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The Underrepresentation of Women in Politics: The Case of Ghana's
Legislature.

Author: Sulemana Umar.

Supervisor: Prince Young Aboagye.

ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of women in national legislatures is a major setback to consolidating democracy in most countries across the world. Yet, only a handful of countries have vigorously implemented Affirmative Action measures to address the problem. Although most countries, including Ghana, have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and further consented to the concerted global agenda of achieving goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national legislatures in most countries continue to be male-dominated. Focusing on the case of Ghana, this thesis explains why women are underrepresented in Ghana's legislature through the lens of the demand and supply framework. Data obtained from quantitative approach supplemented by few qualitative interviews, indicate that several factors; financing political campaigns and discrimination against women politicians, by political party gatekeepers which is exacerbated by sociocultural norms ingrained within the Ghanaian social fabric inter alia, are major barriers to women's political participation in Ghana and hence their underrepresentation in the legislature.

Keywords:

Women: Political Participation: Underrepresentation: Legislature: Ghana.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA:	Affirmative Action
AAL:	Affirmative Action Law
ATR:	African Traditional Religion
CDD:	Centre for Democratic Development
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organization
EC:	Electoral Commission
EU EOM:	European Union Election Observation Mission
FIDA-Ghana	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FPTP:	First Past the Post
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GenCED	Gender Centre for Empowering Development
GSS:	Ghana Statistical Service
GTV	Ghana Television
IDEA:	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPU:	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MMDAs:	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
NGP:	National Gender Policy
NDC:	National Democratic Congress
NAI:	Nordic Africa Institute
NPP:	New Patriotic Party
PHC:	Population and Housing Census
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
USA:	United States of America
WEF:	World Economic Forum
WFD:	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

VAW Violence Against Women
VAWiP Violence Against Women in Politics
WiLDAF: Women in Law and Development Africa

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0. Introduction

The legislature holds a primacy of place among the three arms of government given its core normative functions of representing and aggregating the concerns of the general populace and transforming them viz-a-viz accepted cultural norms and international conventions into laws. Such laws provide the bases for policymaking which serves as the blueprint for resource allocation, governing institutional conduct and human behaviour. Given this crucial role of the legislature in the governance structure, it is important that both women and men are equally represented in order to get their peculiar concerns streamlined in policy for address. Achieving gender equality in legislative representation is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially, goal 5¹ by 2030.

Historically, women have been subjected to various forms of discrimination including exclusion from politics. The waves of feminism and the activities that ensued the declaration of Women's Decade (1975 to 1985) were aimed at empowering women and addressing the systemic and structural discriminations that they go through in society and ultimately invigorate their political participation (Wiesner-Hanks 2011). Indeed, there has been some progress. Globally, the proportions of women legislators increased to 26.9 per cent as of January, 2024 compared to 12.7 per cent in 1998 (Plotnieks 2021; Inter-Parliamentary Union [2024](#)). However, the progress, alas, is slow-paced and masks the reality of low women representation in legislative bodies of individual countries like Ghana. Despite the problem of underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature, there exists a research gap regarding the causes of the problem. For example, Musah and Gariba (2013)'s paper focused on the contributions of women parliamentarians in the daily activities of the legislative house whilst Adams et al (2016) investigated why African countries with higher women legislators turn to have low women in cabinet and vice versa. Bauer and Darkwah (2020)'s paper focused on the cost of politics and politics of acrimony in Ghana. This thesis closes the gap by investigating and analysing the causes of women underrepresentation in Ghana's legislature.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Women's underrepresentation in national legislatures is a ubiquitous problem affecting both old and new democracies. Although Ghana is considered a bastion of democracy in Africa (Charles, [2023](#)) the underrepresentation of women in the country's legislature has been one of the major setbacks to the country's democratic growth since the inception of constitutional

¹ Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (UN, 2022).

democracy in 1992. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM)'s report on Ghana's 2020 elections noted the conspicuous underrepresentation of women in Ghana's political space (EU EOM 2020). Currently, women constitute only 14.5% (40) as against 85.5% (235) men in Ghana's 275-member legislature. The global impact is that, it thwarts the effort to achieve SDG5 which aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and specifically, to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" by 2030 (UN 2022: 20-22).

1.2. Research Question (s)

Addressing the problem of women underrepresentation in Ghana's parliament requires an in-depth analysis of the factors that impede women's political participation in general. Therefore, the central question driving this thesis is; *Why are women underrepresented in Ghana's Legislature?*

1.3. Aim of the Research

Achieving gender equality in national legislative bodies is influenced by several contextual factors which could be at individual, societal and national levels. While some of these factors like the political and electoral systems may have universal implications for a candidate's gender, others like gender stereotypes, patriarchy, resources, etc. are contextual. For example, while patriarchy may not be a serious issue for women candidates in the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), or Sweden, it may be among the major factors that affect women's political participation in developing democracies. Focusing on Ghana, this thesis aims to investigate the factors that account for the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's parliament. Overall, the thesis will contribute to the body of knowledge within the broad area of gender equality especially in political representation.

1.4. Justification

Gender inequality persists and manifests in different forms in all spheres of life. This makes it very relevant to continuously research the issue to address both systemic and structural gender inequalities within society. Although there is a lot of research on women's underrepresentation, most of them have focused on advanced democracies. Only few reflect the African context and the handful that focused on Ghana adopted a narrow approach to the problem by conducting one or two factor analysis of the problem leaving research gaps. According to the 2023 World Economic Forum (WEF) report on global gender gap, given the current rate of progress in gender equality over the 2006-2023 span, it will take the world additional 162 years to completely close the political empowerment gender gap while doing the same will take Sub-

Saharan Africa 102 years (WEF [2023](#)). Ghana ranks 100th position out of 156 countries in the global gender gap index rankings of the WEF. The global agenda to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030 (UN 2016) makes it imperative to conduct this kind of research that adopts a holistic approach to the problem of women's underrepresentation in Ghana's parliament.

1.5. Ghana's Political Context

Prior to colonialism in Ghana, both chiefs and queen mothers had the political authority of ruling the various ethnic groups; Akan, Ewe, Ga Dagomba, Guan, etc in Ghana. Thus, the queen mothers represented women's voice in decision-making. (Kimble 1964; Gocking 2005; Adams and Amadu 2018). Colonialism usurped the authority of the chiefs and queens and deprived the indigenes of all political rights (Abass and Döskaya 2017). The Convention People's Party (CPP) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah gained independence for Ghana from Britain in 1957. Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 through military coup ushered Ghana into decades (1966 to 1992) of military rule punctuated by intermittent efforts to restore civilian rule that were thwarted by multiple coups (Baynham, 1978). When Ghana transitioned to constitutional and multiparty democracy in 1992, the promulgated constitution set out the structure of governance creating the three arms of government; the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary and clearly spelled out their core functions (The Constitution of Ghana, 1992; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2011). These arms functionally operate interdependently through the concepts of checks and balances and balance of power.

The Executive-headed by the president-is responsible for the functioning of public services and implementing the laws passed by parliament. Some members of the Executive (ministers and deputy ministers) are appointed by the President from the ruling party's members of legislature. The President also has the power to make appointments to various public offices including the Chief Justice, The Inspector General of Police, Auditor General, The Special Prosecutor, etc. (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011). It is worthy to note that although women have been appointed as ministers and heads of institutions like the Chief Justice, Commissioners of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Electoral Commission, so far, no woman has ever been president or vice president in Ghana since independence. The recent push by various Think-tanks, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and women's groups such as FIDA-Ghana, for the political party flag bearers to appoint women as their running mates for the coming 2024 elections has led to the appointment of Professor Jane Naana Opoku-

Agyemang by the NDC as the pressure continues on the NPP's flag bearer to do same (Mensah, 2024).

Ghana's constitution vests legislative powers in the legislature. The legislature is responsible for making laws (The Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Besides this function, members of the legislature are responsible for representing and aggregating the concerns of their constituents as well as the general oversight responsibility over the ministries and public institutions and agencies (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011). The legislature performs these functions through various committees such as the Gender and Children committee which has a tailored responsibility to consider all matters relating to gender and children and to ensure issues relating to gender and children are included in appropriate legislation. It also considers proposals aimed at enhancing the pursuit of affirmative action (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011). The legislature is headed by the Speaker of Parliament and since independence it is only in one of the sessions that a woman-Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo; 2009-2013- was voted to occupy the seat (Ibid).

The constitution also establishes the Judiciary and guarantees its independence in its core function of interpreting the laws made by the Legislature. Overall, the Judiciary is responsible for the administration of Justice in the country. The Judiciary is headed by the Chief Justice who is appointed by the President in consultation with the Council of State. The current Chief Justice is a woman and she is the second woman to occupy the position since independence (Ibid).

The constitution further created a decentralised government structure with a de jure, 'bottom-up' approach to political decision making. There are currently sixteen (16) administrative regions and 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Although there is no definitive provision in the constitution regarding gender equality in political representation, neither is there such in the National Gender Policy (2015), Article 35(6b) enjoins the state to ensure a 'reasonable' gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices (The Constitution of Ghana, 1992). To this end, successive governments have tried to create a gender-balanced government through appointments to the MMDAs, ministries, departments and agencies of the state². However, it is regrettable that successive governments after Nkrumah have failed to revisit his initiative of the quota system to increase the number

². Besides ministerial appointments, women have been appointed to chair institutions like the Electoral Commission, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, National Commission for Civic Education, Chief Justice and one ever elected as the Speaker of Parliament. Recently, a woman contested as running mate to the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2020 elections.

of women in decision-making quarters. As such, women's representation in both local and national assemblies have not been impressive.

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter one (1) consists of the introduction, a discussion of the problem, aim, justification, the research question and Ghana's political context. Chapter two (2) discusses the existing literature focusing on thematic issues that pose challenges to women's political participation. Chapters three (3) and four (4) discuss the theoretical framework and the methodology of the thesis respectively. Chapter five (5) presents data and analysis with reflexivity on the theory and research question the thesis seeks to answer and then conclude.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

This section opens with a discussion on the importance of having gender equal legislature, presents the global outlook on women's underrepresentation and then discusses previous literature on the barriers to women's political participation and therefore, their underrepresentation in politics in general but specifically, in the legislature. The review is categorised into thematic areas as follows: Financial Resources, Socio-Cultural Norms, Political/Electoral Violence, Political Party Gatekeepers, Electoral System and Voter bias.

2.1. Why it Matters to have Gender Equality in Legislative Representation.

It is argued, from the lens of *critical mass theory*³ that with an increased presence of women in parliament there is a high likelihood that women's needs, views, interests and perspectives will receive adequate legislative discussions and subsequently get included on the policy agenda (Ballington, 2008: 54). Thus, by simply being present in their numbers, the common claim holds that women make a difference and demystify the myth that politics is not for women (Ballington, 2008). Although it is difficult to assess the legislative impact of women, ample evidence from research suggests a positive correlation between increases in the number of women in parliament and increases in the number of policy reforms regarding issues that affect women specifically (Ibid). For example, evidence from research by the IPU show that women parliamentarians have been impactful in several policy areas including social services, labour, education healthcare, violence against women, children's rights and laws that favour gender equality (Greenwood and Pintat, 2000). In a survey of 272 women and men parliamentarians in 110 countries around the world that sought the insights of parliamentarians on what shapes decision making in national parliaments, it was found that over 90% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that women bring different views, perspectives and talents to legislative discussions (Ballington, 2008). For example, research in Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and some Nordic countries like Norway and Sweden indicates that women parliamentarians in particular are more likely to introduce legislations that relate to women's concerns. Issues such as child care, equality, domestic violence, equal pay, parental leave,

³ Critical Mass Theory in the context of this thesis is a framework that suggests that women are substantively represented when their numbers reach a certain level, at which point institutions and policies will start to be transformed (See IPU, 2008: 54).

pensions, reproductive rights, maternal health, abortion, work/life balance, etc. affect women directly and it is women parliamentarians who push these issues on the political agenda (Swers, 2002; Campbell et al, 2005). Another study on Southern African countries found that women parliamentarians prioritised and had a huge impact on drafting laws related to women's concerns such as family, gender-based violence and reproductive rights, etc. The research further indicated that the breadth and depth of such reforms are greater in countries with higher levels of women's representations (Morna, 2004). This finding is buttressed in later research that found that in developing countries where there is a higher representation of women in the legislature, such legislatures are more likely to pass comprehensive laws on sexual harassment, rape, divorce and domestic violence (Asiedu et al, 2018). Besides, there is general recognition of the caring nature of women by which they are viewed to more than men, acutely aware of the challenges, needs and concerns of other minority groups such as children, elderly, people with disabilities and the disadvantaged which they are likely to include in their work (Ballington, 2008).

