



UniMAC

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

UniMAC-SoGSaR

**REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS: BARRIERS AND
CHALLENGES TO THEIR PARTICIPATION**

BY

AMA ACHIAA AMANKWAH BAAFI

MADC23036

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS
AND COMMUNICATION UNIMAC-IJ IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS
DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

OCTOBER 2024

DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I/We hereby declare that this research is a result of my/our own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.

I/We further declare that all the sources that I/we have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

AMAACHIAA AMANKWAH BAAFI	MADC23036
Student	Index number(s)	Signature	Date

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project Work laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-IJ.

DR. JAMES KWAKU ASANTE
Supervisor	Signature	Date

ABSTRACT

This study explores the multifaceted barriers hindering women's political participation in Ghana, focusing on socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions. Despite notable advancements in gender equality, women's representation in political spheres remains significantly low. Through a qualitative approach, this research identifies the socio-cultural norms and practices that impede women's engagement in politics, examines economic challenges such as limited financial resources and employment opportunities, and evaluates the impact of political institutions and party structures on women's political representation. Additionally, the study investigates existing opportunities and strategies that can enhance women's political participation, including affirmative action policies and successful initiatives. Based on the findings, the research provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations to promote gender equality in Ghanaian politics. By highlighting the complexities of women's political engagement, this study aims to contribute to the discourse on gender equity and empower stakeholders to develop effective strategies that foster inclusive political participation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation first and foremost to the almighty God for the wisdom given me and for how far he has brought me.

Again, to my dear husband, Mr. Kwaku Agyei Baafi for his immense support and advice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I would like to thank God almighty for all he did for me during my time in UniMAC-IJ until the period of my long essay, for guiding me and giving me the needed strength to finish this dissertation in time.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to all who have contributed in diverse ways in making my dissertation a success.

My profound gratitude and sincere thanks to my supervisor James Kwaku Asante Ph.D., a Senior Lecturer at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), and the Former Dean of the Faculty of Journalism, who painstakingly supervised my dissertation. God richly bless him for taking time off his busy schedule to assess and address any shortcomings for my dissertation to become exceptional. His constructive criticisms, input and selfless attempt went a long way to shape this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION..... i

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of The Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 General Objective	4
1.4 Specific Objectives	4
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.6 Scope of The Study.....	5
1.7 Significance of The Study.....	6
1.8 Limitations of The Study	7
1.9 Organization of The Study	8
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	8
2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 Conceptual Framework.....	9
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	14
2.1.1 Gender Role Theory.....	14

2.1.2 Resource Mobilization Theory.....	16
2.1.3 Relevance of The Theories To The Study	18
2.1.4 Operationalization of Terms.....	20
2.3 A Review of Related Studies.....	21
2.4 Chapter Summary	24
CHAPTER THREE	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 Introduction.....	25
3.1 Research Design.....	25
3.2 Population	26
3.3 Sampling Procedure	27
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	27
3.5 Data Collection Procedures.....	28
3.6 Data Handling and Analysis.....	29
3.7 Chapter Summary	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....	31
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	31
4.0 Introduction.....	31
4.1 Demographic Information Of Participants.....	31
4.2 Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Political Barriers Hindering Women's Political Participation in Ghana	33

4.2.1 Socio-Cultural Norms Impacting Women's Political Participation.....	33
4.2.2 Political Institutions and Party Structures	35
4.3 Opportunities and Strategies for Enhancing Women's Political Representation	39
4.3.1 Existing Opportunities within the Ghanaian Political System.....	39
4.3.2 The Role of Affirmative Action Policies and Gender Quotas	40
4.3.3 Successful Strategies and Initiatives	43
4.4 Recommendations for Promoting Gender Equality in Ghanaian Politics	49
4.4.1 Recommendations for Policymakers	49
4.4.2 Encouraging Political Parties to Support Female Candidates.....	51
4.4.3 The Role of Civil Society Organizations	53
4.5 Analysis of Key Findings.....	55
4.6 Summary	56
CHAPTER FIVE	57
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.0 Introduction.....	57
5.1 Summary Of Key Findings	57
5.2 Conclusions.....	59
5.3 Recommendations.....	60
5.4 Limitations Of The Study	61
5.5 Suggestions For Future Research.....	62
REFERENCES.....	63

APPENDIX..... 72

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Political representation is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance, ensuring that diverse voices are heard in decision-making processes. Despite significant strides towards gender equality in various spheres, women continue to be underrepresented in political leadership roles globally, including in Ghana. This chapter provides an overview of the study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, limitations, and organization.

1.1 Background of The Study

Women's political participation in Ghana has garnered increasing attention due to the nation's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment, both on the international stage and within domestic policy frameworks. Ghana's commitment to advancing gender equality is evident in its adherence to international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Additionally, the country has implemented various national policies aimed at promoting women's rights and participation in decision-making processes (Owusu, 2019). This commitment underscores the importance of addressing gender disparities in political representation, considering it as a crucial aspect of democratic governance and sustainable development (United Nations, 2020).

Despite Ghana's efforts to promote gender equality, significant disparities persist in women's political representation. Although Ghanaian women have made strides in recent years, including the adoption of affirmative action policies and an increase in the number of women in parliament, they continue to be underrepresented in key decision-making positions (Morrison, 2017). For

instance, in the 2020 parliamentary elections, women constituted only about 14% of the total number of elected Members of Parliament (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2021). This underrepresentation limits women's ability to influence policy agendas, allocate resources, and advocate for issues affecting women and marginalized groups, thus hindering the realization of inclusive and responsive governance (Friedman & Ranganathan, 2019).

The persistent underrepresentation of women in Ghanaian politics can be attributed to various factors, including socio-cultural norms, discriminatory practices, and institutional barriers. Patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes often perpetuate the perception that politics is a male-dominated sphere, discouraging women from actively participating in political processes (Agyemang, 2016). Moreover, traditional gender roles and responsibilities, such as caregiving and household chores, often impose additional burdens on women, limiting their time and resources for political engagement (Osei-Afful, 2018). Additionally, institutional factors such as the lack of gender-sensitive policies, inadequate support structures for female candidates, and limited access to financial resources further impede women's political aspirations (Bauer, 2013).

Understanding the barriers and opportunities for women in Ghanaian politics is essential for advancing gender equality and democratic governance in the country. By identifying and addressing the systemic challenges that hinder women's political participation, Ghana can foster an inclusive and representative democracy that reflects the diverse interests and needs of its population (Tripp et al., 2006). Moreover, promoting women's political leadership can contribute to more effective and responsive governance, as research suggests that gender-diverse decision-making bodies are associated with better policy outcomes and increased legitimacy (Krook & O'Brien, 2012). Therefore, enhancing women's political representation is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for advancing Ghana's development goals and strengthening its democratic institutions (Inglehart & Norris, 2003)..

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite concerted efforts to promote gender equality in Ghana, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in political leadership positions, posing challenges to democratic principles and effective governance (Mansah, 2019). The low representation of women in politics undermines the principles of democracy, which emphasize inclusivity, diversity, and representation of all societal groups in decision-making processes (Norris, 2004). When women are marginalized in politics, their perspectives, experiences, and interests are often overlooked, leading to policy outcomes that do not adequately address the needs of the entire population (Krook, 2009). This exclusion not only perpetuates gender disparities but also hampers the nation's development efforts, as evidenced by the persistence of gender-based inequalities in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).

Various barriers contribute to the underrepresentation of women in Ghanaian politics, including deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms that assign traditional gender roles and limit women's agency and mobility (Collins, 2000). Discriminatory practices, such as gender-based violence and harassment against women in politics, further deter women from seeking political office (Agyemang, 2016). Moreover, institutional constraints, such as the lack of gender-sensitive policies, limited access to financial resources, and the absence of support structures for female candidates, pose significant challenges to women's political participation (Bauer, 2013). These barriers intersect and reinforce each other, creating a complex web of challenges that hinder women's full engagement in political processes (Crenshaw, 1989).

Addressing the underrepresentation of women in Ghanaian politics requires multifaceted strategies that address both structural and systemic barriers. Efforts to promote women's political participation should encompass legal reforms, such as the adoption of gender quotas and electoral

reforms that enhance women's access to political office (Dahlerup, 2006). Additionally, targeted interventions to challenge socio-cultural norms and stereotypes, promote women's leadership skills, and provide support networks for aspiring female politicians are essential for overcoming entrenched barriers to women's political participation (Krook & O'Brien, 2012). Moreover, fostering inclusive political environments that prioritize gender equality and diversity can create pathways for women to engage meaningfully in political processes and contribute to the nation's governance and development agendas (Tripp et al., 2006).

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to analyze the challenges, barriers and opportunities for women in politics in Ghana, with the aim of promoting gender equality and enhancing women's political representation.

1.4 Specific Objectives

To identify the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers hindering women's political participation in Ghana.

To examine the existing opportunities and strategies that can enhance women's political representation in Ghana.

To provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations to promote gender equality in Ghanaian politics.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the primary socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers preventing women from participating fully in Ghanaian politics?

What opportunities exist within the Ghanaian political landscape that can facilitate increased women's political representation?

How can policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations address the challenges and leverage opportunities to promote gender equality in Ghanaian politics?

1.6 Scope of The Study

This study takes a comprehensive approach to examining women's political representation in Ghana, recognizing that barriers and opportunities exist at multiple levels of governance - national, regional, and local. By exploring these different levels, the study aims to capture the complex dynamics that shape women's participation in politics across various contexts within the country. This multifaceted analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that women face in different political arenas, from national parliamentary elections to local council representation. Additionally, by examining various aspects of political participation, including electoral processes, party politics, and legislative roles, the study seeks to uncover the diverse factors that influence women's engagement in politics and decision-making processes (Osei-Afful, 2018).

While the primary focus of the study is on women's experiences and perspectives, it also recognizes the importance of engaging with key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's political representation in Ghana. By incorporating the viewpoints of male politicians, civil society actors, and traditional leaders, the study aims to capture a range of perspectives on gender dynamics in politics and the factors that contribute to women's underrepresentation. This inclusive approach not only enhances the depth and breadth of the analysis but also fosters dialogue and collaboration among different stakeholders to address gender inequalities in political representation effectively (Tripp et al., 2006). By considering the

perspectives of both women and men in politics, the study aims to promote a more inclusive and participatory approach to advancing gender equality in Ghanaian politics.

1.7 Significance of The Study

This study holds considerable significance for a wide range of stakeholders involved in promoting gender equality and democratic governance in Ghana. Policymakers will benefit from the insights gained through identifying barriers and opportunities for women in politics, as it will inform evidence-based policy interventions aimed at enhancing women's political participation and representation (Morrison, 2017). By understanding the specific challenges faced by women in Ghanaian politics, policymakers can tailor interventions to address these barriers effectively and create a more inclusive and equitable political landscape. Civil society organizations and women's rights advocates can also utilize the findings of this study to advocate for policy reforms and initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment (Agyemang, 2016). By leveraging evidence-based research, civil society organizations can strengthen their advocacy efforts and mobilize support for gender-sensitive policies and programs aimed at advancing women's political rights and opportunities (Tripp et al., 2006).

Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature on gender and politics, particularly within the African context, by providing empirical data and insights into the dynamics of women's political representation in Ghana. By adding to the knowledge base on gender and politics, the findings of this study will enrich scholarly debates and discussions on strategies for promoting women's political empowerment and advancing gender equality (Bauer, 2013). Researchers studying similar issues in other African countries can also draw upon the findings of this study to compare and contrast experiences and identify common patterns and trends in women's political participation across the continent (Krook & O'Brien, 2012). Ultimately, by

advancing knowledge and understanding in this field, this study contributes to efforts aimed at promoting gender equality and democratic governance not only in Ghana but also in the broader African context.

1.8 Limitations of The Study

Despite efforts to ensure a comprehensive analysis, this study acknowledges certain limitations that may affect the interpretation and scope of its findings. Firstly, the subjective interpretations of both researchers and participants can influence the study's outcomes. Researchers bring their own biases and perspectives to the research process, which can shape data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Berger, 2015). Similarly, participants may have diverse experiences and viewpoints that can influence their responses during interviews or focus group discussions (Kvale, 1996). These subjective factors can introduce a degree of subjectivity into the study's findings, highlighting the importance of reflexivity and transparency in the research process to mitigate potential biases (Orb et al., 2001).

Secondly, while this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's political representation in Ghana, it may not capture all possible factors contributing to women's underrepresentation. The complexity of political processes and the interplay of various socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors make it challenging to fully encompass all dimensions of women's political participation (Bauer, 2013). Additionally, the scope of the study may be limited by practical considerations, such as time and resource constraints. Conducting in-depth research across multiple levels of governance and engaging with diverse stakeholders requires significant time, funding, and logistical support (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the study may need to prioritize certain aspects of women's political representation, potentially overlooking or underrepresenting other important factors (Wiles et al., 2008).

1.9 Organization of The Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the research topic, background information, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, and limitations. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature on gender and political representation, providing theoretical insights and empirical evidence. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, including data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study, while Chapter Five offers conclusions, policy implications, and recommendations for future research

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.0 Introduction

The study contains literature covering the various concepts on the **Representation of Women in Politics: Barriers and Challenges to their Participation**. It explores the theoretical framework underpinning the study, specifically gender role theory and resource mobilization theory, in addition to a review of studies related to the topic.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

1. Resource Mobilization and Women's Development

Resource mobilization is a critical aspect of women's development, encompassing the strategic acquisition and utilization of resources to enhance women's roles and opportunities across various spheres, including politics, economics, and social life. According to Molyneux (1985), resource mobilization involves the organization and deployment of financial, human, and social resources aimed at addressing the specific needs of women and promoting their advancement. This framework underscores that mobilizing resources extends beyond mere economic empowerment to include crucial elements such as political participation, where access to financial resources, education, and social networks plays a pivotal role (Molyneux, 1985; Kabeer, 1999).

Kabeer (1999) elaborates on this by emphasizing that resource mobilization is fundamental for overcoming the structural barriers that limit women's access to opportunities and participation in various sectors. For instance, financial resources are essential for enabling women to fund political campaigns and secure positions of influence. Without sufficient funding, women candidates may struggle to compete on equal footing with their male counterparts, thereby limiting their representation and impact (Kabeer, 1999; Grown & Sebstad, 1989). Moreover, access to education and specialized training programs enhances women's skills and knowledge, which are critical for their effective participation in decision-making processes. By investing in educational and training resources, societies can significantly increase women's capabilities and leadership potential (Kabeer, 1999; Grown & Sebstad, 1989).

In addition to financial resources, Elson (1999) highlights that successful resource mobilization must also address social and institutional supports necessary for women's development. Advocacy

efforts, legal reforms, and institutional changes are crucial components of this support system. These efforts aim to create an enabling environment where women can thrive, free from systemic barriers and discrimination (Elson, 1999; Molyneux, 2006). Social resources, such as networks and mentorship, play a vital role in empowering women, providing them with the guidance and support needed to navigate and succeed in the political and professional spheres (Molyneux, 2006; Rai, 2008). Networks and mentorship not only offer practical assistance but also contribute to the emotional and psychological resilience necessary for women to overcome challenges and pursue their goals effectively.

Moreover, Baden (2000) argues that successful resource mobilization for women's development requires a multi-dimensional approach that integrates gender-sensitive policies and targeted programs. This approach involves aligning resources with the specific needs of women, which includes access to healthcare, education, and political training (Baden, 2000; Gaventa, 2006). Gender-sensitive policies ensure that resource allocation addresses the unique barriers faced by women and promotes their overall empowerment. For example, targeted programs that provide financial assistance, training, and advocacy support can help bridge the gap between men and women in various sectors. By focusing on these specific needs, resource mobilization efforts can facilitate women's active participation in politics and other fields, ultimately contributing to their broader development and empowerment (Baden, 2000; Gaventa, 2006).

2. The Role of Women in Politics

The role of women in politics is fundamental to achieving gender equality and enhancing democratic governance. Murray (1998) emphasizes that the active participation of women in

political processes is crucial for ensuring that diverse perspectives and interests are represented in policy-making. Women bring unique experiences and viewpoints to the political arena, which can lead to more comprehensive and equitable policies. By contributing to political discourse and decision-making, women help address a wider range of issues and advocate for policies that better reflect the needs of all segments of society (Murray, 1998; Paxton & Hughes, 2015). This inclusion not only enriches the political debate but also fosters policies that are more inclusive and responsive to societal challenges.

Norris and Inglehart (2001) further highlight that women's political participation significantly enhances governance outcomes and democratic legitimacy. Their research shows that when women are involved in politics, there is a marked improvement in the representation of issues that disproportionately affect them, such as reproductive rights, healthcare, and education. Women's involvement can lead to more responsive and accountable governance by ensuring that policies address a broader spectrum of societal needs (Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Krook & O'Brien, 2012). This increased representation not only improves the quality of governance but also strengthens democratic processes by making them more reflective of and accountable to the entire population.

Childs and Krook (2008) argue that the presence of women in political institutions is instrumental in challenging and transforming entrenched gender norms and stereotypes. Their participation often leads to the adoption of policies that promote gender equality and women's rights, contributing to a more just and equitable society (Childs & Krook, 2008; Zetterberg, 2008). Women in politics can act as catalysts for social change, pushing for legislative reforms and societal shifts that advance gender equality. This transformative role underscores the importance of women's representation in politics not only for achieving gender parity but also for driving broader social change.

However, Celis and Childs (2008) point out that women's political participation is often hindered by significant barriers, including cultural norms, political violence, and institutional biases. These obstacles can undermine efforts to achieve gender equality in politics and limit women's opportunities for meaningful participation. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that include legal reforms, gender-sensitive policies, and support mechanisms designed to facilitate women's entry and success in politics (Celis & Childs, 2008; Waylen, 2014). Effective strategies must tackle both structural and cultural impediments, ensuring that women can participate fully and effectively in political processes. The role of women in politics is pivotal for promoting gender equality and enhancing democratic governance. Women's participation enriches political discourse, improves governance outcomes, and drives social change by challenging gender norms and advocating for inclusive policies. Despite significant barriers, ongoing efforts to address these challenges through legal and policy reforms are essential for ensuring that women can contribute fully to political life. Understanding and addressing these barriers is crucial for enhancing women's roles in politics and ensuring their effective participation.

3. Gender, Democracy, and Women Empowerment

The intersection of gender, democracy, and women's empowerment is fundamental to understanding the dynamics of political representation and participation. **Molyneux (2007)** asserts that democracy and women's empowerment are intrinsically linked, with democratic processes providing the essential framework for women to exercise their rights and influence political decisions. This connection highlights that democracy is not merely about the formal mechanisms of governance but also about the substantive empowerment of women to shape those mechanisms (Molyneux, 2007; **Kabeer, 2005**). Empowerment, in this context, involves the expansion of

women's capabilities and opportunities, allowing them to actively participate in and benefit from democratic processes.

Sen (1999) extends this concept by emphasizing that empowerment transcends mere participation to encompass the development of women's agency and voice within political decision-making. According to Sen, empowered women are better equipped to advocate for their rights, contribute to policy formulation, and influence governance outcomes (Sen, 1999; **Nussbaum, 2000**). This agency is a critical component of democratic governance, ensuring that women's needs and perspectives are effectively represented in political institutions. By enhancing women's ability to participate meaningfully in political discourse and decision-making, empowerment strengthens the overall quality of democracy and governance.

Beauvoir (1949) argues that achieving gender equality within democratic frameworks necessitates addressing deep-rooted structural inequalities and transforming societal attitudes toward women. Democracy provides a crucial space for challenging entrenched gender norms and advocating for systemic changes that promote women's empowerment and equal participation (Beauvoir, 1949; **Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000**). This transformation involves not only legal and institutional reforms but also shifts in cultural attitudes and practices that perpetuate gender discrimination. The interplay between democracy and gender equality thus requires sustained efforts to address both formal barriers, such as discriminatory laws, and informal barriers, such as cultural norms and biases.

Moreover, **Crenshaw (1991)** highlights the importance of an intersectional approach in understanding how various forms of discrimination—such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity—intersect to impact women's empowerment within democratic contexts. This intersectional perspective is crucial for ensuring that democratic processes are genuinely inclusive and equitable,

allowing all women to engage fully in political life (Crenshaw, 1991; **Anthias, 2001**). An intersectional approach acknowledges that women's experiences of oppression and marginalization are shaped by multiple, overlapping factors, and therefore, strategies to promote gender equality must address these complex and interconnected dimensions of inequality.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study employs Gender Role Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and challenges to women's political representation in Ghana.

2.1.1 Gender Role Theory

Gender Role Theory posits that societal expectations regarding appropriate roles and behaviours for men and women significantly influence individuals' actions and decisions (Eagly, 1987). This theory asserts that gender roles are learned and internalized from a young age through socialization processes, which include family dynamics, educational systems, media representations, and cultural traditions (Bem, 1981). These learned behaviours and expectations create a framework within which men and women operate, often prescribing specific roles and limiting their participation in activities deemed inappropriate for their gender. In many societies, traditional gender roles dictate that women should prioritize domestic responsibilities over public and political roles (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This expectation places significant pressure on women to conform to roles as caregivers and homemakers, thereby limiting their availability and perceived suitability for political careers.

These societal norms are deeply embedded and perpetuate the belief that politics is a male-dominated sphere, discouraging women from pursuing political careers (Connell, 2002). The pervasive notion that political leadership is inherently masculine can be traced back to historical contexts where men were the primary actors in public life while women were relegated to the private sphere (Pateman, 1988). This gendered division of labour is reinforced by media portrayals that often highlight male politicians as decisive leaders while depicting female politicians in stereotypical roles or scrutinizing their personal lives and appearances (Ross, 2002). The media's role in reinforcing these stereotypes is significant, as it shapes public perceptions and expectations about who is suitable for political office (Gidengil & Everitt, 2003).

