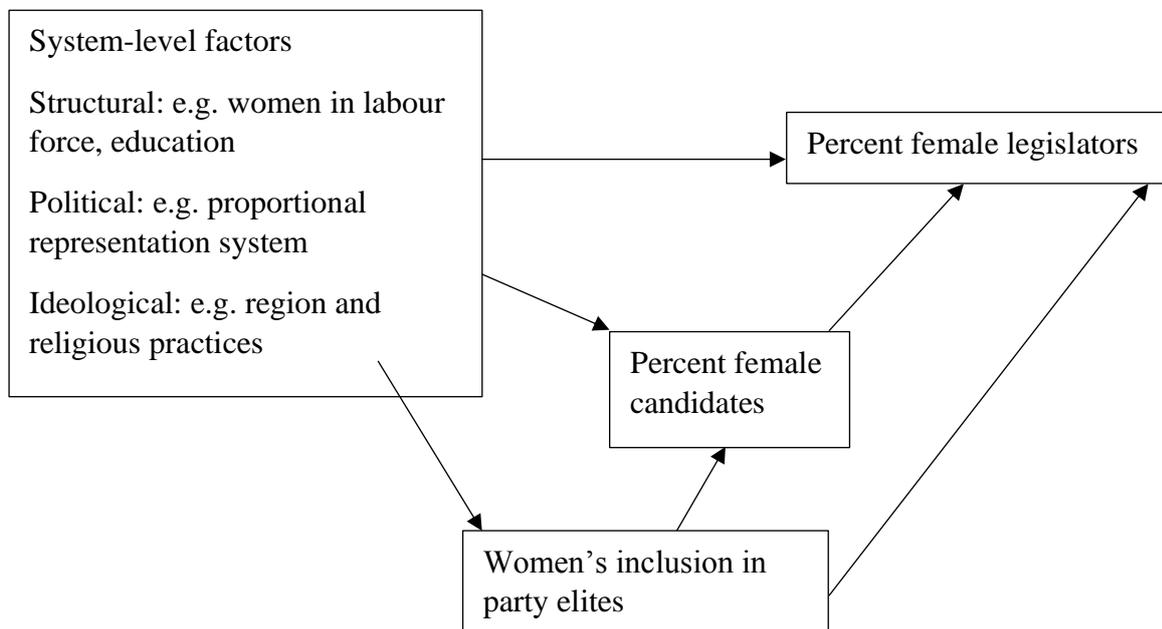
With the drafting of the 1992 constitution and the adoption of democracy, Ghana began to extensively embrace the concept of women’s empowerment, women’s political participation, gender equality and equity. Policies aimed at promoting women’s political representation have since been drafted and are reflected in the manifestoes of the various political parties in the country.

According to the Ghana Gender Policy (2015), the government of Ghana, in order to conform to world standards, recognizes that gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s participation in politics are essential to attaining sustainable development. Also, provisions of the 1992 Constitution on gender equality, women’s empowerment and human rights, as well as Ghana’s pledge to international Frameworks and Protocols on human rights and social protection, good governance and accountability for development have emphasized government’s commitment to promoting the rights of women. Nevertheless, the majority of these policies have not been effective in bridging the existing gender gap in political participation in Ghana. In an attempt to understand the continuous low representation of women in Ghana’s political democracy, this paper turns to explanations from the literature on gender and politics, which to date has focused primarily on explaining women’s representation in the Western world.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Kunovich and Paxton (2005), women's representation in politics is a process that comes with three visible sequential outcomes. In their model of Women in Politics, they explained that country level factors such as proportional representation and the proportion of women in the labor force for instance, influence the percentage of women included in the top hierarchies of political parties (party elites), the percentage of women selected as candidates across all political parties and the percentage of women elected. While women in top hierarchies of political parties can influence the percentage of women fielded as candidates, both have implications for the percentage of women elected. Figure 2.1. below illustrates the process of women's inclusion in politics according to Kunovich and Paxton.

Figure 2.1. The process of women's inclusion in politics.



Source: Kunovich and Paxton (2005).

From the model, these system level factors influence women's inclusion as party elites and have implications for the percentage of women elected to parliament. These factors directly influence the percentage of women in parliament, the percentage of women fielded as

candidates and the general inclusion of women in party elites. Kunovich and Paxton point out that women's literacy levels and the levels at which they are economically active in the labor force form part of the structural factors and these influence the level at which women are represented in politics. Their structural explanations suggest that "women need human and financial capital (gained through education and work experience) to stand for office (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005, p. 513). This is because, the percentage of women who are economically active as well as the proportion of women who are highly educated influence political outcomes for women.

Also, their political explanations suggest that the political system has different demands for women candidates. According to them, political and electoral systems can either hinder or promote women's representation. To quote, it is generally accepted that a "proportional representation system, rather than a plurality-majority system (e.g., as in the United States), aids women in gaining access to the political system" (Kunovich and Paxton 2005, p. 5140). They further argue that the level at which a country is democratized can affect the representation of women as candidates and their translation into legislators. Consistent with other studies (Dahlerup, 2007; Krook, 2010; Matland, 1998), they find quotas and legislative appointments as two political mechanisms used to increase women's representation in both democratic and undemocratic nations.

Quotas have proven effective in promoting gender parity within the countries that have adopted it. One IPU report states that, countries with well-designed gender quotas elect significantly more women to parliament compared to those without and this can pave way for greater gender parity (2019). Goetz (2007) affirms that today, Uganda and South Africa have recorded more women in politics than many developed countries due to affirmative action intervention.

However, Bauer (2012) states that, "in still other countries such as Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria women's organizations struggle to enact women-friendly electoral laws" (p. 370).

The ideological factors focus on how women's role and position in society either enhance or constrain the percentage of women represented in politics. They suggest that the way societies condition women affects their mentality and their perceptions. Patriarchy and cultural norms affect women's representation from individual women's decisions to enter politics, to party selection processes, and to electorates' choices of candidates on the election day. Accordingly, they support other ideological arguments that suggest that cultural ideologies can hinder women's representation even in the presence favourable political systems and socio-economic conditions (Rule and Zimmerman, 1994; Norris and Inglehart, 2001; Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). This thesis will assess these three types of structural factors, seeking to understand how they might apply to the Ghanaian context.

2.3. TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS FOR WOMEN'S LOW REPRESENTATION IN ELECTIVE POLITICS.

According to Kunovich and Paxton, "to understand female legislators, we must first understand female candidates, understanding female candidates is not enough, we must understand the factors that enhance or inhibit the translation of female candidates into legislators" (2005, p. 509). Much of the past literature on gender, politics and women's political representation are said to have ascribed the problem of women's underrepresentation to discrimination and overt bias (Visvanathan, 2012, p. 2). Visvanathan, however, argues that sociocultural opinions towards women's political participation have changed for the better, allowing more women into politics. Evidently, the contemporary literature on the topic has been expanded to include

a host of other factors identified as explanatory variables for women's underrepresentation in parliament.

The broad schools of thought on the topic have situated these explanations into political, socio-economic, and cultural factors which are consistent with the theoretical explanations guiding this study. To some scholars such as Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox in *It Still Takes a Candidate*, the traditional factors contributing to women's underrepresentation can be categorized into three main aspects. These are: sociocultural, institutional and psychological (Lawless & Fox 2010). Shvedova adds that, women's parliamentary representation is faced with certain common problems which she also categorized into political, socio-economic and ideological and psychological (Shvedova 2015, p.33). Bari (2005) further argues that the historic exclusion of women from politics is due to the multiple structural, functional and personal factors that vary among societies.

2.3.a. POLITICAL FACTORS

The political explanations for women's low representation in politics tend to focus on the electoral system, affirmative gender policy measures and the role of political parties. While electoral systems are said to constitute one of the most important factors influencing entrance to politics, political parties are often described as gatekeepers in political appointments and elections (Dahlerup, 2013; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer (2013) argue that inclusive electoral rules such as proportional representation and gender quotas play significant roles in the level at which women are visible in society's daily decision-making processes. Norris (2000) points out that some electoral systems constitute institutional barriers that impede on women's ability to become active participants of political processes.

2.3. a 1. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

According to Myers and Ann, “there is a general consensus that one of the most important political institutions to affect the nature of political representation and democratic governance is the electoral system” (2016, p. 2). This is because the electoral system often plays a significant role in determining the level at which certain interest groups are represented within society. Two general distinctions of electoral institutions have been identified by prominent theories as stated by Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer (2013). While they identified these institutions as “more inclusive” and “more exclusive”, they pointed out how Bingham Powell (2000) identified them as “proportional and majoritarian visions of democracy” whereas Norris (2008) refers to them as “power-sharing and power- concentrating” (Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer, 2013, p. 7). Using these theories, this paper employs the terms: majoritarian and proportional representation as the two types of democratic institutions that determine the rules of politics. To Norris, electoral systems allows for easier implementation of policies within parties like affirmative action for women (Norris, 1997).

Available scholarship on the relationship between electoral systems and political representation revealed that countries with proportional representation tend to promote a significant number of women in legislative bodies as compared to those with a single-member district system (Lijphart, 1994; Myers & Ann, 2016; Rule, 1987; Norris, 1997). Proportional representation systems such as mixed member proportional (MMP) and parallel systems are said to often provide women with better political opportunities while electoral systems that rely on First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) systems often fail to yield women any substantive opportunity for greater representation (Myers & Ann, 2016).

Unlike the majoritarian electoral rule that often leads to two-party systems, proportional representation system is said to also promote a multiparty democracy (Duverger, 1954),

providing avenues for greater representation of women. To Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer (2013), proportional representation promotes inclusive democracy that is representative of a variety of interest groups within society. This system may increase the number of spots for women or women's groups. On the other hand, the majoritarian rule focuses on a winner-takes-all kind of election whereby a single winner is produced and thereby limiting the number of women represented in these socio-political groups.

Though both systems are equally useful in translating votes cast into seats won by candidates, studies show that “the preferred way of electing members of parliament among the world's democracies is by the party list/proportional representation (PL/PR)” (Rule & Zimmerman 1994, p.16). Norris (1997) further observes that affirmative action policies for women often tend to be implemented more easily in proportional representation systems compared to majoritarian systems. Proportional representation is therefore said to provide motivations for political participation, indicating a government's commitment to democracy, power sharing, representation, and gender equality and consequently, “trigger emotive responses from citizens that can draw them into electoral politics” (Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer, 2012, p. 8; Norris, 1997).