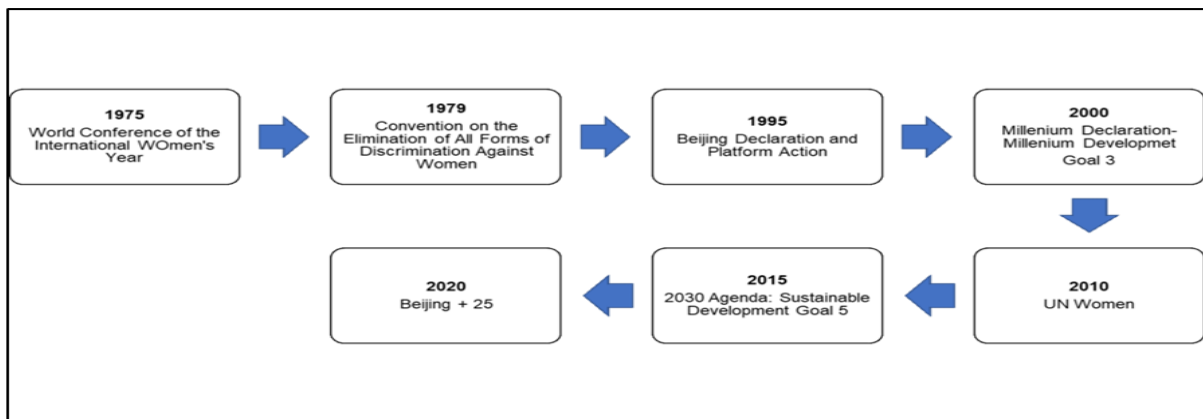
At the heart of the calls for gender equality in legislative representation is the commitment to democracy and respect for the rights of all citizens to participate in the governance process. Indeed, gender equality in decision-making bodies especially, the legislature, is essential for the effective and efficient functioning of democracy (Willow, [2022](#)). Increasing women's presence in national legislatures is found to have decreased aggressive and intemperate language in legislative debates Besides, women parliamentarians are found to encourage cooperative behaviour and are concerned about achieving consensus which enhances decision-making. Therefore, it matters very much to have gender-equality in legislative representation.

2.2. Global Trends in Women's Political Participation and Representation

Literature on the historical analysis of gender and political representation indicates that women have been marginalised in every sphere of life – social, economic, religious, but even more pronounced, is in the political realm (Wisner-Hanks 2011). Their position in society has evolved from a group stereotypically classified as non-citizens who had no political rights as men during the days of Athenian city-states - the offshoot of modern-day democracy - to the gradual extension of political rights to women during the late 19th and 20th centuries (Wiesner-Hanks 2011). By 1946, feminist movements emerged to challenge the status quo and demanded the grant of full political and economic rights to women. This led to the declaration of 1975-1985 as women's decade by the United Nations (UN) which triggered international conferences aimed at uprooting the structural and systemic challenges they face and empower them (Ibid).

As shown in diagram 1. below, from 1975 to 2020, several interventions have been adopted through various fora aimed at empowering women. Notably, the adoption of the Convention on All forms of Discrimination against Women by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 marked a significant milestone towards uprooting and ending all forms of discrimination that women go through in society (UN, 1979). Also, interventions such as reserved seats for women, the quota system (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2003; Krook 2006; Dahlerup 2007) and political financing for gender equality (Muriaas et al 2019) have been adopted by several countries to fast-track women's political representation. Currently, almost all countries in the world have granted full political rights to women. They are legally allowed to vote, be voted for and participate in political deliberations (Schaeffer [2020](#); Paxton et al 2021). Indeed, these measures have led to a marginal increase in women’s political representation globally within the last three decades. As of January 2023, global women’s representation in national legislative bodies increased from 12.7% in 1998 to 26.9 % in 2023 according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2024). Also, 25 out of 194 countries have a female head of state or government, 13 out of 194 countries have at least 50% women in the national cabinet and 6 out of 194 countries have at least 50% women in national legislatures (Council on Foreign Relations-CFR, [2024](#)). Although this is commendable, there is more room for improvement. According to the 2023 World Economic Forum (WEF) report on global gender gap, given the current rate of progress in gender equality over the 2006-2023 span, it will take the world additional 162 years to completely close the political empowerment gender gap (WEF [2023](#)). Therefore, if the goals set for SDG 5 must be achieved by 2030, then, there is the need to urgently implement measures such as gender quotas, reserved seats and political financing for gender equality to spur up women’s numbers in national legislatures.

Diagram 1. Roadmap to Women’s Empowerment



Source: *Centre for Development Studies, University of Bath (2020).*

2.3. Causes of Women's Underrepresentation in National Legislatures

2.3.1. Financial Resources

Majority of literature on financial resources and political participation converge on a strong association between campaign spending and winning elections (Samuels 2001; Ohman 2014; Koerth [2018](#)). However, there are divergent findings in terms of the correlation between campaign spending and winning elections viz-a viz gender. While some identified inadequate or lack of funding to be a hindrance to women's success in elections (Ballington and Kahane 2014), others have reached findings to the contrary (Crespin and Deitz 2010; Thomas 2013), arguing based on their research findings that women in some cases raised and spent equal or outspent their men opponents in electoral campaigns as exemplified in the cases of the United States, Canada and Australia (Crespin and Deitz 2010; Thomas 2013; Cigane and Ohman 2014; Bergen 2015; Muriaas et al 2020). Therefore, inadequate or lack of funding for electoral campaigns may not be the reason for women's unsuccessful electoral outcomes. On the other hand, research has shown that men rather than women candidates in most cases have heavy financial muscles, moneyed networks, patrons and party support during the electoral processes and thus, the former is more likely to compete and win political office than the latter (Ballington and Kahane 2014). As has been underscored, lack of funding is one of the biggest hurdles to women vying for elected offices (Ballington and Kahane 2014). For instance, Thomas' paper; *Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Canada* (2013), identifies unequal access to key resources such as money as a major obstacle to women entering politics in Canada. Shreeves et al (2013) concurred with Thomas with a similar conclusion in Europe. Similar conclusions were made after interviewing women candidates in Yemen, Nepal and Tunisia, (Cigane and Ohman 2014). Research jointly conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development-Ghana (CDD-Ghana) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) on the cost of politics in Ghana, found that men candidates usually outspend their women contenders by an average cost of GHC50,000 as of 2016 (Asante and Kunnath 2018). This concurs with the finding of an earlier qualitative research on parliamentary primaries and candidate selection by Daddieh and Bob-Millar (2012). Although the latter's analyses ignored the impact of this on women's success rate at elections as compared to men, Samuels (2001)'s case study on Brazil's congressional race established that candidates that spend more during electioneering campaigns win elections. In their analysis of election-related violence and gender in Ghana, Aning and Danso (2012) highlighted money as one of the factors that hinder women's quest to

contest for an elected office in Ghana. Arguably, winning an election has a strong correlation with effective campaigning which is anchored on the availability of money. Since women lack financial resources as men to campaign effectively during elections, it implies that the playing field is tilted in favour of men candidates and this has a repercussion on women's political representation as far as gender equality in representation is concerned.

2.3.2. Socio-Cultural Norms/Discrimination

Socio-cultural norms manifest as **gender stereotypes** and **patriarchal values** that define different gender roles for men and women in society. Arguably these social constructions have enormous negative impact on women's political participation especially in societies like Ghana where these practices are institutionalised (Sikweyiya et al, 2020). Research has shown that gendered roles in Ghanaian society are assumed right from the early years of life. While young girls are made to work as home assistants engaging in unpaid household chores and other household responsibilities, young boys would be engaged in paid labour work (Canagrajah and Coulumbe 1999 cited in Amporfu et al 2018). Gyekye argues that these household responsibilities constitute a major barrier to women's career advancement in Ghana (Gyekye 2013, cited in Amporfu et al 2018). Family patriarchal arrangements which permeate the Ghanaian society portrays women as subservient to men and arguably, affects their willingness to actively participate in politics. Research on the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in Ghana had the majority of the respondents acknowledging that due to **patriarchy**, women are tied to domestic work which invariably takes them away from participating in politics. The study also established that, stereotypical cultural beliefs deter women from leading men in society since, according to such belief, women should be under the leadership of men (Darkwah 2016; Adongo et al 2023). Afrobarometer reports that women that are politically active or elected into political offices in Ghana are seen as arrogant, small girls or iron ladies who are unashamed to engage in political campaigns especially with other men (Afrobarometer 2020). Additionally, women in Ghana are relegated to the background when it comes to the right to equal political participation. Besides gendered roles that make women caregivers to children, the sick and the old, participants in exploratory qualitative research that sought the perceptions of women on the political participation of women in Ghana lamented the discouragement politically active women receive from their parents, husbands and siblings who look down upon them and would not even vote for a woman as candidate (Sossou 2011).

2.3.3. Political and/or Electoral Violence

Politics in many African countries is characterised by the incidence of both physical and verbal violence especially during elections (Adolfo et al 2012; Goldsmith 2015; Burchard 2015; Fjelde and Hoglund 2016). Generally, a violent political atmosphere has a high tendency of scaring away political opponents especially when targeted. Literature has shown that women, rather than men, are mostly affected by this violence (Darkwah 2016; Krook 2017; Schneider and Carroll 2020). Particularly, Darkwah's study which relied on data from four previously commissioned studies by the Women in Law and Development in Africa (WilDAF) on women's political participation in Ghana between 2008 and 2012 found that 58.8% of respondents on gender perspectives of the 2008 Ghanaian elections were scared of violence during the elections. An Afrobarometer survey on political violence in Ghana found that women, more than men, respondents have either experienced or feared political violence at political rallies (Afrobarometer 2020). Alongside physical violence is verbal abuse against women in Ghana's politics. The Gender Centre for Empowering Development (GenCED) research paper on *Violence Against Women Within Political Parties in Ghana* reveals that about 72% of respondents⁴ mentioned that women who are active in politics suffer verbal abuse both within and outside political parties (GenCED [2020](#)). Therefore, the impact of physical and verbal abuse on women's political participation in Ghana cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, some studies (Blattman 2009; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Annan et al 2011 and De Luca and Verpoorten 2015) have shown that electoral violence is positively related to women's political participation. The argument is that, to mitigate the incessant violence meted on women in politics, they may engage more in politics to contribute to decision making processes that integrate gendered perspectives in government policies and to criminalise all sorts of violence against them.

2.3.4. Political Party Gatekeepers

Political parties as institutions aim to win elections, form a government, and govern the state according to a particular ideological orientation. However, the sine qua non to doing this is by fielding 'winnable' candidates during elections and this is where the role of party gatekeepers is at play. In a study on *Women and Political Participation* in the United States, Conway (2001) emphasises the influence of gatekeepers in legislative candidate selection and opines that in most cases these gatekeepers are men and tend to favour men (seen as 'winnable' candidates)

⁴ Women selected based on their political engagements, activism, and expertise

over women candidates. A similar study conducted in Great Britain titled; *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in British Parliament*, found about 55% of respondents agreeing that women are not given opportunity by parties and that accounts for women's underrepresentation in British parliament (Norris and Lovenduski 1994). Other studies (Rasmussen 1983 and Vallance 1979) concluded that, the dearth of women in the British parliament is mainly due to prejudice about women by local party selection committees. In Ghana, persons seeking to contest for parliamentary seats on the ticket of either the NDC or NPP must formally go through four stages as internal party processes of candidate selection: nominations, certification, campaign and election (Daddieh and Bob-Millar 2012). Of particular relevance of the selection process at this stage of the thesis is the certification stage where political party gatekeepers have room to exercise veto power (through vetting) over the slate of candidates that will contest the internal party primaries. Here, the argument is that, gatekeepers often introduce phantom or non-existent clauses to disqualify a candidate (mostly a woman) who is viewed to potentially win the primaries. This is done to pave the way for their preferred male candidate who is viewed to potentially win the seat for the party in the general elections. Contrary to the theoretical assumption that, the candidate selection process is mostly skewed to favour winnable candidates who are mostly men, Öhman (2004)'s comparative study and analysis of candidate selection process within Ghanaian political parties found the process to be democratic as it is highly decentralised and incumbents regularly lose out to their contenders often due to discontent by the delegates. Although Öhman's findings may hold true, his analysis ignores the role of gatekeepers which precedes the involvement of delegates (voters) which is the final stage of the candidate recruitment process. Besides, his analysis focused on internal party democracy and was therefore oblivious to the machinations that gatekeepers employ to kick out women aspirants.

