AN INVESTIGATION ON THE AGENCY OF FEMALE POLITICAL
LEADERSHIP IN ENHANCING WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN
KENYAN POLITICS FROM 1992 TO 2017

BY

MANG’ELI, IVY WATHII

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – AFRICA

SUMMER 2018
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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR A
MASTERS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – AFRICA

SUMMER, 2018
DECLARATION
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving grandparents, parents and supportive brother who without their encouragement, constant prayers and support, I would not have succeeded in this research.
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I would like to thank God for his provision and love throughout the course of my studies. I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the support of my family and work colleagues. Their unwavering support during my studies as well as providing me with various contacts has been helpful towards the completion of my academic goals.

I would also like to offer my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Joseph Kimani Njunguna as well as my readers, Dr. Billiah Gisore and Dr. Elijah Munyi. Their guidance and support has been instrumental in my academic journey and I will be forever grateful. I also appreciate the respondents who offered great feedback and formed a critical part of my research. I sincerely appreciate your dedication and interest in my research.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU- African Union

CREAW - Centre for Rights Education and Awareness

FIDA Kenya - Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya

FORD Kenya - Forum for the Restoration of Democracy–Kenya

IPU – Inter Parliamentary Union

IRI – International Republican Institute

KADU - Kenyan African Democratic Union

KANU- Kenya African National Union

KEWOPA- Kenya Women’s Parliamentary Association

NDI- National Democratic Institute

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

UN- United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Agency:** The capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power; a person or thing through which power is exerted or an end is achieved.

**Democracy:** A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

**Democratic Deficit:** Any situation in which there is believed to be a lack of democratic accountability and control over the decision-making process.

**Gender inclusivity:** Gender equality, also known as sexual equality, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender.

**Gender Parity:** Gender parity is a statistical measure that compares an indicator among women, like average income, political leadership and so on to the same indicator among men.

**Governance:** The exercise of power or authority by political leaders for the well-being of their country's citizens or subjects.

**Leadership:** The art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

**Legislation:** The exercise of the power and function of making rules (such as laws) that have the force of authority by their promulgation by an official organ of a state or other organization.
**Political Participation:** Political participation is any activity that shapes, effects, or involves the political sphere. Political participation ranges from voting to attending a rally to committing an act of terrorism to sending a letter to a representative.

**Political Representation:** Political representation is the activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives "present" in public policy-making processes. Political representation occurs when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on the behalf of others in the political arena.
ABSTRACT

This study focuses on female political leaders in Kenya and their role in promoting female political participation from 1992 to 2017. The evolution of Kenya’s political arena has seen the state progress from single-party politics into multi-party politics in 1992, and later adopting devolved government system after the promulgation of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. These changes in the political landscape should have created more opportunities for political participation and representation among Kenyan women which is not the case. This research seeks to find out the role of women in political leadership in Kenya and their hand in enhancing female participation in politics. The study will delve into the various aspects that contribute and hinder women’s participation in political leadership in Kenya as well as various efforts made by female political leaders in promoting the participation of women in political leadership. The research evaluates whether having more female leaders in political discourse leads to an increase in political participation of Kenyan women. Key concepts of political participation as well as political representation form the basis of this study, guiding the investigation that follows. The research used a mixed research data collection method, employing data collection instruments such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and desktop research which were employed to enrich the research. The research conducted, offers the chance to establish the agency of female political leaders in Kenya’s male-dominated political scene.
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, few female leaders have been involved in top political positions. Some of the key female figures in Kenya’s political scene include Wangari Maathai, Charity Ngilu and Martha Karua. Despite the patriarchal underpinnings of Kenyan politics, there has been a concerted effort to encourage a steady increase of female leadership with support through legislative efforts with considerable involvement of civil society.

Among the more recent laws passed in Parliament is the two-thirds gender rule enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution under Article 81 (b) which states, "Not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender." However, the good intentions of gender parity as described in this national law are yet to be actualized as reported by local press. According to Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission records for the 2017 general election show women made up 46.6% of registered voters in Kenya’s 47 counties (IEBC (b), 2017). Despite the IEBC has confirmed that more than a third of the Kenyan population eligible to vote are registered, it is indeed difficult to prove if any of the 46.6% did vote, due to the lack of records.

In the modern age, increased female representation within the political arena is being fostered with more efforts amassed to ensure more women find their political voice and in turn affect policy-making in society. Increased participation hopes to ensure that the male-dominant field of politics becomes more inclusive, encouraging more considered policy-making that takes into account

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1Wangari Maathai was a political and environmental activist, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, the first African woman to receive such honor. Charity Ngilu was the first female presidential aspirant in Kenya in 1997 and has held 3 ministerial positions, as well as the being one of three female governors elected in the 2017 election. Martha Karua also ran for the presidency in 2013, prior to which she served as Minister of Justice, National Cohesion, and Constitutional Affairs from 2005 to 2009.
marginalized communities such as women, children, youth and the disabled. With the just concluded general election in 2017, more female leaders with political aspirations ran as candidates in the hopes of making it into the August House.

According to (Ali, 2017), an average of 419 women won political seats in the last elections. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported, “The 2017 General Elections (second one since the introduction of devolved governance in 2013), saw three women elected as Governors and three women Senators respectively; as the number of women representatives elected to the August House also increased from 16 (in the 11th Parliament) to 23 in the current parliament. The number of female members at the county assembly also increased to about 100 from 84 in the 2013 general election” (Ali, 2017). Some of the most notable entrants into the game of politics include Naisula Lesuuda who became the first female Member of Parliament representing Samburu West after the 2017 elections. Another big winner from the 2017 general election was former 1997 presidential aspirant Charity Ngilu who was elected Governor of Kitui County.

This study sought to investigate whether the increasing number of women in political leadership positions can be attributed to the existing female political leaders.

**1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

This research study sought to establish the relationship between female political leadership and increased female political participation.

Political participation as used in this study is described when talking of a myriad of activities. According to (Pausch, 2012), “in talking about political participation, one must distinguish between participation in a directly political context, such as elections or political institutions,
parties or interest groups and participation in social contexts. We can refer to the former as direct, to the latter as indirect political participation.”

Political representation as defined by Hanna Pitkin is “the activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives "present" in public policy-making processes. Political representation occurs when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on the behalf of others in the political arena” (Dovi, 2006).

Throughout African history, women have been at the fore of leadership since the times of Pharaoh Sobekneferu in 1806 BC according to Egyptian history (Sisowath, 2015). Post-independence there have been several women in prime political positions including Central Africa Republic’s Prime Minister Elizabeth Domitien who took up the position in 1975, Burundi’s Prime Minister of 1993 Sylvie Kinigi as well as Mauritian President Ammenah Gurib Fakim who was sworn into office in 2015 and continues to govern at the time of writing this study.

The notion of female political leadership is not a novel one and continues to receive support even from the world’s most powerful figures. The former American Head of State Barack Obama penned an essay on this subject in Glamour Magazine (Obama, 2016) that breathed life to the movement of gender parity and encouraged more support for female empowerment and gender equality in all spheres of life including politics.

In Kenya, political representation for women has been an uphill battle since the times of Grace Onyango who was the first female Member of Parliament post-independence.

Post-independence in the 1960s, female representation was dismal, and it became even smaller when Former President Daniel arap Moi came to power in 1978. With the introduction of multi-
party politics in 1992, the increase in political parties encouraged more female participation in politics; however only partially.

According to (National Democratic Institute (a), 1995), “in the multiparty elections of December 1992, six women were elected to parliament - three from the Democratic Party, one from FORD-Kenya, one from FORD-Asili and one from the ruling party, KANU (constituting only three percent of parliamentarians). In that year of democratization, no women were nominated to any of the appointed seats in parliament. While many of the barriers limiting the extent of women’s political participation in Kenya are cultural and traditional, others are a function of political party organization or of the lack of other resources for women seeking increased involvement in politics. Until 1995, no woman had ever served as cabinet minister.” Apart from the likes of Wangari Maathai, Charity Ngilu, and Martha Karua, few women have been able to penetrate the male-dominated political sphere in Kenya.

Women took the introduction of multi party politics in stride and looked forward to more participation in the Kenyan political sphere. According to (Mukabi & Kimani, 2012) in 1997, “Hon. Phoebe Asiyo, a female Member of Parliament tabled the first motion on Affirmative Action for women’s representation in elective positions. Her motion called for Parliament to increase the number of female parliamentarians by eighteen, at least two from each province, and an extra two from the Rift Valley Kenya had 8 provinces.” Although the motion fell through, it was a significant first step towards institutionalized gender parity in Kenya.

The promulgation of the 2010 Constitution has seen the creation of the Women’s Representative political post. In addition to this, the two-thirds gender rule Article 81 (b) is associated with ensuring gender parity. Its institutionalization potentially indicated a new era for female politics
in Kenya. Nonetheless, the legislation proved ineffective without proper implementation. This same notion has been shared by members of the civil society who championed an emphasis on the need for affirmative action on such laws. This study explores what women in political leadership have done to increase female participation in politics.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Kenyan women take up a little over 50.3% of the population according to the local population report (U.N U. N., 2018), however they make up less than 25% of Parliament which as discussed by Kenyan non-governmental organization (CREAW, 2017) poses a danger to equal representation. “This right to equality is interpreted as requiring the elimination of historically rooted patterns of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage that contribute to the subordination and exclusion of women. The failure of Parliament to put in place legislative measures to ensure that the 2/3rds principle is met within Parliament threatens to perpetuate the status quo where women continue to be marginalized from decision-making spaces particularly at the national level.”

However, despite legislation made to overturn low representation and improve participation of the female gender, representation of the female gender in government is still yet to reach one third. With gender equality being among the top five areas of interest outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals according to (U.N U. N., 2015), the consequences of unequal representation in leadership can have far-reaching effects on political development. The research investigates the role of female leadership in increasing female participation within Kenya's political landscape.
In the history of Kenyan politics, there are more women in political discourse now than ever before. An increase in female representatives in Kenyan politics should lead to better conditions for all, especially so elevating and empowering other women in society. However, women’s direct and indirect political participation remains to be subdued within the public sphere. With increased representation established thanks to recent laws such as the two-thirds rule, more women should be empowered to step into political discourse and participate. The Beijing Declaration (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995) in particular is among the major laws in support of female participation, stating “Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, and peace.” This study sought to establish whether having more women in political office has had an effect on increased female participation in politics.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To assess the extent to which women in Kenya participate in political leadership.
2. To investigate efforts made by female leaders in promoting the participation of women in political leadership.
3. To assess the factors contributing to the level of women’s participation in political leadership in Kenya.
4. To access the factors that hinder women’s political participation in Kenya.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. To what extent do women in Kenya participate in political leadership?
2. What efforts have female political leaders made in promoting the participation of women in political leadership?

3. What are the contributing factors of women's participation in political leadership in Kenya?

4. What are the factors that hinder Kenyan women’s participation in politics?

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Kenya's political landscape has faced various difficulties after the nation's independence. Adopting ideals of a democratic state, a system ruled by the people, for the people and with the people at the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992; it has since been assumed, political representation and participation of all members of society is significant to the success of any democratic state.