Though a multi-party democracy, Ghana uses the plurality voting system based on the single-member district or first-past-the-post (FPTP), in electing members of parliament. Electorates are allowed to vote for a single candidate and the candidate who polls the most votes is declared the winner. Research has clearly shown that single-member district plurality systems (like the US and the UK) provide few incentives for women's representation within political parties whereas proportional representation systems promote it (Duverger, 1955; Norris, 1985, Rule, 1987.) The FPTP system practiced in Ghana limits the number of women candidates that parties put forward, thereby leading to a low number of women elected to the legislature. Inferring from the host of arguments against, this system, one will not be wrong to assume that,

the existing gender gap in Ghana's political system has roots attached to the nature of the country's electoral system.

2.3. a2. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Quotas

Following the 30% target set by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (1990), in promoting women in decision-making positions, world economies began to adopt affirmative gender policies aimed at achieving this goal. Dahlerup however notes that "this target was far from being met. In 1995, only 10% of the world's parliamentarians were women, in 2005, only 16%, still far from one-third (2013, p. 6). She indicates that this led to many countries seeking "fast track" policies like quotas to achieve this goal as they have proven to be very useful mechanisms for increased representation of women in decision-making processes. Gender quotas are institutional mechanisms designed to "fast track" more women into elected offices to attain the goal of women's equal representation in decision-making processes (Dahlerup, 2013).

The available literature on gender quotas has classified the concept into a variety of typologies. To scholars such as Krook (2005) and Norris (2004), gender quotas can be classified into three types, namely reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas. Krook (2010) points out that reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas share similar goals of increasing the number of women elected to political offices.

Reserved seats are often established through constitutional reforms and occasionally, electoral laws – mandating a minimum number of female legislators (Krook, 2010). On the other hand, party quotas are often adopted voluntarily by political parties to promote women's political participation and representation. Party quotas often turn to be inactive since they are voluntary mechanisms without formal sanctions. Legislative quotas, however, turn to be most effective

in many countries because they are enacted through reforms to electoral laws and sometimes constitutions. Unlike party quotas, legislative quotas are mandatory and apply to all institutions. Dahlerup defines electoral quotas as, “a type of equal opportunity measure that force the monitoring bodies, in most political systems, the political parties to recruit, nominate or select more women for political positions” (2013, p. 6).

Krook (2010) highlights four major explanations for adopting quotas. They are: (1) women rally for quotas (when women’s groups come to realize that quotas are effective in increasing women’s political representation, they are more likely to organize in support of it), (2) political leaders adopt quotas for calculated reasons (most often to compete against rival parties), (3) quotas are adopted when they fall in line with existing or developing concepts of parity and representation and (4) quotas are adopted when they are reinforced by international standards.

Gender quotas are not only effective mechanisms for increasing the numeric representation of women in politics but also effective in projecting a country’s positive image beyond national borders (Dahlerup, 2013; Paxton et al., 2007; Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2012). Kittilson argues that there are two important effects to gender quotas: they “reshape attitudes, values, and ideas towards women’s roles in politics” and “can be a powerful symbol for democracy and justice beyond national borders” (2005, p. 644). Gender quotas promote the number of women in politics but also symbolize how much governments prioritize social inclusion (Dahlerup, 2013; Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer, 2012). Adopting gender quotas shows that democracies acknowledge the existence of gender disparity within their institutions. Gender quotas thus indicate their willingness to take measures in bridging existing gender gaps. According to an IPU report, countries with well-designed gender quotas elected significantly more women to parliament compared to those without and this can pave the way for greater gender parity (2019). Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer (2012) also observe that women are likely to have higher representation in countries with gender quotas compared to countries without

quotas. Nonetheless, the IPU (2019) reveals how country-level experiences with quotas have shown that not all quotas are equally effective. Simply mandating quotas without any placement mechanisms or sanctions are said to have failed to bring about any significant breakthroughs in women's parliamentary representation.

While a shift is taking place from demands for 30% representation of women in all electoral bodies to 50% (IPU, 2019), and countries like Rwanda are making headlines for promoting women's political representation using affirmative action policies like quotas, Ghana has still not achieved the 30% target. Whereas women in Rwanda make up 61.3% of seats in the lower house, women in Ghana constitute only 13.1% of seats in parliament (IPU, 2019). According to Myers & Ann, critical mass theorists often argue that women are considered "token participants when their political participation amounts to less than 15% of the total population" and this is a challenge to their effectiveness in governance and decision-making processes (Myers & Ann, 2016, p. 4). In effect, women in Ghana's parliament are but token participants.

Studies show that the CPP government developed policies that encouraged the representation of women in politics and public life (Allah-Mensah, 2004; Nkansah, 2009). Nkrumah introduced an affirmative action Bill which was passed into law in 1960. However, research shows that this bill took a nose-dive following the overthrow of Nkrumah and has since not taken effect (Tsikata, 2009). Allah-Mensah (2004) states that the affirmative action Bill has to date remained the first and ever quota system in the history of Ghana to have allowed for 10 women to be elected unopposed as Members of Parliament.

It is worth noting that aside the 1959 quota implemented by Nkrumah, Ghana has failed to implement an affirmative action policy directly aimed at increasing women's political representation. Following the overthrow of the CPP government, Ghana was characterized by political instability due to a series of coups d'état (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Debrah, 2005; Tsikata,

2009). Subsequently, the 1959 quota was abandoned. In 1998, Cabinet issued a White Paper on an affirmative action policy, calling for 40% quota for women's representation on all government's bodies (Tsikata, 2009). However, this policy has failed to receive legislative approval to date. Owusu-Mensah (2017) also affirms that the NDC government led by the late Prof. Evans Atta Mills pledged a 40% quota of women in government, but like Krook (2010) explains, party quotas often turn to be inactive since they are voluntary mechanisms without formal sanctions. Consequently, Ghana currently has no quota towards increasing the number of women in politics.

Adopting affirmative action policies such as quotas for female enrolment in tertiary education and putting in place institutional frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality are plausible. However, they are ineffective without a quota sanctioned purposely towards increasing women's presence in politics. Should Ghana consider adopting a serious electoral quota system like Rwanda did, women in Ghana's parliament may no longer have to be token participants. This will not only promote women's effectiveness in governance and decision-making processes in Ghana but aid in correcting the imbalances in political representation.

2.3.a3. POLITICAL PARTIES.

Political parties are often referred to as "gatekeepers" when it comes to political appointments and elections (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993; Lovenduski, 2005; Paxton et al, 2007). As gatekeepers, political parties are very instrumental in selecting candidates including women to run for political offices. The nature of political parties, therefore, has implications for women's presence in politics. As observed by Paxton et al, "leftists' parties" like the Democratic Party in the US are likely to promote "traditionally under-represented group such as women" than right-wing parties like their Republican Opponents (Paxton et al, 2007, p. 270). Additional research

shows that the composition of a political party also has implications for women's presence in politics (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Paxton et al, 2007). When women occupy top positions in political parties, they are likely to advocate the selection of more women to run for political positions. They are also likely to support women candidates in various ways such as pushing for affirmative action policies for women.

Political parties that are inclined towards promoting women's political participation and representation often put in place measures to achieve their goals. Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer (2012) state that in the U.S, the Women's Leadership Forum was formed in 1993 by the Democratic Party "to raise campaign funds from women and more generally get them involved in politics" and in Argentina, the "Peronist Party" was influential in the formation of a women's movement in the early 1950s (p. 14).

Political parties have been known to cause barriers to women's representation in politics (Lovenduski, 2005; Norris and Lovenduski, 1993; Shvedova, 2005). According to Lovenduski, voters do not determine the composition of elected bodies rather, political parties do this. This is because, in most democracies, "voters choose among menus of candidates offered by political parties" (Lovenduski, 2005, p. 64). Electorates do not have power over who is elected to run on the ticket of a political party, but vote based on the limited options offered them by political parties. In this regard, parties that do not subscribe to gender parity ideologies may turn to become obstacles for women's quest to participate in politics. For instance, Lovenduski (2005) notes that political parties are the major perpetrators of patriarchy and gendered discriminations in British Politics. Shvedova reiterates that,

The selection and nomination process within political parties is also biased against women in that 'male characteristics' are emphasized and often become the criteria in selecting candidates. An 'old boys' club' can inhibit and prevent women from integrating themselves

into their party's work. This in turn impacts on the perception of women as viable candidates on the part of those who provide money for election campaigns (2005, p.37).

In Ghana, where little priority is placed on party ideology or nature, political explanations for women's low representation in politics often focus on the composition of political parties and its implications for women's access to political networks, and financial support for women candidates. Despite the fact that women play vital roles in campaigning and mobilizing support for their political parties, they barely occupy decision-making spots in these structures due to institutionalised gendered discrimination within most political parties. Gretchen Bauer (2017) explains that, in Ghana, just as in many other African countries with plurality majority systems, party primaries become the critical moment for women because primaries are especially costly for women who are likely to have fewer resources and for whom fundraising is much more challenging.

The inability of political parties to substantively support women in politics turns to leave gaps in most political democracies which often leads to the underrepresentation of women in governance. It is in this peripheral field Allah-Mensah (2009) blames parties and argues that they contribute significantly to the low representation of women in Ghanaian politics. Allah-Mensah further stresses several factors such as steep financial conditionality, male-dominated structures in political parties which tend to favour men as well as consideration of ethnic, religious, and regional factors over gender. Though she recognizes that the few women in politics are there through the women's wings of political parties, she explains that, in most cases, such actions are a tokenistic and concealed approach aimed at persuading women to vote for the men.

Aside from the cost, women often do not receive the same party endorsements that men get. Selecting a woman for party primaries is often considered a risk as not all political elites support

the idea that the woman may win the contested seat. In an interview, the NDC candidate for Ayawaso West Wuogon (Mr. Delali Kwasi Brempong) is reported to have said, “the most important thing is that, NPP made a mistake, they chose a woman” (Awuni, 2019, n.p.). To him, the biggest mistake made by a political party is in electing a woman to represent them (NPP) in the by-election.

Though these misogynistic comments received several condemnations, they provide evidence for the existence of gendered discriminations within political parties at a time where governments, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders are advocating for increased participation and representation of women in parliament. These derogatory perspectives may contribute to women’s low representation in Ghanaian politics, and suggest that an examination of elite attitudes is worthwhile: if party members and sitting legislators do not feel that women are competent parliamentarians or competitive candidates, it is unlikely that things will change without more drastic, systematic measures.