Gender Role Theory helps explain the persistent underrepresentation of women in politics by highlighting the socio-cultural barriers that shape women's political aspirations and participation. These barriers include the internalization of gender roles, which can diminish women's political ambitions and confidence (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women who aspire to political careers often face resistance from their families and communities, who may view their ambitions as a deviation from traditional roles (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Furthermore, political institutions themselves can be inhospitable environments for women, characterized by sexist attitudes and behaviours that marginalize female politicians (Krook, 2010). These institutional barriers are compounded by the lack of role models and mentors for aspiring female politicians, which can hinder their professional development and advancement (Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006).

The socio-cultural barriers identified by Gender Role Theory are evident in the persistent gender gaps in political participation and representation globally. In many countries, women are underrepresented in legislative bodies, executive positions, and political parties (Paxton & Hughes, 2014). This underrepresentation is not merely a result of individual choices but is deeply rooted in

structural inequalities and societal expectations that constrain women's opportunities and access to political power (Waylen, 1996). Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that challenge traditional gender norms, promote gender-sensitive policies, and create supportive environments for women's political engagement (Phillips, 1995). Initiatives such as gender quotas, leadership training programs, and public awareness campaigns can help to dismantle the socio-cultural barriers that limit women's political participation and foster a more inclusive political landscape (Dahlerup, 2006).

2.1.2 Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource Mobilization Theory emphasizes that the availability and allocation of resources, such as money, education, and social networks, are crucial for facilitating political participation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). This theory posits that successful political engagement requires access to a variety of resources that enable individuals to campaign effectively, establish and maintain support networks, and ultimately influence political outcomes (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Financial resources are particularly important, as they allow candidates to fund their campaigns, access media coverage, and mobilize voters (Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997). Inadequate financial resources can severely limit a candidate's ability to compete in elections, affecting the overall competitiveness and inclusiveness of the political process (Norris, 2004).

Education is another critical resource highlighted by Resource Mobilization Theory. Higher levels of education are associated with greater political knowledge, skills, and efficacy, which enhance an individual's capacity to participate in political activities and run for office (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Educational attainment also correlates with increased access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities, which are essential for navigating the political landscape (Krook, 2009). However, women often face educational disparities due to gender biases and socio-economic barriers that limit their access to quality education and opportunities for professional

development (Unterhalter, 2005). These educational disparities contribute to the underrepresentation of women in politics, as they are less likely to possess the necessary qualifications and confidence to pursue political careers (Fox & Lawless, 2004).

Social networks and political connections play a significant role in facilitating political participation. Resource Mobilization Theory suggests that individuals embedded in strong social networks are more likely to receive support, encouragement, and resources from their peers and mentors (Burt, 2000). These networks provide essential information, strategic advice, and logistical support that can enhance a candidate's political viability (Granovetter, 1973). However, women often face exclusion from influential political networks, which are predominantly male-dominated and resistant to gender inclusivity (Lawless & Fox, 2010). This exclusion limits women's access to critical support systems and diminishes their chances of political success (Krook, 2009).

Resource Mobilization Theory underscores the structural barriers that women face in accessing these essential resources, such as financial constraints, limited educational opportunities, and exclusion from influential networks (Krook, 2009). Financial constraints are particularly pervasive, as women often have less access to personal wealth and political donations compared to their male counterparts (Bauer, 2013). This financial disparity hinders their ability to launch and sustain competitive political campaigns (Lovenduski, 2005). Additionally, institutional barriers within political parties, such as gender biases and discriminatory practices, further restrict women's access to resources and opportunities for advancement (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

By examining these resource-related challenges, Resource Mobilization Theory provides valuable insights into the economic and institutional factors that hinder women's political participation. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that enhance women's access to financial resources, educational opportunities, and inclusive political networks (Krook & Norris,

2014). Efforts such as public funding for female candidates, affirmative action policies in education, and mentorship programs within political parties can help to level the playing field and promote greater gender parity in political representation (Dahlerup, 2006). Ultimately, overcoming these resource-related challenges is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable political landscape where women can participate fully and effectively.

2.1.3 Relevance of The Theories To The Study

The application of Gender Role Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory is highly relevant to understanding the barriers and challenges women face in achieving political representation in Ghana. Gender Role Theory elucidates the socio-cultural norms and expectations that restrict women's political engagement by relegating them to traditional domestic roles (Eagly, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987). These entrenched beliefs perpetuate gender disparities in political participation, as they discourage women from aspiring to political office and influence societal attitudes towards female politicians (Connell, 2002). In Ghana, these norms are deeply ingrained and manifest in various ways, from family expectations that prioritize women's roles as wives and mothers to societal beliefs that question the legitimacy and competence of women in leadership positions (Agyemang, 2016; Osei-Afful, 2018). Such socio-cultural barriers are reinforced through educational systems, media representations, and traditional practices that collectively undermine women's political aspirations (Gidengil & Everitt, 2003; Ross, 2002).

For instance, in many Ghanaian communities, the perception persists that politics is a "dirty" game unsuitable for women, which discourages them from pursuing political careers (Agyemang, 2016). This perception is not only propagated by men but also internalized by women, leading to self-censorship and a lack of confidence in their abilities to lead (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Furthermore, the gendered division of labour in households often means that women have less time and energy to dedicate to political activities, which are time-consuming and demanding (West

& Zimmerman, 1987; Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997). As a result, women's political engagement remains limited, and their presence in decision-making processes is minimal, reinforcing the cycle of underrepresentation (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

Resource Mobilization Theory complements this by highlighting the structural barriers that women encounter in accessing the necessary resources for political participation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In Ghana, women often face significant financial constraints, lack of educational opportunities, and exclusion from political networks, all of which impede their ability to engage effectively in politics (Krook, 2009). Financial resources are crucial for mounting successful political campaigns, yet women frequently have less access to personal wealth and political donations compared to their male counterparts (Bauer, 2013; Lovenduski, 2005). This financial disparity is exacerbated by the fact that political parties often allocate fewer resources to female candidates, viewing them as less viable or capable of winning elections (Krook, 2010; Lawless & Fox, 2010).

Educational opportunities are another critical resource highlighted by Resource Mobilization Theory. Women in Ghana face barriers to accessing quality education, which affects their political knowledge, skills, and overall readiness to participate in politics (Unterhalter, 2005; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Limited educational attainment not only hinders women's ability to engage in complex political discussions but also restricts their access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities that are essential for political advancement (Fox & Lawless, 2004; Krook, 2009). Additionally, women often find themselves excluded from influential political networks that are predominantly male-dominated and characterized by gatekeeping practices that limit women's entry and participation (Krook, 2009; Lawless & Fox, 2010).

By integrating Gender Role Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted challenges that women in Ghana face, encompassing

both socio-cultural and structural dimensions. This integrated approach allows for a deeper understanding of how entrenched gender norms and resource-based barriers interact to limit women's political participation (Connell, 2002; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). It underscores the need for multifaceted interventions that address both the cultural and structural factors impeding women's political representation. Such interventions could include public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes, policy reforms to ensure equitable resource allocation, and initiatives to enhance women's access to education and political networks (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook & Norris, 2014). Ultimately, addressing these barriers is essential for fostering a more inclusive and democratic political landscape in Ghana.

2.1.4 Operationalization of Terms

Political Representation

Political representation refers to the presence and participation of women in political institutions and processes, including elected offices, political parties, and legislative bodies (Pitkin, 1967).

Barriers

Barriers are factors that impede women's political participation. These can be socio-cultural, institutional, or related to resource availability (Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997).

Socio-Cultural Norms

Socio-cultural norms are the shared expectations and rules that guide behavior within a society, particularly concerning gender roles (Connell, 2002).

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers are obstacles within political institutions that prevent women from participating fully in political processes (Chappell & Waylen, 2013).

Resource Constraints

Resource constraints refer to the limitations on access to financial, educational, and social resources necessary for political engagement (Phillips, 1995).

2.3 A Review of Related Studies

In a study conducted by **Asante, A.** (2020) titled “*Barriers and Opportunities: Women’s Political Representation in Ghana*”, the researcher investigated the systemic barriers that women face in accessing political positions and the opportunities that have emerged in recent years. Asante utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with female politicians and quantitative surveys distributed to a broader population. The study revealed that cultural norms and entrenched gender stereotypes remain significant obstacles to women’s political advancement. However, it also highlighted those recent initiatives, such as gender quotas and women’s political training programs, have begun to create pathways for increased female participation in politics (Asante, 2020).

Asante’s research provides a comprehensive analysis of both the challenges and progress in gender representation. Her findings underscore the importance of continued policy reform and targeted support programs to address the persisting disparities. The study’s detailed examination of both qualitative and quantitative data offers valuable insights into the dynamics affecting women in Ghanaian politics. However, the study could benefit from a more extensive exploration of the role of political parties in either facilitating or hindering women's political careers.

In another study conducted by **Agyemang, K.** (2021) entitled “*Political Participation and Gender: An Empirical Analysis of Women in Ghanaian Politics*”, the focus was on empirical data regarding women’s participation rates and the factors influencing these rates. Agyemang employed a quantitative research design, analyzing electoral data and surveys from various political parties. The study found that despite increases in female political participation, significant barriers such as financial constraints, lack of support from political parties, and societal expectations continue to impede progress (Agyemang, 2021).

Agyemang’s research is notable for its robust data analysis and its emphasis on the financial and institutional factors affecting women’s political engagement. The study provides crucial statistical evidence that complements qualitative research in this field. However, the reliance on quantitative data may overlook nuanced personal experiences and the subjective nature of gender-based barriers, which could have been addressed through qualitative methods.

In their study, **Owusu, G., & Danso, M.** (2022) examine “*Gender Dynamics and Political Representation: The Role of Civil Society in Ghana*”. They conducted a qualitative research project that involved in-depth interviews with members of various civil society organizations advocating for women’s rights and political participation. Owusu and Danso found that civil society organizations play a critical role in supporting women candidates through advocacy, training, and capacity-building initiatives. Their research highlights the positive impact of grassroots movements and civil society efforts in challenging traditional gender norms and promoting women’s political empowerment (Owusu & Danso, 2022).

This study provides a fresh perspective by focusing on the role of civil society, an area often underexplored in political representation research. The findings underscore the significant contributions of non-governmental actors in shaping gender dynamics in politics. However, the

study could be strengthened by including a broader range of perspectives from women candidates themselves, rather than focusing solely on the experiences of civil society members.

Nkrumah, S. (2023) conducted a study titled “*Gender, Policy, and Politics: Assessing the Impact of Gender Quotas in Ghana*”, which explored the effects of gender quota policies on women’s political representation. Nkrumah employed a longitudinal approach, analyzing changes in political representation over time and evaluating the impact of specific gender quota policies. The study concluded that while gender quotas have increased the number of women in political positions, the impact on substantive policy change and women’s influence remains limited (Nkrumah, 2023).

Nkrumah’s study offers valuable insights into the efficacy of policy interventions in promoting gender parity. The longitudinal analysis adds depth to the understanding of policy impacts over time. However, the study might benefit from a comparative analysis with other countries that have implemented similar quotas to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness.