2.3.5. The Electoral System

The type of electoral system a country practices has an impact on how the legislature represents various social groups within society. Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system is believed to be more favourable to women and other minority groups because of the party list. In this system, electors vote for political parties rather than candidates. It is therefore easier for women and other minority groups to get elected provided they feature on the party list (Heywood 2013). On the other hand, in the first-past-the-post (FPTP) or the majoritarian electoral system, electors vote for candidates rather than political parties. It is therefore difficult for women and other minority groups to get elected especially where there are reinforcing

factors like patriarchy and gender stereotypes (Heywood 2013). From Wantchekron's study in Benin we understand that FPTP is characterised by clientelist electoral campaigns which tend to favour men candidates over women. Thus, through the distribution of patronage by which men, rather women candidates receive services, handouts and other favours disproportionately, men's political dominance tends to be reproduced (Wantchekron 2003, cited in Lindberg 2004). This position is buttressed by Lindberg (2004)'s analysis on electoral systems and women's participation in Africa which found that the FPTP and majoritarian systems discriminate against the representation of women in legislatures. This corroborates the above hypothesis that the PR electoral system is favourable to women's legislative quest. For example, South Africa's PR system has allowed more women into parliament than Ghana's FPTP system (Osei-Hwedie and Agomor 2018). Thus, the dearth of women in Ghana's parliament could partly be explained by the FPTP electoral system the country is practising. Madsen (2019) of the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) for example, cites the majoritarian or First-Past-the-Post nature of Ghanaian politics among persistent barriers to women's political participation. However, FPTP is not entirely unfavourable to women. It could be applied to achieve gender balance if political parties deliberately field women as candidates in their stronghold constituencies.

2.3.6. Voter Bias

Voter Bias is considered as a voter's preference of male over female candidate even when both have the same ideology and expertise (Le Barbanchon and Sauvagnat, 2022). Duverger's 1955 study; *The Political Role of Women* was among the earlier studies that looked at the underrepresentation of women in elected office. In reference to Norwegian local elections, Duverger pointed to evidence of vote-splitting as an indication of a possible anti-woman bias among voters. Although he acknowledged the impact of other factors such as few women standing for elections, parties' nomination processes, etc, Duverger maintained that the weight of anti-woman tradition within society had an enormous impact on the small number of women in elected assemblies (Duverger, 1955). Buttressing Duverger's hypothesis, Ambrosius and Welch (1984) study in the U.S. found that from 1950 to 1978, men outpolled women in legislative elections. Similar findings were made by Hills (1981) in Britain, Kelly and McAllister (1984) in Australia and Engstrom (1987) in Ireland (cited in Black and Erickson, 2003). In relation to gender pay gaps, Le Barbanchon and Sauvagnat's within-candidate variation analysis in French municipalities reveal that an increase in gross monthly pay gap in favour of men simultaneously decreases the vote share of women candidates. Thus, the latter

received fewer votes in municipalities with fewer gender earnings. Their theoretical analysis also indicates party gatekeepers select only men candidates in most contestable districts (Le Barbanchon and Sauvagnat 2022). Other researchers such as Gonzalez-Eiras and Sanz (2018), Clayton et al (2020), Van der Pas et al (2022), Saltzer and McGrath (2022); Cella and Manzoni (2023) have all arrived at findings that buttress Duverger's position. On the other hand, other researchers who have reached a divergent view argue that when other factors such as those that affect the supply of women candidates and women contesting in competitive constituencies are held in control, women fare as well as men at the polls. Darcy et al (1994) in their analysis of election results in five different states in the US found that women won when they competed with similarly-situated men in both primary and general elections. In Australia, Studlar and McAllister (1991) concluded that once party and incumbency were held in control, men do not enjoy any significant advantage over women at the polls. Relatedly, Black and Erickson (2003), in their analysis of aggregate data and survey information from candidates, argue that once standard control variables are introduced, women actually had a small vote advantage over men. Therefore, suffice to conclude that, literature on voter bias have reached divergent views. Whilst some conclude that voters are biased against women candidates at polls, others maintain that the otherwise holds true when other factors are held in control.

Opening up with an introduction, this chapter of the thesis discusses why it matters to have gender equality in representation by outlining the impact of women parliamentarians on determining the issues that make it to the political agenda. It looked at the global trend in women's political participation and representation and then undertook a wider literature discussion on the causes of women underrepresentation. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework(s) that explain women's underrepresentation.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Framework

3.0. Introduction

As discussed in chapter two (2), the factors that influence women's political participation and for that matter, their representation, are multi-dimensional; and thus, transcend the analytical boundaries of a single theory. Given this complexity, the thesis integrates the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection propounded by Norris and Lovenduski (1995) and Milbrath and Goel (1977)'s concept of Political Participation. The analytical deficit of these integrated theories regarding voter bias in candidate selection is supplemented by Matland's (2005) Legislative Recruitment System. The concept of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWiP) is an additional concept employed to enable theoretical analysis on the issue of political/electoral violence as a barrier to women's quest for legislative seats.

Before discussing the theoretical models, I will first, explain the focus of this thesis within the concept of representation based on Hannah F. Pitkin's (1967) work on the concept of representation.

3.1. The Concept of Representation (Hannah F. Pitkin, 1967).

Representation is conceptualised differently in different disciplines (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 1-9; Lovenduski, 2005, p.3). In Political Science, Hannah F. Pitkin, in her widely cited work; *The Concept of Representation (1967)* succinctly defined representation as "making present again" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 8; Lovenduski, 2005, p. 3). She identified four types of political representation; authorised, descriptive, symbolic and substantive. From these typologies, descriptive representation (DR); where representation is based on shared similar characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity or residence, is much more relevant to the purpose of this thesis (Lovenduski, 2005, p. 3). It is worthy to note that women legislators in Ghana do not represent only women as the import of DR may suggest, but a constituency comprising all genders. The concern of this thesis with DR is the number of women (in figures as against that of men) in Ghana's legislature. I will now return to the theoretical models.

3.2. Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995).

In their pioneering study; *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race, and Class in the British Parliament (1995)*, Norris and Lovenduski employed the concepts of *demand* and *supply* to explain legislative candidate selection processes of political parties. The module's argument is that, the outcome of political parties' selection processes and the ultimate composition of the legislature could be understood in terms of the interactions between the *supply* of aspirants willing to contest for office and the *demands* of political party gatekeepers who select the

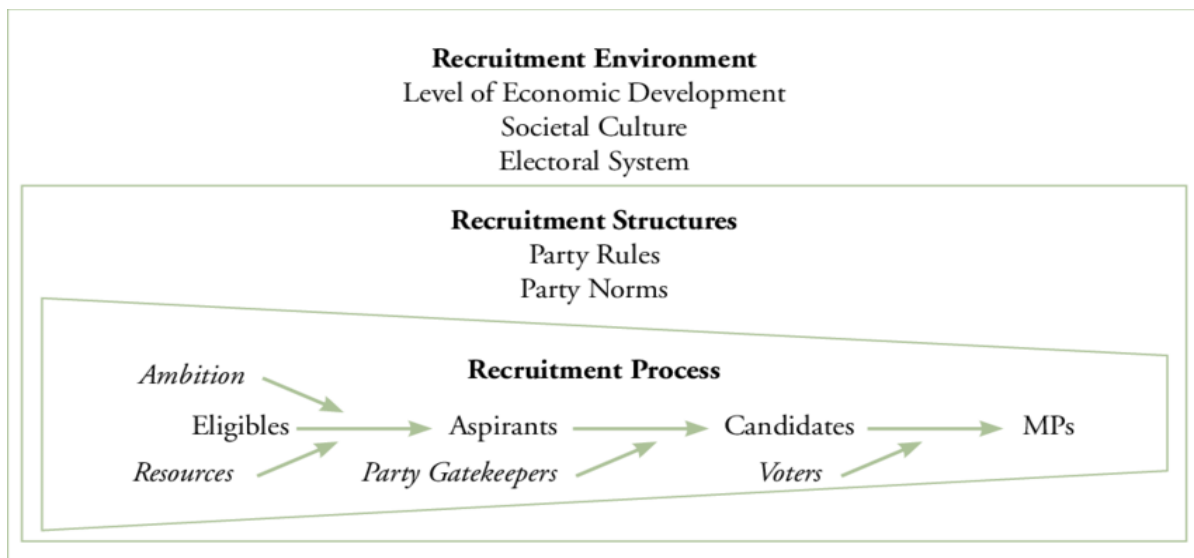
aspirants (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Kenny 2013). On the *supply-side*, the authors explain that resources such as time, money and experience and importantly, intrinsic motivation and interest in politics are the factors that influence the supply of aspirants (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Krook, 2010). The *demand-side* assumption is that aspirants are chosen based on the judgement and prejudice political party gatekeepers make about them (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). It should be understood that the interactions between the supply and demand (micro-level) for aspirants are shaped by the context of the broader environment (macro-level) which consists of the political system, the electoral system, the party system, the socio-cultural and economic environment which altogether, not only set the formal and informal rules but also cultural norms of the game (Kenny, 2013).

The demand and supply module and Milbrath and Goel's (1977) concept of *Political Participation* are well-knit. In their work; *Political Participation: How and Why Do People Get Involved in Politics?* the authors argue that an individual's participation in politics is influenced by personal factors (micro-level) and environmental (macro-level) factors. For the purposes of this thesis, the most relevant personal factor is the psychological involvement (interest) in politics which is underpinned by what the authors refer to as the "socioeconomic status" (SES) - age, sex, religion, education, social position, location and resources such as money and time. The environmental factors that motivate political participation according to the authors include; the political setting, sociocultural milieu and the stimuli taken from such an environment (Milbrath and Goel, 1977, p. 47). Therefore, Milbrath and Goel's conception is integrated here to enhance the analysis and ultimately answer the research question. Returning to the Norris and Lovenduski's module, in a repressive political system with closed opportunities for women's economic engagement due to cultural norms which create and perpetuate *patriarchy*: gendered power relationship that emphasises the superiority of men over women (Heywood 2013) and *gender stereotypes*: different social roles and held expectations of behaviour and actions for men and women as distinct and unequal in their mental, physical and agency capabilities (Wiesner-Hanks 2011), the supply of women aspirants will be very low since they, unlike men aspirants, are very unlikely to possess the necessary resources to make them eligible for recruitment in the eyes of gatekeepers. On the other hand, shaped by the broader political, economic and socioeconomic contexts, the judgement and prejudice of gatekeepers on aspirants are influenced by an assessment of the aspirant's personal character, education, political experience and whether they have the resources (money and time) to invest into their campaigns in order to win the seat for the party (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Krook,

2010; Kenny 2013). Here, gatekeepers have the discretion to exercise either direct or imputed discrimination. By direct discrimination, gatekeepers make positive or negative judgments about aspirants on the basis of common characteristics associated with their group rather than as individuals (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). For example, in a traditional society like Ghana, a woman aspirant may be judged to lack time and other resources necessary for the contest due to stereotypical belief that women belong to the kitchen and must stay home to give care to their children and husbands. Gatekeepers apply impute discrimination when they anticipate a reaction among the electorate towards certain social groups (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Thus, in gender stereotypical societies where politics is viewed as an arena for men, eventual women candidates may not receive the electorates' approval and as such, may not win when selected by gatekeepers. Therefore, for fear of losing the seat in the general elections, gatekeepers may not select women aspirants as candidates.

A major deficiency of Norris and Lovenduski's module in relation to legislative recruitment is that it lacks explicit theoretical explanation of voter bias which is the ultimate decider on who goes to the legislative house. Therefore, Matland's (2005) recruitment system is employed as a supplementary theoretical model. Matland's analogy is that women seeking legislative seats need to pass through three (3) barriers. They must; (a) be eligible (b) get recruited by party gatekeepers, and (c) be voted into office. This is depicted in the diagram below.

Diagram 2. Legislative Recruitment System



Source: Matland (2005)

Although the process is the same for men, what Matland seeks to highlight is the opaqueness of the process for women aspirants especially where gatekeepers have the discretion of selecting aspirants deemed able to win the seat for the party. According to Matland, the first

barrier is eligibility (self-selection) which is determined by the ambition to contest and the ownership and availability of resources (time, money, formal education, etc.) at the disposal of the aspirant. The second barrier is gatekeepers (party-selection) where political party gatekeepers based on their judgements and prejudices select from the pool of aspirants to present as candidates on the party's ticket for the general elections. The final barrier is the stage where voters elect (election) their preferred candidates into office as members of the legislature. It should be noted that the level of economic development, societal culture and electoral systems as well as and political party rules and norms affect the recruitment process at different stages and thereby, influence the degree of openness to women candidates (Matland 2005).