Similarly, women politicians and the feminine race in general are often criticized for contributing to the low representation of women in Ghana’s political democracy. This is because women politicians tend to be divided by political party affiliations and are often seen antagonizing among themselves instead of creating a united front for the cause of promoting women's issues. Sossou (2011) observes that most women in Ghana will be reluctant to vote for a female president should a woman be courageous to stand for the position. According to one participant from her study, “women are their worst enemies ...if one woman decides to excel, we defame the person and do nothing to encourage one another” (Sossou, 2011, p. 5). This is consistent with Shvedova’s (2005) argument that women are their own enemies.

Another example can be cited of Hon. Ursula Owusu’s bid to take the Ablekumah South constituency. She faced several misogynist criticisms: most of which labelled her as a

prostitute, a bitch and an unfaithful divorced woman. Many electorates were not prepared to have a woman of her supposed calibre lead the constituency. Interestingly, among her opposers were women. Most people within her own political party neither cared about her educational background nor work experience but were more particular about the various derogatory fabrications making waves in the Ghanaian media at the time. From a newspaper report, one lady was stated to have said:

“it is matter of public knowledge that Ursula was divorced by her doctor husband because of her adulterous relationship with Akufo-Addo and she thinks that we will make her our candidate so that the NDC people will have a field day in 2012... as a woman, I am not about to vote for an adulterous woman who will not be a good role model for we the young girls” (Ghanaweb, 2010).

Another candidate who happened to be a resident of where Ursula grew up is also reported to have said that she will not vote for Ursula because she cannot cook. She is quoted to have said, “I will not vote for a woman who does not know how to cook. It may be trivial but that is the reason why I will not vote for Ursula to become our MP” (Ghanaweb, 2010).

This is not to say political parties have been totally ineffective in promoting women’s presence in politics. In fact, political parties in Ghana have made significant efforts in promoting women in politics since independence. In 2016, the CPP elected a female running mate. Also, the NDC and NPP have reduced filing fees to half for the female candidates. However, these have been labelled ineffective as the proportion of women elected to run on the ticket of political parties is always low. Perhaps, political parties need to consider advocating legislative measures like electoral gender quotas in ensuring that women are equally represented in politics. According to Ablakwah,

Political parties must reserve a quota of their strong holds for women. After all these decades, we are not making progress; but rather we are declining. The tokenism where political parties reduce filing fees by half for women is not enough; I even think it is an insult to our women. Can't we have laws that a percentage of our constituency should be reserved for women (Lartey, 2019, n. p).

However, studies from other jurisdictions have shown that women's political success occurs with or without any recognizable help from political parties. As observed by Canadian scholars, Bittner and Goodyear-Grant (2013), women's representation in Newfoundland (NL) politics has often occurred without the actions of political parties. This success has been partially attributed to the vibrancy of a very active women's movement in the province. Unfortunately, most women in Ghana do not have such a vibrant and robust base from which they can develop political networks due to the lack of corporation between women politicians and women organizations. Tsikata (2009) argues that there exists a host of women's movements working hard to make impacts in the political system yet most of them are barely active and vibrant. Many of these organization are also spearheaded by men who in the long run may be canvassing votes from these women (Allah-Mensah, 2009). Taken as a whole, the political institutional structures in Ghana are not set up in a way that is supportive of women's presence in politics, and the discussion of political parties shows that party elites themselves may pose a barrier due to misogynistic and archaic attitudes about women's place in society.

2.3.b. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Socio-economic conditions are critical factors that play a significant role in limiting the representation of women in the arena of politics and leadership of both long-standing and new democracies. According to Shvedova (2005), women's social and economic status in society

has a direct impact on the level at which they can participate in elected bodies. She notes that the economic status of women in society has a direct impact on their recruitment to participate in political institutions and elected bodies. She further explains that the economic conditions of third world countries have intensified the risk of poverty for women and thereby leading to the increased feminization of poverty. Also, evidence from extensive research over the years indicates that many women in the workforce hold positions that are undervalued and attract meagre wages and thereby increasing their level of poverty (Golberg & Kremen 1990; Karam, 1998; Shvedova, 2005).

Women's high poverty rates are therefore attributed to the fact that most of their economic activities attract little or no income. This burden of poverty borne by women as a result of their low-income earnings, unpaid labor, lack of adequate education and women's dual responsibilities impact negatively on their ability to participate actively in politics. Feminization of poverty implies that women are the poorest compared to their male counterparts thus majority of women will have little or no resources to organize and finance political processes. Shvedova quoted Razia Faiz, (former MP, Bangladesh) as having said:

the two most overwhelming obstacles for women in entering parliament are lack of constituents and lack of financial resources. Women move from their father's home to their husband's home...They are like refugees. They have no base from which to develop contacts with the people or to build knowledge and experiences about the issues. Furthermore, they have no money of their own; the money belongs to their fathers, their husbands or their in-laws. Given the rising cost of running an effective campaign, this poses another hurdle for women in developing world" (qtd. 2005, p. 39).

This section will assess the roles of the feminization of poverty, illiteracy, and education levels in influencing women's representation in formal politics.

2.3.b1. FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY.

According to one report from the UN Women, more women than men live in poverty, are hungrier and discriminated against across the world. Specifically, the report records that, between the ages 25 to 34 there are 122 women who live in extreme poverty for every 100 men in that age group (UN Women, 2018). This is as a result of the increasing gender discrimination in salaries, recruitment, promotion and women's unpaid labour activities. Shvedova also observes that in most countries, women's unpaid labour activities "amount to twice that of men and the economic value of women's unpaid labour is estimated to be around one-third of the world's economic production", consequently resulting in what is termed "feminization of poverty" (2005, p. 42).

Women's unpaid domestic activities often constrain their roles in the public sphere. Waylen argues that "as for many women, particularly the less well-off, domestic responsibilities make participation in the formal electoral arena particularly at national level more difficult than for many men" (2007, p. 6). This is because, the majority of women's unpaid household chores do not in any way empower them for social recognition. Most women easily get burnout and eventually give up their political roles and ambitions. Unfortunately, the private-public dichotomy has rendered the domestic activities performed by women apolitical hence do not count towards their contributions to the politics of the state. In the quest to survive, fulfil the basic needs of the family while being active in politics, most women may end up drawing back from politics as they find their dual roles hefty.

The feminization of poverty describes a phenomenon under which women represent a disproportionate percentage of the poor in society (Chant, 2006; Pearce, 1978). This phenomenon is not only the result of a lack of income but also the combination of various factors such as the lack of equal opportunities due to structured gender roles in most societies,

family organization, inequality in the access to public services, inequality in social protection and labour market among others.

Like many developing countries, women's presence in politics in Ghana is also constrained by poverty, rendering them financially handicapped. Boateng (2014) indicates that poverty has been moved from the focus on income to include exclusion from social goods and services. He further explains that, women in Ghana through gender socialization are made to embrace social exclusion as a norm in the Ghanaian cultural system. To him,

patriarchy and androcentrism combine to mask and trivialize concerns of children and women depriving them with the legitimate opportunity to participate meaningfully within the 'malestream' or 'menstream' characterizing the Ghanaian society. The result is feminization of poverty experienced by women of all ages (Boateng 2004, p. 5).

Owusu-Afriyie and Nketiah-Amponsah (2014) affirm that women are more represented in the ranks of poverty compared to men in Ghana. A greater portion of female households in Ghana, according to Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena (2001), lies below the \$1 per person per day poverty line. Allah-Mensah (2009) indicates that steep financial conditionalities often favour men over women within political parties.

Consistent with Allah-Mensah's (2005) claim, poverty among women in Ghana may inhibit their representation in politics as a result of their inability to meet the huge financial cost associated with political campaigns in the country. To Tsikata (2009), women's inability to mobilize funds for political activities further worsens their attempt to make significant contributions to the country's political system. As noted by Sossou (2011), "women do not have the necessary resources and capital to engage in active politics because, politics is very expensive, and most women are handicapped financially" (p. 4). The lack of financial resources, therefore, has negative implications for women's presence in politics.

2.3.b2. ILLITERACY.

According to the Hobbesian theory on the state of nature, humans have the natural capacity to determine right from wrong or good from evil (Bobbio, 1993; Fromm, 2011). Similarly, people have acquired some form of knowledge before the introduction of formal education. This means that no one is totally ignorant of the politics of their environment. Stromquist (1990) argues that being illiterate does not equate to being ignorant, yet, being able to write and read is a fundamental need of every society. For this reason, women's literacy is not measured by their informal knowledge but by formal education that teaches an individual how to read, write and critically analyse policies. Within an increasingly technological global system, research shows that educational levels play significant roles in the number of seats held by women in parliament as well as influence the level of personal power acquired in contributing to national development (Matland, 1998; Stromquist, 1990).

Women are often said to take up courses that train them to become good wives instead of effective leaders. According to UNICEF (2018) report, although many more women than men graduate, fewer achieve degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. (STEM). This has implications for their social, political and economic participation across the globe. In spite of this, one study shows that, educated women do not only possess better multitasking and analytical skills but often become better mothers and wives (Stromquist, 1990). Thus, educating women empowers them to express themselves and make meaningful contributions to societal development.

According to Owusu-Mensah, "education is the key to unlocking opportunities and potentials" (2017, p. 69). The Ghana Living Standards Survey round six (GLSS6) (2013) prepared by the GSS indicates that the Ghanaian government has formulated several educational policies including: Capitation Grant, School Feeding Programme, and access to functional literacy

programmes. These policies are aimed at ensuring that citizens acquire the needed skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to develop themselves and contribute to society. However, educational statistics in Ghana show that more males than females are enrolled and retained in school. The table below provides a statistical representation of both men and women’s levels of education in Ghana as of 2012-2013.

Table 2.3. Levels of Education

Level of education attained	Both sexes	Females	Males
Never been to school	19.7	24.3	14.6
Less than MSLC/BECE	44.6	44.7	44.5
MSLC/BECE/vocational	20.9	19.3	22.8
Secondary/SSS/SHS and higher	14.7	11.7	18.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: www.statsghana.gov.gh. (GLSS6, 2012-2013. ages 15years and older).

The report records that, the proportion of females who have never been to school (24. 3%) is higher than for males. Also, 44.7% have attained educational levels below Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC), or Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). 19.3% of the population also has MSLC/BECE/(vocational) and only 11.7% have secondary education or higher (SHS/SSS).

Odame (2010) observes that the low education status of women inhibits their political representation. Though recent reports show a fair number of girls enrolled in basic and secondary education, this study shows that a significantly low number of women make it to the tertiary level compared to boys. The gender disparity in tertiary education may be partly explained in consistency with Manuh’s (1993) argument that the education girls receive are mostly to prepare them for motherhood and housewifery. According to the 2018 Global

Education Monitory Report, women in Ghana accounts for less than one-quarter of all STEM degrees (p. 15).