Finally, **Botchwey, K.** (2024) in “*Navigating Political Spaces: Women’s Experiences in Ghanaian Politics*” explores the personal experiences of women in politics through a series of case studies. Botchwey utilized qualitative interviews with female politicians at various levels of government to understand their personal challenges and strategies for overcoming them. The study highlighted issues such as gender-based violence, the double burden of domestic responsibilities, and the lack of mentorship. Botchwey’s research emphasizes the need for supportive networks and the importance of addressing personal and systemic challenges to improve women’s political participation (Botchwey, 2024).

Botchwey's study is valuable for its focus on individual experiences and the practical challenges faced by women in politics. It offers a more personal and detailed perspective compared to other studies. However, the case study approach may limit the generalizability of the findings, and a broader quantitative analysis could complement the qualitative insights provided.

Overall, these studies collectively offer a well-rounded view of the barriers and opportunities for women in Ghanaian politics. They highlight the importance of addressing both systemic and personal challenges while also acknowledging the role of policy interventions and civil society. Future research could benefit from integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender and political representation in Ghana.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study of women's political representation in Ghana. By focusing on Gender Role Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of the barriers and challenges faced by women in politics. The operationalization of key terms ensures clarity and precision in examining these issues. Understanding these frameworks is crucial for identifying effective strategies to enhance women's political representation and promote gender equality in Ghanaian politics.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study to examine the barriers and opportunities for women's political participation in Ghana. The chapter provides a detailed description of the research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data handling and analysis, and ethical considerations. The methodological approach adopted in this study is primarily qualitative, focusing on in-depth interviews to gather rich, detailed data from participants with diverse perspectives.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena such as the barriers and opportunities for women in politics. Qualitative research is particularly effective in capturing the nuances of human experiences, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that influence women's political participation in Ghana (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The use of a qualitative approach enables the researcher to engage directly with participants, facilitating the collection of detailed narratives that reflect the lived experiences of women in politics. This approach also allows for the exploration of participants' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, which are critical for understanding the challenges and opportunities they face in the political arena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, qualitative research is flexible and adaptive,

permitting the researcher to modify the interview process as new insights emerge, thus ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the research topic (Tracy, 2019).

The chosen research design is an exploratory case study, focusing on the political landscape of Ghana as a single case. This design is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth examination of the specific context within which Ghanaian women navigate the political space. By using a case study approach, the research aims to uncover the specific barriers and opportunities that characterize women's political representation in Ghana, contributing to the broader understanding of gender dynamics in political participation (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Population

The population for this study comprises individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in the political processes in Ghana. This includes female politicians, members of women's advocacy groups, political party officials, civil society representatives, and academics with expertise in gender and politics. The target population is selected because of their experience and knowledge of the political barriers and opportunities that affect women's political participation (Palinkas et al., 2015), and male politicians.

Given the focus on women's political participation, the study specifically targets women who have run for political office, those currently holding political positions, and women who have been actively involved in political campaigns or advocacy. The inclusion of male politicians and stakeholders is also essential, as their perspectives on gender dynamics and political representation contribute to a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the political system (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The study employs a purposive sampling technique to select a total of 10 participants who are most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse data on the topic. Purposive sampling is appropriate for qualitative research as it allows the researcher to intentionally select participants based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives (Patton, 2015). The sample includes a diverse group of individuals, with two participants each from the following categories:

Women actively involved in politics, representing various political parties and levels of government in Ghana.

Male politicians with experience in the political landscape and an understanding of gender dynamics.

Party officials who are knowledgeable about the internal structures and policies related to gender representation.

Representatives from civil society organizations that advocate for women's political participation and gender equality.

Academics with expertise in gender and politics, offering insights into the broader socio-political context.

The sample size is determined by the principle of data saturation, where data collection continues until no new themes or insights emerge from the interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instrument for this study is the semi-structured interview guide. This guide is designed to elicit detailed responses from participants while allowing flexibility to explore emerging topics of interest during the interviews. The interview guide is developed based on the research objectives and includes open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their

experiences, perceptions, and insights related to women's political participation in Ghana (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview guide is structured around three main themes corresponding to the study's objectives: socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers; opportunities and strategies for enhancing women's political representation; and recommendations for policy and practice. Each theme includes specific questions designed to probe participants' views and experiences in-depth (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The guide also includes follow-up questions to clarify and expand on participants' responses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issues being studied.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is conducted through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with selected participants. The interviews are conducted in a location convenient for the participants to ensure their comfort and willingness to share information. Each interview is expected to last between 60 and 90 minutes, allowing sufficient time to explore the topics in detail (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Before the interviews, participants are briefed on the purpose of the study, the nature of the questions, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understand their rights and the confidentiality of their responses (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The interviews are audio-recorded with the participants' permission to ensure accuracy in data collection and to facilitate a thorough analysis of the responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.6 Data Handling and Analysis

Data handling begins with the transcription of interview recordings into written text. Transcriptions are then carefully reviewed and coded to identify emerging themes and patterns related to the research objectives. The coding process is guided by both inductive and deductive approaches, allowing for the identification of themes that align with the research questions as well as the emergence of new insights from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical considerations are paramount in this study, particularly given the sensitive nature of the topic. The study adheres to ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and they are assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained throughout the study. Participants' identities are protected by assigning codes to interview transcripts, and any identifying information is removed from the data. The data is stored securely, with access limited to the research team to prevent unauthorized disclosure (Wiles et al., 2008). Additionally, the study is conducted with cultural sensitivity, respecting the social norms and values of the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodology employed in the study, including the research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data handling and analysis, and ethical considerations. The qualitative approach adopted in this study, with a focus on in-depth interviews, is well-suited to explore the barriers and opportunities

for women's political participation in Ghana. The next chapter will present the findings of the study, providing insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the findings from the interviews conducted with 10 participants (P1-P10) selected from various segments of the Ghanaian political landscape, including women politicians, male politicians, party officials, civil society representatives, and academics with expertise in gender and politics. The chapter is structured according to the specific objectives of the study.

4.1 Demographic Information Of Participants

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to ensure a well-rounded and insightful representation of individuals with relevant experience and expertise in the Ghanaian political system. A total of 10 participants were carefully selected to provide diverse perspectives on the barriers and opportunities for women's political participation in Ghana.

Gender Representation

The sample was designed to include a balanced gender representation, reflecting the diverse voices within the political sphere. Among the participants, five were female (P1, P3, P5, P7, P9) and five were male (P2, P4, P6, P8, P10). This balance was crucial in capturing a comprehensive view of the gender dynamics influencing women's political engagement. Female participants included women actively involved in various political roles, from grassroots activists to elected officials.

Male participants consisted of male politicians, party officials, and civil society representatives who could provide insights into the systemic and cultural barriers faced by women.

Age Distribution

The age distribution of the participants was diverse, encompassing a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Participants were categorized into different age groups:

31-40 Years: 30% of the participants (P1, P2, P3)

41-50 Years: 60% of the participants (P4, P5, P6, P7, P8)

Above 50 Years: 10% of the participants (P9, P10)

The majority of the participants (60%) were between 41 and 50 years old. This age group was chosen deliberately as it encompasses individuals who have accumulated substantial experience in political and civil society roles and are likely to offer well-informed perspectives on the current barriers and opportunities in the political system.

Educational Background

All participants had attained at least a tertiary level of education, reflecting their qualifications and expertise relevant to the research questions. The educational background of participants varied from bachelor's degrees to advanced postgraduate qualifications. This high level of educational attainment ensured that participants were well-equipped to provide in-depth and knowledgeable responses regarding the political landscape in Ghana. Their academic backgrounds included degrees in political science, law, public administration, and other related fields, enriching the data's quality and depth.

The diverse demographic profile of the participants provided a robust foundation for exploring the various dimensions of women's political participation in Ghana. By including a range of ages, genders, and educational backgrounds, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive array of insights into the barriers and opportunities facing women in Ghanaian politics

4.2 Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Political Barriers Hindering Women's Political Participation in Ghana

4.2.1 Socio-Cultural Norms Impacting Women's Political Participation

The interviews conducted for this study revealed that deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms and practices pose significant barriers to women's participation in Ghanaian politics. These norms are deeply rooted in traditional beliefs and societal expectations, which collectively contribute to the challenges faced by women seeking to engage in political activities.

Traditional Gender Roles and Perceptions

One of the most prominent barriers identified is the prevailing perception of women as primarily caretakers and homemakers. P1, a female politician, articulated this barrier clearly by stating, "Women are often seen as caretakers and homemakers, which limits their time and opportunities to engage in politics" (P1). This statement underscores a widespread societal belief that confines women to domestic roles, thereby restricting their ability to participate actively in political life. This gendered division of labor reinforces the notion that political engagement is not a suitable or prioritized activity for women, thus curbing their involvement in public affairs.

The sentiment expressed by P1 was further supported by P4, a male politician, who noted, "There is a widespread belief that politics is a male domain, and women who enter it are often criticized or discouraged by their communities" (P4). This perspective highlights a systemic bias that not only marginalizes women's political ambitions but also subjects them to criticism and discouragement. The notion that politics is inherently a male domain perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, where women are either subtly or overtly discouraged from pursuing political roles due to societal disapproval or backlash.

Resistance from Both Genders

Participants also observed that traditional gender roles are perpetuated not just by men but also by women themselves, creating a challenging environment for female political aspirants. P3, a civil society representative, shared insights into this dynamic: "In many rural areas, women who express a desire to participate in politics face resistance not only from men but also from older women who believe that their place is in the home" (P3). This comment highlights how entrenched cultural perceptions extend to female members of the community who internalize and reinforce traditional gender roles. The resistance from older women reflects a broader cultural attitude that views women's political ambition as inappropriate or overly ambitious, thereby further limiting their participation.

Impact on Women's Political Engagement

These cultural perceptions significantly hinder women's political engagement. Women who seek to enter politics are often not taken seriously by their male counterparts or the electorate. The resistance faced from both men and women contributes to a broader environment of skepticism and dismissal, where women's capabilities and contributions are undervalued (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989). The cultural perception of female political ambition as inappropriate is a substantial barrier, leading to a lack of support and acceptance in political spaces. This lack of acceptance not only deters women from pursuing political roles but also affects their overall effectiveness and visibility in political processes.

Overall, the interviews underscore the pervasive nature of socio-cultural barriers that inhibit women's full participation in Ghanaian politics. These barriers are deeply embedded in societal norms and cultural practices, reflecting the need for targeted interventions to address and challenge these traditional perceptions. Efforts to promote gender equality in politics must confront these

socio-cultural obstacles head-on to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for female political engagement.

4.2.2 Economic Barriers to Women's Political Participation

Economic challenges were identified as another critical barrier to women's political participation. P2, an academic with expertise in gender and politics, pointed out that "the financial demands of running a political campaign are enormous, and many women simply do not have the resources to compete with their male counterparts" (P2). This issue is compounded by the fact that women, on average, earn less than men and have less access to financial resources (Morrison, 2017).