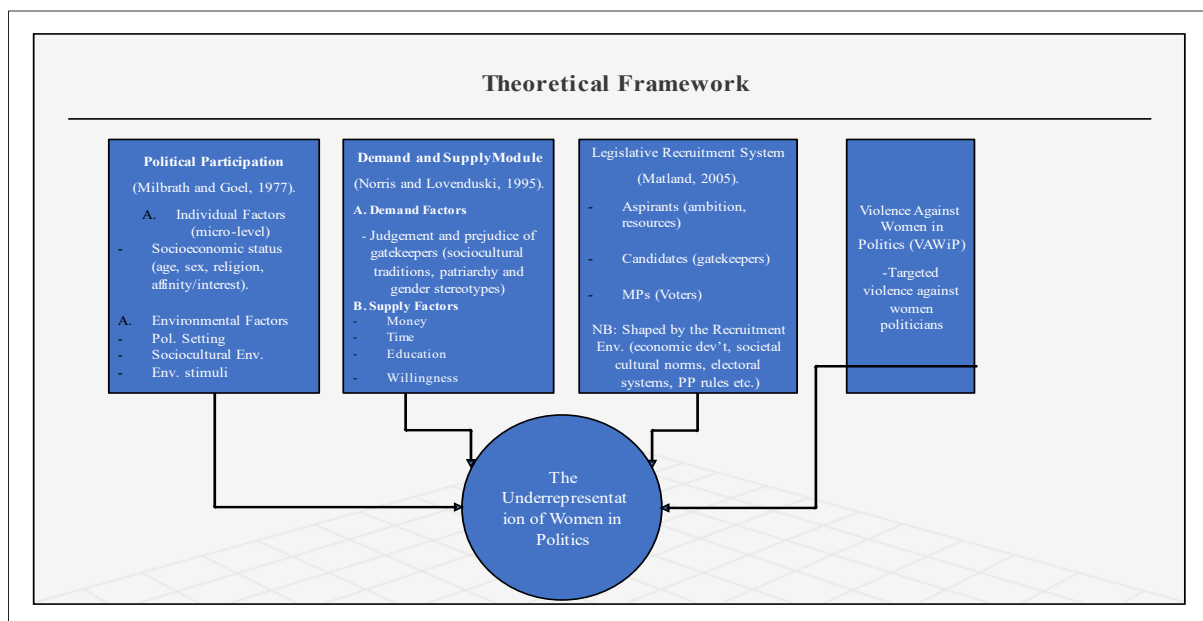
The module also lacks explanation regarding the issues of violence against women in politics (VAWiP). Therefore, this thesis relies on the explanation of VAWiP by the UN Women. According to UN Women VAWiP is “any act of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realising their political rights, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign....” (UN Women, 2017, p. 22). As understood from the ground-breaking work of Krook and Sanin (2015), the concept emerged from Bolivia in the year 2000 when politically active women lamented what they referred to as “political harassment and violence against women” during local elections (Krook 2020, p. 14). Following reports of similar widespread exploitations, discriminations, oppressions against women in politics in South Asia and Africa (e.g., Kenya's Flora Terah's case), a wide range of international practitioners and institutions took it up and crafted it as a global concept dubbed, Violence Against Women in Politics (Krook 2020). What makes VAWiP unique from other types of violence such as violence against women (VAW), gender-based violence (GBV), etc, is that it is politically motivated and targets women politicians. Although violence against women in elections (VAWiE) – occurs during the election period – is a different concept on its own, it is, for the purposes of this thesis, subsumed under VAWiP since candidate recruitment processes which could be accompanied by violence against women aspirants precede elections.

Although the three modules discussed above are closely related in their analytical approaches, what motivates the choice of Norris and Lovenduski's model is the specific attention it gives to legislative candidate recruitment processes and the ultimate composition of the legislature which is at the core of this thesis. Besides, the demand and supply module seek to explain not

just the composition of the legislature but also, ‘*why* and *how* the members got there’ (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995, pp. 10-11). By combining an analysis of the broader institutional and politico-cultural context (macro-level) with analysis of candidate circumstances and gatekeeper attitudes (micro-level), as well as gender dimensions of the recruitment process, the model addresses key limitations in previous modules of legislative recruitment (Kenny, 2013). Since this thesis is concerned with gender equality in the composition of the legislature, the model thus offers a compelling framework for analysing and understanding how Ghana’s legislature has consistently recorded a lower number of women than men.

However, some researchers in the field of political recruitment such as Krook (2010), Kenny (2013) and Bjarnegård and Kenny (2016) have critiqued the module from the standpoint of Feminist-Institutionalist Theory. They argue that the challenge in applying the model is that, despite its integration of gender into the dynamics of legislative recruitment, it fails to fully engage with the underlying gender norms and relations that structure the institutions of political recruitment. Additionally, in an attempt to theoretically connect the institutions of political recruitment, the module slips into oversimplifying the complex interactions and dynamics of the political recruitment process (Kenny 2013). Besides, given the context of this thesis, the model is limited as it does not provide any explanation as to how political and electoral violence affect women’s chances of getting to the legislative house. It is also deficient as it fails to explain the impact of voter bias in legislative recruitment. Diagram 3 below gives a pictorial view summarising the theoretical concepts explained above

Diagram 3. Theoretical Frameworks



Source: Author’s work 2024.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

4.0. Introduction

The purpose of the thesis could be methodologically achieved with either quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method approach. However, for practicality, the thesis adopted a quantitative approach to collect empirical materials from the field using an online questionnaire. Some data were obtained from a few qualitative interviews and a television interview.

4.1. Why Quantitative Approach?

The research question at hand asks *why* women are underrepresented in Ghana's legislature. Therefore, the thesis seeks to understand and explain the reasons behind the problem rather than explore it for a deeper understanding (Pajo, 2023). In doing so, the thesis adopts a quantitative approach to obtaining empirical data from the field using online questionnaires. It is worthy to note that the respondents for this thesis are politicians who hardly had time for qualitative interviews. Additionally, although a majority of them could be reached at the parliament house in Ghana, some are dispersed at different locations (constituencies). If I had to leave questionnaires with them, it would have meant that I had to travel to almost all the sixteen (16) regions of Ghana if the data must have a fair representation. Although it is practically possible, especially in bigger research, the time and resources for this research are limited to embark on such an adventure. Additionally, the sample size (56) is bigger than the recommended maximum sample size for qualitative interviews which according to Marshall et al (2013) is determined by *saturation*⁵ but could be between 25 and 30 interviews based on their research. Besides these practical reasons, applying the quantitative approach enabled the quantification of the variables to numerically explain the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's parliament. It was possible to collect data from a large number of respondents to enrich the findings since the thesis is not interested in gaining deeper understanding of personal issues as done in a qualitative approach. It also helped to establish relationships between two or more of the independent variables and then determine which is most impacting on the dependent variable. As quantitative research, it is possible to generalise the results, replicate the study to either uphold or falsify the results (Bryman, 2016; Pajo, 2023). In addition, the quantitative approach allows for statistical analysis of the variables to test an already established theory

⁵ A point in research data in collection where additional information becomes repetitive and therefore unnecessary (Marshall et al, 2013)

rather than analysing individual stories or doing content or text analysis to establish a theory (Stockemer, 2019; Pajo, 2022). However, the approach requires respondents to provide straightforward answers and this limits their ability to express their experiences and feelings. It is also possible to miss some vital information respondents may want to share regarding recruitment discriminations. In addition, facial expression, body language and reactions of the respondents to some questions are totally missed with this approach (Bryman, 2012; Hopper 2011, cited in Lichtman 2014; Pajo 2023). Although these critiques hold true, their impact on this thesis are minimal since it is an explanatory quantitative study and is not interested in deeper personal experiences (Pajo, 2023). Nonetheless, two (2) qualitative interviews were conducted as supplementary information to make up for missed information from the main data (Hopper 2011, cited in Lichtman 2014). Although sophisticated and complex, supplementing the quantitative data with qualitative information helps broaden the analysis to provide comprehensive results (Bryman 2016).

4.2. Sampling

The thesis considered constituencies where a woman and a man contested on the ticket of either the National Democratic Congress (NDC) or the New Patriotic Party (NPP) during the 2020 parliamentary elections in Ghana. In all, fifty-six (56) constituencies met the criteria and that gives a population (N) of 112 individuals. Out of these, fifty-six (56) respondents were sampled for the research. To arrive at this, a simple random probability sampling approach was adopted and the technique employed was picking every 2nd constituency from the list of all 56 constituencies and that gives a sample (n) of 56 respondents.

This sampling method was adopted to ensure that each member from the population had an equal opportunity of being included and also to reflect the core characteristics of a sample; thus, representative and generalizable. To constitute the sample, party affiliation, region and the categories identified within the population as stated above were taken into consideration. This was to avoid a lopsided data where the respondents belong to the same political party, region or constituencies with similar characteristics. The technique of picking every 2nd constituency was aimed at neutralising the major disadvantage of using the adopted sampling approach which requires a complete list of the population. (Bryman, 2016; Pajo, 2023)

However, two regions could not follow this approach because there was only one constituency in each where a woman contested. It was apparent in these regions that randomization could not be used. These constituencies were just added to attain the sample (small-n) stated above.

4.3. Fieldwork and Data collection

Over the last few years, advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as the outbreak of COVID-19 have led to an increase in the adoption and usage of online tools for conducting research (Lobe et al, 2020; Limone et al, 2022). Thus, with the adoption of internet-based methods, questionnaires could be submitted and data collected electronically (online) using tools such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms and Qualtrics, instead of presenting papers (Limone et al, 2022; Pajo, 2023). Fieldwork for this thesis was done virtually and data was collected using an online platform; Google Forms. Questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and the link to the questionnaire was generated. A list of the sampled respondents and their contact details was compiled from the websites of the Parliament and the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana. After pretesting the questionnaire with my supervisor and a fellow student, the necessary corrections were made. I sent a link to the questionnaire to each of the sampled respondents through either emails, texts and WhatsApp messages, depending on which was available. Anticipating that some respondents from the sample may not participate, the questionnaire was sent to over sixty (60) respondents and this explains why the response rate exceeded the number of sampled respondents. Completed questionnaires were automatically received through the same platform when respondents clicked on the submit button. Filling and submitting the questionnaires for the entire sample took more than 19 months. Within the first three months, 36 questionnaires were filled and sent after two reminders. The difficulty then arose as how to identify respondents who did not submit theirs for reminders to be sent to them. After sending third and fourth reminders in the 7th month, those that already responded owned up and their list was then sieved out. At this juncture, 45 completed questionnaires were received. The remainder that came to make up a total of 60 completed questionnaires were coming in bits after several reminders were sent.

There are strengths and weaknesses to this method. Being a self-completion questionnaire, it was convenient for respondents to determine when and how fast they wanted to answer. The issue of interviewer variability (asking different questions in different ways) and interviewer effects were avoided with this approach. Besides, the approach is quicker and cheaper to administer and thus, helps save time and resources. On the other hand, the identity of the respondents is not guaranteed and the possibility to probe a question further is lost. In addition, it is difficult to tell if respondents answered the questions in correct order since they could read the entire questionnaire before answering (Bryman, 2016). Nonetheless, there is surety as to

the identity of the respondents since their contact details were obtained from official sources; the EC and Parliament of Ghana.

Filled questionnaires were received through the same Google Forms and the data was manually entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Two qualitative interviews were conducted with political representatives but one was dropped due speech impairment from one of them that made his interview incomprehensible. Another qualitative interview was conducted with a male respondent to obtain additional information at the candidate level. Although efforts to interview a female respondent proved futile, an [interview](#) with the Executive Director and Programs Manager of [FIDA-Ghana](#) on Ghana Television (GTV)⁶ on 24th January, 2024 serves as a valuable secondary data to enrich the analysis in this thesis. The interview was in regards to the agenda to pressure flag bearers of the political parties to choose female running mates ahead of the 2024 elections.

In all, 60 completed questionnaires were received. Each questionnaire was automatically and uniquely numbered by Google Forms. These questionnaires were checked for missing data, variables were defined and a code book was developed. The data was then entered into the SPSS software for analysis

4.4. Ethics

The thesis upheld and applied the ethical requirements of a research. The consents of respondents and interviewees as well as the GTV were sought and the intention of the data collection was well-explained. It was mandatory for respondents to either decline or accept to answer before they could proceed to answer the questions. Those that declined answering were taken directly to the submit button. For the convenience of respondents, the questions were systematically arranged into sections and in simple and clear language. Double-barrelled and contingency questions were avoided with the use of skips. Responses to the questionnaire were received in a manner that made it impossible to match them with individual respondents. Thus, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Names of interviewees were withheld to also keep them anonymous. The interviewer maintained a neutral position throughout the process in order to limit personal bias that could potentially affect the findings as well as the analyses.