A low level of education works hand-in-hand with poverty which in the long run, has implications for women's presence in politics. Access to higher education therefore empowers women socially, economically and politically, whereas the lack of it may result in women having little or limited knowledge on how to be effective in the formal decision-making bodies of the country. In a study, Sossou (2011) reports how many participants asserted that the main aim behind girls' training in Ghana is to make them good wives for their husbands and good mothers to their children. Participants, however, believe that given proper education and training, women may become politically active.

2.3.c. CULTURAL FACTORS

Customary cultural barriers such as misogynistic norms and patriarchy have been pointed out by scholars as one of the major obstacles to women's representation in politics (Ginwala, 2005; Shvedova, 2005). In Africa, culture plays a significant role in determining the levels at which women are involved in politics (Peprah et al, 2018). The socialization process of women has made most of them believe that they are subordinate to men and that their place is in the domestic arena and even within the home, their place is in 'the kitchen' (Eyinde, 2010). This has greatly affected their ability to confidently step out of their traditional comfort zones into the public domain. According to Paxton et al. (2007), the private-public dichotomy and the idea that women are incapable of participating in politics have dominated political theory for a very long time. They state that "it took until the twentieth century for feminist political theorists to challenge these notions", arguing for women's activities in the private sphere to be treated as political issues (Paxton et al., 2007, p. 271). This would have been a comforting justification

for their political participation, but this is not the case: women's domestic activities are still considered apolitical in many societies. Thus, most of the traditional explanations for women's (lack of) presence in politics and public life suggest that various cultural beliefs, practices, values, norms, religion and other cultural traits characterizing a society affect women's recruitment into public offices (Bari, 2005; Peprah et al, 2018; Lawless & Fox 1999, 2010; Shvedova, 1998).

Peprah et al. (2018) argue that the domestic roles assigned to women usually dissuade them from mainstream politics, suggesting that they serve as structural impediments for women who wish to navigate the political arena. Rule (1987) affirms that structural barriers exist and impact on women's political representation all over the world. Lawless and Fox (1999) further agree that culture plays a prominent role in determining the level at which women partake in activities outside of the confines of the home.

Political participation requires that citizens including women are visible in every aspect of a society's political process. However, Bari (2005) notes that most cultures place limitations on women's mobility and this impacts on their ability to engage in active politics. For instance, women are said to be faced with cultural restrictions on their movement through certain mechanisms such as "sex segregation and purdah (a culture of seclusion and secrecy)" which limit their exposure to the larger political system (Bari, 2005, p. 5; Callaway, 1984, p. 431; Enyinde, 2010, p. 2). Paxton, et al. agree that cultural ideologies about women often play significant roles in the level at which women are represented throughout the political process, "from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates, to the decisions made by voters on Election Day" (2007, p. 271). The patriarchal nature of societies also impacts on women's political participation and representation. To Shvedova (2005), the division of labour based on sex are present in most patriarchal societies and militate against

women's presence in politics. Ideologically, women are perceived to be inferior to men. As a result, societal roles and responsibilities are often divided to enforce this ideology.

Though culture affects women's ability to participate in politics across the globe, cultural beliefs towards women in politics varies among countries. Using explanations available from the traditional literature to conclude on Ghana's situation may not be totally acceptable as most of these explanations are often Eurocentric. Matland agrees that while the importance of political culture is being increasingly emphasized, "developing good measures of cultural differences is quite difficult" (1998, p. 113). This is because culture is unique to context and often, strategies applied in solving a cultural problem in one context, may prove ineffective in other contexts.

Institutionalised cultural beliefs are very much inherent in Ghanaian societies and are manifested in several ways including gendered proverbs, religion, and practices such as division of roles and responsibilities. Gendered proverbs, patriarchal societal structures, and women's perception of politics have therefore been identified in this paper as some of the cultural factors that often make it complex for women to represent and be adequately represented in Ghanaian politics.

2.3.c1. GENDERED PROVERBS

Proverbs are often a medium for the expression of gendered norms and practices across Ghana. Research on the characterization of men and women in a peasant society in Northern Sweden, for instance, shows that the gendered perspectives found in proverbs often form a system of "gender hegemony that supports masculine superiority and feminine subordination" (Anderson, 2012, p.10). In Ghana, Asimeng-Boahene finds that, "the use of proverbs has

become the tool through which men control positions of social and economic influence by limiting women's participation to domestic spheres" (2013, p.126). In support, Diabah & Appiah-Amfo (2015) add that, Akan proverbs are often gendered, mostly presenting women in a stereotypical way, which can be "interpreted as derogatory, negative or subservient" (p.3). They argued that the consequence of these cultural perspectives on women's roles and image in Ghanaian societies is that, "women become non-productive dependents on men, which then weakens their bargaining power both at home and within larger society" (Diabah & Appiah-Amfo, 2015, p.5). This basically means that, cultural perceptions on women have the power to affect their effectiveness in decision-making processes including mainstream politics.

For instance, the Ghanaian gendered proverb; "If a woman buys a gun, she leaves it in a man's room" depicts the notion that the woman is a weaker sex who is incapable of handling a gun (which is a symbol of power). Similarly, the saying that, "a woman is a flower in a garden, her husband is the fence around it" also connotes the understanding that women are weak and need the protection of men. These proverbs have become tools used to construct a society that is highly patriarchal, favouring men over women. They also depict how women are subordinated to the authority of men revealing how Ghanaian societies perceive women.

African proverbs are often circulated through various means including songs, rhymes, religious teachings and television programs. Asimeng-Boahene states that, "African proverbs are expressed not only in words, but also in the language of the drums and even in the patterns woven in cloth. He further explains that articulating African proverbs through these various means have "facilitated the transmission of knowledge and conventions which socially construct women's positions in the society" (2013, p. 124).

2.3.c2. PATRIARCHY.

Research shows that patriarchy is very much institutionalised in most democracies thereby impacting on women's political representation (Sossou, 2011). One study shows that, "the seed of democracy lies in the principle that the legitimacy of the power to make decisions about people's lives, their society and their country should derive from a choice by those who will be affected" (Ginwala, as quoted in IDEA, 2005, p.12), and democracy is known to have historically favoured men than women, enforcing the private-public dichotomy as a foundation for most forms of contemporary democracies. Women must therefore be allowed to make decisions or partake in making decisions that affect them as a unit.

The Ghanaian society is deeply entrenched in the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and femininity, promoting the man as the head of the home. In effect, the woman's private sphere where she may assume some autonomy is as well controlled by the man in the person of either her husband or father. To Connell, "hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (1995, p.77). Thus, hegemonic masculinity guarantees the acceptance and compliance with patriarchy. Corresponding to the wider understanding of this concept, women in Ghanaian societies (be they patrilineal or matrilineal), often tend to be subjected to male domination. In most circumstances, men determine if a woman will be active in politics or not. Even when women turn to be active in politics, their choices or decisions are often influenced by those of men. Men sometimes exert pressure on their wives, influencing their decisions to join a political party, contest elections and the candidates they vote for. In a study, one participant said, "Our husbands will not even encourage us, and they will even tell us the political party to vote for" (Sossou, 2011, p.5). Inferring from this, it is reasonable to assume that men in Ghanaian society hardly encourage their women to participate in politics. In situations where men are supportive, they tend to influence decisions and choices of the women

in question by dictating to them which political party to join or which candidate they vote for. These studies suggest that understanding the attitudes of Ghanaian women and men is likely to provide some important insights into the future of women's representation.

2.3.c3. WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF POLITICS

Culture often influences the way people think, including how they conceptualize things around them. Culture therefore plays a role in how women understand and perceive the concept of politics as well as their abilities to participate effectively in politics. According to Fox and Lawless (2011), "the most potent explanation for the gender gap in political ambition is that women are less likely than men to view themselves as qualified to enter the electoral arena" (p. 60). Shvedova also finds that women often tend to perceive politics as a "dirty game" which they wish not to be associated with (2005, p. 45).

In Ghana, Tsikata (2009) finds that the use of stereotypes, insults, and aggression during political contests creates insecurity which diminishes women's quest for participation. Thus, family members and friends often discourage women who show interest in politics from participating due to the culture of insults, electoral violence and threats often associated with politics in Ghana. Tsikata (2009) cites the example of electoral violence that took place during the 2006 general election. She notes that women were being abused by their spouses for merely showing interest in contesting the local government elections. As a result, out of a total of 16 women who picked up the nomination forms, 8 of them were returned. In an interview, one veteran politician, Maame-Dokono, also revealed that she has no interest in pursuing politics again in her life due to the many insults she received. She said,

the disgrace and insults I received for going into politics openly were too much for me. I have learnt my lessons and will not go into politics again. Even if I will go into politics, I will be behind the scenes and not as openly as I did in the past (Dadzie, 2018, n. p).

A study by the International Republican Institute (IRI) on women's political participation in Ghana also finds that women often stay away from contesting political positions for fear of insults and negative societal perspectives. According to the report, one respondent who identified as a Muslim during the focused group discussions said that women are not allowed to lead in her religion...

so, for that matter, if you have the courage to do it, they will discourage you because as a woman you must be with your husband and take care of your children. Most of the women in politics flirt with men so because of that I had to ask for a divorce (Allotey, 2018, n. p).

Though many of these institutionalized cultural beliefs often prove difficult to measure given the fact that they tend to emerge from formidable attitudes rather than formal or legal barriers, they affect women's presence in politics through various means. In other words, cultural barriers to women's presence in politics are very formidable and people's ideologies and perspectives affect women's decision to run. It may be much easier to create a quota for women, than tell people to change their cultural orientations. Unfortunately, these cultural perspectives have found their ways into mainstream politics and seem to be affecting women's presence in major political decision-making processes. Though evidence abounds that certain cultural practices hinder women's presence in politics (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Sossou, 2011; Shvedova, 2005), experience has also shown how difficult it is to make changes to cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Trokosi in Ghana. With regards to proverbs, Yitah states that "sexist ideologies" and "discriminatory rhetoric" in proverbs are not questioned

because they are believed to be created by the ancestors who are always deemed right (2012, p.10).

2.4. CONCLUSION.

The literature suggests that social, economic and political barriers provide explanatory variables for women's (lack of) presence in politics (Collier, 1974; Dersnah, n.d; Matland, 1998; Pateman 2015; Shvedoda, 2005). As suggested by Kunovich and Paxton (2005), these structural factors influence the extent to which women are present in formal politics. An assessment of these three types of factors indicates that there are numerous obstacles that women face in making their ways through politics in Ghana, and that no single explanation accounts for the presence of women in the legislature.