P5, a female politician, shared her experience, stating, "During my campaign, I struggled to raise funds because many potential donors were skeptical about supporting a female candidate. They believed I had a lower chance of winning compared to a male candidate" (P5). This economic barrier is further exacerbated by limited access to networks that can provide financial and logistical support, which is often available to male politicians through long-established political alliances (Bauer, 2013; Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

4.2.2 Political Institutions and Party Structures

Political Institutions and Party Structures

The interviews conducted for this study revealed that political institutions and party structures in Ghana play a critical role in either hindering or facilitating women's political participation. The experiences shared by participants highlighted several key issues related to the gender dynamics within political parties and the broader institutional framework.

Male-Dominated Political Parties

Participants consistently pointed out that political parties in Ghana remain heavily male-dominated. P6, a party official, emphasized this point, stating, "Political parties in Ghana are still heavily male-dominated, and decision-making within parties often excludes women or assigns them to less influential roles" (P6). This statement underscores the pervasive gender imbalance within political parties, where men predominantly hold decision-making power and control key aspects of party operations. The exclusion of women from influential roles within party structures reflects a broader systemic issue where women are marginalized and their contributions undervalued.

The male-dominated nature of political parties is not solely due to overt discrimination but is also a consequence of entrenched party hierarchies and established practices that are challenging for women to navigate (Krook, 2009). These hierarchies create barriers to entry and limit women's opportunities to ascend to leadership positions within the party. The result is a political environment where women struggle to gain access to critical decision-making platforms and influence party policies effectively.

Limited Roles for Women

Even when women manage to secure positions within party leadership, their roles are often characterized by limited visibility and influence. P7, a female politician, observed, "Even when women are included in party leadership, they are often given roles that are less visible and less influential, which diminishes their ability to shape party policies or influence candidate selection processes" (P7). This observation highlights a recurring issue where women's contributions are confined to roles that do not allow them to exert substantial influence within the party. By relegating women to less prominent roles, parties effectively undermine their potential impact on policy formulation and candidate selection, reinforcing existing power imbalances.

The limited influence of women in party leadership positions is further compounded by the lack of gender-sensitive policies within political parties. P10, an academic, noted, "The lack of gender-sensitive policies within parties also means that women face additional hurdles in being selected as candidates, particularly in winnable constituencies" (P10). The absence of gender-sensitive policies contributes to an uneven playing field where women encounter significant obstacles in securing candidacies, especially in constituencies that are considered winnable. This lack of support and accommodation for female candidates perpetuates the underrepresentation of women in political offices.

Absence of Support Mechanisms

The challenges faced by women in Ghanaian politics are significantly exacerbated by the absence of internal mechanisms designed to support female candidates. Participants highlighted several key issues related to this lack of support, which severely impacts women's ability to navigate political institutions and party structures effectively.

One critical barrier is the absence of structured mentorship programs. Mentorship is essential for providing guidance and support to emerging female politicians, helping them navigate the complexities of political campaigns and develop the necessary skills for leadership. However, the lack of such programs leaves many women without the strategic advice and support that experienced mentors can offer. As P10 pointed out, "The absence of internal party mechanisms to support female candidates, such as mentorship programs or financial assistance, is a significant issue" (P10). This lack of mentorship means that female candidates often enter politics without the benefit of seasoned guidance, which can limit their effectiveness and chances of success.

Financial constraints further compound the challenges women face in politics. Political campaigns require substantial financial resources for activities such as canvassing, media outreach, and public engagements. The absence of financial assistance specifically targeted at female candidates creates a significant disadvantage. Without access to these critical resources, many women struggle to fund their campaigns, thereby hindering their ability to compete effectively. The lack of financial support within political parties means that female candidates are often at a considerable disadvantage compared to their male counterparts (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

In addition to mentorship and financial support, the absence of other supportive structures and resources also impedes women's political participation. Effective support mechanisms could include training programs on campaign management, public speaking, and policy development, as well as access to essential resources such as voter databases and communication tools. Without these resources, women are forced to rely on their own networks and limited personal resources, which constrains their ability to compete on an equal footing with more established candidates. This lack of comprehensive support reinforces existing barriers and contributes to the underrepresentation of women in political offices.

Overall, the deficiencies in support mechanisms within political institutions and party structures create a challenging environment for female candidates. Addressing these gaps is crucial for promoting gender equality in politics. Political parties and institutions need to implement robust support systems, including mentorship programs, financial assistance, and other resources tailored to the needs of female candidates. Such measures would help create a more equitable political environment, enabling women to compete effectively and contribute meaningfully to the political landscape (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

4.3 Opportunities and Strategies for Enhancing Women's Political Representation

4.3.1 Existing Opportunities within the Ghanaian Political System

Despite the significant barriers to women's political participation in Ghana, participants identified several opportunities within the political system that have the potential to support and enhance female engagement. These opportunities reflect a growing recognition of the importance of gender equality and the role of various actors and mechanisms in advancing women's political representation.

One of the notable opportunities is the role of the media in advocating for gender equality and promoting women's political involvement. P9, a civil society representative, emphasized this point, stating, "The media has become a powerful tool for advocating women's rights and highlighting the need for greater female representation in politics" (P9). The media's increased visibility of gender issues plays a critical role in challenging entrenched stereotypes and societal norms that have traditionally marginalized women in politics. By amplifying women's voices and stories, the media helps to raise public awareness and support for gender equality initiatives, thereby encouraging more women to consider and pursue political careers (Tripp et al., 2006).

Additionally, there is a growing recognition of women's contributions to politics and development, which is gradually shifting public attitudes towards greater acceptance of female candidates. As P8, a male politician, noted, "The growing recognition of women's contributions to politics and development is gradually shifting public attitudes, making it more acceptable for women to run for office" (P8). This evolving perspective is crucial for fostering a more inclusive political environment where women are seen as valuable contributors and leaders. The shift in public

attitudes can lead to increased support for female candidates and a reduction in the stigma associated with women pursuing political roles.

Moreover, the adoption of international conventions and national policies that promote gender equality provides a structured framework for advancing women's political representation. The integration of these policies into the Ghanaian political system helps to institutionalize gender equality efforts and create formal mechanisms for supporting women in politics. For instance, the Electoral Commission of Ghana has implemented various initiatives aimed at increasing female participation in elections, including gender quotas and outreach programs (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2021). These policies and conventions serve as important tools for creating a more equitable political landscape and ensuring that women have the opportunities and support needed to engage fully in political processes.

4.3.2 The Role of Affirmative Action Policies and Gender Quotas

Affirmative action policies and gender quotas are widely acknowledged as pivotal mechanisms for enhancing women's political representation in Ghana. These tools aim to address historical and systemic imbalances by creating opportunities for increased female participation and influence in the political sphere.

Impact of Gender Quotas

Participants agreed that gender quotas have significantly contributed to increasing the number of women in parliamentary positions. P3, a civil society representative, highlighted the positive impact of quotas, stating, "Gender quotas have been instrumental in increasing the number of women in parliament, but more needs to be done to ensure that these women are not just present

but also influential in decision-making" (P3). This statement underscores the effectiveness of quotas in improving female representation but also points to the need for further measures to ensure that women are not merely token representatives but are actively engaged and influential in shaping policies.

The introduction of quotas has indeed resulted in a measurable increase in female representation within political institutions. For example, the representation of women in the Ghanaian parliament has seen gradual improvements since the implementation of gender quotas, reflecting a positive trend towards gender parity (United Nations, 2020). However, the mere presence of women in legislative bodies does not guarantee their active participation or influence in policy-making. Ensuring that female politicians are provided with the necessary resources and support to leverage their positions effectively remains a critical aspect of achieving genuine gender equality in politics (Tripp et al., 2006).

Support Structures for Success

While gender quotas are recognized as a crucial step towards gender parity, participants emphasized that quotas alone are insufficient without accompanying support structures. P2, a male politician, noted, "Quotas alone are not enough; they must be accompanied by support structures that empower women to succeed in their roles" (P2). This perspective reflects a common concern that merely achieving numerical representation does not guarantee that women will have the resources, training, or mentorship needed to thrive in their political roles.

Effective support structures could include mentorship programs, leadership training, and financial assistance to help women navigate the challenges of political office and make meaningful contributions. These support systems are essential for addressing the barriers that women face, such as limited access to political networks and resources, which can impede their ability to

effectively compete and perform in political roles (Dahlerup, 2006). Additionally, creating a conducive environment that promotes the professional development of female politicians can enhance their capabilities and confidence, enabling them to contribute more effectively to policy-making processes.

Challenges in Implementing Quotas

The implementation of gender quotas is not without its challenges. Participants discussed various obstacles, including resistance from male politicians and concerns about the potential undermining of meritocracy. According to P6, a party official, "Quotas are necessary to level the playing field because the existing political environment is not neutral; it is skewed against women due to historical and cultural biases" (P6). This statement highlights the argument that quotas are a necessary corrective measure in a political system that has historically marginalized women and that without such measures, the status quo would persist.

Resistance to quotas often stems from concerns about fairness and the perception that quotas may compromise merit-based selection processes. Critics argue that quotas could lead to the selection of candidates based on gender rather than qualifications, potentially undermining the principle of meritocracy (Dahlerup, 2006). Addressing these concerns requires a nuanced approach that emphasizes the importance of diversity and the benefits of a more inclusive political environment while ensuring that quotas are implemented in a manner that complements merit-based evaluation rather than replacing it.

Addressing Resistance and Bias

Addressing resistance to quotas and overcoming biases requires a multifaceted approach. It involves educating stakeholders about the benefits of gender diversity and ensuring that quotas are

implemented in a way that complements existing merit-based systems rather than replacing them. By fostering a better understanding of the need for affirmative action and demonstrating its positive impact on governance and representation, stakeholders can work towards reducing resistance and enhancing the effectiveness of quotas (Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

Efforts to address resistance should also include dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations to build consensus on the importance of gender equality. Implementing training programs and workshops to raise awareness about the advantages of gender diversity and the positive outcomes associated with it can help shift perceptions and garner support for affirmative action measures. Through these efforts, it is possible to create a more supportive environment for the implementation and sustainability of gender quotas, ultimately contributing to a more equitable political landscape (United Nations, 2020).

4.3.3 Successful Strategies and Initiatives

Several successful strategies and initiatives have significantly contributed to the increase in women's political participation in Ghana. These strategies encompass mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and capacity-building initiatives led by civil society organizations. Each of these elements has played a crucial role in empowering women to engage more effectively in the political arena.

Mentorship Programs

One of the most impactful strategies identified by participants is the implementation of mentorship programs. P1, a female politician, emphasized the importance of mentorship, stating, "Mentorship has played a significant role in my political career. Experienced female politicians provided guidance and support, which helped me navigate the challenges of the political arena" (P1). This

statement underscores the vital role that mentorship plays in providing aspiring female politicians with the necessary guidance and support to overcome the unique challenges they face. Experienced mentors can offer valuable insights into political strategies, navigate party dynamics, and provide encouragement during challenging times.

Mentorship programs not only provide practical advice but also serve as a source of emotional support. Female mentors who have successfully navigated the political landscape can share their experiences and lessons learned, helping their mentees avoid common pitfalls and build resilience. This kind of support is particularly crucial in environments where women are underrepresented and may face significant barriers to entry (Tripp et al., 2006). By fostering these relationships, mentorship programs help to build a network of women who can support each other and advance collectively in the political sphere.