However, equal representation is yet to become a reality in Kenya's political arena. As reported by (CREAW, 2017) “women make 21% of parliamentary seats in today’s parliament, after the 2017 general election where 76 seats are occupied by women out of a total of 347 seats.” This, when accounted for, is "at least 23 women have been elected to the National Assembly, up from the 16 elected in the last elections. This, added to the 47 women-only seats and half of the 12 nominees by political parties, will bring the women in the National Assembly to 76, still short by 41 seats to make 117 or one-third of the 349 MPs" according to local political commentary by (Oluoch, 2017). Therefore, less than one third of political positions are in fact occupied by women in Kenya, far from what is directed by the two-thirds gender rule.

During this moment in history that seeks female input in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, a closer look at what Kenya's female leadership has contributed to political development is key.
To understand the importance of female agency in enhancing political participation of other women, a retrospective look at women’s accomplishments within society as well as the social structures they have championed this cause, could provide perspective on what women in leadership are capable of. This is relevant now more than ever before when the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals such as gender equality and economic growth cannot be actualized without the active participation of women.

The implications of increased female leadership with the enforcement of the two-thirds gender parity rule and the subsequent snowball effect on female representation it could have is still unknown. Little scholarly work has been done on the role female politicians have done to improve female political participation. Its magnitude still largely remains to be commented on, thereby ignoring the level of impact more female leadership has on political representation and participation. However, there are studies such as those by (Barasa, 2017) which “examined the trend of women’s participation in politics,” and those by Dr. Nyokabi (Kamau (b), 2010) which tell of the female leaders, “perceptions, experiences, visions, achievements and the lived experiences that have shaped their leadership perspectives and approaches.” Nonetheless no studies focus what role female political leaders have and can play in encouraging other women to participate in elective politics in Kenya.

This study sought to understand female political participation and leadership, thus exploring its impact to help underscore the importance of female involvement and spur more programs that seek to encourage gender inclusivity within Kenyan politics. As the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Kenya explains based on their work at grassroots level, leadership training and support could be highly effective for female political aspirants, thereby increasing participation. “After engaging with communities at grassroots level, we slowly began to see a
behavioral change. The electorate eventually embraced and identified themselves with female candidates as explained by (Ali, 2017).

Not only will such findings increase the chances for a much fairer representation of the citizens' interest, it is also instrumental in securing the participation of women in the political field for years to come.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study undertook an investigation on the agency of female political leaders in enhancing women’s political participation in Kenya, focused on the time period from the start of multi-party 1992 to the last general election 2017. The study used a mixed research design using qualitative methods that utilize data collection instruments such as interviews and questionnaires and quantitative methods that will use desktop research as a data collection instrument over the course of the study.

The scope of the study spotlights female political leaders as the target sample for the duration of the study, while Kenya remained as the site of the research conducted. Female political leaders form the target sample for the duration of the study, based on their experience in the Kenyan political landscape as well as the positions they hold.
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review
The topic of this study sought to investigate the role of female leaders in enhancing the political participation of other women in Kenya. The dynamics of this topic offered the opportunity to probe what impact women in leadership have had within Kenya’s political landscape and their role in encouraging the political representation and the subsequent participation of other women.

The traditional African patriarchal society still has a large hold on the modern African society, with little changes to the conventional roles of men and women. These conventions and norms still hold true even in the political arena where women have dismal representation within the August House as members of the National Assembly. According to (National Democratic Institute (b), 2018) "For the first time in Kenya's history, women were elected to serve as governors and senators, and 29 percent more women ran for office than in the previous election — a fact that led to the largest number of women ever seated at all levels of the Kenyan government. Women now hold 172 of the 1,883 elected seats in Kenya, up from 145 after the 2013 election."

Despite various laws to encourage female political participation and political representation, women still fall behind. However, there is support of legislation such as the recent globally agreed upon Resolution 66/130 adopted in the United Nations Assembly that encourages "states to commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including … setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions” (U.N, 2011).
It has been noticed that there is an increase in women in politics, however female representation in political discourse fades in comparison to that of their male counterparts. Locally, the two-thirds gender rule institutionalized in 2010 at the promulgation of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution was set to ensure women occupy at least a third of the political seats within the government. Despite its part in the Constitution, Kenyan Legislature is yet to take a leap of faith and ensure its full implementation. According to (United Nations Women, 2017), documentation on the “Women in Politics” global map of 2017 indicated that despite efforts towards gender parity; the growth is “slow progress towards gender equality in these areas at regional and national levels.”

This study sought to establish what caused the increased involvement of women in politics, particularly in political participation throughout the years in Kenya since independence, into the transition into multi-party politics in 1992 and more recently into devolution after the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2010. Moreover, the study delves into the contributing factors that encourage or hinder female participation within the Kenyan political arena as well as the challenges that obstruct women from participating directly by running for political leadership or indirectly by voting, attending rallies and so on. Finally, the literature review also brought to light the efforts of women in leadership in enhancing the political participation of women, by advancing the political careers of other women who may be new entrants into politics.

2.1.1 Background on Female Involvement in Kenyan Politics from 1992-2017

The notion of equal political representation and political participation throughout the globe only remained as a concept with few countries achieving 50-50 gender representation with government.
Nevertheless, there are some states that have made great efforts to achieve or improve female political participation within their governments. According to data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2018), three African states namely Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa rank within the top ten countries in the world with the highest percentage of women in national parliament. Indicated at the topmost position of gender inclusivity within parliament is Rwanda, with women occupying 61% of the 80 available seats. On the same report (IPU, 2018), the Kenyan state ranks 84th out of 193 states considered in the rankings.

In 1963, an independent Kenya struggled to establish the equal participation of both genders in the political arena. While establishing a new Kenya after the era of colonization came to an end, it is documented indeed few women had a hand in shaping the nation through elective office. According to cross-national research, there are various variables that contribute to low women’s participation. Speaking on the most critical obstacles, (Moon, 2004) explains “Analysts view electoral systems, party system fragmentation, and gender quotas as the most significant.”

However, before the attainment of independence, women were at the fore-front of mobilizing liberation movements in conjunction with the Mau Mau fighters. According to (Barasa, 2017), “In Kenya, for example, the colonial experiences on women involvement can be traced to the Mau Mau period when they were used as instruments of communication and political mobilization.” Therefore, there is a considerable change in the political participation of women before and after the formation of the independent Kenya.

As Jomo Kenyatta took on the presidency of the newly independent Kenya, female political representation began to dwindle. Among some of the foremost female politicians to run for office in the 1960s was Wambui Otieno. A former freedom fighter, Wambui Otieno goes down the
history books as being a woman filled with political ambition but never occupied an elective parliamentary seat. According to (Adenekan, 2011), “In the early 1960s, she joined the Tom Mboya-led Nairobi People's Convention Party, as the leader of the Women's Wing, and later the Kenya Africa National Union. She was also a prominent figure in Mau Mau's successor organization, Kiama kia Muangi.” However, faced with opposing patriarchal socio-cultural values and lackluster support from political parties, this leading political figure never met her political potential.

Later in the 1980s and 1990s, as Daniel arap Moi succeeded Jomo Kenyatta as president, female political participation faded away. Moi employed strict governance that shunned competitive politics and endangered the concept of democracy, female political representation in the 1980s faded into the background remaining as nothing but a concept.

The severity of the matter was well captured by a report released during that period of President Moi’s regime. The report (National Democratic Institute (a), 1995) stated, "Following seriously flawed multiparty elections in Kenya in 1992, formidable challenges to democratization remain. Political organizers, including opposition party organizers, journalists, and civic activists, face an often hostile environment in which to express their views. The political climate is one of fear, suspicion and even intimidation. Open discussion and collaboration are impeded under these conditions."

Among the few women to occupy political seats during the early stages of Moi’s presidency was Phoebe Asiyo. Elected the Parliamentary representative for Karachunyo in 1980, she was also re-elected after the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992, serving another term. She is heralded for being among the longest-serving women in Parliament.
After Kenya evolved into a multi-party democracy, the political sphere was set-up to potentially face a re-awakening. Multi-party politics was a revival for the representation of women in Kenyan politics, (Barasa, 2017) states “…on women’s participation, the trend during and after the Kenyatta’s and Daniel Moi’s regimes only less than 5% of the leaders were women and their roles in political parties was social rather than political…however, the fourth parliament 1979 -1983, 5 (3.1%) women were elected to parliament out of 158 and only one was appointed as a Minister. But in the 1990s an improvement was witnessed with the numbers of women in Parliament rising to reflect 3.5% from a constant 2.0%.”

In many ways, the emergence of multi-party politics was the re-entry point for women in political participation. According to (Giesler, 2006), “new political opportunities of democratization offered a platform also for professional and progressive women from which to claim political spaces in the mainstream. The fervor, with which many women embraced democracy, claiming a fusion of social and personal liberation agendas, was similar to the urgency with which earlier generations of women had joined liberation struggles. The early 1990s was thus the starting point of a 'second liberation' for women, one that was to take them into the centre of political decision making, as they were not prepared to 'miss the boat a second time round.”

A substantial fete for women in politics was the appointment of Nyiva Mwendwa as the Minister for Culture and Social Services in 1995. She became the first female minister in Kenya paving the way for several others after her, who would later occupy ministerial positions in their political careers. For example Charity Ngilu who held the position of Minister of Health in 2003, Martha Karua in 2003 was Minister of Water Resources Management and Development while Anne Waiguru held the position of Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in
2013. Charity Ngilu and Martha Karua also went on serve in other ministerial capacities after their first appointments.

The new multi-party dispensation encouraged a spirited approach to politics with the opening of many political parties aside from the Kenya African National Union, others such as the Democratic Party founded by Mwai Kibaki in 1991 flourished. Other parties formed after the fall of single-party politics were FORD Kenya, Sisi Kwa Sisi and many more enhanced the exchange of ideas on governance, democracy and various ideals of leadership. At its peak, Kenya has had a total of 77 registered parties according to a national index carried out ahead of the 2017 general elections (Registrar, 2017).

After the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2010, the political arena underwent some changes as the Legislature lead from the forefront, promoting changes that would have more women engaged in Kenya's political processes. Among these changes encouraged is the increased political participation in joining political parties and other organizations at the grassroots level, voting as well as the political representation which includes running for political positions as women. The two-thirds rule that states "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender," has been instrumental in the resurgence of female representation in government.

However, the implementation of the new legislation has been sluggish. According to Kenya’s civil society, the slow implementation only curtails the aim of Article 81(b) that hopes to ensure a more inclusive government. Taking action against Parliament in 2015, the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) sought to hasten the implementation process of gender parity within Parliament 5 years after the promulgation of the 2010 constitution. According to the non-
governmental organization, their motives for the suit was to seek "a declaration that the Attorney General and the Constitution Implementation Commission had failed in their duty to develop and present affirmative action legislation ahead of the August 27th, 2015 deadline placed by the Supreme Court" (Hombe, 2015). Although the two-thirds rule is yet to be fully realized, its implementation is critical to a more democratic society. Kenya could be well on its way to making the two-thirds rule a reality if various obstacles are overcome.

2.1.2 Factors affecting Female Political Representation in Kenya

Female representation in Kenya’s political scene has been quite low as compared to other African countries as previously established in various indices (IPU, 2018). In fact, Kenya is dragging far behind its regional counterparts in achieving gender parity despite having the two-thirds rule in its Constitution. According to (Kamau N., 2010) “Currently, the Kenyan Parliament has only about 10 percent women representation, trailing far behind the global average of 18.8 percent women representation in parliaments. Some African countries have already attained the critical mass threshold of 33 percent women's representation in decision making positions. Over the past decade, all the countries in the East African region have overtaken Kenya on all measures of gender equality indices.”

The low representation in the August House is not without reason. There are various socio-cultural, economic and political challenges female political aspirants face in pursuit of a position in elective office. This section of the study explores the various facets of political participation and representation that contribute to the low numbers of women's representation in Kenya from the institutionalization of multi-party politics in Kenya 1992 to the most recent election of 2017.
The major factors can be summed up into three, as explained by (Nzomo, 2014) "in the first four decades of post-colonial rule, progress towards women's access to formal political leadership positions, has been slow due to a combination of structural obstacles which include:

   i) Deeply embedded patriarchal socio-cultural values;
   
   ii) Undemocratic institutions and policy frameworks and
   
   iii) Low levels of civic and gender awareness."

**i) Deeply embedded patriarchal socio-cultural values**

Among the top factors contributing to low female representation are socio-cultural norms. The agency of women within a highly patriarchal state has led many women to dash their dreams at political success early. According to Malawian gender scholar (Kamlongera, 2008) “the nature of women's political participation reflects conventional gender roles and relations: women are followers and supporters, not leaders…women, from the time they are born, are socialized to be subservient to men, and conditioned to take up household responsibilities and subordinate positions. This, then, affects the nature of their participation in the public sphere.” With societal beliefs that emphasize that the role of women as home-makers and not decision-makers, leaders and voters alike are less likely to seriously consider a female political aspirant.

In addition to these strongly held cultural beliefs, many female leaders are often the subject of defamatory statements from male rivals, set to taint their public image. For those brave enough to run for public office during the 2017 elections, many tell of the intimidation tactics used against them while on the political campaign trail. An article published ahead of the 2017 elections chronicled the experience of female politicians who were "robbed by men armed with machetes..."
and batons, had their motorcades attacked and supporters killed and were beaten and threatened with public stripping” (Marie Berry, 2017). With such callous feedback from their male counterparts, the chances of women running for public office are slim to none.

Apart from the obvious linkages between these socio-cultural factors and extreme gender stereotyping to political participation, low representation could be closely tied to the poor influence female leaders wield when and if they finally get into the August House.

**ii) Undemocratic institutions and policy frameworks**

Another essential factor contributing to low representation of women are the political structures and lack of supporting legislation to encourage representation and participation. Unable to achieve the 33% quota which is one-third of parliament being occupied by female leadership, Kenya's political landscape is late to all things gender parity. With various stumbling blocks for women making political bids, it is no wonder that many fail long before the ballot is cast.

A local non-governmental organization the National Democratic Institute has carried out extensive research in the area of government policy frameworks and its effect on women’s political participation and representation. According to research, (National Democratic Institute (b), 2018) recently revealed some factors that “discourage women from participating in the nation’s electoral process include inadequate support from political parties (particularly in the primaries), a lack of financial resources, gender stereotyping and patriarchal structures across society.” Just as in the case of Wambui Otieno while at the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and many after her, the lack of support from political parties is a bottleneck to the representation of women in Kenyan politics.
Kenya’s female political leadership is yet to abolish various stumbling blocks to the ballot for upcoming female leaders, thus continuing the low. With structural discrepancies, the matter of low representation of women is much bigger than one would think. According to (Moon, 2004) a cross-national research indicates several factors for equal representation which include “free and fair elections for political offices, fair electoral laws, equal campaigning opportunities, fair polling, honest tabulation of ballots, citizens' right to organize political parties and other political groupings, the existence of significant opposition, freedom from domination by powerful groups, and autonomy or participation of minority groups in the decision-making.” Unfortunately, however, many of these indicators lack in the Kenyan political elective process, thereby hindering female representation within Kenya’s political sphere.

Poor structures continue to champion the notion that politics is “a man’s world” with unfair party nominations as well as ballot rigging that often leaves female political candidates left out of the political equation. With a lack of proper backing from their political parties, many women rarely get the chance to run for political office. According to (RVI, 2016), very few elective political positions in the 2017 general elections were won by female politicians as "most county governments only reached the threshold through nomination rather than the election of women."

Based on the results of the 2017 general election it would not be presumptuous to assume that the two-thirds rule so far has done little to disrupt the status quo in Kenya’s political scene that the male gender dominates. Even so, it would be foolish to ignore that only a few women make it into office, and to do so female political leaders require great support from their male counterparts to secure a nomination. For those who may not hail from prominent families, a new set of obstacles befall them, as acknowledged by the United Nations “women are often more likely than men to
face practical barriers to entering politics, including a paucity of financial resources, lower levels of education, less access to information, greater family responsibilities, and a deprivation of rights that has left them with fewer opportunities to acquire political experience” (United Nations, 2012).

Often granted more opportunities for education and business, the male gender is privy to loads more opportunities than their female counterparts. This continues to affect female political representation in Kenya, with education playing a critical role. Malawian scholar (Kamlongera, 2008) also noted, “A lack of education acts as a major limitation to women's participation in politics all over the world.” According to literacy survey conducted locally in Kenya(UNESCO, 2007) stated “males had higher literacy and numeracy rates of 64.2 per cent and 67.9 respectively, compared to 58.9 and 61.4 per cent for females.” With the introduction of free primary education and subsequent plans for free secondary education; the number of women able to access education within Kenya has grown exponentially. According to (Howard, 2017) only recently have the female to male literacy ratios been so closely linked, indicating a departure from the large gaps in education synonymous with previous years. Research states “the female literacy rate is 74.9 percent, compared to the literacy rate of males at 81.1 percent, a stark difference from the literacy rates of the past”(Howard, 2017). This is indication that Kenya’s female population is potentially set to have more economic, socio-political opportunity in the years to come.

iii) Low levels of civic and gender awareness

For many women entering the political realm, low levels of civic awareness are among the top handicaps to political participation and representation. Those in rural areas have limited access to information, on their rights to participate. Without the proper information, women could unknowingly forsake their rights and render their vote useless. Through various civic education
programs such as those of The League of Kenya Women Voters, civic participation has and can continue to be enhanced in the electoral process through voter education and promoting civic competence in the entire electorate, including women.

Women in politics face an uphill battle. Challenged with socio-cultural norms, financial constraints, and legislative barriers while coping with low rates of civic education, these factors all translate to the relatively low number of female political leaders. However, this study explores what women in power have done to enhance the participation of other women in Kenyan politics despite various bottlenecks to political participation.

2.2 FEMALE-DRIVEN EFFORTS TO ENHANCE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KENYA

Efforts to rebrand the role of women in politics through organizations such as Maendeleo Ya Wanawake and National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) were heavily monitored by a largely male-run government in the 1980s through to the 1990s. In spite of their noble work with women in capacity building and agenda setting, many of these organizations operated under strict regulations during the 1980s to 1990s. (Nzomo, 2014) explains that “the only three national women’s organizations allowed to function at the time, namely, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (MYWO), National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) and the Nairobi Business and Professional Women’s Organization operated strictly on government’s terms: they had to be non-political and non-partisan in all their actions and deeds and had to limit their women’s agenda.”

Despite challenges, the unification of women in politics has happened before with the sole aim of trampling the status quo and improving female agency within politics. According to (Nzomo,
2,000 Kenyan women representatives from across the whole country demanded that the
democratization be engendered; an overhaul of the legal policy framework, to remove all forms of
discrimination against women in access to decision-making positions…” during the 1992 National
Women's Convention. Aside from conferences and conventions, women also formed organizations
to see to their cause of female political participation and representation. Among the more
prominent organizations today include, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, Kenya Women's Parliamentary
Association (KEWOPA) and Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya.

Organizations such as Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) have made political
representation its sole aim, as reflected in its mission statement “to promote the advancement of
parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge & understanding of democratic governance
and facilitate the networking of women parliamentarians for the socio-economic and political
development of Kenya” (KEWOPA, 2001). Political participation has also been discussed at
length among female political leaders in organizations such as The League of Kenya Women
Voters which mobilized civic education to boost participation.

2.2.1 Efforts Made by Female Leaders to Enhance Political Participation of other Women
One of the most prominent organizations, run and chaired by women is the Maendeleo Ya
Wanawake. Established in 1952, the organization is now chaired by Mrs. Phoebe Asiyo, at the
time of this writing. The former Member of Parliament for Karachuonyo has an impressive
political resume, including serving as an Ambassador to the United Nations Development Fund
for Women.

The organization is highly respected within political circles due to its high membership which
totals to about four million women. Maendeleo Ya Wanawake is also known for its transformative
welfare-based programs that span a variety of topics that include ‘Gender & Governance’ as well as ‘Women and Development’. Despite being so highly respected for being the first solely women's organization, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake's footprint in enhancing political participation is not entirely clear. At formation, the organization was tasked with the welfare of women in the nation, which caused them to contemplate the economic and social well-being of women first, only to later consider women’s political participation in the 1980s years into establishment. Therefore, this could be indicative of the undervalued power of women’s political participation or it could also indicate that Maendeleo Ya Wanawake indeed shouldered a large burden that political participation only came to the organization as an afterthought in the 1980s.

There have been several endeavors by organizations within civil society to increase female political participation in Kenya. Through various programs, organizations such as The League of Kenyan Women Voters which was established in 1992, has continued to reach out to women in the grassroots to enhance political involvement. According to (League of Kenya Women Voters, 2018) there have been extensive efforts to ensure civil education “In 2012-2013, prior to the General Election, the League received funding from UN Women through the Gender and Governance Program III. The League implemented a project…titled ‘Women’s participation in governance and decision-making processes at national and local levels in Murang’a and Laikipia counties.’”

The League of Kenya Women Voters is not the only organization at the frontier of providing more Kenyan women with access to civic education as well as the necessary resources to run for public office. Among the more active organizations is the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya who apart from serving as a non-governmental organization closely related with the judiciary, it
also steps in, to work closely with newly elected female political leaders. According to the organization's website, it continues to facilitate training sessions for Narok Female MCAs on legislative drafting and effective media engagement even as recently as March 2018 (FIDA, 2018). In a county where women are faced with retrogressive cultural practices of Female Genital Mutilation, early marriages and even low literacy within the community, training on legislative drafting could be instrumental in ensuring the issues that face the marginalized female population within Samburu County and other areas across Kenya are aptly addressed.