This discussion also suggests that more examination of political attitudes, and in particular, attitudes about gender equality and women's role in politics is worthwhile. Existing studies suggest that cultural factors may be a very large impediment to women's participation, and unless institutional change is made, women may not enter into politics in larger numbers anytime soon. This thesis attempts to look more at this issue, and the next chapter will focus on the methodology and design which forms the basis of analysis in this study.

CHAPTER THREE.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. INTRODUCTION.

This study aims at exploring the obstacles to women's representation in politics in Ghana, and in particular, to assess the role of attitudes about gender equality. To investigate my research questions stated in chapter one, I will employ a quantitative research design using secondary survey data collected by the Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana (2017), conducted with sitting parliamentarians. The survey data will aid in evaluating Ghanaian legislators' attitudes towards the factors affecting women's presence in Ghana's political democracy, in addition to how they feel about the topic of gender equality and the extent to which they perceive gender disparities.

One of the barriers to understanding the role of women's representation in Ghana is lack of data. These survey data have been made available to me by the scholars who fielded the survey, and while they are imperfect and I did not design the questions, these data should be able to shed important light on political attitudes, and the extent to which cultural factors may be impeding women's presence in formal politics. This chapter will describe the data, the collection process, and the analyses conducted for this thesis.

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY DATA

The survey data was obtained from a study conducted for the Department of Political Science: University of Ghana in 2017. The objective for collecting the primary data was to investigate how the Ghanaian government has responded to the problem of gender inequality from 2001-2016, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The survey data also

aimed to assess the various gender policy measures adopted by government from 2001-2016 and of most important to this study is the objective of examining perceptions of the factors hindering gender equality in Ghana. ³

These data are useful for three main reasons:

1. The participants are the representatives of the entire citizenry whose responses may also reflect the attitudes of the members in their constituencies.
2. Legislators' attitudes to the topic are not only coming from an elitist point of view but also from the point of view of those who have first-hand knowledge of the problem. This is because legislators (includes both men and women) have competed in campaigns and elections and are thus expected to have some sense of the types of obstacles that may prevent gender parity in Ghana's democracy.
3. The survey which sought to investigate the factors hindering gender inequality issues in the country was conducted with sitting parliamentarians who are responsible for enacting gender sensitive laws. Their responses are not only relevant in analysing their perceptions of gender disparities in parliament but may also be relevant in predicting the factors militating against gender parity in political representation in Ghana.

³ The survey data is a secondary data obtained in its raw state and analysed using the SPSS. In accessing the survey dataset, I contacted Dr Isaac Owusu Mensah, a senior Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, who provided me access to the dataset. The primary surveys were distributed in the form of questionnaires to the sitting parliamentarians. Simple Random Sampling technique was used to provide each of the sitting parliamentarians equal opportunity to be selected for the study. It must be noted that the analysis of this dataset, however, was solely carried out by me (present author), where simple frequencies, charts and tables were derived using the SPSS.

3.3. STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE OF THE DATA.

The Ghanaian legislature is made up of a total of 275 members and this constituted the study population. According to the study's coordinator Owusu-Mensah (2017), the initial aim of the study was to interview 20% (55) of the 275 members of parliament: constituting 15% female respondents and 85% male respondents which is reflective of the legislature. However, a few women MPs refused to answer the questionnaires thereby reducing the total number of questionnaires administered to parliamentarians to 51 (46 males and 5 females) instead of the 55 projected (Owusu-Mensah, 2017). These data are imperfect and do not capture the attitudes of all sitting members of the parliament, unfortunately. But data availability is a major problem in this context, and it is expected that these data will still provide important insights that can be applied to better understand attitudes to women's presence in politics in Ghana.

Members of parliament are highly educated members of society who are responsible for law making including policies that are expected to promote women's presence in politics. As members of an institution responsible for making laws that promote equality in all public institutions, members of parliament are an ideal group of individuals to survey, as their responses are likely to reflect government's commitment to gender equality, and their perceptions will help us to understand elite attitudes about these issues, and the potential for change in Ghana.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. The analyses presented are the results of simple univariate and bivariate statistical analyses. The goal for this thesis is to provide a simple description of the attitudes of parliamentarians, therefore I do not present any multivariate statistics. Descriptive analysis enables simple statistical summaries about the

sample's perceptions and attitudes, providing a starting point for understanding parliamentarians' attitudes about women in politics. Walliman (2011) explains that descriptive analysis deals with examining a situation in order to describe the norm. Descriptive analysis provides a stepping-stone for the development of further quantitative studies, and later in this thesis I make some suggestions for further research.

3.5. CONCLUSION.

There are many explanations provided for the existing gender disparities in politics in the academic literature. The theoretical framework guiding this research project indicates that women's unequal political representation can be attributed to many structural factors, including political institutions, socio-economic factors, and cultural factors. By assessing parliamentarians' attitudes to these various issues, we are able to better understand all three, as their perceptions are likely to provide us with cultural insights, as well as their insights into the role of political and socio-economic factors. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the available data.

CHAPTER FOUR.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of the survey data. The study is focused on investigating perceptions of the factors accounting for the low representation of women in Ghanaian politics, by examining a survey of parliamentarians conducted in 2017. By looking at these data, I will be able to assess legislators' perspectives about the respective roles of political factors, socio-economic factors, and cultural factors in hindering gender equality issues. As the data generally captures the factors hindering gender equality issues in the country, it becomes useful for our understanding of the same problem within the legislature. Thus, the results give us a fuller picture of the barriers to women's representation in Ghana's political system including the legislature.

4.1. THE SURVEY

The survey covers a host of issues, involving some that are central to this study: questions on government's knowledge of the existence of gender disparities, government's responses in addressing gender gaps in all institutions, and the factors hindering gender equality issues in the country. I will begin by providing background of the sample of 51 legislators who responded to the survey, then I will summarize their responses to the attitudinal variables.

4.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES.

Table 4.1 provides descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) of the background of the participants. It reflects characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, educational levels, and political affiliations.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	46	90.2
Female	5	9.8
Total	51	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
18-30years	3	5.9
31-40years	32	62.7
41-50years	9	17.6
51-60years	7	13.7
Total	51	100.0
<i>Occupation</i>		
Civil Servant	45	88.2
Self Employed	51	100.0
Total		
<i>Level of Education</i>		
Secondary/Vocational	2	3.9
First degree or HND	22	43.1
Master	23	45.1
PhD	4	7.8
Total	51	100.0
<i>Party Affiliation</i>		
NPP	36	70.6
NDC	15	29.4
Total	51	100

Out of 51 participants, only 5 were women representing 9.8% of the total sample. Three (3) participants (representing 5.9%) were between the ages of 18-30 years and the majority of them (32 representing 62.7%) were between the ages of 31-40 years. Also, 9 of the respondents were between the ages of 41-50 years (representing 17.6%) while 7 were between the ages of 51-60 years (representing 13.7%). Six participants (representing 11.8%) indicate they were civil servants while 45 participants (representing 88.2%) indicate they were self-employed. The majority of the participants (23 representing 45.1%) were master's degree holders, and a significant proportion of the participants (43.1%) were bachelor's degree/diploma holders. Four participants representing (7.8%) had their Ph.D.'s while 2 participants (3.9%) indicate they had secondary/vocational education. With regards to their political affiliation, a sizeable number of the sampled individuals, 36 (70.6%) belonged to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) while the remaining participants (15 (29.4%)) indicated they belonged to the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

The demographic information is included to provide insights into the backgrounds of these parliamentarians. Because there are so few respondents in the survey, however, the analysis that follows will not disaggregate by demographic factors. Gender is central to the study, but because there are only five women in the sample, for example, I will not break out responses by sex or any other demographic variable. Responses to attitudinal questions that follow will be looked at amongst the sample as a whole, to provide a general sense of the perceptions and opinions of parliamentarians.

4.1.2. GENDER INEQUALITY: AWARENESS AND EXPLANATIONS AMONG PARLIAMENTARIANS

Members of Parliament were asked if they are aware of the existence of gender disparities: 98% answered in the affirmative while 2% answered no. This large number of participants who answered ‘yes’ shows that; lawmakers are fully aware of the existing gender gaps within all government institutions including parliament (see Figure 4.1).

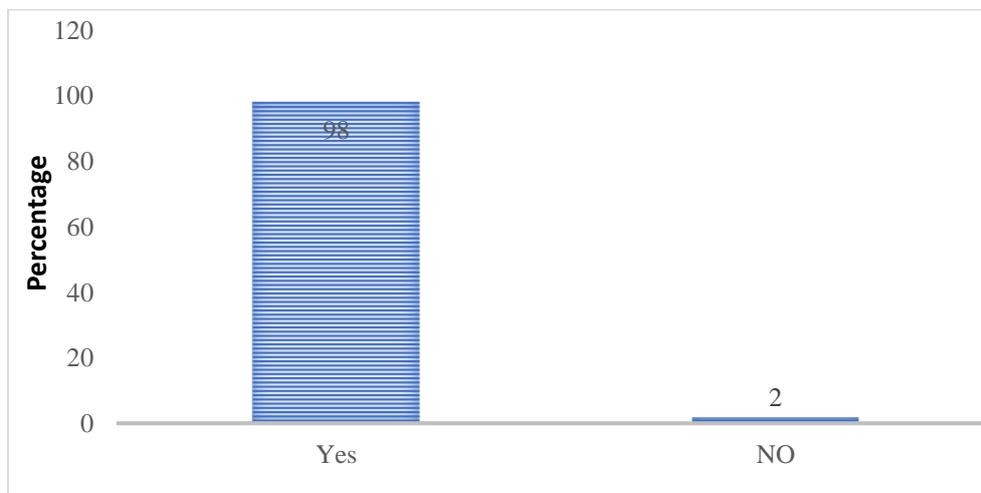


Figure 4.1: Respondents’ awareness of gender inequality

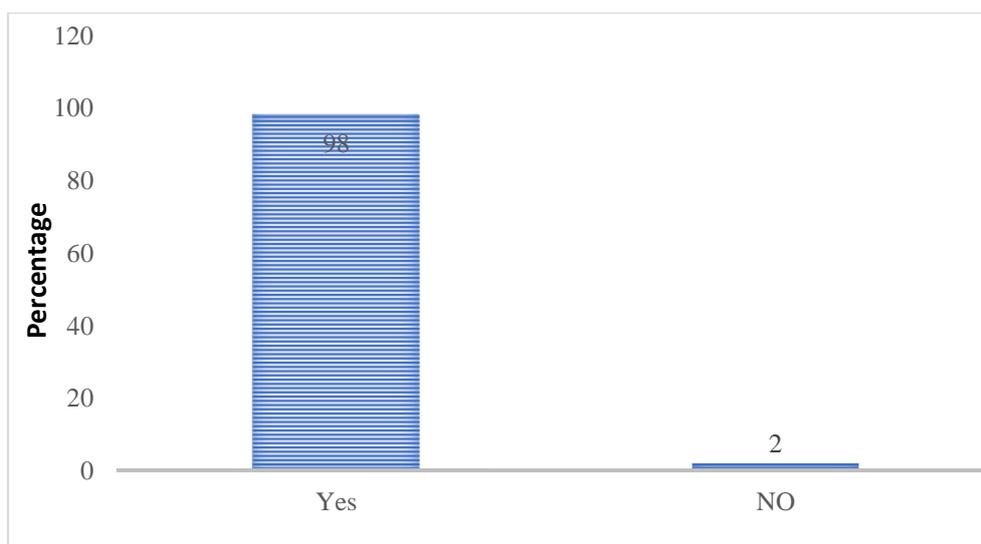


Figure 4.2: Awareness of Government of Ghana's commitment to bridging gender inequality in any form