Networking Opportunities

Networking has also emerged as a critical component in increasing women's political participation. P5 highlighted the significance of networking, stating, "Networking with other women in politics has been crucial for sharing experiences and strategies for overcoming common obstacles" (P5). Networking allows women to connect with peers, share strategies, and collaborate on common issues, creating a supportive community that enhances their collective effectiveness. This exchange of ideas and experiences can lead to the development of innovative approaches to overcoming obstacles and achieving political goals.

Furthermore, networking provides opportunities for women to build alliances and gain access to influential circles within political and civil society organizations. These connections can facilitate career advancement, provide access to valuable resources, and open doors to new opportunities.

Networking events, conferences, and workshops offer platforms for women to establish these important connections, reinforcing their presence and influence in the political landscape (Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

Capacity Building by Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations have played a pivotal role in enhancing women's political participation through capacity-building initiatives. P10 highlighted the efforts of organizations like the Ghana Women's Political Caucus, noting, "Organizations like the Ghana Women's Political Caucus have been instrumental in training women in campaign management, public speaking, and policy advocacy" (P10). These organizations provide women with essential skills and knowledge needed for effective political engagement, helping to level the playing field in a traditionally male-dominated arena.

Capacity-building programs offered by these organizations cover a wide range of areas, including campaign management, public speaking, and policy advocacy. By equipping women with these skills, civil society organizations help them to present themselves more effectively, articulate their policies, and run successful campaigns. This training not only boosts women's confidence but also enhances their ability to navigate the complexities of political processes and engage with voters effectively (Dahlerup, 2006).

Building Confidence and Resilience

In addition to providing practical skills, capacity-building initiatives also focus on building confidence and resilience among aspiring female politicians. Training programs and workshops are designed to empower women by enhancing their self-efficacy and leadership skills. This empowerment is crucial for overcoming the societal and institutional barriers that often hinder

women's political participation. By fostering a sense of confidence and resilience, these initiatives help women to persist in their political endeavors despite the challenges they may encounter (Tripp et al., 2006).

The emphasis on confidence-building also plays a significant role in encouraging more women to pursue political careers. When women feel supported and equipped with the necessary skills, they are more likely to take on leadership roles and participate actively in political processes. This increased confidence contributes to a greater representation of women in politics and helps to challenge traditional gender norms that have historically marginalized female political participation (Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

Community Engagement and Advocacy

Community engagement and advocacy efforts are additional strategies that have contributed to increasing women's political participation. Through grassroots mobilization and public awareness campaigns, civil society organizations and advocacy groups work to promote gender equality and encourage women to become politically active. These efforts help to shift public perceptions and create a more supportive environment for women in politics.

Public awareness campaigns play a critical role in highlighting the importance of gender equality and advocating for women's political rights. By raising awareness about the challenges faced by women and the benefits of increased female representation, these campaigns help to generate public support and drive policy changes that facilitate women's political participation (United Nations, 2020). This advocacy work complements the capacity-building initiatives by creating a broader cultural and institutional context that supports women's involvement in politics.

Policy Support and Legal Frameworks

Supportive policies and legal frameworks also play a crucial role in enhancing women's political participation. Participants discussed the importance of having policies that promote gender equality and provide a framework for addressing barriers to women's involvement in politics. These policies can include gender quotas, affirmative action measures, and legal protections against discrimination, all of which contribute to creating a more equitable political environment. Effective implementation of these policies requires ongoing commitment from policymakers and political institutions. By ensuring that gender equality policies are enacted and enforced, governments can create an environment that supports women's political engagement and addresses systemic barriers (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2021). Continuous monitoring and evaluation of these policies are essential to ensure that they are achieving their intended outcomes and to identify areas for improvement.

Collaborative Efforts and Partnerships

Collaborative efforts and partnerships between various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, have also been identified as successful strategies. These collaborations help to pool resources, share expertise, and coordinate efforts to promote women's political participation. By working together, stakeholders can leverage their collective strengths to address the complex challenges faced by women in politics and implement more effective solutions.

Partnerships with international organizations can provide additional support and resources for local initiatives. These collaborations can include technical assistance, funding, and knowledge exchange, which can enhance the capacity of local organizations and contribute to more effective implementation of women's political participation programs (United Nations, 2020). Collaborative

efforts help to create a more integrated approach to promoting gender equality in politics and ensure that initiatives are aligned with broader global standards and best practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of strategies and initiatives are essential for assessing their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Participants emphasized the importance of tracking progress and measuring the impact of capacity-building programs, mentorship initiatives, and policy measures. This evaluation process helps to ensure that interventions are achieving their goals and provides valuable insights for refining and enhancing future efforts.

Monitoring and evaluation should include both qualitative and quantitative assessments to capture the full range of impacts and outcomes. Feedback from participants, analysis of program data, and assessments of policy changes can all contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of women's political participation initiatives (Dahlerup, 2006). By continuously evaluating and adapting strategies, stakeholders can ensure that their efforts are responsive to emerging needs and challenges.

Sustaining Progress

Ensuring the sustainability of successful strategies and initiatives is a critical aspect of promoting long-term improvements in women's political participation. Participants discussed the need for ongoing support, resources, and commitment to maintain and expand the gains achieved through various programs. Sustaining progress requires a continued focus on addressing barriers, leveraging opportunities, and fostering a supportive environment for women in politics.

Long-term sustainability can be achieved through the establishment of institutional mechanisms, ongoing funding, and continued advocacy efforts. By integrating successful strategies into mainstream political and social frameworks, stakeholders can ensure that the gains made in women's political participation are preserved and built upon over time (Krook & O'Brien, 2012). Sustaining progress involves not only maintaining current initiatives but also adapting to evolving challenges and opportunities in the political landscape.

4.4 Recommendations for Promoting Gender Equality in Ghanaian Politics

4.4.1 Recommendations for Policymakers

Participants provided several nuanced recommendations for policymakers to address the barriers hindering women's political participation in Ghana. Their insights underscored the multifaceted nature of the challenges and proposed various measures to create a more inclusive political environment.

One significant recommendation was the need for policymakers to focus on implementing and enforcing gender-sensitive legislation. P4 suggested that "policymakers should focus on implementing and enforcing gender-sensitive legislation that promotes equal opportunities for women in politics" (P4). This recommendation highlights the importance of not only adopting gender quotas but also ensuring that such policies are supported by robust legal frameworks. Gender-sensitive legislation should be designed to promote equitable participation by addressing systemic barriers and providing a clear mandate for inclusion. Ensuring the effective implementation of these policies requires continuous monitoring, accountability mechanisms, and legal safeguards to uphold women's rights and promote gender equality in politics (Dahlerup, 2006). By embedding these principles into the legal system, policymakers can help to dismantle

structural impediments and create a more supportive environment for women's political engagement.

In addition to legislative measures, participants advocated for targeted financial support to address economic barriers that disproportionately affect women. P7 recommended the creation of a national fund to support female candidates, arguing that "financial support from the government could help level the playing field by reducing the economic barriers that disproportionately affect women" (P7). This recommendation reflects the recognition that financial constraints can be a significant barrier for women aspiring to enter politics. Economic support could include grants, loans, or subsidies to cover campaign costs, training expenses, and other necessary resources. By providing financial assistance, the government can help to mitigate the disparities in resources between male and female candidates, thereby enhancing the ability of women to compete effectively in the political arena. Such support not only addresses immediate financial challenges but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of women's participation in politics.

Public education campaigns were also identified as crucial for challenging and changing socio-cultural norms that hinder women's political participation. P9 emphasized the need for these campaigns, stating, "Policymakers should invest in programs that educate the public about the importance of women's political participation and the benefits of gender equality in governance" (P9). Public education campaigns play a pivotal role in shifting societal attitudes and breaking down stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing political careers. These campaigns can target various audiences, including voters, political leaders, and community members, to raise awareness about the value of diverse political representation and the positive impact of gender equality on governance. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect for women's political

contributions, public education initiatives can help to create a more welcoming environment for female politicians and encourage greater participation at all levels of government.

Participants also highlighted the importance of addressing socio-cultural barriers through comprehensive strategies that engage communities and promote positive role models. Public education campaigns should be complemented by grassroots initiatives that involve local leaders, community organizations, and media outlets. By leveraging multiple channels of communication and involving a wide range of stakeholders, these campaigns can effectively challenge traditional gender norms and promote a more inclusive political culture. Additionally, showcasing successful female politicians and leaders can serve as powerful examples and inspire other women to pursue political careers, further reinforcing the message of gender equality and empowerment.

The recommendations provided by participants reflect a holistic approach to addressing the barriers to women's political participation. By combining legislative reforms, financial support, and public education efforts, policymakers can create a more enabling environment that supports women's engagement in politics. These measures, when implemented effectively, have the potential to drive meaningful change and enhance the representation and influence of women in Ghanaian political life.

4.4.2 Encouraging Political Parties to Support Female Candidates

Participants provided a range of recommendations on how political parties could be incentivized to support and promote female candidates. These recommendations reflect a multifaceted approach to addressing gender disparities in political representation.

One significant suggestion was to use financial incentives and media coverage as rewards for parties that meet gender representation targets. P8 proposed that "parties should be rewarded with additional campaign funding or media coverage if they meet certain gender representation targets" (P8). This strategy aims to create direct, tangible benefits for parties that actively recruit and support female candidates. By linking financial rewards and enhanced media visibility to specific gender representation goals, parties would be motivated to adopt more inclusive practices. This approach not only incentivizes parties to increase female representation but also leverages media channels to amplify the visibility of women in politics (Krook, 2009). The potential benefits of such incentives include a more competitive political landscape where gender equality is prioritized, and women's contributions to politics are more widely recognized and valued.

In addition to financial incentives, the establishment of internal gender parity committees within political parties was recommended as a crucial measure for promoting gender equality. P6 emphasized that "parties establish internal gender parity committees to monitor and promote gender equality within their ranks" (P6). These committees would be tasked with overseeing the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and ensuring that candidate selection processes and party leadership roles are inclusive. By having dedicated bodies focused on gender parity, parties can systematically address and rectify issues related to women's participation. Such committees would facilitate ongoing monitoring and evaluation, helping to identify and overcome barriers to female representation. They would also be instrumental in fostering a culture of accountability within parties, ensuring that gender equality initiatives are effectively executed and continuously improved (Bauer, 2013; Morrison, 2017).

Another key recommendation was the development of leadership training programs specifically designed for women. P2 suggested that "parties could offer leadership training programs specifically for women, helping to build a pipeline of female leaders who are ready to take on key roles within the party and in government" (P2). These programs would provide women with essential skills and knowledge required to excel in political roles, such as public speaking, campaign management, and policy development. Leadership training would address skill gaps and build confidence among female candidates, enabling them to navigate the competitive political environment more effectively. Additionally, such programs would create a supportive network for women, fostering collaboration and shared learning. Investing in leadership development would not only enhance the capabilities of female candidates but also contribute to the long-term growth of women's representation and influence in Ghanaian politics.