⁶ Ghana Television (GTV) is the oldest and biggest state-owned television station in Ghana

4.5. Limitations

A major limitation to this thesis is the small sample (n) and this made it practically impossible to conduct some complex analysis such as regression which might have given stronger results on some of the variables. Besides, a crucial factor that influences the outcome of elections especially regarding gender is voter bias. Therefore, excluding voters in the sample means that the issue of voter bias will be missed in the analysis. Given the dispersed nature of the main respondents (contestants in the 2020 elections), it was practically not feasible to include voters in the sample. However, this problem is addressed by the inclusion of questions regarding voter behaviour in the questionnaire. Besides, if the sample had included non-politically active young women and men viewed to have the potential of becoming political office holders, some of the findings may differ. Therefore, future and/or higher and bigger research may expand the list by including not only voters, but also, non-politically active youth asking them what informs their choices of candidates and why they choose to be indifferent to politics respectively. Besides, being a mail-in questionnaire, the respondents only read the questions but do not get to hear them. Therefore, there is a risk of respondents not understanding some questions which may not get clarified. However, this has been anticipated and therefore the language, wording, sequence and layout of the questions were made easy to understand (De Leeuw et al 2008, Cited in Stockemer 2019).

[1] A point in qualitative data collection where additional interviews may not necessary as they repeat already collected data

CHAPTER FIVE

Data, Findings and Analyses

5.0. Introduction

This chapter provides answer(s) to the research question by presenting the data, findings and analysis. For detailed analysis of the variables, the chapter introduces subheadings as guidance for focusing on most relevant issues. The findings are presented in graphs, charts and tables and are accompanied by an analysis. Where necessary, contradicting or buttressing findings from previous research are incorporated for critical analyses of the findings.

5.1. Background and Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Frequency Table of Respondents.

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	32	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Male	28	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

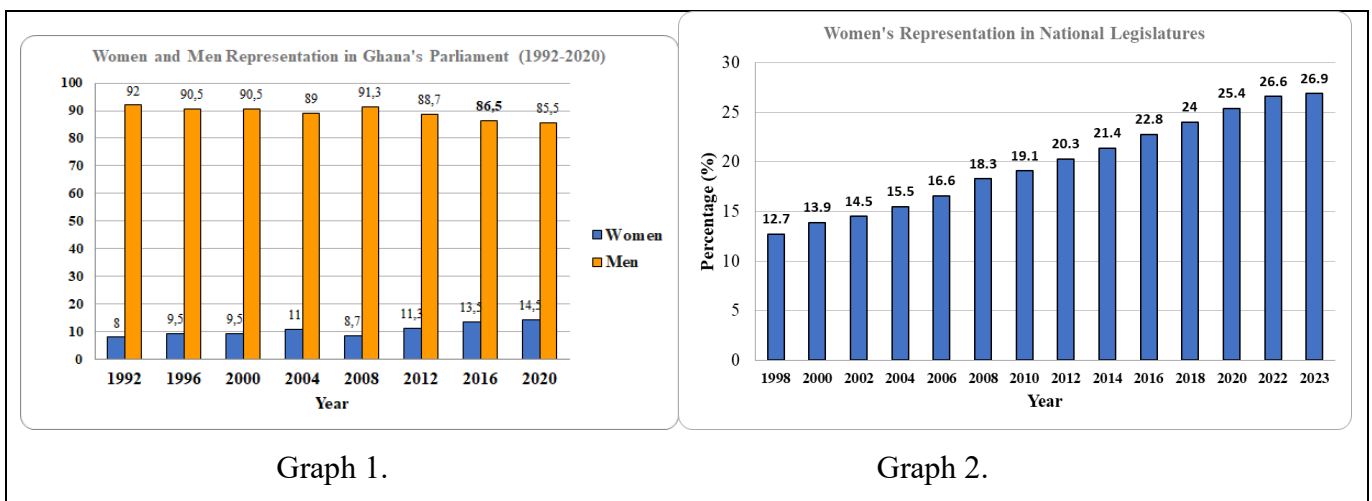
Source: Author's work, Field Data (2023)

As shown in table 1. above, 32 (53.3%) of the respondents were women and 28 (46.7%) were men. Thus, there were more women than men respondents to the questionnaire. This may point to an error in the sampling method which might have been skewed (unintentionally) to include more women than men respondents. Also, the additional four respondents that answered could be all women. Nonetheless, it was interesting that more women participated in the research as it indicates awareness and readiness to deconstruct male dominance in Ghana's politics. This is an indication that women are more concerned about the gender gap in representation in Ghana's parliament and would welcome interventions that will help close the gap with men in the legislative house.

The table (2) below presents two graphs (1&2). Graph1 shows data on the gender representation in Ghana's legislature from 1992 to 2020. The data shows minimal increment for women legislators in each session of parliament since 1992. However, there was a drop from 11% in the 2004 session to 8.7% in the 2008 session of parliament. The overall increment in women legislators from 8% in 1992 to 14.5% in 2020 represents just a 6.5% increase which is appalling given the population of women in Ghana. The global outlook regarding women's representation is not dissimilar from Ghana's. As shown in graph 2 of table 2 below, there has been just 14.2% increment in women's representation from 1998 to 2023. Although it is

commendable, I believe it is not commensurable to the advocacy efforts put by women’s advocacy groups, Think tanks, international and intergovernmental organizations aimed at increasing women’s representation in politics. Arguably, unless structural and systemic discrimination against women in politics are removed, women’s representation in politics will continue in a snail-pace, stagnate or in the worst case, retrogress. This problem set the stage for further investigation into the factors that inhibit women’s political participation and representation in the following analyses.

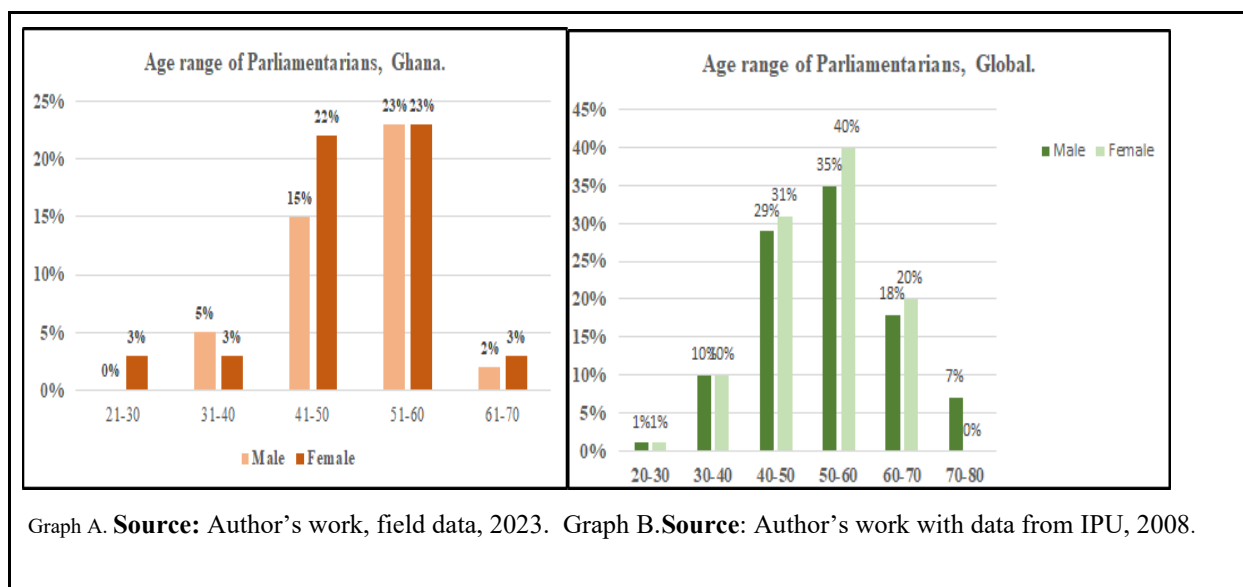
Table 2. Graph 1. Gender representation in Ghana’s parliament (1992-2020). Graph 2. Global percentage of women in national Parliaments (1998-2023).



Source: Inter Parliamentary Union (2023)

The table (3) below presents two graphs (A and B) on the age range of parliamentarians. Graph (A) shows the age range of parliamentary candidates in Ghana’s 2020 parliamentary elections. The data shows that the most candidates for the political parties under consideration were above forty (40) years with majority of them ageing between 50 and 60 years. This is similar to the data obtained by the IPU in a survey of 272 parliamentarians from 110 countries across the world. Thus, graph B corroborates graph A on the argument that the majority of parliamentarians from Ghana and across the world are old; ageing between 40 and 60 years or more. What is striking from both graphs is that there are more older women parliamentarians than men.

Table 3. Age Range of Parliamentarians, Ghana (graph A) and Global (graph B).



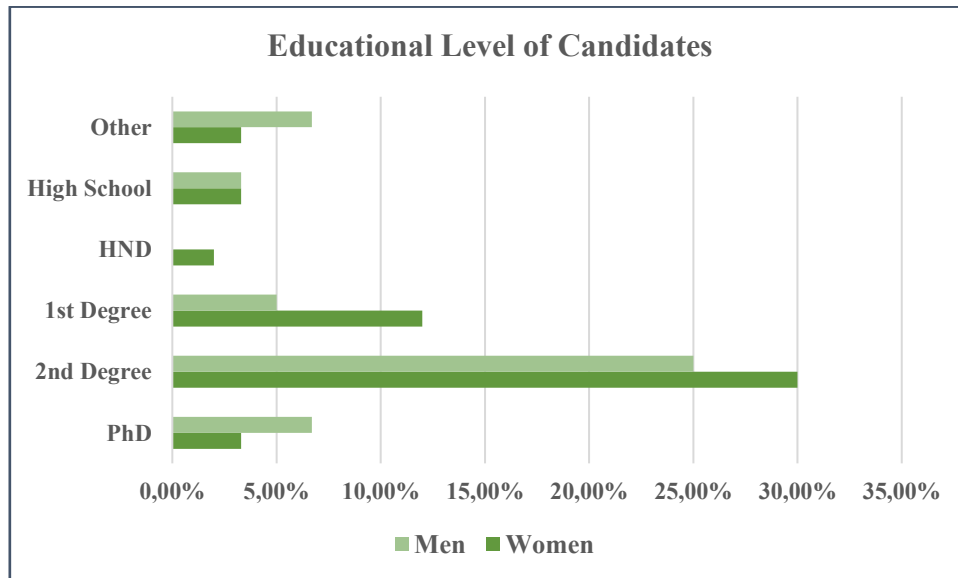
This gives an indication that Ghana's legislature is dominated by ageing members. The implication here is that, either the youth especially young women are not given the opportunity to present themselves for elected office or they do not have the wherewithal to contest given the high cost of doing politics in Ghana or they are apathetic to politics. But in either case, the supply of young women for legislature contests is hampered. Although the worth of experience the old have may enhance the work of the legislature, an aged legislature not only denies the institution of young women with fresh ideas but also points to the need to address the structural hurdles like the cost of doing politics and gender stereotypes that inhibit the supply of young women for political recruitment.

5.2. Candidate Eligibility Resources (Education, Money and Time)

Education is major determinant of a candidate's eligibility for both supply and demand sides of the model. Despite it not being a prerequisite for political contest in Ghana, in modern political dispensation, education has become a de facto resource that aspirants and political party recruiters look for to fit the political space. Data from graph 1 below shows that whilst more men (7%) than women (3.3%) hold a PhD, more women (30%) and (12%) than men (25%) and (5%) hold 2nd degrees and 1st degrees respectively. This finding converges with IPU's global survey as shown in graph 2. It could be seen from the graph that more women (50%) and (33%) had attained post-graduate university degree and 1st degree or polytechnic education respectively than men (49%) and (31%). This implies that women that contested in the 2020 parliamentary elections in Ghana had higher levels of formal education than their men

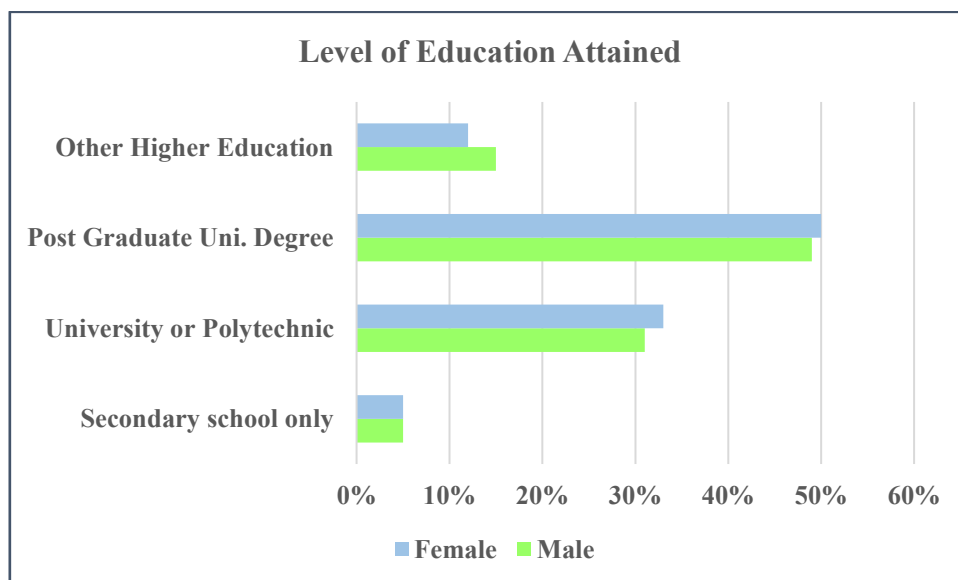
contenders. Therefore, it suggests that the supply of women candidates may not be hindered by education as a resource for eligibility. Thus, in terms of the education variable, women underrepresentation in Ghana’s legislature could be attributed to demand side discrimination against women. However, the findings here diverge from the findings in a Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) report which indicates that as of 2014, literacy rate among men aged 15-49 was 82% while that of women for the same age group was 67% (GSS, GHS and ICF Int 2015).

Graph 1. Educational Level of Respondents, Ghana.



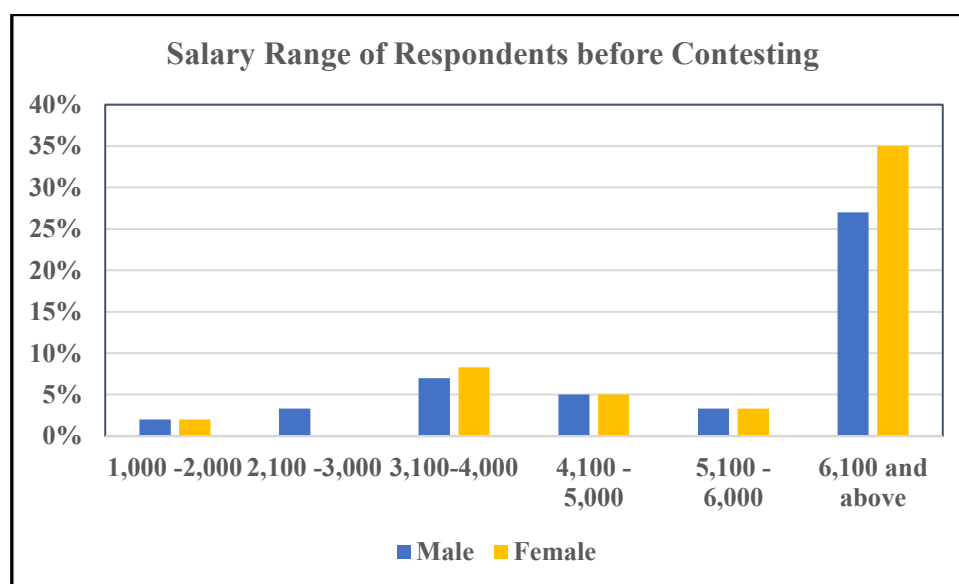
Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023)

Graph 2. Level of Education Attained, Global.



Source: Author’s work with data from IPU, 2008.

Graph 3. Salary Range of Respondents before Contesting



Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023)

Money is an essential resource for political contest especially in view of the monetization of politics across the world (Casas-Zamora and Fulguera 2016). Therefore, its availability or lack affects both the eligibility of candidates (supply) and recruiters’ criteria. Graph 3 above indicates that before contesting the parliamentary seat, all respondents were in one way or the other employed and had monthly income. While detailed analysis of this comes later, the data shows that most respondents (35%) women and (27%) men were earning six thousand (GHC 6,000) or more and the remaining respondents (more women though) earned between GHC 1000 and GHC 6,000. These results reflect the fact that most of the respondents were already members of parliament and seeking re-election, others were lawyers, some owned businesses whilst others worked for nongovernmental organisations (NGOs).

Table 4. Time to Campaign

Gender * Could you campaign in all areas of the constituency Crosstabulation				
Count				
		Could you campaign in all areas of the constituency		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Female	31	1	32
	Male	28	0	28
Total		59	1	60

Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2023.

Time is an invaluable resource for political campaigns. Candidates need time to campaign and sell themselves to prospective voters in their respective constituencies. The question that produced the data in the table 4 above enquired if respondents were able to campaign in all areas of their constituencies. This sought to find out if respondents had time for political campaigns. As shown from the table, all except one (1) female respondent answered in the affirmative. Thus, time as a resource for candidature eligibility was not a challenge to the supply of both women and men candidates.

Given the above preliminary analysis it could be argued that resources such as education, money and time which are necessary for not just political participation but also candidacy eligibility were not major barriers to the supply of either women or men candidates. Although this may hold true, if the sample had been widened to include young women and men who intend to join or are already in politics might yield different results.

5.3. The Decision to Contest

A crucial factor to getting more women into Ghana’s legislature is the willingness of women to participate and contest for parliamentary seats. This is what Milbrath and Goel referred to as *psychological attachment to politics*, Norris and Lovenduski refer to it as *the interest to contest* and Matland calls it *self-selection*. Indeed, self-selection is the beginning of the recruitment process in Matland’s legislative recruitment system as indicated in diagram 1 above

Table 5. Cross Tabulation; Gender*Religion*Decision to Contest

Gender * Decision to Contest * Religion Crosstabulation						
Count			Decision to Contest			Total
Religion			Family and friend's advice	Political Party influence	My personal Decision	
Muslim	Gender	Female	1	1	4	6
		Male	0	1	5	6
	Total		1	2	9	12
Christian	Gender	Female	2	14	10	26
		Male	1	8	13	22
	Total		3	22	23	48
Total	Gender	Female	3	15	14	32
		Male	1	9	18	28
	Total		4	24	32	60

Table 5 above seeks to explain how gender and religious affiliation influence an individual's decision to contest, thus self-selection. As the table shows, most Muslim women (4) and men (5) that contested the elections made the decision to do so by themselves. Similarly, on the Christian side, ten (10) women and thirteen (13) men that contested the elections made the decision themselves whilst fourteen (14) women and eight (8) men were influenced by their political parties. Generally, fifteen (15) women were influenced by their respective political parties (demand-driven) as against fourteen (14) of them who took a personal decision (supply-driven) to contest. This indicates that the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature is driven by both supply and demand sides. The theoretical implication here is that, candidates influenced by the political parties to contest are very likely to have an easy pass from the hands of gatekeepers and this holds true otherwise. This suggests the influence gatekeepers have in determining whose image appears on the ballot for the party. However, what is worrying is the low number of Muslim women and men (6 each) that fell within the sample. Despite working with a relatively small sample and there being more Christians than Muslims in Ghana's population (GSS 2021), the number of Muslims in active politics and leadership positions very low. This is buttressed by research on Muslims and party politics in Ghana which found that, although the participation of Muslims in Ghana's politics has increased, it is largely at the local levels and limited to activities such as voting, attending rallies and campaigning. However, same cannot be said of their participation at higher levels of politics including membership of the legislature. This is largely due to limited resources for participation such as formal education, financial resources, political efficacy and lack of self-confidence by especially women in Muslim dominated communities (Mohammed et al, [2021](#)). Although both men and women are affected by these factors, women are the most affected and this ultimately affects the supply of women candidates from the Muslim communities. On the issue of self-selection, confidence is found to play a significant role for women. In research that examined why women are underrepresented in the UK's House of Commons, lack of confidence was cited as the primary reason women would not want to stand for political office under the conviction that "parliament was not for me" (Maguire 2018: 31). In a Fawcett Society report, 44% of women as against 24% of men cited low-self confidence among women as the main barrier to their political participation. Similarly, Elder (2004)'s socialisation studies in the USA argues that in the 1960' through to the 1980s, the 'political gender role socialisation hypothesis represents a barrier to women's political participation whereby women are not encouraged to run for political office as men because children were led to believe that "politics is a man's world"

(Maguire 2018: 31). Therefore, if women do not avail themselves to contest for legislative seats, it will be difficult if not impossible to deconstruct men's dominance in Ghana's legislature. In an interview with a secretary to one of the political parties, he was emphatic that women are underrepresented in Ghana's legislature due to a deep-seated belief that women are not supposed to lead men. He stated: "...because of one[,] the religious belief that women are not supposed to lead...". (Interviewee 1, 2023). His view is buttressed by the Executive Director (ED) of FIDA-Ghana in an interview on GTV when she stated;

... so basically, women are invisible. ... and our socialization processes where we have actually categorized and placed women in certain areas. This is what a woman should do. Society has actually told us where a woman's place is. But fortunately, we are seeing women breaking the glass ceilings. (GTV, 2024).

Although she expressed some optimism, the misogynistic attitude of the Ghanaian society she explained keeps women away from politics. This is buttressed by Sossou (2011)'s findings where urban women participants in her study referred to their position as being 'relegated to the background'. The participants revealed that;

Our situation is difficult because of our entrenched traditional beliefs and norms. The traditional notion is that men are the heads and this notion is working through every sphere of life and including the political sphere. (Sossou 2011: 5-6)

This implies that, because of cultural norms and religious beliefs, Ghana still lives in the 1960s to 1980s of the USA – in reference to Elder's socialisation hypothesis above – where politics is for men and women may not trespass much less talk of leading men. When reflected on the theoretical frames, it will be observed that this is a double-edge problem cutting on both the supply and demand sides. On the supply side, women may feel discouraged to contest owing to socio-cultural structures of patriarchy and gender stereotypes as indicated in Sossou's quotation above. On the other hand, political party gatekeepers influenced by the cultural environment are already prejudicial towards women aspirants and can exercise direct or imputed discrimination on women aspirants. Right from here, one may conclude that gender-wise, there is an unequal playing field in terms of the sociocultural environment.

5.4. The Playing Field

A level playing field is important in ensuring equality and fairness in political campaigns. When the playing field is tilted to favour party recruiters' preferred candidates who are in most cases men (Conway 2001), it undoubtedly affects the demand side of the candidate recruitment

process. I asked respondents if the campaign playing field was level for both men and women candidates. As it could be seen from table 6 below, 47(78.3%) strongly disagreed whilst only 6 (10%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the question. It should be observed that the unlevel playing field is a consequence of the broader (macro-level) recruitment environment rather than a supply/demand (micro-level) problem. Ghana's political, economic sociocultural environments have combined effects on women's advancement in education, occupation and political participation (Allah-Mensah, 2005). While men work and earn salaries, women are engaged in household unpaid work, male child education was preferred to girl child education and while the girl child is subjected to obnoxious cultural practices such as 'trokosi' and female genital mutilation, and adult women relegated to *witch-camps*, the male child and adult males respectively, do not go through these practices. Arguably, this wider socioeconomic context which is largely unfavourable to women affects both their supply and demand for political recruitment. FIDA-Ghana's programs manager (PM) laments that;

Growing up, we realized that we allow the females to help us in the kitchen while we leave the men to go out there to play. So that's where it starts from. So naturally, then we grow to think that women's place are in the kitchen. (GTV, 2024).

An interesting factor that emerged from the interview with the executive Director of FIDA-Ghana but not prominent within the theory has to do with how the media has not been fair to women politicians. She asserts that:

...of course, how the media portrays women is also very, very essential. There's a stereotyping, you know, and so there's always a gravitation towards male leadership because of the way women are portrayed. When you have your panels, you have M panels, all male panels, you know, and so you don't hear the voice of women. (GTV 2024).

Admittedly, both social and traditional (print and electronic) media play an enormous role in political campaigns in this era of technology. As an outlet reaching a greater number of people at the same time, the media offers an easy platform to ease political campaigns. It is therefore unfair when women candidates are not given equal media space to campaign compared to their men contenders. Although the 'media' could be theoretically placed within the macro-level political recruitment environment, the significant role it (especially social media) plays in "amplifying the voices" of candidates makes it pressing that its theoretical and analytical position is brought to the fore rather buried within the demand and supply framework (Gibson [2023](#), no pg.).

Table 6. Equal Playing Field for all Candidates?

Gender * Equal playing field for campaign for both men and women Crosstabulation							
Count		Equal playing field for campaign for both men and women					Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
Gender	Female	30	0	0	0	2	32
	Male	17	5	2	3	1	28
Total		47	5	2	3	3	60

Source: Author's work, Field Data (2023)

From table 7 below, a cross tabulation of gender and challenging factor during campaigning indicate that, whilst most women candidates (15) had challenges with gender stereotypes and (10) had challenges with violence and insults, 23 men candidates had challenges with funding while only (5) had issues with gender stereotypes during the campaigns. Given the structural and systemic barriers women in Ghana face in terms of getting employed in paid jobs, it is surprising that men, rather than women candidates had challenges with funding (Allah-Mensah, 2005). On the other hand, the data amplifies how women candidates face gender stereotypes and targeted physical violence and insults during campaigns in Ghana. Thus, whilst money as a resource might not affect the supply of women candidates, gender stereotypes emanating from the sociocultural and political environments are likely to affect the supply of women candidates for elected office, hence their underrepresentation.

Table 7. Gender and Challenging Factor during Campaigning.

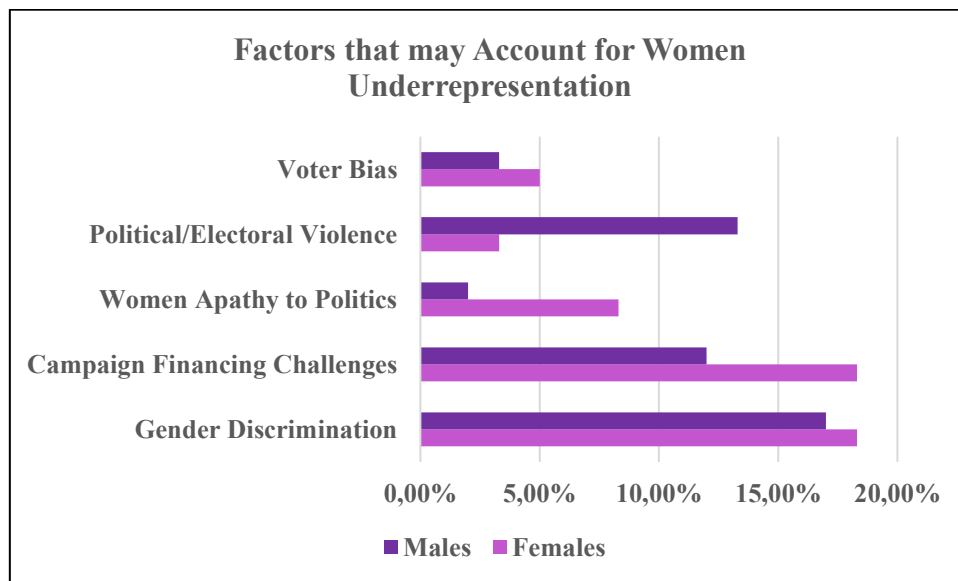
Count		Challenging factor during campaign				Total
		Lack of family/political party support	Gender Stereotype	Funding	Violence and Insults	
Gender	Female	1	15	6	10	32
	Male	0	5	23	0	28
Total		1	20	29	10	60

Source: Author’s work, Field Data, 2023.

5.5 Discrimination Against Women

Data in graph 4 below indicate that there is high discrimination against women politicians in Ghana. Almost the same percentage of women (18%) and men (17%) thus, making about 35% of respondents think that women are discriminated against.

Graph 4. Factors that may Account for Women Underrepresentation in Ghana



Source: Author’s work, Field Data, 2023.

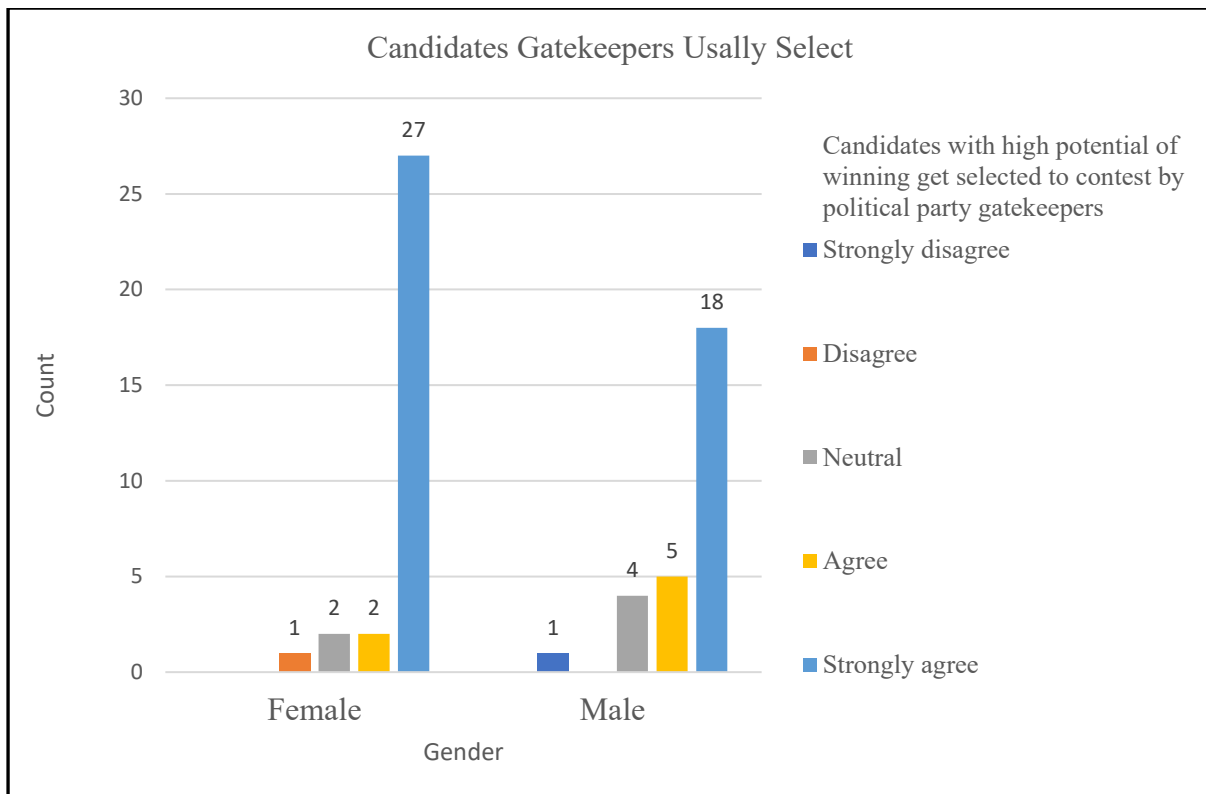
When asked why women are underrepresented in Ghana’s legislature, the Programs Manager of FIDA-Ghana asserts that:

I'm looking at it from the angle of gender inequality. And once there's gender inequality, that means there's discrimination, or it will lead to discrimination, it will lead to social injustice, ... women make more than 50% [Ghana's population] yet we are underrepresented. ... we do not have any legislation that gives women quotas to be in decision making.... ... look

at our ... social norms, naturally we have been socialized to think that men are natural and better leaders... (GTV, 2024).

Norris and Lovenduski argue that on the demand-side of political recruitment, women who are willing to contest for legislative seat suffer either direct or imputed discrimination from gatekeepers. By Direct discrimination, a woman candidate is judged based on the characteristics associated with their group as women and by imputed discrimination, gatekeepers anticipate a reaction among the general populace suggesting that voters may not vote for women candidates) discrimination by political party gatekeepers (Krook 2009).

Graph 5. Candidates that Gatekeepers usually Select



Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023)

Graph 5 above confirms Norris and Lovenduski’s argument as a total of 45 out of 60 respondents strongly agreed with 7 agreeing that gatekeepers usually select candidates that are perceived to eventually win the seat for the party. Therefore, by impute discrimination, women prejudged as losers by gatekeepers will not be selected to contest. The argument is further buttressed by Niven (1998)’s findings which concluded that male party elites consistently preferred men over women candidates and as long as men continue to constitute a vast majority of party gatekeepers, achieving any substantial gains in women’s descriptive representation will be difficult (Niven 1998). Responding to my question on the role of the political parties to

address women's underrepresentation, interviewee 1 as a representative of one of the political parties asserts that:

Yes, the party is much concerned about the gender disparities that we have in our body politics. And so, the party has structures to cater for that okay. We have not yet achieved the party's full objective of inclusiveness, but there's structures in place to take care of the imbalances. (Interviewee 1, 2023).

That notwithstanding, there is a conspicuous lack of legitimized clauses in the parties' constitutions that specifically support women's candidature. Even in the executive structure of the parties, positions that woman may contest are only deputizing ones. This is indicative of how the political parties as institutions are reluctant in supporting women's candidature especially in swing constituencies.

The processes of selecting candidates by both political parties involves the filing of nominations (by aspirants), interviewing aspirants (by gatekeepers) and intra-party primaries (delegates of the party vote for a candidate of their choice to contest the general elections on the party's ticket). If the argument that candidate selection entirely rests on the whims and caprices of the political party gatekeepers is accepted, then, it is compelling to be concerned about the ploys of the candidate selection processes. At the vetting stage, gatekeepers have a space to exercise their discretion to decide whose image appears on the ballot for their party for the general election. Daddieh and Milliar (2012)'s work revealed that women aspirants that were disqualified during internal party recruitment of the NPP in 2008 accused the vetting committee of inventing 'back door' measures to kick them out of the competition. An example is the case of Tema West Constituency where a woman was threatened to be disqualified to contest on the party's ticket on the accusation that she was not in good standing with the party although she claimed to have paid all her dues. However, what was clear was that the woman was contesting against a man who happened to be the party's favourite candidate because he had won the seat for the party for three consecutive terms (Daddieh and Milliar, 2012). Another revealing case was that of Okaikoi-South constituency where a woman who filed her nomination to contest in the NPP's primaries but was disqualified by the vetting committee on grounds that she had not nurtured the constituency by providing social amenities such as public toilets, street lights etc. and helping individuals constituents in paying their wards' school fees, paying hospital bills, providing roofing sheets, food items, cement, etc. to victims of disasters. Meanwhile her male contender who was the incumbent and the party's favourite, was confirmed by the committee by popular acclamation (Daddieh and Milliar, 2012).

What complicates the issue for women is the religious beliefs and the wrong explanation of religious texts as well as cultural attitudes that suggest that women are of lower status and class than men, giving credence to the gender stereotypes and patriarchal values that stops women from political participation.

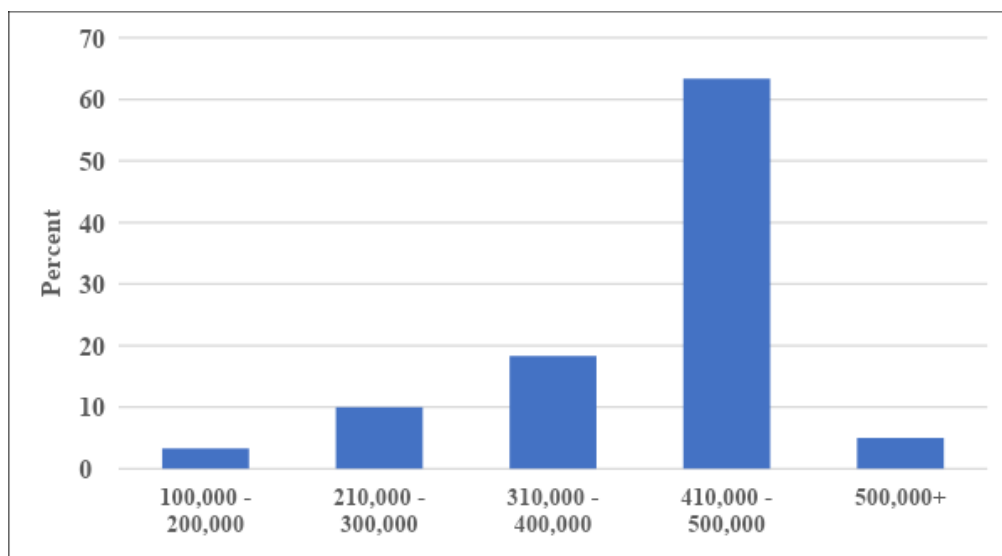
5.6. Campaign Financing Challenges

Data from graph 4 above indicate that many women (18.3%) and men (12%) representing about 30% of the respondents believed that campaign financing is a major factor that negatively impacts women’s political participation. It should be noted that vehicles, logistics and resources that enhance political campaigns are rolled into the campaign financing variable. For me, campaign financing is the major setback for women who wish to contest for political office not only in Ghana but across the world. Political campaigns are increasingly being expensive and that simultaneously muscles out the financially lame politicians such as women and thus, unlevel the campaign playing field in favour of the rich who are mostly men. This is buttressed by the point made by interviewee 2. Although he did not disclose the amount he spent for his campaign, he lamented the high cost involved:

So, the big, big, big, big factor is resources to finance your campaign. That's a big, big, big challenge. ... It's about money. Democracy is not easy. It's the money business. If you want to even try to quantify it, you go crazy. It's better you spend and put your mind off it. (Interviewee 2, 2023).

As presented in graph 6 below, the average expenditure of most candidates for the 2020 parliamentary elections in Ghana was between GHC 410,000 (\$36,500.18) and GHC 500,000 (\$44,512.42).

Graph 6. Total Expenditure for the Entire Election



Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023)

The above shows an increase from what was found to be the cost of politics in Ghana during the 2016 elections. It was found that within one electoral cycle, the cost of contesting a legislative seat in Ghana increased by 59% from GHC 245, 614 in 2012 to GHC 389, 803 in 2016 ([WFD/CDD 2018: 13](#)). However, the current increase when calculated on GHC 500, 000 against the amount in 2016 shows an increase of 28.3% which is much lower than the percentage increase between 2012 and 2016. As shown in table 8 below, it is interesting to find out that women out-spent men during the election campaigns.

Table 8. Cross tab. Gender*range of Total Expenditure

Gender * Range of total expenditure for the entire contest Crosstabulation							
Count		Range of total expenditure for the entire contest				Total	
		100,000 - 200,000	210,000 - 300,000	310,000 - 400,000	410,000 - 500,000		500,000+
Gender	Female	0	5	3	22	2	32
	Male	2	1	8	16	1	28
	Total	2	6	11	38	3	60

Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023).

As it could be seen, more women (22) than men (16) spent between GHC410,000 and GHC500,000. Thus out-spending men in that category. On the other hand, more men (8) than women (3) spent more between GHC310,000 and GHC400,000 during the 2020 parliamentary election. Meanwhile, research has shown that there is a high gender wage gap in Ghana with women being disproportionately disadvantaged. The proportion of men engaged in paid employment is twice that of women while women dominate in vulnerable and unpaid work (Adu Boahen and Opoku 2021: 3). Undoubtedly, the increasing cost of politics invariably affects the supply of candidates especially women who need to raise a lot of money to ensure their eligibility. Gatekeepers on the other hand look for candidates that have the resources to campaign who, in most cases are men who find more favour from donors. The Executive Director of FIDA-Ghana opines that:

So basically, when we say money, then you know our politics is so monetized. And we don't depend on public funding. ... And so, you'd have to depend upon you know donors and you find out donors actually congregate around men (GTV, 2024).

Responding to the question on the high and increasing cost of politics in Ghana, interviewee 2 associated it the problem to deep-seated belief within the Ghanaian society that politicians *are rich* and push a lot of financial demands on you. He stated:

... once you put your head into politics, you want to contest the election, everybody assumes that your room is full of money. The perception is that, oh, he has money. People's school fees, and you can imagine, students are demanding, they want to pay fees, you know, hospital, you know, and all, you have to do... (Interviewee 2, 2023).

As has been observed, money is domineering political campaigns in democracies across the world presenting a serious barrier to women contesting for elected office (Cigane and Ohman 2014; Casas-Zamora and Fulguera 2016; Agrawal and Hamada 2021) Casas-Zamora, - current Secretary General of Int. IDEA - opined that “politics dominated by money is more often than not, politics dominated by men.” (Casas-Zamora and Fulguera 2016: 08). This therefore means that as long as political campaigns continue to be expensively monetized, women will continue to be squeezed out of politics and therefore continue to be underrepresented in national legislative bodies. This is a problem of both supply and demand because on the supply side, for lacking financial resources, women may not avail themselves to contest. On the demand side, gatekeepers may deliberately disqualify women when they prejudice such women no to have the wherewithal to contest. However, despite a considerable consensus among campaign spending and electoral outcome researchers regarding a positive correlation between campaign spending and winning (Casas-Zamora and Fulguera 2016; Koerth [2018](#); Schuster 2020), this research found that it is not always the case that those who spend more usually win elections.

Table 9. Correlation; Spending and Winning

		Correlations	
		Range of total expenditure for the entire contest	Did you win
Range of total expenditure for the entire contest	Pearson Correlation	1	-,408**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001
	N	60	60
Did you win	Pearson Correlation	-,408**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	
	N	60	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author’s work, Field Data (2023)

As we saw from table 9 above, women candidates spent slightly higher than men during the campaigns of the 2020 elections. It was therefore prudent to further investigate how spending and winning correlate. As shown from table (10) above, a correlated tabulation of the two variables shows a *Pearson correlation coefficient* (r) of -0.4 (r= - 0.4) which indicates a perfect or strong negative correlation between spending and winning elections.

Table 10. Correlation: Spending and winning relationship, controlling the impact of campaigning

		Correlations			
Control Variables			Range of total expenditure for the entire contest	Did you win	Could you campaign in all areas of the constituency
-none- ^a	Range of total expenditure for the entire contest	Correlation	1,000	-,408	,065
		Significance (2-tailed)		,001	,620
		df	0	58	58
	Did you win	Correlation	-,408	1,000	-,135
		Significance (2-tailed)	,001		,305
		df	58	0	58
	Could you campaign in all areas of the constituency	Correlation	,065	-,135	1,000
		Significance (2-tailed)	,620	,305	
		df	58	58	0
Could you campaign in all areas of the constituency	Range of total expenditure for the entire contest	Correlation	1,000	-,404	
		Significance (2-tailed)		,002	
		df	0	57	
	Did you win	Correlation	-,404	1,000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	,002		
		df	57	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

The results obtained from table 9 above might have been influenced by some factors of which campaigning is weightier. However, after holding the campaigning variable in control the results, as shown from table 10 indicates that the impact of campaigning on the relationship between spending and winning elections is minimal as the Pearson correlation coefficient changed from -0.408 to -0.404. It is therefore convincing that the relationship between spending and winning election is a strong negative correlation.

5.7. Political/ Electoral Violence (PEV)

Another factor responsible for the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature conspicuous from the data in graph 4 above is the issue of P/EV. 16.7% of respondents think that the issue violence accounts for women's underrepresentation. Interestingly, only 3% of women respondent think that P/EV hinder their political participation whilst a above 13% of men think it is a hinderance to women. In most cases, it is men that unleash such violence in order to scare away women politicians that pose a threat to the former's political ambition. It is therefore logical if most men believe that women would be scared away from politics by violence. According to Krook, it is "a rising global trend" (2018: 673) and the United Nations General Assembly in its 2011 Resolution 66/130 called for zero tolerance for violence against politically active women. As the theory suggests, violence against women in politics can occur in different forms; physical, verbal, and sexual harassment. Several reports and research show that politics in Ghana is characterized by the incidence of violence especially during elections (Bekoe et al 2012; Cobb et al 2020). Cases in point are the Techiman South election day shooting which took the lives of two people, Ayawaso West Wuogon violence and shooting, shooting at Kasoa, Assin North bye election violence, etc. (UNDP 2019; Myjoyonline 2020; Arthur 2023). interviewee1 opined that:

"... the nature of the politics we are doing it is not so intellectual it's a ... you know, where physique is being shown sometimes you have to be physically strong to butcher your way.... There is also spiritual violence where candidates visit shrine doctors to help them spiritually attack their opponent. So, it scares[s] women from participating. (Interviewee 1, 2023).

It is worthy to note that some of these violence and shootings are targeted at political opponents who in some cases are women who may be terrified and scared to contest for political office again. Although interviewee emphasized the potency and intensity of what he described as 'spiritual violence', it has no scientific and theoretical basis for it to be highlighted here. Suffice to say that it forms part of the supernatural beliefs in the unknown stemming from societal

cultural beliefs. Another form of violence pervasive in Ghana's politics is verbal invectives and vilifications in which the personalities rather than policy options of political opponents are attacked by either contestants or their supporters through the use of traditional and social media handles. Politically active women are either seen to be prostitutes, disrespectful, or shameless. I asked interviewee 1 what deters women from politics and he responded as follows:

... as a result of stigmatizing issue in our young democracy and women who are into full length politics are seen as women who are more or less prostitutes.... (Interviewee 1, 2023).

The above assertion is corroborated in Bauer and Darkwah (2020)'s research where active women politicians recounted how they were variously described as "she was a prostitute", "the president was her boyfriend" by the supporters of opponents and where women members of parliament (MPs) were referred to as "my wife", "my mother", "my sister", etc. by their men colleagues (Bauer and Darkwah 2020: 108).

Another worrying trend of violence against women politicians is sexual harassment. Although not reported in the findings of this research, previous research (Krook 2018; Sarfo-Kantanka 2021) have prolifically reported the incidences of sexual harassment on women politicians. For example, allegations of sexual harassment provoked the resignation and dismissal of men parliamentarians in Canada, the United Kingdom and France in 2017 (Krook 2018). A woman MP in Ghana opined that "most women are ... asked to, more or less, sell themselves before they could get ... positions" (Sarfo-Kantanka 2021: 11). Arguably, women encounter a lot and varied forms of violence in politics besides domestic violence. This makes politics unattractive and scary to many women who may want to enter politics. This affects the supply-side of the political recruitment for women as they fear to present themselves for political positions. The irony here is that women tend to be blamed for being misogynist and apathetic to politics hence, their underrepresentation. However, the data as shown in graph 7 above indicate that only 10% of the respondents think that women's apathy to politics is the reason for their underrepresentation.

5.7. Voter Bias

Besides gatekeepers' discrimination against women aspirants, at the end of the recruitment equation is the subject of voters who ultimately decide winners. As shown in graph 4 above only 8.3% of respondents think that voter prejudice about women accounts for the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature. Previous findings by Studlar and

McAllister (1991) and Norris et al (1992) indicate that voters not only vote for men and women candidates equally but may also vote mammoth for women than men (Black and Erickson 2003). Therefore, while voter prejudice about women candidates cannot be ignored, it has lesser impact when compared to factors like discrimination and funding. What is typical of the Ghanaian voter is that they vote for political parties rather than candidates. Therefore, if political parties present women candidates in their strongholds, such women are sure to win even if they contest against men from other political parties. For example, in a bivariate analysis on voting behaviour in Ghana, it emerged that most voters in the Volta Region of Ghana which is the stronghold of the NDC are one and half times more likely to vote for the NDC than the opposing NPP. Thus, if the NDC presents a woman candidate in the Volta Region, to contest the NPP's candidate whether a man or woman, the former will most likely win despite being a woman. It is also so for the NPP if the party presents a woman candidate in the Ashanti region (Adams and Agomor 2015).

5.8. Conclusion

Despite the immense international, regional and local advocacy for gender equality especially in political representation, and the recognition that women bring different perspectives and ideas that enrich legislation, the number of women in national legislatures is still very low. The empirical data for this thesis has shown that the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature is accounted for by both supply and demand factors. Whilst factors such as financial resources, political violence, inter alia may affect the supply of women aspirants, discrimination against women politicians by political party gatekeepers hugely affect the demand for women aspirants. Thus, the micro-level factors of supply and demand combine with the macro-level factors from the wider political, sociocultural and economic environments to account for the underrepresentation of women in Ghana's legislature.

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Appendix 1: Link to Questionnaire

[International Development and Management Programme \(LUMID\). Department of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden. Thesis Questionnaire. - Google Forms](#)

Appendix 2: Interview Consent Form and Guide

Interview Consent Form

International Development and Management Programme (LUMID).
Department Of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden.

This interview intends to collect data for research titled: **The Underrepresentation of Women in Politics: The Case Study of Ghana's Legislature**. The data collected is purely for an academic exercise and will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Your participation is highly desirable to help improve Ghana's Democracy with regard to gender equality in political representation. However, you may decline or quit participation at will and at any point in time you feel so.

I, the undersigned hereby represent the
(name of institution) and give my consent for the interview.

Interviewee:

Name Withheld

Signature

Verbal

.....

Place and Date Ghana, 2022-11-29

Withheld

.....

Name

Interviewer:

Sulemana Umar.

Signature

Verbal

.....

Place and Date, Lund, 2022-11-29

Suleman Umar

.....

Name

Interview Guide

1. Could you please introduce yourself (i.e. name (**may withhold**), educational level, position and role at the institution and how long working with gender issues is).

2. What is your view about gender and political participation in Ghana's politics?
3. How is your institution concerned about women's underrepresentation in Ghana's Parliament?
4. Generally, what factor(s) do you think affect(s) women's political participation and therefore their underrepresentation in Ghana's Parliament?
5. If you were to rank the factors, which one would you consider as the most affecting?
6. Do you think Ghana's Political Financing Law is in the right shape in terms of leveled playing field? (Probe: Why and how?).
7. Did you, or in collaboration with other institution (s) organize any training for women candidates in the run up to the 2020 parliamentary elections aimed at helping them win the elections?
8. Why has Ghana not adopted any affirmative action policy like gender quotas, reserved seats, or gendered electoral funding?
9. What measures do you think should be put in place to increase, if not bring to parity to men, the number of women in Ghana's Parliament?
10. What measures have you as a political party put in place to increase the number of women in Ghana's Parliament? (Probe Reserve Seats for women in strongholds, Gender Quotas, and funding and other logistical support specifically for women).