Members of Parliament were also asked if they were aware of the government of Ghana’s commitment to bridging gender inequality in any form and promoting women’s roles in societies and all public institutions including the legislature. Figure 4.2 indicates that 98% answered in the affirmative while 2% said they weren’t aware of such commitments. These data suggest that lawmakers in Ghana are fully aware of the existence of gender disparities and the government’s efforts to make change. Interestingly, they also appear to believe that government has done enough to raise awareness about gender issues, as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Is the government of Ghana and all stakeholders in gender equality issues doing enough to raise awareness of issues of gender equality?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cum. Percent
Yes	42	82.4	82.4	82.4
No	9	17.6	17.6	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

I will return to this finding later in the chapter, but the results in Table 4.2 provide an early indication that parliamentarians are not necessarily supportive of doing more to improve women’s equality. Before returning to this finding, I will focus on legislators’ beliefs about what the problem is, and why it is that gender equality may be an issue in Ghana.

When asked what they think are the factors that generally hinder gender equality issues in the country, a substantial number of participants (45.1%) stated that cultural and religious beliefs hinder gender equality in all institutions.

Table 4.3: Factors hindering gender equality issues in the country

	Frequency	Percent
Male Supremacy Syndrome	12	23.5
Cultural and religious beliefs	23	45.1
Females belittling themselves	2	3.9
Illiteracy	3	5.9
Economic hardship	4	7.8
Political actors not interested in gender equality	5	9.8
Approach adopted by these gender advocates is too strong	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0

Table 4.3 summarizes these findings: 23.5% stated that male supremacy syndrome hinders gender equality, 3.9% stated that gender inequalities persist because women often belittle themselves (women perceiving themselves incapable of the task of public office), 5.9% pointed to illiteracy, 7.8% stated that economic hardships hinder gender equality, and 9.8% suggested that gender gaps exist in the country's political institutions because political actors are not interested in promoting gender equality. Another 3.9% of the participants stated that the approaches adopted by gender advocates often prove too strong. Perceptions among legislators of the factors limiting gender equality cut across socio-economic, political and cultural angles. These data also suggest that legislators identify cultural factors as having the greatest role in hindering gender equality issues in the country.

4.3.a. POLITICAL FACTORS

The literature suggests that institutional/political factors play an essential role in influencing women’s representation. The structures of elections and rules of the game (including electoral systems, quotas and affirmative action, and the role of parties) have an important effect on women’s presence in formal politics. 9.8% of the responding parliamentarians believe that gender inequalities exist in the country’s political systems due to political actors not being interested in promoting gender equality, furthermore, 3.9% of the respondents also believe that the approaches adopted by most gender advocates are too strong. Taken together, these data demonstrate that there is not a lot of political will among the ruling class to take additional measures to improve women’s equality.

When asked about what types of policies government has enacted in the past, legislators refer primarily to affirmative action, but also refer in large numbers to education policy (see table 4.4). If legislators are thinking about affirmative action policies when they think about legislation, it makes sense that they think that approaches being adopted are “too strong”—affirmative action, while effective, is highly contentious around the world.

Table 4.4: Can you name some of the policies if your answer in 5 is Yes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Affirmative action	36	70.6	70.6	70.6
Interstate Sucession law	2	3.9	3.9	74.5
Valid Girl child education policy	10	19.6	19.6	94.1
NA	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

A strong majority of legislators indicated that the implementation of these policies did indeed improve gender issues, as seen in Table 4.5, and that these improvements included primarily

increasing women’s involvement in leadership positions as well as raising awareness of the importance of gender equality (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Did the implementation of these policies improve gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	37	72.5	72.5	72.5
No	13	25.5	25.5	98.0
NA	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6: If yes, in what ways?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Creating awareness on the importance of gender equality	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
Progressive involvement of women in politics and other leadership positions	23	45.1	45.1	64.7
Higher number of girl child admission	4	7.8	7.8	72.5
NA	14	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Finally, when asked if the government is doing enough to address gender issues, the majority indicated that they believed enough was being done, as seen in table 4.7, where 74.5% of those legislators who responded to this survey were satisfied with the actions that the government had taken to address gender issues.

Table 4.7: Is the Ministry of Children Affairs/ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection doing enough to address gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	38	74.5	74.5	74.5
No	13	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

As seen in Table 4.2 above, 82% of parliamentarians are satisfied with the government—and all stakeholders in gender equality issues—are doing enough to raise awareness of gender inequality. There does appear to be a bit of a disconnect: a belief that gender inequality is a serious issue, awareness that the government has been active, and yet this is coupled with satisfaction with government efforts, even though we know that there are large disparities in equality. Only 17.6% said that the Ghanaian government is not doing enough. There may be appetite for more change.

Ghana has not sanctioned a legislative quota even though quota systems are widely used by many countries to promote women's presence in politics. Although the majority of the participants had earlier agreed that the Ghanaian government has responded positively to promoting gender equality, some participants are also of the view that government has not demonstrated enough zeal for this course. When asked about the factors hindering gender equality, 9.8% of the participants stated that gender disparities exist in the country (including parliament) because political actors are not interested in promoting gender equality.

In conformity with the reviewed literature, the results from this study suggests that most policies formulated with the aim of promoting women's representation in politics have not been effective and this can be attributed to the following factors. First, there exist the problem of competing government priorities and political will. There is not much zeal on the part of government towards issues of gender equality and women's empowerment as compared to other policies. This is most evident in how women's low political representation is treated as just another issue of gender inequality. There is usually no clear conceptualization of this phenomenon and as a result, there is a problem with conceptual clarification of gender equality in the public sector. According to the National Gender Policy, enough evidence exists to prove that government/public sector structures and some Development Partners continue to “demonstrate insufficient understanding and knowledge of gender equality and gender

mainstreaming. Lack of professional knowledge and skills on gender causes conceptual clumsiness and it is a key accountability challenge in the sector" (2015, p.16).

Also, there is weak gender mainstreaming coordinating role of the Gender Ministry. The Ministry, mainly because of budgetary and capacity constraints is unable to provide the required effective and inclusive national coordination role for gender mainstreaming (Ghana National Policy, 2015). Governments usually justify this action on the grounds that there is lack of funds or resources for the implementation of the various gender policies. The 2019 budget of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has been described by Dr. Kojo Appiah-Kubi (Chairman of the parliamentary Select Committee on Gender, Children and Social Protection) as “gender unresponsive”. Similarly, Madam Laadi Ayii Ayamba (ranking member of the committee) describes the 0.06% total budget allocated to gender equality and women’s empowerment as woefully inadequate (ghanabusinessnews.com). It is not wrong to conclude that the Gender Ministry is often perceived as a consuming machinery and not a Ministry in the priority value chain of government.

Despite the survey data being silent on the roles that the nature of the political system plays in hindering women’s political representation, both the data and the explanations available from the reviewed literature seem to suggest that without political will and institutional change, women’s presence in politics is unlikely to improve.

4.3.b. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS.

Parliamentarians were asked to indicate what they felt was hindering gender equality issues in the country, and a number of responses pointed to socio-economic factors. 7.8% of the respondents agreed that economic hardships play a role in producing the problem, and 5.9% of the participants responded that illiteracy plays a role in hindering gender equality within all

political institutions in the country. In all, 7 participants (13.7%) agreed that these socio-economic factors hinder gender equality within all institutions. The table below provides a statistical representation of these figures.

Table 4.8: Socio-economic factors

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Economic hardship	4	7.8
Illiteracy	3	5.9
Total	7	13.7

From the review of the literature, it was found that the socio-economic factors limiting women's representation in Ghanaian politics included the feminization of politics and illiteracy. According to Rawva Shawa, Member of the former Palestinian Legislative council, "It's very difficult for women to talk, to argue, to press for their concerns". She further explains that the only way to encourage women to talk is by education. She states, "Education has led many women in my society to join political parties or participate in political activities. Education is the most important channel for encouraging women to speak out" (qtd, in Shvedova, 2005, p. 43).

In Ghana, a report published by the Food and Agricultural Organization in 2013 indicates that the overall literacy rate of women is 46% (Ghanaweb, 2019). Accordingly, over half of the women's total population is illiterate. This means that most women will not be able to express themselves let alone contribute to decision-making processes effectively. This has crippled the political efforts of most women in Ghana, and it is fascinating that less than 6% of those who responded to this survey saw literacy as a barrier.

On economic hardships, the reviewed literature suggests that women are considered the poorest compared to their male counterparts. This is because most of their activities do not translate

into wages or salaries. Shvedova (2005), explains that in most countries, women's unpaid labor activities amount to twice of men. In the Ghanaian context, Sossou records that lack of adequate education and steeped financial barriers are hindrances that work against women's equal representation in politics. According to one participant from her study, "women do not have the necessary resources and capital to engage in active politics because politics is very expensive, and most women are handicapped financially" (2011, p. 5). The Ghana National Policy report (2015) also indicates that "the incidence of poverty is much more among females than males (p. 16). Further, according to the United Nations Development Assistance (UNDAF) report (2016), though women in Ghana constitute half of the Agricultural labour force and are estimated to produce between 50% and 70% of the food crops, they earn less than 10% of the total income generated.

Furthermore, Heintz (2005) states that between employment and poverty lies a clear gendered pattern. Heintz explains this in line with the fact that "women's employment is frequently concentrated in activities for which earnings are low, the risk of poverty is high, and control over income precarious" (2005, p. 2). Based on evidence from the fourth Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS, 4), he reports that compared to 8.2% of the total population of Ghanaian men engaged in unpaid family activities, there were 18.7% of the total population of women in unpaid family works.

Evidence from the 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana statistical services further suggests that for every 100 economically not active females, there were 81 economically inactive males (GSS, 2010). Table 4.9 below provides statistics on the percentage of people inactive economically in 1960,1970,1984,2000 and 2010.

Table 4.9: Percentage of economically not active population aged 15years and above of the total population by sex.

Year/Sex	1960	1970	1984	2000	2010
Male	11.0	16.5	16.5	23.3	27.2
Female	43.3	36.4	18.4	27.3	30.4

Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census.

Only a small proportion of legislators pointed to the importance of socioeconomic status and literacy, which is surprising given the strong disparity between women and men. We know from the literature that socio-economic factors hinder gender parity in political representation, and yet the legislators do not take much notice of this factor. This may reflect their higher than average socioeconomic status, as highly educated, highly powerful individuals. Their perceptions probably do not reflect the socioeconomic reality of Ghana, placing them at a disadvantage if they actually want to make changes to the status of women in that country.

4.3.c. CULTURAL FACTORS

On the cultural factors identified by legislators, 23.5% of the participants responded that male supremacy syndrome hinders gender parity issues in the country. Also, a significant amount of the respondents (45.1%) agreed that cultural and religious beliefs pose a problem. Still, 3.9% pointed out that, gender parity issues are hindered by the fact that women often tend to belittle themselves. Altogether, a total of 72.5% of legislators agreed that cultural factors hinder gender parity issues in Ghana's political democracy. Table 4.10 below provides a statistical representation of these figures.

Table 4.10: cultural factors

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Male supremacy	12	23.5
Cultural and religious beliefs	23	45.1
Females belittling themselves	2	3.9
Total	37	72.5

Based on explanations available in the traditional literature as well as the theoretical lens adopted, the cultural narratives in this study are thus focused on elements such as patriarchy, women’s perception of politics and gendered proverbs. In Sossou’s study on how Ghanaian women perceive politics, she finds that cultural barriers are the most difficult hindrances to women’s presence in politics. She reports one participant for having said, “our situation is difficult because of our entrenched traditional beliefs and norms. The traditional notion is that men are the heads and this notion is working through every sphere of life and including the political sphere” (2011, p. 5).

On women’s perception of politics, Sossou finds that due to lack of adequate education, most women turn to misinterpret politics as a dirty game. They, however, cannot be blamed for this notion given the prevalence rate of corruption and conflict characterizing most African governments. Ghana has had her fair share of political strife and these experiences seem to linger in the minds of many women. Many of the past military regimes were terrible periods in the life of many women in Ghana, and that has informed their decisions to abstain from politics. The contemporary political system is also diluted with widespread corruption, and most women do not want to be tagged in this kind of political system. Fox & Lawless (2011), however, suggest that gender equality in political representation will not be achieved if women continue to perceive their political abilities as inferior to those of men.

Also, both the quantitative data and the reviewed literature agree that gender parity in political representation may be hindered by the fact that women often belittle themselves. Gyekye (1996) notes that, women often tend to belittle themselves, believing that they are worthless because they have been repeatedly told about their insignificance through many gendered proverbs. Sossou also recorded one participant from her study who said, “I do not think any Ghanaian woman would dare to stand for presidency because women in general look down upon themselves and do not support each other” (2011). Responses from the quantitative data (3.9% of the participants) also indicated that gender inequalities (including inequality in political representation) exist in Ghana because women often belittle themselves. The literature reviewed further highlighted the argument that women are not often courageous to take up leadership roles due to the idea that politics is a dirty game, characterized with foul play. Consequently, women are relegated to the secondary positions of power in the Ghanaian society.

Further, proverbs play significant roles in understanding the cultural representation of women throughout the country. While serving as a medium through which gendered norms and practices are expressed, proverbs are also another form of language spoken across all regions in Ghana and are therefore critical to our understanding of the image of women in Ghanaian societies. Diabah and Appiah-Amfo (2015) state that, language and culture are intertwined as language is very critical to how gendered issues are constructed within Ghanaian cultural societies. They describe proverbs as “carefully couched utterances”, that are acceptable means of communicating difficult and often “sensitive cultural truths” (Diabah and Appiah-Amfo, 2015, p.7).

A host of scholarly works have focused on how women are represented in Ghanaian proverbs, (Asimeng-Boahene, 2013; Diabah and Appiah-Amfo, 2015; Agbemabiese, n.d. Oduyoye, 1979) and most often how these proverbs tend to promote subordination of women to the

authority of men. For instance, Oduyoye (1979) finds that articulating Akan (a Ghanaian social group) proverbs provide justification for the social roles assigned to women and an understanding of women's image in Ghana. Asimeng-Boahene also states that, "the use of proverbs has become the tool through which men control positions of social and economic influence by limiting women's participation to domestic spheres" (2013, p. 126).

What we know about Ghanaian culture, through proverbs and other indicators, provide us with additional support for the perceptions of legislators: given the sexism and misogyny that exists historically and in contemporary society, cultural beliefs and ideologies about gender will be very difficult to overcome.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that legislators believe that gender inequality exists in many institutions in Ghana including the legislature as a result of a combination of political, socio-economic and cultural factors. The responses of parliamentarians suggest that pervasive cultural stereotypes against women pose a difficult threat to efforts aimed at promoting women's presence in Ghanaian politics because various discriminatory social practices against women are often justified in the name of cultural values and heritage. The perceptions of legislators—and in particular the belief that government has done enough to solve issues of gender inequality—suggest that the problem is deep, and the solution is not simple. Furthermore, the data suggest that if we wait for women's presence to take place in tandem with social/value change, women may not achieve equal representation in politics for a very long time.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the study and draws conclusions from the findings. The research questions that the study seeks to answer include: What factors account for the gender disparities in Ghana's political democracy? And more specifically: what are legislators' attitudes towards the factors hindering gender parity in political representation in Ghana's democracy? And what conclusions can we draw about the future of women's representation in Ghana based on their perceptions?

5.1 LOW REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN GHANAIAN POLITICS

This study analyses the factors hindering women's representation in Ghanaian politics by analysing a survey conducted with legislators, to understand the factors they believe to hinder gender equality issues in Ghana's democracy. The analysis suggests that the legislators believe that low representation of women in Ghanaian politics stems from a combination of political, socio-economic and cultural factors, consistent with other studies (Inglehart and Norris, 2003, p. 127; Kittilson and Schwindt- Bayer, 2013; Norris, 1989; Shvedova, 2005).

On the political factors, I anticipated that members of parliament would touch on the nature of Ghana's electoral system and its implications for women's presence in politics. I also expected the quantitative data to support the argument that the structure of political parties plays a role in limiting political participation and representation as discovered in the traditional literature. However, the survey data were silent on these factors. Nonetheless, the

study finds that despite several efforts and policies adopted and implemented by successive Ghanaian governments, gender disparities in political representation continue to exist. The facts of gender inequality in Ghana suggest that there is more work to be done, and yet only nine participants (17.6%) indicate that the government of Ghana and all stakeholders in gender equality issues are not doing enough to address issues of gender equality. The lack of political will to make further improvements to solve a problem that has not yet been solved is indicative of the uphill battle that will be faced for those who want to see more women in politics.

The study finds that illiteracy and poverty also play important roles in limiting women's presence in politics in Ghana (Chant, 2006; Pearce, 1978; Waylen, 2007; Shvedova, 2005), and yet only a small proportion of the participants (7.8% and 5.9%) from the survey data discussed that, the absence of finance as well as women's levels of education respectively, have implications for their equal representation in decision-making bodies. While evidence abounds to prove that the economic status of women in society has a direct impact on their ability to participate in political institutions and elected bodies (Shvedova, 2005; IDEA, 2005, p.37), women are more represented in the ranks of poverty compared to men (Owusu-Afriyie and Nketiah-Amponsah, 2014), and steep financial conditionalities often favour men over women within political parties in Ghana (Allah-Mensah, 2009). Furthermore, only 5.9% of the participants agreed that illiteracy hinders gender equality in political representation, while educational statistics in Ghana show that more males than females are enrolled and retained in school (GLSS6, 2012-2013). Thus, the burden of poverty borne by women as a result of their low-income earnings, unpaid labor, lack of adequate education and women's dual responsibilities is likely to have a large negative impact on their ability to participate actively and effectively in politics, if the existing academic literature on this topic is correct.

While we know from the literature that institutional/political and socioeconomic factors play a major role in determining the type of political representation of a country, the participants in this survey focused their assessment on cultural factors, indicating that this category had the largest influence on gender equality issues in the country. While 23.5% of respondents indicated that male Supremacy Syndrome is one factor limiting gender equality in political representation, 45.1% respondents indicate that Cultural and religious beliefs are the factors limiting gender parity in the country's political institutions. 3.9% of the participants also stated that gender disparities persist due to females belittling themselves. Taken together, these results suggest that parliamentarians think that culture is the largest factor explaining women's presence in Ghanaian politics. And yet, the data also clearly show that appetite for additional changes from parliamentarians is low, suggesting that cultural values and attitudes may be leading party elites to discount the importance of their role and the types of political solutions that may be available to them.

5.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

In the conduct of this study, many influences were beyond my control placing limitations on the methodology and conclusion. Being an academic exercise, the study was limited by time and financial resources. While lack of time prevents a comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon, the unavailability of financial resources prevents the collection of primary data purposely for the study, thereby, resulting in the use of secondary data that provides limited responses to the research questions. In addition, the apparent lack of adequate literature on the barriers to women's presence in Ghana's political democracy makes it difficult to draw relevant evidence from Ghanaian and Africanist scholars. Although elite participants of the quantitative study provided key information about the attitudes of legislators in relation to gender equality,

with potentially a high level of knowledge and expertise, future studies should do well to involve ordinary citizens, whose responses may provide divergent views and additional insights into the role of culture and attitudes in influencing gender equality in Ghana.

Consistent with the explanations available in the traditional literature (Dahlerup, 2013; Paxton et al, 2007; Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2013), as well as with the analysis and results from this study which suggest cultural norms are formidable obstacles to women's political representation, future studies on political representation in Ghana should do well to look at the role of political change, including quota systems for example, in promoting women's representation in politics. Given the fact that cultural inequalities often prove difficult to address, imposing a quota system may be able to help change "attitudes, values, and ideas towards women's roles in politics" and "can be a powerful symbol for democracy and justice beyond national borders" (Kittilson, 2005, p.644). Institutional change can lead cultural change, and given the values expressed by parliamentarians, this may be the option most likely to effect change.

5.4. CONCLUSION.

Consistent with theories of women in politics, the factors militating against gender parity in political representation in Ghana have been identified to include a host of elements categorized under political, socio-economic and cultural factors. Cultural factors provide a formidable barrier to women's equal representation in Ghana's political democracy. This study is justified on grounds that promoting gender equality in political representation is necessary for achieving sustainable development of Ghana as well as the enhancing women's status and wellbeing. Greater gender equality promotes productivity and enhances development outcomes and making institutions more representative (National Gender Policy,

2005, p.19). As observed by Shvedova (2005), "excluding women from positions of power and from elected bodies impoverishes the development of a society" (p.47). Gender equality in political representation should, therefore, not be about giving women positions of power just because they are women, instead, gender equality must ensure that women are not denied political positions because they are women.

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APPENDIX

Frequency Tables for the Quantitative data.

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	46	90.2	90.2	90.2
Valid Female	5	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-30years	3	5.9	5.9	5.9
Valid 31-40years	32	62.7	62.7	68.6
Valid 41-50years	9	17.6	17.6	86.3
Valid 51-60years	7	13.7	13.7	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Civil Servant	6	11.8	11.8	11.8
Valid Self Employed	45	88.2	88.2	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	49	96.1	96.1	96.1
Valid Single	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Highest level of educational attainment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Secondary/Vocational	2	3.9	3.9	3.9
First degree or HND	22	43.1	43.1	47.1
Master	23	45.1	45.1	92.2
PhD	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Region

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Greater Accra	6	11.8	11.8	11.8
Central Region	5	9.8	9.8	21.6
Eastern Region	5	9.8	9.8	31.4
Western Region	6	11.8	11.8	43.1
Northern Region	5	9.8	9.8	52.9
Upper East	4	7.8	7.8	60.8
Upper West	4	7.8	7.8	68.6
Volta Region	5	9.8	9.8	78.4
Brong Ahafo	5	9.8	9.8	88.2
Ashanti Region	6	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Political Party

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NPP	36	70.6	70.6	70.6
NDC	15	29.4	29.4	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of the concept of gender inequality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	50	98.0	98.0	98.0
No	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

If yes, to what extent will you say you are knowledgeable about the concept of gender inequality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very knowledgeable	34	66.7	66.7	66.7
Knowledgeable	17	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

How did you come to learn about gender inequality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid School	16	31.4	31.4	31.4
Print/Electronic Media	28	54.9	54.9	86.3
Sensitization Process	6	11.8	11.8	98.0
Other	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Life experience	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Valid	NA	50	98.0	98.0	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of Government of Ghana's commitment to bridging gender inequality in any form and thus promote the role of women in societies and public institutions including your agency?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	50	98.0	98.0	98.0
Valid	No	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Do you personally support a commitment to bridging gender inequalities and thus promoting women empowerment in Ghana?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	47	92.2	92.2	92.2
Valid	No	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Is the government of Ghana and all stakeholders in gender inequality issues doing enough to raise awareness in respect of issues of gender inequality?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	42	82.4	82.4	82.4
Valid	No	9	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Do you think there is the need to even talk about gender inequalities and put forward measures to addressing it particularly in public institutions?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	50	98.0	98.0	98.0
No	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Are you aware of any policy implemented by government to deal with gender inequality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	48	94.1	94.1	94.1
No	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Can you name some of the policies if your answer in 5 is Yes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Affirmative action	36	70.6	70.6	70.6
Interstate Sucession law	2	3.9	3.9	74.5
Girl child education policy	10	19.6	19.6	94.1
NA	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Did the implementation of these policies improve gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	37	72.5	72.5	72.5
No	13	25.5	25.5	98.0
NA	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

If yes, in what ways?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Creating awareness on the importance of gender equality	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Progressive involvement of women in politics and other leadership positions	23	45.1	45.1	64.7
	Higher number of girl child admission	4	7.8	7.8	72.5
	NA	14	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Is the Ministry of Children Affairs/ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection doing enough to address gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Yes	38	74.5	74.5	74.5
	No	13	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

If yes, what are some of the issues they have been able to address?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Women empowerment	15	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Child trafficking	2	3.9	3.9	33.3
	Trokosi system	2	3.9	3.9	37.3
	Health Insurance for pregnant women	2	3.9	3.9	41.2
	Low level of education	12	23.5	23.5	64.7
	Unemployment	2	3.9	3.9	68.6
	Wives being sacked from their husband's house upon death	3	5.9	5.9	74.5
	Unfair treatment of female house helps	1	2.0	2.0	76.5
	NA	12	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

To what extent has the Department Of Women (DoW) and its various decentralized agencies helped in coordinating national responses to gender inequalities and promote the implementation of activities that addresses the right towards advancing growth and sus

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Large extent	23	45.1	45.1	45.1
Some extent	21	41.2	41.2	86.3
Valid Very small extent	3	5.9	5.9	92.2
Neutral	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

In your view, is there more the Ministry can do to enhance gender equality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	51	100.0	100.0	100.0

If yes, what are some of the things that can be done to enhance gender equality issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More education / sensitization on gender issues.	34	66.7	66.7	66.7
Abolish bad traditional and cultural practices	2	3.9	3.9	70.6
Conventions must be made	5	9.8	9.8	80.4
Valid Mothers should resocialize their children	2	3.9	3.9	84.3
Budget allocation for gender issues	2	3.9	3.9	88.2
Nothing should be done	2	3.9	3.9	92.2
More sponsorships for the girl child to remain in school	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

How will you rate the efforts of the Ministry of Gender, children and social protection and the government in their quest to improve gender equality issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Very good	15	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Good	32	62.7	62.7	92.2
	Not good	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Abolish trafficking of young women and children

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly agree	11	21.6	21.6	21.6
	Agree	29	56.9	56.9	78.4
	Indifferent	4	7.8	7.8	86.3
	Strongly disagree	2	3.9	3.9	90.2
	Disagree	5	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Promoting women into decision making positions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly agree	20	39.2	39.2	39.2
	Agree	22	43.1	43.1	82.4
	Indifferent	3	5.9	5.9	88.2
	Strongly disagree	3	5.9	5.9	94.1
	Disagree	3	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Increased women entrepreneurship; empower women economically hence enhancing women access to economic resources

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	18	35.3	35.3	35.3
Agree	28	54.9	54.9	90.2
Indifferent	2	3.9	3.9	94.1
Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	96.1
Disagree	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Introduce and strengthen gender budget

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	11	21.6	21.6	21.6
Agree	28	54.9	54.9	76.5
Indifferent	5	9.8	9.8	86.3
Strongly disagree	5	9.8	9.8	96.1
Disagree	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Review and enforce existing laws protecting women's right and introduce amendments to take care of existing gaps

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	22	43.1	43.1	43.1
Agree	21	41.2	41.2	84.3
Indifferent	5	9.8	9.8	94.1
Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	96.1
Disagree	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Increased investment in the infrastructural for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	11	21.6	21.6	21.6
Agree	29	56.9	56.9	78.4
Indifferent	2	3.9	3.9	82.4
Strongly disagree	3	5.9	5.9	88.2
Disagree	6	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Achieve gender parity in the educational sector

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	16	31.4	31.4	31.4
Agree	22	43.1	43.1	74.5
Indifferent	4	7.8	7.8	82.4
Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	84.3
Disagree	8	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

What in your views are the factors that generally hinder gender equality issues in the country

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male Supremacy Syndrome	12	23.5	23.5	23.5
Cultural and religious beliefs	23	45.1	45.1	68.6
Females belittling themselves	2	3.9	3.9	72.5
Illiteracy	3	5.9	5.9	78.4
Economic hardship	4	7.8	7.8	86.3
Political actors not interested in gender equality	5	9.8	9.8	96.1
Approach adopted by these gender advocates is too strong	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Inadequate capacity of institutions to implement programs for women empowerment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	19	37.3	37.3	37.3
Agree	27	52.9	52.9	90.2
Indifferent	3	5.9	5.9	96.1
Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
Disagree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Inadequate budgetary allocation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	17	33.3	33.3	33.3
Agree	28	54.9	54.9	88.2
Indifferent	1	2.0	2.0	90.2
Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	92.2
Disagree	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Overlapping of functions between the ministry and other MDAs due to mandate

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	13	25.5	25.5	25.5
Agree	22	43.1	43.1	68.6
Indifferent	3	5.9	5.9	74.5
Strongly disagree	4	7.8	7.8	82.4
Disagree	9	17.6	17.6	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Weak policy coordination on gender and children issues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	12	23.5	23.5	23.5
Agree	30	58.8	58.8	82.4
Indifferent	1	2.0	2.0	84.3
Strongly disagree	2	3.9	3.9	88.2
Disagree	6	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Weak monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	16	31.4	31.4	31.4
Agree	27	52.9	52.9	84.3
Strongly disagree	2	3.9	3.9	88.2
Disagree	6	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Do you think the exclusion of Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs from the cabinet this present NPP government shows lack of commitments to gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	23	45.1	45.1	45.1
No	28	54.9	54.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Do you think the exclusion impact negatively on the quest to empower women?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	25	49.0	49.0	49.0
No	26	51.0	51.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Do you think Ghana has the required institutions to respond to the gender gap?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	29	56.9	56.9	56.9
Valid No	22	43.1	43.1	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

How do you see the future of Ghana regarding Gender equality and empowerment of women?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very good	17	33.3	33.3	33.3
Valid Good	29	56.9	56.9	90.2
Valid Not so good	2	3.9	3.9	94.1
Valid Do not have a future	1	2.0	2.0	96.1
Valid Indifferent	2	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Can you suggest ways that government and other stakeholders can come together to ensure the improvement of gender issues?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More platforms for dialogue / Higher education for females	16	31.4	31.4	31.4
Valid Stake-holders engagement	5	9.8	9.8	41.2
Valid Convention and legal framework	11	21.6	21.6	62.7
Valid Provision of vocational skills	2	3.9	3.9	66.7
Valid Budget allocation	8	15.7	15.7	82.4
Valid Do away with bad cultural beliefs	4	7.8	7.8	90.2
Valid Allocation of resources to the rural areas	4	7.8	7.8	98.0
Valid No, I don't even want gender equality	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	