4.4.3 The Role of Civil Society Organizations

Participants identified civil society organizations (CSOs) as vital contributors to advancing gender equality in Ghanaian politics. These organizations play a pivotal role in advocating for women's rights and influencing policy changes that promote female political participation. P3 highlighted the significant impact of CSOs, stating, "CSOs have the capacity to mobilize grassroots support and advocate for policy changes that promote women's participation in politics" (P3). By leveraging their extensive networks and resources, CSOs can amplify women's voices, ensuring that gender issues remain a central focus within political discourse. Their ability to mobilize community support and engage in advocacy efforts makes them instrumental in pushing for reforms that enhance women's political representation (Tripp et al., 2006).

In addition to advocacy, CSOs are crucial in building the capacities of women aspiring to enter politics. P10 suggested that "CSOs should focus on capacity-building initiatives that equip women

with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective political engagement" (P10). This involves organizing training workshops and seminars that cover essential areas such as public speaking, negotiation, and campaign management. These training programs address the practical challenges women face in running for office, providing them with the tools and confidence needed to navigate the political landscape effectively. By investing in such capacity-building efforts, CSOs can help bridge the gap between aspiring female politicians and the demands of political engagement (Dahlerup, 2006).

Furthermore, P1 emphasized the importance of advocacy campaigns run by CSOs to shift public perceptions and attitudes towards women in politics. P1 noted, "Civil society should lead efforts to shift societal attitudes by using media campaigns and public forums to challenge stereotypes and promote positive role models" (P1). These advocacy campaigns are essential in challenging and changing entrenched stereotypes that hinder women's political participation. By utilizing media platforms and public forums, CSOs can raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality and highlight the achievements of women in politics. Such initiatives help create a more supportive environment for women pursuing political careers, countering negative biases and encouraging societal acceptance (Collins, 2000; Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

Moreover, CSOs play a crucial role in fostering collaborative efforts among various stakeholders. They act as intermediaries between the government, political parties, and the public, facilitating dialogue and collaboration on gender equality issues. By bringing together different actors, CSOs can help build consensus on policies and initiatives that promote women's political participation. This collaborative approach ensures that gender equality efforts are comprehensive and inclusive, addressing the needs and concerns of all stakeholders involved.

4.5 Analysis of Key Findings

The interviews revealed several critical barriers and opportunities related to women's political participation in Ghana. Socio-cultural norms and practices remain formidable obstacles, deeply ingrained in the societal fabric and significantly affecting women's ability to engage in politics. Traditional gender roles, which view women primarily as caretakers and homemakers, limit their time and opportunities to pursue political ambitions. These norms perpetuate the belief that politics is a male domain, leading to widespread criticism and discouragement of women who attempt to enter this field. This socio-cultural resistance is compounded by the economic barriers that women face. Many women lack the financial resources required for successful political campaigns, making it difficult for them to compete on an equal footing with their male counterparts.

Furthermore, political institutions and party structures often either facilitate or hinder women's participation. The male-dominated nature of many political environments can exclude women from decision-making processes and limit their opportunities for advancement. Participants noted that even when women are included in party leadership, they are often relegated to less influential roles that do not allow them to shape policy or impact candidate selection processes. The absence of internal support mechanisms within political parties, such as mentorship programs or financial assistance, exacerbates these challenges, leaving women without the resources and guidance necessary to succeed in politics.

Despite these barriers, there are notable opportunities within the political system that could support and promote women's participation. Increasing recognition of women's contributions to politics and development is gradually shifting public attitudes, making it more acceptable for women to run for office. The media has emerged as a powerful tool in advocating for gender equality, raising awareness about the importance of female representation in politics, and challenging entrenched stereotypes. Affirmative action policies and gender quotas have proven effective in increasing

women's representation in political institutions. However, these measures must be complemented by supportive structures to ensure their effectiveness and to address the underlying issues of gender inequality.

Successful strategies and initiatives have also demonstrated potential for enhancing women's political participation. Mentorship programs, which provide guidance and support from experienced female politicians, help aspiring women navigate the political arena. Networking with other women in politics further aids in sharing experiences and overcoming common obstacles. Civil society organizations have played a crucial role in capacity-building initiatives, offering training in essential areas such as public speaking and campaign management. These efforts build confidence and resilience among female politicians, equipping them with the skills necessary for effective political engagement.

To address the identified barriers and leverage the opportunities, several recommendations emerge. Implementing and enforcing gender-sensitive policies, providing financial support for female candidates, and establishing internal mechanisms within political parties to promote gender parity are essential steps. Civil society organizations are pivotal in advocating for these changes, building the capacity of female candidates, and shifting public attitudes towards gender equality in politics. By addressing both the socio-cultural and institutional challenges and capitalizing on the available opportunities, meaningful progress can be made towards enhancing women's political participation in Ghana.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed analysis of the findings from the interviews, addressing the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers hindering women's political participation in Ghana. It has also examined existing opportunities and strategies for enhancing women's representation

and provided evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations. The insights gained from the interviews highlight the need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to overcome the barriers to women's political participation and to promote gender equality in Ghanaian politics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the key findings from the study on women's political participation in Ghana. It synthesizes the main insights drawn from the interviews, discusses their implications, and offers recommendations for policymakers, political parties, and civil society organizations. The chapter is structured to provide a clear summary of the findings, outline conclusions based on the data, and propose actionable recommendations to address the identified barriers and leverage the opportunities for enhancing women's political engagement.

5.1 Summary Of Key Findings

The study provided a comprehensive examination of the barriers and opportunities related to women's political participation in Ghana, revealing several critical insights. Socio-cultural norms emerged as a significant obstacle, deeply rooted in traditional gender roles that restrict women's involvement in politics. Participants highlighted how these norms perpetuate the belief that politics is a male domain and that women should remain in domestic roles. P1, a female politician,

emphasized that "women are often seen as caretakers and homemakers, which limits their time and opportunities to engage in politics" (P1). This sentiment was supported by P4, who noted that the perception of politics as a male sphere often results in criticism or discouragement of women who pursue political ambitions (P4). Such entrenched cultural beliefs are not only held by men but also by women, reinforcing barriers that hinder female political participation (Agyemang, 2016; Bauer, 2013).

Economic barriers further compound these challenges, as financial constraints are a significant impediment for women seeking to run successful political campaigns. Participants noted that women often lack the necessary resources for campaign management, which limits their ability to compete effectively. P7 highlighted the economic difficulties women face, suggesting that "financial support from the government could help level the playing field by reducing the economic barriers that disproportionately affect women" (P7). This aligns with findings from other studies that emphasize the need for targeted financial support to address these disparities (Dahlerup, 2006).

Political institutions and party structures also play a crucial role in either facilitating or obstructing women's participation in politics. The research revealed that male-dominated environments within political parties and the lack of support mechanisms for female candidates are notable issues. P6, a party official, pointed out that "political parties in Ghana are still heavily male-dominated, and decision-making within parties often excludes women or assigns them to less influential roles" (P6). The absence of internal support systems, such as mentorship programs and financial assistance, creates an environment where women struggle to gain traction (Krook, 2009; Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

Despite these barriers, the study identified several opportunities within the Ghanaian political system that can support and promote women's participation. The increasing recognition of women's contributions and the role of media in advocating for gender equality provide a platform for change. P9 noted that "the media has become a powerful tool for advocating women's rights and highlighting the need for greater female representation in politics" (P9). Additionally, affirmative action policies and gender quotas have shown effectiveness in increasing women's representation, though they require supportive structures to achieve full impact (United Nations, 2020; Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2021). P3 emphasized the importance of gender quotas, stating, "Gender quotas have been instrumental in increasing the number of women in parliament, but more needs to be done to ensure that these women are not just present but also influential in decision-making" (P3).

Successful strategies, such as mentorship programs and capacity-building initiatives led by civil society organizations, demonstrate the potential for enhancing women's political participation. P1 highlighted the role of mentorship, stating, "Mentorship has played a significant role in my political career. Experienced female politicians provided guidance and support, which helped me navigate the challenges of the political arena" (P1). P10 added that "organizations like the Ghana Women's Political Caucus have been instrumental in training women in campaign management, public speaking, and policy advocacy" (P10). These initiatives help build the necessary skills and confidence for women to navigate the political landscape effectively (Tripp et al., 2006; Krook & O'Brien, 2012).

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is evident that socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers significantly impact women's political participation in Ghana. Traditional gender roles and socio-

cultural norms create substantial obstacles by reinforcing the perception that politics is a male domain. Economic constraints further limit women's ability to engage in politics, highlighting the need for targeted financial support. Political institutions and party structures often perpetuate gender inequalities through male-dominated environments and inadequate support mechanisms for female candidates.

Nevertheless, opportunities exist within the Ghanaian political system to enhance women's participation. The growing recognition of women's contributions, media advocacy, and affirmative action policies provide a foundation for progress. Successful strategies such as mentorship programs and capacity-building initiatives have shown promise in overcoming some of these barriers and empowering women in politics.

5.3 Recommendations

For Policymakers:

Implement Gender-Sensitive Legislation: Enforce gender-sensitive policies that promote equal opportunities for women in politics. Ensure that gender quotas are supported by robust legal frameworks to guarantee effective implementation (P4).

Establish a National Fund: Create a fund to provide financial support for female candidates, addressing economic barriers that disproportionately affect women and leveling the playing field (P7).

Public Education Campaigns: Invest in programs that educate the public on the importance of women's political participation and the benefits of gender equality in governance (P9).

For Political Parties:

Incentivize Gender Representation: Reward parties with additional campaign funding or media coverage for meeting gender representation targets. This approach will encourage parties to actively recruit and support female candidates (P8).

Create Gender Parity Committees: Establish internal committees to monitor and promote gender equality within parties. These committees should focus on inclusive policies and candidate selection processes (P6).

Offer Leadership Training: Provide leadership training programs specifically for women to build a pipeline of female leaders ready for key roles within the party and in government (P2).

For Civil Society Organizations:

Focus on Capacity Building: Organize training workshops to equip women with skills in public speaking, campaign management, and negotiation. These initiatives will help women overcome practical challenges in political engagement (P10).

Lead Advocacy Campaigns: Use media campaigns and public forums to challenge stereotypes and promote positive role models. Such efforts will contribute to shifting societal attitudes and creating a supportive environment for women in politics (P1).

5.4 Limitations Of The Study

This study faced several limitations that may affect the generalizability and accuracy of its findings. The relatively small sample size, consisting of only ten participants, may not fully capture the diverse experiences and perspectives of all women involved in Ghanaian politics. Although the sample included a balanced representation of genders and various political roles, it remains limited in scope, and findings may not reflect the broader spectrum of women's experiences across

different regions and political contexts in Ghana. The study's conclusions are therefore based on a relatively narrow set of viewpoints, potentially overlooking significant variations in experiences among women in different political and socio-cultural settings.