Legislation is among the most effective ways women in leadership have a chance at leveling the playing field for all women and girls. Through its ‘Women and Governance Program', the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) has been able to make significant changes to the lives of many. Established in 1985, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya claims high success rates with its various programs including "10,000 women leaders supported, and 5,000 community women rights monitors recruited among other changes" (FIDA, 2018).

Organizations such as Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) focus on civic education, advocacy and lobbying, while other groups focus their efforts on supporting women leaders by providing capacity building and election monitoring. In her research, Kenyan international studies scholar Professor Maria Nzomo highlights the agency of women through various organizations, as an essential component to ensuring the continued participation of women in Kenya's political landscape. The organizations are used as "strengthening mechanism for collaboration, mobilization and collective action among women's organizations (e.g. The Kenya

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2 Female Genital Mutilation is the cutting, partial or total removal, of the external female genitalia for cultural, religious, or other non-medical reasons. It is usually performed on girls between the ages of four and ten. It is also called female circumcision and is often practiced in Kenya’s pastoralist communities of Samburu and Maasai.
Women's Political Caucus (KWPC) formed in April 1997; Women's Political Alliance of Kenya (WPAK). A significant agenda-setting contribution by the Caucus was the launching of the Women's Political Manifesto for the 2002 General Elections, which defined women’s own platform for political participation, and served as a women’s agenda accountability tool for political aspirants and political parties" (Nzomo, 2014).

Organizations throughout Kenya’s political history have and continue to make a great impact on women’s political participation. However, in addition to work at the grassroots, more legislative endeavors need to be actualized to ensure the women who seek leadership are well supported by political structures that are effectively implemented. Civic education, awareness and lobbying will not help women achieve the desired threshold without crucial legislation to support it.

Therefore, the true significance of women-led caucus and organizations outside of Parliament are of substance to the increase of women’s political participation in all capacities from informed voting, to policy-making and even leadership at national levels.

2.2.2 Efforts Made by Female Leaders to Enhance Political Representation of other Women

In politics, to increase female political participation, female leadership must make an effort to ensure more women find their way into political discourse. Often the approach is twofold, either by creating the necessary legislature that breaks down barriers, making it easier for more women to have agency in the political arena. The classic example of such legislation is the two-thirds gender rule written into the 2010 Constitution. The principle purpose of the two-thirds gender rule is to ensure some equity in representation, giving more women a chance at leadership in all spheres within the political arena. However, the full weight of such legislation can only be felt when it is fully implemented.
The second means by which women can increase female political participation is if women in leadership can also act as mentors to those who may express an interest in joining the political sphere. In this sense, the idea of learning from the mistakes of others, standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before them is vital to a new generation of female political leadership. This research explores what concerted efforts various women have or have not made towards enhancing the political representation of women and the domino effect that these actions have on female political participation.

As early as the 1960s, women have dabbled in politics. The testosterone-driven field is a difficult area for any woman to find success, however despite the odds Grace Onyango became the first female mayor of Kisumu in 1965 and later the first female Member of Parliament in post-colonial Kenya, representing Kisumu Town in 1969. Onyango was not the only woman to break the glass ceiling for women in politics. However, she did ensure that many women after her had a better chance at leadership.

Grace Onyango tabled various documents; in an attempt to ensure women would remain present in leadership and not fade into the background even when challenged by their male counterparts. According to local news outlet (Standard Digital Media, 2016), “the second of nine children experienced gender discrimination first-hand, since it was “no place for women.” To level things, she campaigned for women to be employed in an interesting fashion: If any male employee died or retired at the municipal council, the replacement was to be the wife, sister or daughter!”

However, Grace Onyango’s proposed laws on leadership in local government were never implemented. The proposed law potentially had presented various assumptions that could have hindered the overall objective to secure more leadership opportunities for women. It has been
argued that the law pre-supposed that political ambitions automatically run down the family line which could be very misleading indeed. Nonetheless, Grace Onyango’s attempt at policy-making that advocates for female political participation was a lesson in the need for more well-considered and holistic policies that provide mechanisms for implementation.

The notion of mentorship is a unique approach to overcoming the many obstructions to political representation women face. The innovative tactic presupposes that by sharing their experiences with new entrants into politics, the more established women leaders would guide more women who venture into politics and prevent them from falling into the same pitfalls they once did. This would potentially continue, generation after generation creating a ripple effect that would thereby increase the number of political representation of female leaders. The various challenges faced by women in politics such as capacity building, the basics of legislation drafting, agenda setting and even resource gathering for campaigns and so on will be easier confronted based off knowledge gained by an earlier generation of female political leaders.

Unfortunately, direct mentorship has not taken root here in Kenya. However; many other countries are beginning to realize its importance in shaping a new generation of female leaders. In the United Kingdom, a much bigger attempt is being made to encourage mentorship according to (Bell, 2014) “a reassuring fact for women thinking about entering politics is that established female politicians do understand how important it is for them to spend time mentoring. A large number of them already devote their spare time to making it happen for other women.”

Though Kenyan female political leaders rarely make announcements about which political aspirant they are mentoring, it is hardly known to the public whether established women in political leadership reach out and mentor those who may still be new to the game of politics.
However, where one-on-one mentorship has failed to take root within Kenya, the women-run organizations have stood in place to encourage and foster mentorship in its broadest term, in one form or another.

According to (Kachambwa, 2018), “progress can be attributed to the power of networks and coalition building amongst women’s organizations to support and amplify the voices of women leaders. The League of Kenyan Women Voters, the Kenya Women’s Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) and the Kenya Women’s Political Caucus for example, have all demonstrated the power of networks to achieve their goals and has helped strengthen women’s political representation across government sectors.”

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory used in this theoretical framework is Feminism.

2.3.1 Feminism

Among the top proponents of this theory include J.A. Tickner, Dorothy E. Smith, Judith Butler and Patricia Hill Collins. The feminist movement gained steam, as women in Europe and America attained the right to vote in the 1920s. The first wave of feminism was in the 19th continuing to the early 20th century, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third began in the 1990s and continues on to the present times. Feminist theory as we know it today emerged from these feminist movements.
According to (Dorey-Stein, 2015), “feminist theory is principally “based on of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes” throughout the ages. Feminist opinion often engenders state affairs, governance and other aspects of life. According to (Youngs, 2004), “dominant conceptualization of political and economic agency in male-dominated terms ignores both women's realities and their active contributions to political and economic discourse."

There are several popular strains of feminist theory. Among the most popular strains of feminist thought include radical feminism, cultural feminism, separatist feminism as well as black feminism. In consideration of this research paper’s area of focus, the liberal feminist theory is the main theory used. The theory of liberal feminism earliest proponents included Mary Wollstonecraft and Judith Sargent Murray.

The liberal feminist theory was formulated in contrast to radical feminism. The theory’s tenets highlight structural engendering that leaves out women from various aspects of society. According to (Baehr, 2013) the liberal feminist theory “holds also that women's needs and interests are insufficiently reflected in the basic conditions under which they live, and that those conditions lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination. Liberal feminists hold that autonomy deficits like these are due to the “gender system” (Okin 1989, 89), or the patriarchal nature of inherited traditions and institutions, and that the women's movement should work to identify and remedy them.”

The liberal feminist theory applies well to the content explored in this research exploring female political representation in relation to the agency of female political leaders. This theory is based on the concept of “the protection and promotion of citizens' autonomy is the appropriate role of the state on the liberal view, liberal feminists hold that the state can and should be the women's
movement’s ally in promoting women's autonomy.” Therefore, in relation to this paper, the agency of women in enhancing female representation and participation cannot be defined in male-dominated terms; instead, a new description of the agency for women within the political arena may have to be constructed.

Feminist theory "explores both inequality in gender relations and the constitution of gender” (Jennifer Carlson, 2014). The feminist ideas that point towards women having been disadvantaged act as a channel for discourse on the role female leadership, plays in the promotion of political participation and political representation among women in Kenya. Though feminist ideals rarely crop up in the African context, some organizations such as Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya as well as Kenya Women's Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) embody feminist ideals. In Kenya, feminism is still looked at with disdain, leading many to avoid being associated with the concept and its ideology.

(Kamau (a), 2014) Notes, “that this position of most Kenyan women is a misconception of what feminism is and the association of it with the more radical stance that was publicized more than the core of feminism which to her is humanism." Such strongly held beliefs about feminism could be among the many reasons why women disengage from associating themselves with feminist ideals and thus shy away from working towards the cause of having more women’s representation in governance.
3.0 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives an outline of what data was collected. It also provides a brief synopsis on the data collection instruments and data analysis tools utilized in the course of the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research on the investigation of female leadership’s agency in enhancing women’s political participation was a case study research that made use of mixed research data collection methods.

The research was based on two key variables that interact throughout the study. The investigation explored the work of female political leadership (independent variable) and women’s representation in Kenyan politics (dependent variable). The study conducted utilized mixed methods and gathered both qualitative and quantitative data to inform the conclusions made from the findings. Qualitative data provided more descriptive data whereas quantitative data offered empirical data throughout the study. The case study design sought to establish whether having more women in leadership increases the chances of more female political representation within Kenya’s political landscape.

The research design involved a variety of mixed data collection instruments to triangulate the findings of the data. The triangulation method was chosen because it offers rich data, sourcing both qualitative and quantitative data. Taking on a case study research design, the researcher made use of face to face and telephone interviews with key informants as the data collection tools for qualitative primary data.
In addition to this, the primary data was supported by secondary data gathered from scholarly journals and public data from non-governmental organizations and government. These sources provided vital information on female political representation within Kenya. The researcher’s use of journal articles, as well as previously published data by organizations and government as tools for secondary data collections was in a bid to find new meaning to the interaction of the two variables of Kenyan female leadership and female political representation, in light of the previously gathered data.

Therefore, empirical data allowed the researcher to draw statistics on women’s participation within Kenya in various political parties and within the August House as elected leaders, through desktop research. In addition to this, the qualitative data allowed the researcher access to personal opinions through interviews and surveys.

**A summary breakdown of the research methods used for the objectives:**

**Objective 1:** To access the extent to which women in Kenya participate in political leadership - This objective was actualized with the use of secondary data.

**Objective 2:** To investigate the efforts made by female leaders in promoting the participation of women in political leadership - This objective was actualized with the use of face to face and telephone interviews with various key informants.

**Objective 3:** To access the factors contributing to the level of women’s participation in political leadership in Kenya - This objective was actualized with the use of face to face and telephone interviews with various key informants as well as the administration of questionnaires.
Objective 4: To access the factors that hinder women’s political participation in Kenya - This objective was actualized with the use of face to face and telephone interviews with various key informants as well as the administration of questionnaires.

3.2 SITE OF THE STUDY

The site of study takes place in Kenya, particularly Nairobi.

The Kenyan Parliament as well as the House of Senate are both located in Nairobi. With many parliamentarians working in and around Nairobi, it is rightly so considered the epicenter of politics within Kenya. 47 members serve as Women’s Representatives out of the 349 members of The National Assembly and another 29 female members of the Assembly are representatives of various constituencies. These various women, who serve in political leadership as part of the National Assembly, formed a major part of the data sample used to provide primary data.

In addition to this, conducting the research in Nairobi in particular, worked well. As one of Kenya’s most cosmopolitan cities, Nairobi offered the opportunity to investigate the various factors that still influence positively and/or, negatively the rate of female political representation. It also provided information on Kenya’s socio-economic and political factors that create bottlenecks to women’s political representation.

According to (National Democratic Institute, 2018), “Women account for just 23 percent of the National Assembly and Senate - a figure that includes seats reserved exclusively for women representatives.” As reported by the electoral commission, Nairobi had over 2 million registered voters ahead of the 2017 elections (IEBC (a), 2017), which was one of the counties with a high number of registered voters.
Nairobi also serves as the site of the study since most women's organizations have their headquarters stationed within Nairobi among them Maendeleo Ya Wanawake located within the Central Business District, as well as the Federation of Female Lawyers Kenya located in Lavington. These organizations not only work with current serving politicians, but also provide support for those women with political ambitions as well as those who might have failed at the ballot. These organizations informed the research, providing qualitative and quantitative data on women’s preparedness for the ballot as well as data on flaws of the national electoral process that in turn locks out many women from political leadership and representation.

Therefore, having the site of the research in Nairobi contributed to an extent, to the level of accessibility to key stakeholders in the female political participation.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE POPULATION

The sample population was women in political leadership in Kenya. The target sample population consists of women in leadership selected based on the criteria of experience and political position. Thus, the researcher reached out to 2 failed political aspirants, 1 new entrant into the game of politics, 2 women active political parties and the National Assembly as well as 1 accomplished female political leader. In addition to this, valuable information was also provided by a member of civil society who works in collaboration with women eager to be part of Kenya’s political realm.

Because of the targeted nature of the research study non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive and snowball sampling were used. The high-profile nature of politicians within the
Kenyan society made them difficult to approach; therefore, snowball sampling was used to gain access to the respondents outlined above.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data needed for this research was both primary and secondary data. Using a triangulation data collection method, the research conducted required qualitative and quantitative collection methods, due to the mixed research design selected. The research was enhanced by the use of both primary and secondary data which will provide a wealth of information on the subject matter.

Qualitative data collection procedures employed include individual semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with key informants as well as open and close-ended questionnaires that provided primary data. These interviews provided the opportunity for respondents to share freely their contributions to increasing female political participation as well as the obstacles faced towards that end. On the other hand, quantitative data collection procedures for secondary data collection included organizational and government data as well as various relevant scholarly articles from a variety of journals. The use of secondary data for this research also involved the analysis of various previously conducted studies around contributing factors that encourage female political participation.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Quantitative and qualitative data sourced from secondary data sources was analyzed simply by coding and interpreting the data. Secondary data was beneficial to this study due to its availability,
contributing to the ease by which the data was collected, analyzed and interpreted in regard to the study.

On the other hand, qualitative data analysis of the primary data involved case study analysis that focused on interpreting respondents’ data into revised themed, coherent information that provided context to the study. The various data collection tools were face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and questionnaires to provide a wealth of information. The researcher used semi-structured interview guides and administered questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions as the key data collection instruments so as to gain the most information from respondents. The data gathered was promptly coded and grouped into relevant thematic groupings that allow for a comprehensive interpretation of data that informed the recommendations made later in the conclusion of the research study.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The female respondents involved in the research conducted, had to be given due notice on their participation in this research. It was imperative that the research had the respondents’ informed consent before conducting the research.

Due to the public nature of politics and the participants involved, information shared with the researcher remained private, adhering to the principles of confidentiality and objectivity throughout the research.

Finally, the researcher had to maintain the anonymity of the respondents involved in the research. Since some of the information was personal, the identities of the public personas who were involved as research respondents, had to remain unnamed.
3.7 LIMITATIONS

A challenge faced by the researcher was to overcome her personal voice. In matters of gender and the disadvantaged position women hold in society, this presented as a bias that might have colored the perspective of the researcher given her gender.

Time was also a constraint in the matter of securing interviews with the busy political elite. However, the use of snowball sampling helped minimize the difficulties in reaching out to the target sample of female political leaders.
4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographics Characteristics

There are 76 women in Kenya’s National Assembly. Out of the 76, this research used 7 respondents who were selected based on their experience, the political positions they hold as well as age.

4.1.1 Gender

The research was an investigation on the role of female political leadership in encouraging the political participation of Kenyan women between 1992 and 2017. Due to the targeted nature of the research, the respondents who made up the target sample involved in the research were only women. There were no respondents of the male gender involved in the research carried out.

4.1.2 Age
The key informants who provided the bulk of the information were aged between 45 and 65 years of age. Due to the nature of politics, hardly any young individuals make it far into the political arena, thereby explaining the age of the respondents.

4.2.3 Education Level
According to the diagrammatic representation of the education levels of respondents in Figure 1, it is clear that most education among Kenya’s female political elite is distributed among Undergraduate and Master’s levels.
There were no candidates who had attained less than a High School certificate, and none of the respondents interviewed had attained certification at Doctorate level.

4.2 Summary of Results

4.2.1 Insight to the extent of political participation amongst women in Kenya

The research conducted involved 7 respondents who were selected by use of purposive and snowball sampling due to the targeted nature of the research. The 7 respondents involved in the research were selected based on the political position that they have held, as well as their experiences throughout their political career. The seven individuals are representative of the larger group of female political leaders because of their diverse backgrounds, as well as the political positions they have occupied such as Senator, Women’s Representative, Member of County Assembly as well as failed candidates who ran for Member of National Assembly.
Focusing on the role of female political leadership and their part in enhancing women’s political participation in Kenya, a series of questions were asked to ascertain the extent of political representation, based on various activities such as voting, vying for elective office and lobbying for new legislature. For the purpose of this study, data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires as earlier mentioned.

Based on the data gathered, all the respondents owned a voter’s card which they obtained at age 18, and they have all voted recently, in the 2017 general election. However, it seems their motivations for obtaining the voter’s card varied. Based on the research it is clear that obtaining a voter’s card was only a means to fulfill a government requirement for majority of the respondents (four out of seven) as presented in Figure 2.

It is important to note however, that one of the respondents did site the influence of a male-figure as their motivation to obtain a voter’s card. Therefore, male influence does factor into women’s political participation, even though it might be minimal. In some ways male approval and support, factors into why women run for public office. Conversely, patriarchal norms stand to hinder women’s political representation at Kenya’s highest political landscapes. Thereby, patriarchy in part, contributes to Kenya’s low female political representation.

When asked about any political aspirations as a child, all the women participating in the research revealed that they had no desire to run for public office until much later in their lives. Therefore, this is indicative of the fact that women as young girls have been convinced of their place in society, hidden away from the public arena; only recently taking on more public roles such as representatives within Kenya’s political realm. For many of the respondents, the idea of political participation such as attending political rallies and political representation such as taking on
positions as elective representatives all factor at different levels with the latter, being more out of the scope of the typical African woman. However, the women who participated in this research explained that before political engagement as political representatives, many women discuss political matters amongst themselves in the comfort of their homes, in chamas and even engage in political discourse at rallies and within political parties.

![Figure 2: Factors Influencing Voter's Card Registration](image)

Alternatively, the research also reveals that women are eager to participate in national affairs, performing their civic duties as Kenyan citizens. However, like many other African women, their hopes to break free of the gender stereotypes, has been a difficult task.

4.2.2 Factors positively contributing to the Level of Women’s Participation in Political Leadership in Kenya
Respondents discussed the factors contributing to an increase in women’s political participation. Based on the responses to the interviews and questionnaires, the most significant contribution to women’s political leadership is family support as well as the support of other women.

1. Support from family and friends

Respondent PN spoke of her experience when she first decided to run for elective office. Making the switch from non-governmental work to politics, she decided to run in the hopes of making a difference for others. Respondent PN credited the support of her loving husband as part of the reason as to why she stayed her course to run for office. Respondent PW also pointed out that support of family and friends was vital.

Respondent PW went on to explain that the support of other women also running for public office, provided encouragement while on the campaign trail. The camaraderie was vital in continuing on with her political career and encouraged her to reach out to other women aspiring to join Kenya’s tough political scene.

2. Support and capacity-building from non-governmental organizations

As policy makers, the female politicians acknowledged the work of women’s-based organizations such as Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), National Council of Women of Kenya, as well as Kenya Women’s Political Caucus for training women with political aspirations along with those who have already obtained political positions.

Respondent RL highlights that low representation and participation within Kenya’s political sphere as “an indication of the novelty women in thatspace.” However, “this has seen women struggle to build networks and strive to work together.” These various non-governmental
organizations have spearheaded female political participation and have ignited civic education in Kenya.

Moreover, efforts of non-governmental organizations such as Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya and the National Democratic Institute were attributed as being central to encouraging women’s political participation at grassroots levels. The various programs carried out by non-governmental organizations have been praised for their work in increasing civic education and awareness among women in the rural areas, and thus equipping Kenyan women for political participation.

4.2.3 Factors that Hinder Women’s Political Participation in Kenya

The series of questions addressing the obstacles affecting women’s political participation provided a wealth of information. Not only did the respondents who were political leaders share their experiences, but also those working in non-governmental organizations provided insight into the low political participation of women in rural Kenya.

1. Patriarchal norms influence female political participation

Speaking about the part traditional norms play in influencing political participation in Kenya’s largely patriarchal society, there are several observations that became apparent. According to Respondent BR a civil society member, “male dominance in our society does not provide a level playing field for political participation of women in politics which provides undue advantage to the men. It is this patriarchy that has resulted in very few women presenting themselves up for leadership positions… At the grassroots level in particular, men dictate as to whom their wives
will vote for during elections and in some instances confiscate their identity cards so that their wives do not participate in electoral voting process. I have encountered women who are afraid of participating in politics because their husbands do not approve.” Unfortunately, the sentiments of Respondent BR were similarly shared among the female politicians interviewed in the course of the research.

Respondent RL noted that the deeply “patriarchal structures are intertwined into all aspects of society including politics.” Therefore, these structures go on to shape gender relations, and subsequently cause women from participating in the political sphere. These sentiments apply to women across Africa including the developing state of Nigeria. According to (Callaway, 1987) “The appeal to educate and give political emancipation was in conflict with what had become deeply engrained patterns of male subordination women. Challenges to such patterns engendered strong reactions...”

(Chuku, 2009) Writes, “From the corpus of literature on the participation of African women in politics, we can delineate two opposing paradigms: one that hinges largely on the romanticization of African women’s political history before European colonial domination, and another that emphasizes their political subordination and invisibility.” Nonetheless, the structural discrimination that sees women marginalized from Kenya’s political realm is one that can only be reversed with a shake-up of old ideals with a change in mindset and policies hinged on the socially-constructed gender norms fronted by our largely patriarchal society.

Nonetheless, women have begun to take up more political positions according to (Bardall, 2017); the 2017 elections “saw important gains for women’s representation at various levels of government. Twenty-two women won constituency seats (up from 16 in 2013), including four
from pastoral, conservative communities, bringing the overall level of women in the National Assembly to 22%. Women have been elected to governor and senate seats for the first time (three out of 47 governorships and three out of 68 senate seats), and have made gains at the County Assembly level, where they hold 6.6% of the seats and three out of 68 senate seats.”

2. **Political structures, and policies play a major part in female political participation**

Based on the conversations shared with the key informants, the interviews revealed that indeed women are relegated to the sidelines in their attempt to make contributions to the political sphere. Among the respondents were failed candidates, a Women’s Representative as well as a senator. Based on their responses, their political journey and interactions with male politicians has been eerily similar.

Failed political candidate CL speaks of overcoming various hurdles during the campaign trail. Among the biggest obstacles faced by women running for political office is the lack of funding. Nearly all the respondents except one spoke about their problems of securing funding. Lack of resources has become a bottleneck to more women participating in politics. Respondent RL speaks on the unequal support that women receive in comparison to their male counterparts from their political party, while on the campaign trail. Receipt of campaign materials, media visibility and other forms of support from their party is imbalanced leaving female political candidates with limited reach and engagement with voters, which in turn as noted by Respondent RL “results in their low performance at the ballot.”

In the course of their interactions it has become clear that gender interactions within the political arena are highly dysfunctional. Most women sited that they faced discrimination and faced some sort of name-calling or harassment while dealing with their equals in the political arena. Only
one respondent mentioned having faced ill-treatment from a fellow woman as presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Discrimination while participating in politics

The harassment and ill-treatment of female politicians, aspiring or established is indeed worrying. Respondent CL pointed out her experiences proved to her that “women are held to a higher standard…and among themselves, women tend to discourage rather than encourage each other, we are our worst enemy. We are too anxious for male approval.”

However, it seems that the saving grace to most of these obstacles is some of the support and mentorship women have provided each other. Using various networks such as The Kenya Women’s League of Voters as well as Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), women have been able to come together. However, it was noted by Respondent CL that these organizations provide mentorship in a general sense, and not on a one-on-one basis which would be more effective. Therefore, female political leadership only plays a secondary role in the
increase of female political representation. Only offering their knowledge and experience through the various women-run nongovernmental organizations such as KEWOPA, Kenya’s female leadership lacks true agency in enhancing women’s political participation even in the exercise on improving women’s civic education at grass roots levels.

3. Lack of civic education

Education of the female electorate on their civic rights has become a more pressing matter, and a major obstacle especially in regard to enhancing female political participation. However, it has been a drawn-out debate on who should actually provide civic education to the female population. Civic education is seen as the key to increasing participation and awareness, in a bid to level out representation as well as political participation within Kenya.

For any democratic state, public participation is vital to the selection of leaders who represent their interests in the highest level of decision-making in the land. According to (Roberta Bartloletti, 2016) “since the 1990s, the theme of participation has come to the fore in international debates regarding at least three critical issues: the relationship between representative democracy and deliberative democracy and the possibility of citizens’ empowerment through their involvement in policy making…the feeling of disaffection toward politics and of democratic deficit.”

To participate fully, women must be educated on their civic rights and duties as citizens, enabling them to contribute constructively to every sphere of a state including its political arena.

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3 Democratic deficit is defined as “any situation in which there is believed to be a lack of democratic accountability and control over the decision-making process” according to the Collins Dictionary. As used in this text, it implies that the governing system experiences a democratic deficit because it lacks a full representation of all members of society.
How this research study has revealed that the responsibilities of civic education in relation to empowering women towards political participation have been poorly executed. Without a proper national strategy, civic education continues to make a lackluster impression on the women eager to participate politically at national and grassroots level. This begged the question, who is responsible for civic education?

According to Respondent CL, “civic education rests of the backs of non-governmental organizations as well as self-education.” Therefore, female politicians should not be expected to rally around educating the masses on their civil rights, because according to Respondent RL “female politicians should focus on policy-making”. Highlighting the level of low civic education Respondent RL noted, “the lack of civic education is a deliberate attempt to keep citizens unaware, uninformed thereby making them easier to govern. Education is also central to championing civic awareness among women, through the school system.”

Instead, other solutions to enhance civic education can be used such as the use of technology and the re-integration of a comprehensive civic education into the school curriculum. A program piloted in one of Kenya’s rural communities in Isiolo by the International Republican Institute, proved that technology can be useful in reaching women in rural areas in communities where cultural and religious matters often act as obstacles to political participation for women. The pilot program by (International Republican Institute, 2015), proved “Technological tools, such as SMS, provide a more discreet and secure mechanism for women from rural and patriarchal societies to voice their concerns and engage in county issues…the SMS platform has also been instrumental in engaging more women in county-level social audits, which IRI and local Kenyan civil society groups use as an oversight mechanism to ensure that county budgets reflect the priorities of the community.”
4. A lack of affirmative action on the implementation of the two-thirds Gender Rule

The two-thirds gender rule has been an essential part in ensuring equality in political participation within the Kenyan political landscape. The hopes for the two-thirds gender rule is to ensure more women hold political positions, thereby representing various marginalized groups and influencing policy-making. However, based on the interviews with various respondents, most of them believe the two-thirds gender rule is not well implemented.

The legislation that has been progressively implemented in Parliament between the 2013 and 2017 elections has a significant rise in female political representation. However, as discussed “the elections would not return sufficient numbers of elected Members of the National Assembly and the Senate necessary to meet the one-third-to-two-thirds gender-principle crystallized” (CREAW, 2017). Thus, despite the increase in representation, the two-thirds gender rule is yet to be fully implemented.
Figure 4: A Comparison of Female Political Representation in 2013 & 2017

The low representation is across the board and is indicative that the two-thirds has done little to ensure at least a third of elective positions are occupied by able, female leadership.

Discussing the true power of the positions offered to women, it is noted that these positions are either given to fill quotas or are given without the intention of allowing women to exercise full agency over the position they hold. Respondent BR noted, “I do not believe there is true control of power for anyone in appointed positions. That said, women in power continually face intimidation and challenges in execution of their mandate. We recently witnessed the suspension of a woman County Executive from the Nairobi County Assembly for doing what she considered right by going against the Governor’s orders. One can never be fully in control without facing corresponding consequences.”

Respondent RL also concurs, highlighting “The strongest women tend to be put aside, because they will rock the boat…so they end up putting weaker women in various positions” and this
only serves to prove that women are incapable of handling powerful positions. Therefore, this brings to light the pertinent matter of quality leadership vis a vie the quest to fill quotas based on the need to abide by the two-thirds gender rule. Respondent BR notes, “There is need to review the constitution and abolish the affirmative action provision for elective positions. In its place, ensure that there are provisions that will ensure that elections will ensure that there is a 50/50 representation of both men and women through election by having a male and female representing the same electoral area with different mandates. This way only the deserving women are elected to parliament” thereby eliminating the two thirds quota system.

Hinging her argument on the basics of a democracy, Respondent RL shared that she believes that Kenya without the participation of all members of its electorate (including women) is not a democracy. She explained, “The 2/3rd rule has been completely resisted. Participation is not about power, but it is about ensuring women’s perspectives are captured in every legislation. In Kenya there is an obsession with power, and where women are oppressed, the economy is oppresed.”

Respondent BR also added that lack of affirmative action, only serves to lessen the significance of the two-thirds gender rule. Respondent BR noted, “The government has brought before parliament a bill to facilitate the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule in the National Assembly, several times. However, in all these instances the bill has been unsuccessful either due to lack of quorum or support from the necessary number required to pass the bill. The government has also ensured that the two-thirds gender rule has been affected in the appointment of government officials.” Good will to pass various aspects of the two-thirds gender rule failed due to a lack of quorum was also highlighted by Respondent PN.
However, the two-thirds gender rule can and should receive some credit for bringing more women into the fold within Kenya’s highly patriarchal political arena. Respondent PW notes that “it is working and has brought many women into the public arena.” The idea that having more women in leadership in whatever capacity is beneficial in breaking barriers and establishing equal representation is a commonly held stand point. Respondent RL notes that “to advance the cause of increasing female political participation, we should never shortchange the value of visibility.”

The main concept that has emerged through these interviews is the importance of networking and support amongst women to ensure the visibility of female political leadership and their efforts so as to anchor the importance of the two-thirds gender rule in spearheading transformational female leadership represented in Kenya’s August House.

4.2.4 Efforts Made by Female Political Leaders in Promoting the Political Participation of Women

1. Female politicians’ efforts to help other women enter Kenya’s political realm

There have been some efforts to network together as women in Kenya’s male-dominated political arena. However, more strategic efforts can be made to realize an improvement in female political participation. According to Figure 3, new female entrants to Kenya’s political landscape still face discrimination from other women in politics. This lack of support is further explained by Respondent CL who noted “women are our own worst enemy.” Thus, the use of non-governmental organizations is critical to bringing women together to support each other.

There is a need to adopt a new strategy to increase participation of Kenyan women through the efforts of other women. According to Respondent BR, “we need to have more women participate
in sponsoring bills and motions that directly affect their lives in Kenya. The women in Parliament need to make noise about their achievements work in unity to show their strength. This will help convince the society to embrace and support women leadership. This will also provide the encouragement needed to increase the number of women participating in politics.”

Exercising their mandate and increasing their visibility in the media as a group, could make women’s presence within the political arena more deliberate. And as they take center stage, female politicians can use the attention to lobby for various bills critical to enhancing the quality of life of Kenyan women, and the Kenyan society as a whole. In many ways, the Parliament is a reflection of society, therefore an August House that lacks active women is indicative of a society where women are too afraid to speak up for themselves, and that is truly a sad and unprogressive society.

2. Female politicians’ individual efforts to mentor other women eager to enter Kenya’s political realm

When asked about their individual efforts to reach out and mentor other women with political aspirations, or even engage in civic education at the grassroots level, most respondents pointed out they have done little in this area.

Respondent BR a member of civic society mentioned her efforts in running a civic educational program at the grassroots level. Respondent BR explained her work in detail where she worked to help increase the participation of women in politics both in electoral politics and in their political parties. She explained, “I was part of a team that provided leadership and campaign training for women politics prior to the last general elections in 2017. The training included understanding the electoral laws and party nomination rules and procedures which would ensure
that they successfully secured a party ticket for the general election. The support prior to party primaries also included the training of agents for the female candidates to effectively secure their vote during the party primaries where most women lose their chances. I also work with youth in political parties which encourage the participation of young women in political parties in capacity building sessions which encourage them aim for political seats in future and also encourage them to participate in public decision-making processes.”

The female politicians involved in this study, did mention they did received some form of mentorship from other more established female political figures such as Charity Ngilu and Martha Karua. In this regard, they pointed out that the mentorship was not close mentorship, however a more general mentorship often facilitated by non-governmental organizations such as the Kenya Women’s Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA). However, because of the new dynamics of the two-thirds gender rule, mentorship and civic education are out of the realm of many female political leaders. Respondent PN mentioned that, the focus of women in elective office remains re-election for their second term. Thus, the responsibility of civic education to encourage political participation in women, is largely left to non-governmental organizations.

However, there have been some efforts to work with non-governmental organizations to improve capacity building. Use of various organized programs for capacity building such as the Program for Young Politicians in Africa (PYPRA), The Campaign Academy by National Democratic Institute as well as the Closing Civic Space program by the International Commission of Jurists-Kenya (ICJ) have been a critical tool for female politicians to reach out to larger masses as Respondent PW noted.
Throughout the interviews, all the politicians did point out that the idea of mentorship is great, however it is very problematic. Respondent PW notes that “when mentoring someone, it requires trust and previous experience has proven that those you mentor can come to disappoint you. It is better to focus on re-election for the second term, before engaging in mentorship and grooming individuals for political leadership.”

4.3 Interpretation and Discussion of Research Results

The research conducted set out to explore the means female political leadership are using to enhance female political participation in Kenya. Pegged on the two-thirds gender rule, legislation from the 2010 Constitution as well as other means, the researcher hoped to uncover women political leaders’ efforts to boost female participation.

However, based on the questionnaires and interviews, it seems that there are a few contentious matters when it comes to the role of Kenya’s female political leadership in enhancing female political participation.

1. Female political leadership has no role in encouraging political participation of other women.

It is clear that women in political leadership are indeed at a disadvantaged position. Women in politics often encounter harassment, chauvinistic stereotypes while constantly being held to a higher standard. Women in politics face an uphill battle, starting from nothing to achieve something. According to (Gruenebaum, 1981), “Qualities considered necessary for achievement have been attributed to men, and the opportunities to develop these qualities through education, training, and association have also been re-served for them. Characteristics defined as "feminine" - dependence and powerlessness -have always served as the basis for denying women
civil, political, and economic rights.” This keeps the cycle of low political participation from one generation to the next generation from the time Kenya was a newly independent state, now years later celebrating its golden jubilee. However, there are some means that women have used to break this recurring cycle; leveraging within their networks and working together.

In spite of this, the idea that women should leverage their networks for the sake of improving the chances of increased female participation was a troublesome concept to unpack. Based on various respondents, female political leaders should not make it their mission to increase female political participation. However, based on the women interviewed who work in civil society, female political leadership’s participation is essential. Capacity-building for female political aspirants, and the women who endeavor to participate in Kenya’s largely male-driven political landscape, it is important that more women in politics should take on this responsibility.

Therefore, to some extent it seems like a blame-game between government, non-governmental organizations and Kenyan female politicians. One participant, Respondent PW noted that is better facilitated by non-governmental organizations, while serving female politicians stay focused on re-election. Respondent PK shared similar thoughts stating, “There is more effort in improving socio-economic empowerment through government initiatives such as Uwezo Fund’s program, the Women’s Enterprise Fund, however, little goes into the important aspect of political empowerment.”

Unfortunately, this blame-game sees all three groups (government, non-governmental organizations, female political elite) fail, as they all hope that the other is doing more to enhance female political participation. The lack of a clearly mapped plan points to the disjointed approach to enhancing political participation among Kenya’s women. Therefore, it would be of
significance to ensure that all three sectors of society, the government, civil society as well as Kenya’s female political elite clearly state and adhere to their roles to ensure a cohesive strategy in promoting enhanced political participation of women.

2. The two-thirds gender rule is ineffective in ensuring equality in leadership and participation for Kenyan women.

The research revealed that most women in politics in Kenya lack faith in the two-thirds gender rule. It might have increased the amount of positions available to women through the creation of posts such as the Women’s Representative; however, the ability to exercise their mandate once elected, is questionable.

According to (Giesler, 2006) “In many places women initially entered the public arena in order to protect their roles as mothers and wives, but later sought to change both politics and their ascribed position in society. It was on account of this double agenda that African women were, in the words of nationalist leader Sekou Toure, 'the most dynamic force because in them lies the total hope for progress.” However, what could be ‘policy implementation’ has done little to support the hope female political participation would bring.

It has been noted by local political scholars that “there’s clear reluctance, if not resistance, to implementing the gender-equity rule. The most obvious reason for this laxity is the fact that male leaders don’t want to give up their privilege. Women continue to face systemic discrimination in Kenyan society” (Okoth, 2017). The concept that brought the Women’s Representative position into creation may have been to ensure more female political participation, through representation in Kenya’s August House. However, the interpretation and implementation of the two-thirds gender rule has now become a matter of filling in quotas, and not necessarily a matter of gaining
quality and involved leadership from the female population. Though the female population is the larger percentage of 50.1% according to (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018) within Kenya, their needs and interests are still yet to be well represented. As Figure 4 presented, there has been an increase in female political participation and representation, however the two-thirds rule has failed to secure a significant increase in political representation.

In addition to the arguable quality in leadership, the research also revealed doubt in the inability to pass bills that of interest to the female population. This therefore curtails their ability to pass pertinent bills that would be of benefit to the women they represent at the grassroots. Moreover, these bills could eventually ensure more political participation of women within Kenya. However, there are several bills so far that female political leadership have managed to secure such as the Marriage Act, Matrimonial Property Act as well as the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act. These legislations are important as they provide the perspective of women in the highest level of policy-making, and directly change the lives of women at grassroots level.

Alarmingly, 80% of all respondents reported encountering discrimination or harassment from men, while on the campaign trail as well as in their capacities as leaders. On the other hand, 20% cited discrimination and use intimidation tactics implemented by other women. Thus, although there are new roles for women within Parliament, their ability to execute their duties is often challenged by both male and female counterparts.

The perceived unity among female political leadership is destroyed further when party politics is involved. These political structures do more to encourage in-fighting among female political leaders. As (Giesler, 2006) notes in her research, “party loyalty almost always trumps sisterhood
and is used to divide sisters has clearly created problems when two women stand in one constituency. Asking one to resign is hardly fair and supporting two opposing women candidates is futile. And the struggles that can ensue in such head to head battles can be very ‘dirty’, such as during the 2001 election in Zambia, when Edith Nawakwi stood against a fellow party woman who had opted to stand as an independent against her. A third woman politician, moreover, clearly in favor of the competitor, attacked Nawakwi…stating she allegedly kept male MP's awake with mini-skirts: ‘Women candidates are being supported because they are perceived [as] kind, decent, and are less likely to steal. Ms Nawakwi grabbed somebody's husband and that is not being kind.”

The need to find grace amongst their male counterparts as well as success in their capacities, leads many female political leaders into narrow-minded thinking. Therefore, women in politics rarely ever work towards encouraging female political participation independently but rather are more focused on their individual mandate. In addition to this, the disparity in male to female political representation sets a precedent for the high levels of imbalance in party support which in-turn leads to low levels of support amongst women; breeding a culture of mistrust amongst women in political leadership.

Unexpectedly, some respondents suggested radical solutions to the slow implementation of the two-thirds gender rule based on their responses. For 50% of the respondents, a new system should be re-imagined that will completely abolish gender-bias right from the party nomination stage. Respondents PW, BR and others shared the idea of a 50-50 party nomination with two delegates of different genders running for the same seat, so as to circumvent the gender bias, dubious quality of leadership and ensure that each party presents two candidates of both genders to the ballot, as representatives set to make it to the August House.
3. Civic education offers more opportunity for political participation than individualized mentorship programs for Kenyan female political aspirants.

In many ways, Kenya has defined political participation in terms of voting and leadership in representing a certain area and its people. However, there are various ways to consider the re-definition of active citizenry. Now with the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule, there is a need to analyze state democracy and the participation of all its citizens as the vital component to Kenya’s democratic future. According to (Roberto Bartoletti, 2016) “the theme of participation has come to the fore in international debates regarding at least three critical issues: the relationship between representative democracy and deliberative democracy and the possibility of citizens’ empowerment through their involvement in policy making; the role of communication and of digital media in promoting new forms of participation; the feeling of disaffection toward politics and of democratic deficit.” With participation in Kenya still falling behind that of its neighbors, a new approach to civic education could lead to new levels of participation and avoid a democratic deficit.

For any and all Kenyan women who are eager to participate in Kenya’s political scene in any capacity, the research has revealed that individualized mentorship is hardly ever an option. Now in the era of devolution, Kenya’s leaders have more demands placed on their time and efforts, thus making it more difficult to make time to groom an individual and mentor them in the game of politics.

It is clear that the unsynchronized approach used today is not helpful in ensuring more Kenyan women gain civic education, making them ill-equipped to participate well in politics. Therefore, a two-pronged approach could offer more benefits, while giving the women in political leadership more time to concentrate on transformative policy-making that could improve the
lives of millions of Kenyan women. Based on the research, civic education should be spearheaded by non-governmental organizations that have more funding for grassroots programs, while elite female political leaders step in to provide context, generously sharing their experience.

The research conducted has revealed, Kenyan female political leaders should not be tasked with the responsibility of enhancing female political participation through civic education; however, they can be tasked with enhancing female political participation through creating legislations that seek more female political participation in Kenya.

Government, non-governmental organizations as well as female political leaders all have their part to play, towards ensuring more female political participation in Kenya. A more robust civic education curriculum integrated into the school education systems could provide a better foundation to creating an active citizenry. Focus on the responsibilities of various elected leaders, an understanding on the bill of rights as well as the importance of participation are all indispensable to creating more female political participation in Kenya.

Additionally, the use of social media and technology could catapult efforts towards enhancing civic awareness and more importantly political participation.
5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was carried out in Kenya and involved women in political leadership as the target sample. The research data on the agency of female political leadership in promoting female political participation in Kenya provided some interesting insights.

The following is a brief summary of the findings as they relate to the objectives of the study.

5.1.1 The extent to which women in Kenya participate in political leadership

The 2010 Constitution brought with it a few critical amendments to Kenya’s political structures. Among the most significant additions made to the Kenyan constitution is the two-thirds gender rule. Created to encourage equality, it was assumed that it would provide women with more opportunities in political leadership.

And to some extent women have continued to increase in terms of their political participation, more importantly in political leadership even taking up positions in elective office in the capacity of governor and senator.

Despite these new developments to women’s political participation, women in power cannot fully exercise their mandate. Still relatively marginalized in Kenya’s political sphere, their capacity to make true change is undercut due to their low numbers. The lack of goodwill to implement the two-thirds gender rule is stifling their ability to do more within Kenya’s political landscape as this research has revealed. Thus, women in Kenya occupy various positions as
Governors, Senators, MCAs and even Members of the National Assembly however, are second-guessed and often cowed in their attempts to make drastic policy changes.

In addition to women’s participation as representatives in the August House, many participate through various political parties, and non-governmental organizations such as Kenya Women’s Parliamentary Association, Kenya Women Voter’s League and more. These organizations not only build networks, they also provide a forum for women to discuss various chauvinistic policies that could and should be changed, as well as a chance to formulate a strategy to revolutionize archaic policies and mindsets about women. These organizations also provide for an exchange of ideas, offering many a think-tank that perceives women as individuals unimpeded from true participation within Kenya’s political landscape.

5.1.2 Factors contributing to the level of women’s participation in Kenya’s political leadership

1. Factors contributing to political participation among women

As earlier established, political participation as used in this research is defined as a series of activities that include voting, signing petitions, attending a rally or even representing a particular area and its population in Parliament.

The research conducted revealed that there are several contributing factors to the level of women’s political participation in Kenya. Civic education stands among the top positive contributing factors to Kenyan women’s political participation. Awareness of one’s civic duties and an interest to fulfill these duties including participating in various political processes, has seen many women participate.
Another positive contribution to women’s political participation is the work of non-governmental organizations such as Kenya Women Parliamentary Organization, Kenya Women’s Caucus, Kenya Women’s League of Voters as well as Maendeleo Ya Wanawake. These organizations work in tandem towards the same objective, bringing women together with the aim of political empowerment among many other objectives. Their programs that work towards establishing an increase in political participation use capacity-building on legislation drafting, fundraising techniques as well as civic education, in their efforts towards increasing women’s political participation. These female-run organizations are also essential as they allow women to network and leverage their relationships to encourage female political participation through lobbying for relevant policies in Parliament, as well as civic awareness campaigns at grassroots levels across the country.

2. Factors hindering political participation among women

Female political participation has faced various factors that have hindered its increase among Kenyan women. Amongst the most common obstacles to political participation of women is Kenya’s highly patriarchal society. The stereotypes and societal norms keep women from participating fully in Kenyan politics. Throughout the course of the research, women in politics have cited discrimination, the use of intimidation tactics as well as harassment as they chronicled some of the harrowing experiences they faced while engaged in the Kenyan political sphere.

In addition to this, a lack of support from family and friends has contributed negatively towards a woman’s ability to participate in politics. Feeling unsupported, women hardly ever enter into politics without support from family, and especially so without the approval of their husbands. Through the course of the research, it became apparent that almost all women in politics seek out
approval for their political aspirations from a male figure perhaps their father, or husband before beginning their political career. Without the support and validation of a male-figure, many women’s political careers become non-starters.

The research also revealed that although the Kenyan Constitution might have the two-thirds gender rule in place, its implementation so far, has done little to help increase political participation. Poor political structures and policy frameworks continue to further a cycle that oppresses women from political participation, and instead keeps them in the fringes of Kenya’s political landscape. Thus, the slow implementation of the two-thirds gender rule has been used to maintain a status quo were the male gender receives the highest priority. The slow implementation of the gender parity rule has elicited some harsh reactions from female political leadership who suggested the eradication of the two-thirds gender rule in favor of a more equal system, with implementation mechanisms built into the political structure.

Low civic awareness despite the efforts of non-government organizations continues to perpetuate low numbers of female political participation. Uninformed and disengaged, women in Kenya have many obstacles to overcome to fully participate in politics.

Finally, research conducted revealed that some women work against others. Instead of supporting each other, sometimes women undercut and sabotage others for the sake of their individual careers. Often women are pitched against each other in the dirty game of politics; however, this reality encumbers the more important objective that is the overall improved political participation of all Kenyan women. This selfish approach and catty behavior only serves to benefit the male political figures, while it tears down the brave women who participate in Kenya’s murky political scene.
5.1.3 Efforts made by female political leadership in promoting the participation of women in Kenya

Based on the research, female political leadership has been instrumental in promoting participation of women in a broad sense. Figures such Phoebe Asiyo, Grace Onyang’o as well as more contemporary female political elite the likes of Charity Ngilu and Martha Karua, have been influential in promoting female political participation. Through various forums organized by non-governmental organizations such the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association and the Kenya Women Voters League, female political leaders have made a concrete effort to give general guidance to new and aspiring female political leaders.

Use of legislation has been central in ensuring the provision for the voice of women with the Kenyan political arena. Using their networks, women have been at the forefront of challenging gender norms and have successfully lobbied for changes in legislature to increase the political participation of women. The provision of free primary education, Marriage Act, Matrimonial Property Act as well as the Protection against Domestic Violence Act have been crucial in safeguarding the well-being of women and in turn securing their ability to participate in politics.

Unfortunately, the female leaders have done little to improve civic education as individuals. However, their collective efforts combined with those of non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Gender have been pivotal in improving civic and gender awareness among women in Kenya. Various programs by organizations such as National Democratic Institute, and Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya, shed light on the importance of women and governance, and the essentials of political participation for in rural and urban areas alike.
5.2 Conclusion

The research conducted on the agency of female political leadership in enhancing women’s political participation in Kenya politics has revealed various matters.

Among the most vital of revelations is that female political leadership may have influence amongst themselves, however the circle of influence is indeed limited. Despite the introduction of various legislations such as the two-thirds gender rule, female political leaders lack the clout to make true and lasting change by their own accord. Some of the obstacles to their limited influence include their low numbers in the National Assembly, as well as their inability to support each other during legislation drafting and lobbying. Thus, women often cross gender lines to seek support from their male counterparts. The constant need for male approval and validation often means that women’s agency in policy making is weakened.

It is also imperative to note that the two-thirds gender rule is ineffective, and instead should be scrapped to seek out an alternative approach to engendered political structure in Kenya. The policy which was created with good intentions has not made the impact that was expected since its proposition. Instead, its slow implementation has ensured women lag behind, always one or two more steps behind their male counterparts. Taking in to account the difficulties facing implementation of the gender parity rule, more consideration should be taken when evaluating alternatives in the future, so as to ensure a more pragmatic, well-thought out implementation strategy.
5.3 Recommendations

Female political leaders may not have been able to make such big improvements to female political participation in Kenya. However, research has revealed that there are several means to creating more impact to enhancing female political participation.

Among the most critical means to increasing political participation, is the use of technology. Technological advancements have been piloted in certain counties in Kenya particularly Isiolo County, to test their ability to increase political participation. For communities in rural areas that inhibit political participation of women due to religious and or cultural reasons, the use of technology such as an SMS platform is an ideal solution to roll out across the state. The technology may not only ensure more women participate but can also provide more information to improve their civic and gender awareness, thereby empowering them politically.

I would also recommend a change in engendered politics policy that would account for a realistic implementation strategy. The two-thirds gender rule was and still is a great idea; however, its slow implementation has been its downfall. Instead, I would advocate that equal male and female candidates are presented by each party so as to do away with the quota system that has selected poor leadership for the sake of filling in quotas. Perhaps also piloting the suggested engendered policy within one county could be beneficial to see loopholes to implementation as well as improve its roll-out plan state-wide.
5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

This research established that the agency of female political leadership is limited in enhancing female political participation. Their limited mandate and political clout are hinged on the poorly implemented two-thirds gender rule. However, there are also other gaps in knowledge that would be of interest in relation to enhancing women’s political participation.

Further areas of study could see researchers delve deeper into what the Kenyan political system would look like with the abolition of the two-thirds gender rule as well as the alternative policies to creating an engendered political system, which enhances and celebrates female political participation.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A: ESTABLISHING THE BASICS

1. What is your age?

3. What is your education level?

SECTION B: TO WHAT EXTENT DO WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS?

1. Do you own a voter’s card?

2. At what age did you obtain a voter’s card?

3. Have you ever voted?

4. Why did you get a voter’s card?
   - It is a government requirement.
   - I wanted to fulfill my civic duty.
   - I hoped to enter into politics.
   - My father, brother or uncle encouraged me to get one.

5. When was the last time you voted in a Kenyan election?

6. Have you ever tried running for elective office?

SECTION C: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LEVEL OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN KENYA

1. Do you think women should be involved in politics?

2. Are you part of a women’s political organization?

3. What do you first think of women running for political office?
4. What benefits did you hope to bring while in elective office?

SECTION D: WHAT FACTORS HINDER WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KENYA?

1. Do you think traditional roles affect political participation in Kenya? (If yes, please describe why you think male patriarchy is linked to female political participation)

2. Do you feel that your political party provided you the support you required?

3. How did you secure funding for your campaigns?

4. Have you ever experienced discrimination from male counterparts while in politics?

5. Have you ever experienced sabotage from female counterparts while in politics?

6. Have you received any mentorship from other women in politics?

7. Do you believe that the positions offered to women in government are giving women control of true power?

8. Do you believe that the 2/3rd Gender Rule will ensure equal representation for women in Parliament?

9. Do you think that the Kenyan government is taking affirmative action to implement the 2/3rd Gender Rule?

10. Do you think the Kenyan Constitution has made provisions that encourage female political participation?
11. Does the Kenyan government do enough to improve civic awareness among women?

SECTION E: WHAT EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY FEMALE LEADERS IN PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Do you think that women in Parliament are doing enough to help other women to enter politics?

2. Have done anything to help other women to enter the Kenyan political sphere?

3. Would you ever consider quitting politics?

4. In your opinion, do female politicians do enough to encourage female political participation at grass roots level?

5. Do you think more politicians should mentor other women interested in politics?

Thank you for your time. Your assistance is much appreciated.
DISCLAIMER: Thank you for participating in this survey. Please note that the information you provide in this questionnaire is private and confidential and will only be used for the sake of the research being conducted. Please answer honestly and freely, as the data you provide is essential in establishing female political participation in Kenya.

SECTION A: ESTABLISHING THE BASICS

1. What is your gender? Male Female

2. What is your age? Below 25 25-45 years 45-60 years

3. What is your education level? High School Undergraduate Masters Doctorate

SECTION B: WHAT FACTORS HINDER WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KENYA?

1. Do you think traditional roles affect political participation in Kenya? Yes No (if yes, please describe why you think male patriarchy is linked to female political participation)

2. Do you feel that your political party provided you the support you required? Yes No
3. How did you secure funding for your campaigns?  
Fundraising   Family   Bank Loan

4. Have you ever experienced discrimination from male counterparts while in politics? 
Yes     No (if yes, please explain what type of discrimination)

5. Have you ever experienced sabotage from female counterparts while in politics? Yes     No

6. Have you received any mentorship from other women in politics? Yes     No  
(If yes, please describe who and how you received mentorship)

7. Do you believe that the positions offered to women in government are given women control of true power? Yes     No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

8. Do you believe that the 2/3rd Gender Rule will ensure equal representation for women in Parliament? Yes     No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

9. Do you think that the Kenyan government is taking affirmative action to implement the 2/3rd Gender Rule? Yes     No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)
10. Do you think the Kenyan Constitution has made provisions that encourage female political participation?  Yes    No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

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11. Does the Kenyan government do enough to improve civic awareness among women?

Yes    No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

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SECTION C: WHAT EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY FEMALE LEADERS IN PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Do you think that women in Parliament are doing enough to help other women to enter politics? Yes    No (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

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2. Have done anything to help other women to enter the Kenyan political sphere? Yes    No (if yes, please describe your endeavors here)..............................................................................................................................................
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3. Would you ever consider quitting politics? (if yes, please provide a few reasons that would influence your decision)

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4. In your opinion, do female politicians do enough to encourage female political participation at grass roots level? (if no, please describe what more you think can be done)

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5. Do you think more politicians should mentor other women interested in politics?

Yes  No (if yes, please describe what more you think can be done)

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Thank you for your time. Your assistance is much appreciated.