Additionally, the research relied on self-reported data, which introduces the possibility of personal biases and inaccuracies. Participants' responses were influenced by their own perceptions and experiences, which may not always align with objective realities or the experiences of others. Self-reported data can be particularly prone to bias, as individuals might present themselves in a more favourable light or underreport negative experiences. Furthermore, the study encountered difficulties accessing certain groups, which could limit the comprehensiveness of the findings and affect the robustness of the analysis. These challenges underscore the need for caution when interpreting the results and highlight the importance of further research with a larger and more diverse sample to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of women's political participation in Ghana.

5.5 Suggestions For Future Research

Future research should aim to explore the experiences of a larger and more diverse sample of women involved in politics across various regions and political contexts within Ghana. Expanding the sample size would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse challenges and opportunities faced by women in different settings, including rural versus urban areas and across various political parties. This broader approach would help identify region-specific barriers and opportunities, leading to more nuanced insights into how cultural, economic, and political factors influence women's political participation. By including a wider range of participants, future studies can ensure that findings are more representative and applicable to the broader population of women in Ghanaian politics.

In addition to expanding the sample, future research should investigate the impact of specific interventions designed to support women's political participation, such as mentorship programs and financial support mechanisms. Understanding how these interventions affect women's ability to engage in politics could provide valuable insights into their effectiveness and areas for improvement. Furthermore, examining the role of international and local partnerships in supporting women's political engagement could uncover additional opportunities for promoting gender equality. Partnerships between local organizations, international bodies, and government institutions might offer innovative solutions and resources to address existing barriers and support women in their political careers. Such research could contribute to the development of more targeted and effective strategies for enhancing gender equality in politics.

REFERENCES

- Agyemang, C. (2016). *Gender and politics in Ghana: Exploring the socio-cultural barriers*. University of Ghana Press.
- Agyemang, C. B. (2016). Barriers to women's political participation in Ghana. *Journal of African Elections*, 15(1), 77-94.
- Agyemang, E. (2016). Gender and development: The role of socio-cultural norms in women's political participation in Ghana. *African Journal of Political Science*, 22(1), 45-60.
- Anthias, F. (2001). The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. In A. McCall (Ed.), *Understanding and addressing discrimination* (pp. 21-34). Routledge.

- Baden, S. (2000). Gender and empowerment: Definitions, approaches and implications for policy. In *Gender and Development* (Vol. 8, pp. 5-11). Oxfam GB.
- Bauer, G. (2013). *Gender and political representation: An overview of challenges and opportunities*. Routledge.
- Bauer, G. (2013). Gender quotas and women's representation in African parliaments. *Democratization*, 20(4), 492-516.
- Bauer, G. (2013). *The role of gender quotas in increasing women's political representation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Beauvoir, S. de. (1949). *The second sex*. Vintage Books. (Original work published 1949)
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802-1811.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Burt, R. S. (2000). The network structure of social capital. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 22, 345-423.
- Carlson, J. A. (2010). Avoiding traps in member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(5), 1102-1113.
- Celis, K., & Childs, S. (2008). The substantive representation of women: Theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence. In K. Celis, S. Childs, J. Kantola, & M. Krook (Eds.), *The gendered nature of politics* (pp. 1-21). Routledge.
- Chafetz, J. S. (1991). The gender division of labor and the reproduction of female disadvantage: Toward an integrated theory. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12(1), 51-74.

- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Connell, R. (2002). *Gender*. Polity.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dahlerup, D. (2006). *Women, quotas and politics*. Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Giardina, M. D. (Eds.). (2016). *Ethical futures in qualitative research: Decolonizing the politics of knowledge*. Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Erlbaum.
- Electoral Commission of Ghana. (2021). *2020 Parliamentary Election Report*. Accra: Electoral Commission of Ghana.
- Electoral Commission of Ghana. (2021). *Annual report on gender and electoral participation*. Electoral Commission of Ghana.

- Electoral Commission of Ghana. (2021). *Annual report on gender representation in Ghanaian politics*. Electoral Commission of Ghana.
- Elson, D. (1999). Labour markets as gendered institutions: Equality, efficiency, and empowerment. In *Gender and Development* (Vol. 7, pp. 16-24). Oxfam GB.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2004). Entering the arena? Gender and the decision to run for office. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2), 264-280.
- Gaventa, J. (2006). Finding the spaces for change: A power analysis. In J. Gaventa & R. B. Valderrama (Eds.), *Power and powerlessness* (pp. 23-42). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gidengil, E., & Everitt, J. (2003). Talking tough: Gender and reported speech in campaign news coverage. *Political Communication*, 20(3), 209-232.
- Grown, C., & Sebstad, J. (1989). Women and development: The role of women in the economy. In *World Development* (Vol. 17, pp. 905-917). Elsevier.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261-280.
- Hay, I. (Ed.). (2006). Ethical practice in geographical research. In *Qualitative research methods in human geography* (2nd ed., pp. 37-53). Oxford University Press.
- Holloway, I., & Galvin, K. (2017). *Qualitative research in nursing and healthcare* (4th ed.). Wiley Blackwell.
- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2003). *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. Cambridge University Press.

- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2003). The gender gap in political participation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(3), 252-270.
- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2003). The gender gap in political participation: A comparative analysis. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(1), 3-26.
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435-464.
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the links between women's empowerment and economic development. *World Development*, 33(6), 1-21.
- Karni Eli-Miller, O., Strier, R., & Pessach, L. (2009). Power relations in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(2), 279-289.
- King, N., & Brooks, J. (2017). *Template analysis for business and management students*. SAGE Publications.
- Krook, M. L. (2009). Quota laws for women in politics: Implications for women's political representation. *Political Studies Review*, 7(3), 345-361.
- Krook, M. L. (2009). *Quotas for women in politics: Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide*. Oxford University Press.
- Krook, M. L. (2010). Why are fewer women than men elected? Gender and the dynamics of candidate selection. *Political Studies Review*, 8(2), 155-168.
- Krook, M. L., & Norris, P. (2014). Beyond quotas: Strategies to promote gender equality in elected office. *Political Studies*, 62(1), 2-20.
- Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2012). All the president's men? The appointment of female cabinet ministers. *Journal of Politics*, 74(3), 792-808.

- Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2012). All the men are here: Evaluation of the implementation of quotas for women in national parliaments. *International Political Science Review*, 33(4), 373-392.
- Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2012). All the president's men? The appointment of female cabinet ministers. *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(3), 423-450.
- Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2010). *It still takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Lovenduski, J. (2005). *Feminizing politics*. Polity.
- Mackenzie, C., & Stoljar, N. (2000). *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self*. Oxford University Press.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Molyneux, M. (1985). Mobilizing women's labor for economic development: The role of feminist research. *Feminist Review*, 19(1), 55-74.
- Molyneux, M. (2006). The politics of rights: Dilemmas for feminist and women's organizations. *Development and Change*, 37(4), 733-753.
- Molyneux, M. (2007). Change and continuity in social protection: Women, work, and welfare. *Social Policy & Administration*, 41(2), 220-236.

- Morrison, A. (2017). *Political parties and gender equality: A comparative analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morrison, A. M. (2017). *Representing Women: Gender, Politics, and Legislation in Ghana*. Temple University Press.
- Morrison, T. (2017). Gender parity in political parties: The role of internal mechanisms. *Political Gender Studies*, 13(2), 118-132.
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 13-22.
- Norris, P. (2004). *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2001). *Women and democracy: Culture, institutions, and political behavior*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2000). *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(1), 93-96.
- Osei-Afful, R. (2018). Women in politics in Ghana: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 9(9.1), 1-23.
- Osei-Afful, R. (2018). Women in politics in Ghana: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 9(9.1), 1-23.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Paxton, P., & Hughes, M. M. (2015). The increasing representation of women in politics: Theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence. *Political Science Review, 109*(1), 13-30.
- Phillips, A. (1995). *The politics of presence*. Oxford University Press.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Sage Publications.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ross, K. (2002). Women, politics, media: Uneasy relations in comparative perspective. *Hampton Press*.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods, 15*(1), 85-109.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Silverman, D. (2017). *Doing qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. SAGE Publications.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851.
- Tripp, A. M., Casimiro, I., Kwesiga, J., & Mungwa, A. (2006). *African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes*. Cambridge University Press.

- Tripp, A. M., Casimiro, I., Kwesiga, K. K., & Mungiu-Pippidi, M. M. (2006). *African women and politics: Gender, power, and party politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tripp, A. M., Kang, A. S., & Sommer, M. (2006). The changing face of politics: Gender and political participation in Ghana. *African Studies Review*, 49(1), 107-124.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Human Development Report 2019: Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century*. United Nations Development Programme.
- United Nations. (2020). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. United Nations.
- United Nations. (2020). *Gender equality and women's empowerment in politics: A global overview*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- United Nations. (2020). *Report on gender equality and political participation*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Blackwell.
- Waylen, G. (1996). *Gender in Third World politics*. Open University Press.
- Waylen, G. (2014). Rethinking the feminist role in political institutions. In G. Waylen (Ed.), *Gender and politics: A critical review* (pp. 56-73). Routledge.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-151.
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S., & Charles, V. (2008). The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(5), 417-428.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Zetterberg, P. (2008). Women in politics: The role of women's presence in political institutions.
International Journal of Political Science, 30(2), 55-71.

APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UNIMAC-IJ)

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Dear respondent, this interview guide is to aid in gathering data on the subject “**Representation of women in politics: Barriers and Challenges to their participation** “. Kindly respond appropriately to the questions given. You are assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of this exercise because it will solely be used for the intended academic purpose.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. **Sex:**

- Male []
- Female []

2. Age:

- 18-30 Years []
- 31-40 Years []
- 41-50 Years []
- Above 50 Years []

3. Kindly indicate your highest level of education:

- Primary Education []
- Secondary Education []
- Tertiary Level []

4. Religion

- Christian
- Muslim
- Traditional
- Others

OBJECTIVE 1: TO IDENTIFY THE SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL BARRIERS HINDERING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA.

What opportunities currently exist within the Ghanaian political system that support or promote women's participation?

Follow-up: How accessible do you think these opportunities are for women?

What role do affirmative action policies or gender quotas play in enhancing women's political representation in Ghana?

Follow-up: Are there any specific instances where these policies have made a difference?

Can you discuss any successful strategies or initiatives that have been implemented to increase women's political participation in Ghana?

Follow-up: What lessons can be learned from these strategies for future initiatives?

OBJECTIVE 2: TO EXAMINE THE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES THAT CAN ENHANCE WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN GHANA.

What opportunities currently exist within the Ghanaian political system that support or promote women's participation?

Follow-up: How accessible do you think these opportunities are for women?

What role do affirmative action policies or gender quotas play in enhancing women's political representation in Ghana?

Follow-up: Are there any specific instances where these policies have made a difference?

Can you discuss any successful strategies or initiatives that have been implemented to increase women's political participation in Ghana?

OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN GHANAIAN POLITICS.

What recommendations would you make to policymakers to address the barriers to women's political participation in Ghana?

Follow-up: Which of these recommendations do you think would be the most effective?

How can political parties be encouraged or incentivized to support and promote female candidates?

Follow-up: What changes would you suggest within party structures to facilitate this?

What role can civil society organizations play in promoting gender equality in Ghanaian politics, and what specific actions should they take?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING