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Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender construction, resistance and empowerment

Janet Serwah Boateng
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Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender Construction, Resistance and Empowerment

This thesis is presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Janet Serwah Boateng

Edith Cowan University
School of Arts and Humanities

2017

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Abstract

Calls for more female participation in politics have featured strongly in developed and developing countries since 1975 when the UN made women's issues a priority. Ghanaian society's underlying patriarchal structure has made some progress towards gender equity in politics. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in levels of female participation and representation rates, targets have not been reached and the least amount of progress has taken place in local government. The thesis draws upon theories of gender and development (GAD) that emphasises on gender relations in development and proposed the empowerment of women as central to gender equality. Also, social capital underpins this study in arguing that although social capital tends to be accessed differently by men and women, and that culturally men have more established ways of networking widely, there is potential for women to strategically garner social capital in ways that are beneficial to contesting for political seats. Interviews undertaken individually with 40 women in district assembly (DA) positions, and focus groups of 40 men and 10 women campaigners from 4 zones in the country were transcribed, categorised and coded using Nvivo version 10 software. From this qualitative data, the enabling and precluding factors of participation in local government by women in Ghana were analysed and ranked according to the prevalence in the data. The results identified that enabling factors' themes were Individual Motivational Strategy, Community Support, Civil Society Support, Family Support and Campaign Strategy. Precluding factors' themes were Barriers, Challenging Factors, and Discouraging Factors. The issues surrounding gender equity in Ghanaian politics and governance have been comprehensively described against this backdrop of explanations from people with experience of campaigning, taking up official positions, and in some cases withdrawing from politics or competing against women.

Whilst patriarchal beliefs still abound for aspiring and serving female politicians, some candidates have been able to achieve high levels of male support, and many feel voters' support has come from constituents' belief that representation by a woman is their best hope of having development addressing women's issues. The findings are potentially useful to future aspiring female politicians in Ghana, and other stakeholders committed to encouraging and supporting women with the overall aim of achieving gender equity.

Table of Contents

Copyright	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xv
Acknowledgements.....	xix
Dedication	xxi
 Chapter 1	 1
Introduction: Background of the Study.....	1
Part One	3
Demography of Ghana	3
Socialisation and Socio-Cultural Barriers to Women's Participation in Public Office.....	5
Culture	6
Patriarchy	7
Family System	8
Marriage	9
Religion	10
Funeral Rites	11
Social Class	12
Preference to Male Education.....	14
Females as Dependants.....	14
Gender Roles	16
Participation and Representation of Ghanaian Women in Politics.....	21
Electoral System in Ghana	27
Political Systems and Governance in Ghana.....	30
Local Government System in Ghana.....	31
Part Two	38
Global Perspectives of Under-Representation of Women in Government.....	38
International Efforts Towards Gender Equality	41
Profiles of Some Female Political Achievers.....	44
Governments' Efforts to Reduce Inequality in Ghana	46
Affirmative Action	51
NGOs and Gender Advocates on Gender Equality	57
Concluding Statement	63

Problem Statement	63
Objectives of the Study	65
Research Question.....	66
Significance of the Study	66
Scope of the Study.....	67
Limitation of the Study.....	69
Structure of the Study.....	70
Chapter 2	75
Literature Review	75
Part One: Women and Gender Theories in Development	75
Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD) Approaches.....	76
Gender and Development (GAD) Theory.....	78
Part Two	82
Concept of Empowerment.....	82
Types of Empowerment.....	85
Concept of Resistance	88
Part Three: Social Capital Theory	93
Origin	94
Definitions	95
Dimensions	96
Levels of Interaction in Social Capital.....	110
Benefits of Social Capital	112
Conceptual Framework	121
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 3	124
Methodology	124
Part One: Research Approach.....	125
Development of the Study Design	127
Procedure of the Study	129
Research Sites	129
Sampling Technique and Size	131
Profile of Participants.....	133
Data Collection and Instruments	135
Part Two	140
Data Analysis	140
Familiarisation	142

Thematic Framework	143
Indexing	144
Charting	145
Mapping and Interpretation	146
Validity and Reliability Strategy	149
Role of the Researcher	150
Ethical Concerns	152
Conclusions	153
Chapter 4	154
Women and District Assembly Elections: The Supporting Factors.....	154
Part One: A brief Overview of Social Capital Theory	154
Part Two: The Supporting Factors	155
Individual Motivational Strategy.....	158
Individual qualities identified in the focus group	165
Being ambitious	165
Community Support	166
Community support identified in the focus group.....	171
Civil Society Support	173
Civil society support identified in the focus group	175
Family Support	177
Family Support identified in the focus group.....	178
Campaign Strategy	180
Strategic campaigning identified in the focus group	181
Part Three: Discussion of the Data	182
Conclusion	191
Chapter 5	193
Women and Local Level Politics: The Precluding Factors.....	193
Part One: Barriers to Women's Participation in Local Politics	195
Part Two: Challenging Factors	201
Part Three: Discouraging Factors	210
Precluding Factors, the Perspectives from the Focus Groups	218
Part Four: Discussion of the Data	226
Conclusion	229
Chapter 6	230
Conclusions of the Study	230
Part One	230

Part Two: Study Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.....	231
Recommendations	237
Part Three: Contributions to Knowledge.....	240
Part Four: Areas for Future Research.....	242
Summary	243
References	245
Appendices	275
Appendix A: Guide for Face-to Face Interview	277
Appendix B: Guide for Focus Group Discussion.....	279
Appendix C: Gender Equity & Female Politician’s Social Capital Tool	281
Appendix D Information Letter.....	283
Appendix E Informed Consent Document	285

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Ghana (https://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/).....	4
Figure 2: Local Government Structure in Ghana (Local Government Digest, 2008).....	34
Figure 3: Women's Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana.. Error! Bookmark not defined.	
Figure 4: Dimensions of Social Capital (Narayan and Cassidy, 2001).....	109
Figure 5: Conceptual Framework (Author's Construct, 2017)	122
Figure 6: Research Design (Author's Construct, 2017).....	127
Figure 7: Study Sites in Ghana	130
Figure 8: Photograph of Data Coding Process (Author's Photograph, 2016).....	144
Figure 9: Male Focus Group Discussion 1 (Author's Photograph, 2015)	176
Figure 10: Social Capital and Women in Politics (Author's Construct, 2017).....	190
Figure 11: Face-to-Face Interview (Author's Photograph, 2015).....	205
Figure 12: Male Focus Group Discussion 2 (Author's Photograph, 2015)	223
Figure 13: Female Focus Group Discussion (Author's Photograph, 2015).....	223

List of Tables

Table 1: Women's Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana (1994-2015)	26
Table 2: Study Districts in the Four Sampled Regions	68
Table 3: Timeline for procedures used in this study	129
Table 4: Participants in the study	132
Table 5: Demography of Participants	134
Table 6: Framework Analysis Stages.....	142
Table 7: Charting of Themes by Individual Cases.....	146
Table 8: Sample key themes and sub-themes	148
Table 9: Supporting factors to women's representation in the DAs in Ghana.....	156
Table 10: Barriers to women's representation in the DAs in Ghana	195
Table 11: Discouraging factors to the elected women in the DAs in Ghana	212

List of Abbreviations

AAIP	Affirmative Action Initiative Programme
ADC	Australian Development Corporation
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
AU	African Union
CCMA	Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEOMs	Commonwealth Election Observer Missions
CMA	Christian Mothers' Association
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
CWMG	Collation of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana
DAs	District Assemblies
DAWN	Development Alternative with Women for a New Era
DAEs	District Assembly Elections
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFID	Department of International Development Fund
DLG	Democratic Local Governance
EC	Electoral Commission (Ghana)
ECR	European Commission Report
EUEOMs	European Union Election Observer Missions
FIDA-Ghana	International Federation of Women Lawyers, Ghana
FPTP	First-Past-The-Post
GAD	Gender and Development
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GE	Gender Equity
GEI	Gender Empowerment Index
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GI	Gender Inequality
GNA	Ghana News Agency

GNI	Gross National Income
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HDR	Human Development Report
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IDI	In-depth Interview
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Committee
JHS	Junior High School
KEDA	Kwahu East District Assembly
KEEA	Komenda-Edina-Equafo-Abirem
KWMA	Kwahu West Municipal Assembly
KSDA	Kwahu South District Assembly
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government And Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAFCO	National Food Buffer Stock Company
NCWD	National Council on Women and Development
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NJMA	New Juaben Municipal Assembly
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights in Ghana
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PPAG	Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana
PPG	Patriotic Professional Ghana
RCC	Regional Coordination Council
SC	Social Capital
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SMA	Sunyani Municipal Assembly
SWDA	Sunyani West District Assembly
TFLCCHR	Task Force of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
TSDA	Tano South District Assembly
UDS	University of Development Studies
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNW	United Nations Women
WB	World Bank
WCW	World Conference on Women
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WiLDAF-Ghana	Women in Law and Development in Africa (Ghana-Chapter)
WEF	World Economic Forum
WVIP	World Vision International Project
31st DWM	31 st December Women's Movement

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all women and Gender Advocates who persistently struggle to reduce *gender inequality* in decision-making positions in government. Special tribute to the pioneers who left no stone unturned to create awareness of women's subordination at many levels in society. This project should be an inspiration for academic performance and for the continuation of equalising gender in society.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Background of the Study

This study focuses on the supporting factors to the participation of women in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. Although few women have been elected to the district assemblies, there is limited literature on the factors that supported them in gaining their representative positions. The previous research which has been undertaken tends to have concentrated on obstacles to women's participation in local and national politics to the neglect of the enabling factors to women's participation in the local government system, with a resultant paucity of attention and promotion of women's needs and interests in the local governance systems. For that reason, neither the types of local organisations that scrutinise national level politics nor world bodies have access to sufficient data on women's political empowerment in local governments, which results in the reporting of unbiased measurements of gender empowerment index and gender inequality in Ghana.

This study also explores social perceptions on factors that may preclude Ghanaian women's participation in local government. Although the literature abounds on the causes of low representation of women in national and local governments by scholars such as Ballington (2012), Ofei-Aboagye (2000), and Cracknell, Groat and Marshall (2014), this current study fills a gap in the literature with the experiences of women facing socio-cultural prejudices and the support they gain while they compete in elections to win positions in local government. The women's navigation through politics within local and national institutions and authorities to empower themselves politically at the local government level are also presented to acknowledge their efforts

to enhance gender equality in decision-making processes. This study concentrates on the elected Assemblywomen since the researcher reckoned their efforts, mainly when there was no reserved seats or quotas, and they had to compete with their male counterparts in the district assembly elections. The study draws upon the social science discipline and contributes to the existing body of knowledge by describing the Ghanaian women's experiences with elections and the strategies they employed to win elected positions, highlighting the enabling factors to their representation.

This chapter is divided into two parts to provide a comprehensive presentation of the Ghanaian socio-political system and women's participation in politics. Part one presents the Ghanaian context with emphasis on the country's demography; socio-cultural beliefs and practices; participation and representation of women in politics; electoral system; political systems and governance, and local government system. Part two explores the issue of the under-representation of women in politics, firstly from the global context and, secondly from the Ghanaian perspective. Also, part two of this first Chapter presents international efforts towards attaining gender equality and women's empowerment; profiles of some of the women who broke through the glass ceiling; governments efforts to address inequality, affirmative action, and non-governmental efforts and advocacy for gender equality in Ghana.

This chapter concludes with a statement of the research problem; the objectives of the study including an outline of the research questions; comment on the significance of the study; the scope and limitation of the study; and the organisation of the study.

Part One

Demography of Ghana

On March 6, 1957, Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from the British Colonial power. The 2013 Human Development Report described Ghana as a country with a medium level of human development and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of USD 1,684 (Malik, 2013). By 2013, the country had made substantial progress, reaching a lower-middle income economy status similar to that of Bangladesh, Chile, Mauritius, Rwanda and Tunisia. Ghana's economic growth slumped from 14% in 2011 to 4.1% in 2015. Although there was an increase of 4.1% in the country's economic development in 2016, its financial performance was poor (Okudzeto, Lal & Sedegah, 2016). The economic situation of the country indicated that despite the slowed economic growth, it was predicted to turn around to 5.8% in 2016. It was further predicted that following consolidation of macroeconomic stability and implementation of measures to resolve a crippling power crisis, the economic growth would reach 8.7% in 2017.

The main exports of the country were cocoa, gold and oil (Dogbevi & Seidu, 2013; Schwimmer, 2006). The country occupies a land area of 238, 533 square kilometres and shares borders on the North, South, East and West by Burkina-Faso, Gulf of Guinea, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire respectively. The 2010 Population Census in Ghana indicated a female majority of 12,633,978 representing about 51.34% out of the total population of 24,658,523 (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2010). A pictorial depiction of the administrative regions of Ghana is provided in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Map of Ghana (<https://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/>)

Women constitute the majority of Ghana's population, yet they were poorly represented in government particularly in the district assemblies, which hold the highest administrative decentralised authority in the local areas. Although there are hindrances to women's representation, a few are elected. The bar graph below presents a photo of the situation.

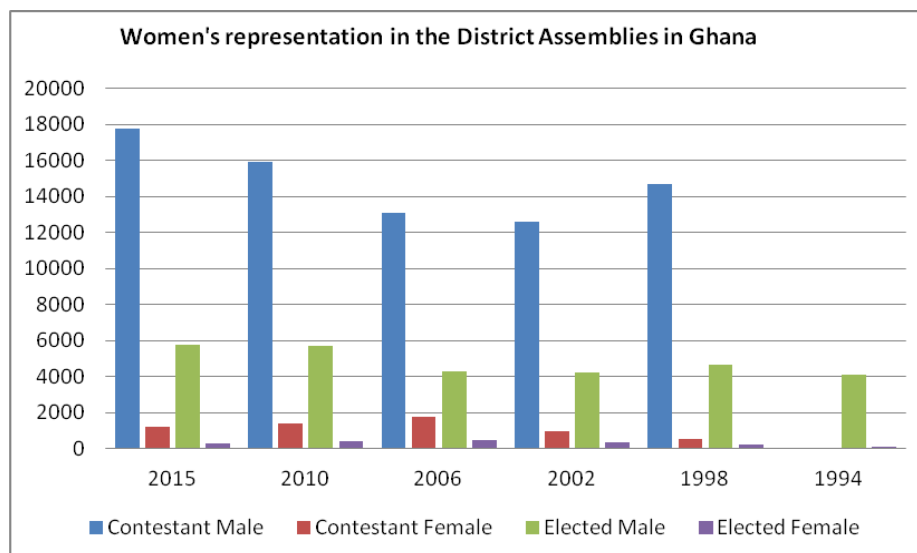


Figure 2: Women's Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana
(ABANTU for Development, 2009; Paaga, 2016)

The Bar graph (Figure 2) gives a pictorial description of the situation of female representation in the district assemblies (DAs) in Ghana. The figures and percentages of the representation are also presented in a table on page 24 to support further the argument that though there were no reserved seats for women in the assemblies yet, won elected positions in the DAs.

Ghana practices modern governance system such as the local government administration, yet the system is sometimes influenced by the traditional structures, ethnicity, socialisation, socio-cultural beliefs and practices, and customary laws, which also disadvantage women in positions of authority. The next part of this study presents the socio-cultural practices in the Ghanaian society.

Socialisation and Socio-Cultural Barriers to Women's Participation in Public Office

The limited number of female representatives in positions of responsibility in government results from the unequal gender power relations in the Ghanaian society. This part of the chapter gives an extensive review of the Ghanaian socio-cultural

beliefs and practices that tend to limit women's opportunities to engage in the public sphere. The public space, hitherto primarily reserved for men was as a result of the gender construction in society. Gender can be understood as a socially constructed relationship between males and females, which is shaped by culture, norms, customs, values and social relations (Flores, 2005). Gender construction is, therefore, a process of nurturing and influencing individuals with the social norms, rules and values, and the allocation of gendered responsibilities or roles in society (Britwum, 2009). The social construction of gender roles and status (gender construction), patriarchal systems and structures have disadvantaged women and perpetuate gender inequality in society. These concepts in the social structures describe how gender inequality is enforced, probably because of the associations of the cultural systems (beliefs and practices). There are clear links between the socio-cultural practices and gender construction where the connection relates to the historical legacy of patriarchal forces and agents (e.g. family, marriage, cultural practices, religion, social norms and values). Subsequently, culture and cultural systems, patriarchy and patriarchal agents are presented to surmise how they contribute to the disadvantaged position of women in Ghana.

Culture

Culture is a complex whole including beliefs, art, religion, values, norms, ideas, laws, knowledge, and customs, which are socially shared among people in society and passed on through either an ethnic group, clans or families of the generations (Umar, 2011; Hofstede, 1980). For example, the culture of individuals is the totality of their experiences acquired through the transmission of heritage from one generation to another about how to learn, eat, drink, behave, walk, dress and work. Consequently, people are born in the environment of culture and, therefore, shared

values are accumulated, integrated, responsive, changing, which continuous and makes it the memory of their human race. In Ghana, society is divided into five major ethnic groups including Akan, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Guans and Mole-Dagbane who have settled across the 10 regions of the country (Refer to Figure 1). The cultural practices of each ethnic group feature patriarchal systems that uphold male's notional superiority and advantages (Amoakohene, 2004; Boateng, 2006, 2009; Coalition of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana [CWMG], 2004; Ebila, 2011; Prah, 2004; Sam, 2010).

Patriarchy

Patriarchy, a word derived from the Greek language means "the rule of the father" as a father or the patriarch holds authority over women and children (Kay, 2005). Initially, in the nineteenth century, Weber used the patriarchy concept and referred to it as a patrimonialism where the concentration was on the father (patriarch) dominating the households. However, patriarchy as a concept was maintained in the twentieth century to signify men rather than fathers specifically and can be attributed to the developments in feminist thought, women's studies and gender studies (Jóhannsdóttir, 2009). Also, patriarchy is a system of government where older and younger men ruled society through their position as household heads (Duncan, 1994). Adibi (2006) defined patriarchy as males (fathers, husbands and brothers) having precise control over women and family; in this instance, referring to how women relied on men for survival as wives sought permission from husbands, male partners or fathers before engaging in politics and any public activities. Further explanations of patriarchy by Adibi (2007) indicate that patriarchal societies have endured throughout history, and were surviving in the economic, political and religious change, which sustained gender differences. Akita (2010) in his thesis also explains patriarchy as a

structure of power relations which endorses male supremacy and female subordination.

These deep-rooted patterns of socio-cultural practices and patriarchal agents including the family system, marriage, religion, and funeral ceremonies are inclined to privilege men over women and perpetuate gender differences and inequality (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; Britwum, 2009; Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Mahamadu, 2010; Moghadam, 2003).

Family System

The family system formed through a male and female uniting, creates a strong bond between people, and it is the primary source of an individual's culture, identity, loyalty, recognition, status and responsibility. The Ghanaian culture is a collective one where families share any loss or achievement or honours, including political achievements, but men are at the advantage side (Umar, 2011). The families also facilitate gender construction, resulting in the socially constructed gender power relations and roles. Two types of family lineages (i.e. matrilineal and patrilineal family inheritance) are recognised in Ghana, which reveal two major types of succession and inheritance rights among the ethnic groups. These succession types are linked to the legacy systems, which share two features: a distinction between family and individual property; and for male siblings as heirs, who are entitled to inherit family property than female children or nieces (Schwimmer, 2006). As a result, the two systems of inheritance rights become privileges of the male against the female in a family or a clan. For instance, with the patrilineal type of inheritance, heirs who are mostly males are chosen from the paternal lineage to inherit property, whereas, in the matrilineal form of succession, male heirs who are often nephews are chosen above daughters and nieces from the maternal lineage to inherit property.

Also, among the matrilineal Akan families, members' right to inheritance of an estate, farms, and bank accounts in the first instance goes to the oldest surviving brother of either a deceased male or female. The beneficiaries to the inherited properties, typically men, can increase their wealth through investing in inherited assets, which further enhances their relative economic, political and social status to the disadvantage of women in the family (Prah, 2004). As a result of biases in the allocation of capital resources, inheritance and assets, the females' opportunities to gain financial resources to engage in any public activities tend to be impeded (Kabeer, 2002). The diverse cultural practices mark the subdivisions in the ethnic groups in Ghana, but each group shares a common cultural heritage, history, origin and language as well as marriage (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; Schwimmer, 2006).

Marriage

Marriage, as a universal social institution has been an individual's rite of responsibility. Among the ethnic groups in Ghana, the rites happen within the families of a male and a female. This rite of passage also determines the Ghanaian status of a lifetime achievement within their families (Nyarko, 2013). Thus, an unmarried matured person or a divorcee may find it difficult to occupy an elected political position or a throne of traditional governance; that makes marriage a societal responsibility among many Ghanaians. The marriage types in Ghana include the customary or traditional system of marriage, which involves the families of the couple and it is characterised by polygamous relationship, hence, a man could marry more than one wife. The other type of marriage is the ordinance marriage that requires registration in court after the traditional engagement, and it forbids any form of polygamy of which the offence attracts fines, court settlement or divorce. It is the

ordination marriage that some religious sects or churches organise wedding ceremonies for the Christian couple, which indicates the people's religiosity.

Religion

Religion is as central to the majority of people's lives as it is to politics. Religion has, therefore, been another agent of patriarchy, which could negatively influence women's leadership abilities and political lives (Lu, 2016; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The major religious sects in Ghana are Christianity, Traditional and Islamic. The 2010 Population Census in Ghana indicated that 71.2% of the population identified as Christians, 17.6% as Moslems and 5.2% as being of the Traditional religious faith, and 5.3% of the people is not affiliated with any religion (Nyarko, 2013). According to Burke (2012), conservative religions such as Catholicism limit women's leadership role and the church is not willing to involve them in their religious institutional structures, and the reasons given emphasise the supposed existential differences between men and women. However, pagan and early churches had women as priestesses (Witherington, 1991). Paxton & Hughes (2016) also assert that countries with more protestant Christians attained women's political rights earlier than in countries with the dominance of Catholicism.

Furthermore, whereas Christians such as those in the Church of Christ and other types of Protestant Churches, accept the ordination of women as priests, those in the Roman Catholic Church refuse such conferment (Hooper & Siddique, 2010; Levitt, 2012; Nair, 2000). There have been the critics of the Vatican's decision even internally; an example was Vivienne Hayes, a chief executive of the Women's Resource Centre in the Catholic Church (Hooper & Siddique, 2010). Moreover, most critics argue that the churches that were against women's leadership only wanted to mire themselves in ancient patriarchal tradition (Mahamadu, 2010; Scott, 2010; Vlas

& Gherghina, 2012). Once the congregation of the Catholic religion adhere to its doctrines universally, believers in these Christian churches in Ghana also limit women's involvement in the priesthood, which also affects their leadership responsibilities.

Similarly, the Islamic religion has never authorised females to lead or preach to a congregation of mixed sexes (Siddiqi, 2005). The Ghanaian traditional religious beliefs in the form of taboos and myths also influence the economic and political empowerment opportunities and gender roles of many Ghanaian women. For example, it was a taboo for females to work in mining sites in some rural areas in the Western region of Ghana (Addei & Amankwaa, 2011). Thus, it can be observed that the predominant religions influencing the contemporary Ghanaian society forbid women from engaging in leadership roles. Since politics as a profession requires engaging in social leadership, for the many of the females who have professed the religious beliefs that limit women's leadership roles, this has made them reluctant to engage in public activities such as politics.

Funeral Rites

Other cultural functions such as the funeral rites present mixed opportunities for both men and women in Ghana. Ghanaians organise funeral rites almost every week, and it is during these ceremonies that political parties and politicians donate cash and materials and use the occasions' platforms to indirectly campaign (Aborampah, 1999; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001; Morrison, 2004). As politicians announce their presence and affirm their political affiliations, males in the communities avail themselves to make contact with these politicians while females busied themselves entertaining guests, cooking and serving drinks to well-wishers and sympathisers (Aborampah, 1999). Notably, it has been argued that these customary practices and

platforms hamper the chances for women to socialise in ways that broadened their social networks (Manuh, 2011).

However, according to Kempe (2011), Ghanaian women and other people develop social networks through gatherings, social media platforms, through an individual's relationships; in friendships, collaborations, business partnership, and romantic relationships. Mobility had become part of political activism, and as a result, networking is also used to enhance the building of constituencies for future political engagement (Norris, 2004). Therefore, contrary to the arguments of Aborampah, it is possible that women could also use funeral platforms as strategic fora in their ways to rejuvenate their relationships with the public, network, and build constituencies that may seem to support their political ambitions. Thus, when the ambitious women notice male aspirants, they tend to strike acquaintance to the extent of discussing any political issues in the country, thereby introducing themselves to the reality of politics.

Social Class

There is another critical aspect of social structure where people are categorised into social class in society, which takes place according to their social status and the culture as customary practices are producing gender inequality that is aligned with such social classes. As a result, social class structures has been a fundamental factor sustaining inequality in general and gender inequality through patriarchy in particular. In the Ghanaian society, the social stratification upholds class patterns where social classes are assumed into three categories. These categories are the 'Royals', which include the kings, noble or great advisors to a king, and queen mothers who maintain exclusive right to the traditional kingdoms among the ethnic groups in Ghana (Patel, 2012). The second class or category of people is named the 'commoners' such as income earners or average middle-class workers, while the third class or category is

considered as the living poor in which women have been categorised among them (Patel, 2012; Schwimmer, 2006).

Moreover, Boadu (2002) asserts that social class could determine access to resources, such as medical care and adequate housing, the nature of the physical and urban environment, income and education within their jurisdiction and are the privileged beneficiaries of social amenities. Thus, the class of individuals also reflect differential opportunities within their cultural beliefs and practices. The sub-cultures and social practices also set parameters for women's different position in public spaces and limit their power through mechanisms such as gender-differential terms to inheritance rights in line with customary laws (CWMG, 2004; Prah, 2004; Sam, 2010; Schwimmer, 2006).

Customary Laws

The customary laws are unwritten rules that apply to particular communities, and in Ghana, they existed immediately before the 1992 Ghanaian constitution came into force. Chapter 4 of the 1992 constitution states that customary laws shall not be affected by the coming into force of the 1992 constitution. The 1992 constitution could uphold any cultural practices with the implication that the law does not challenge many of the customary laws and practices such as marriage, traditional religions, funeral rites and widowhood rites. Thus, even when these cultural practices contradict more contemporary practices, they are upheld in traditional areas in Ghana. Such adherents to these cultural practices, disadvantage women from competing in public spaces to gain influential positions in society (CWMG, 2004; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Prah, 2004).

Also, such inequality in the socio-cultural settings makes women's contributions to productive, reproductive and community work often less visible and

less valued than the contributions of men. Until the 1980s, development planners had failed to incorporate women's roles in development processes as there were gender preferences in education and in many sectors of society (March, Smyth & Mukyopadhyay, 1999). For instance, in some rural areas, patriarchal norms encouraged the preference for male child education to the disadvantage of females (Amoakohene, 2004; Boateng, 2009; Coalition for Women's Manifesto for Ghana [CWMG], 2004; Prah, 2004).

Preference to Male Education

Prioritising male education and subject segregation, such as for boys to study administration while girls were trained in home economics and home management skills, was widely practised. The belief relegated many females to private spheres of life, where they developed the interest in home management, which in turn reduced their interest in public activities, and politics (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; Ebila, 2011; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Sam, 2010). Such educational discrepancies arose from the notion that women were 'second-class citizens' and that 'woman's place was in the home and kitchen'. These kinds of social practices were not designed with the goal of gender equality in decision-making positions, and they illustrate the perception of one way on how women depend on men for survival (Makama, 2013).

Females as Dependants

In some rural communities in Ghana, the common beliefs that females must depend on males for survival extend to a moral stance that women must not argue with men in public. These beliefs were supported by Ghanaian adages that *Obaa to tuo a etwere barima dan mu* or *Obaa to tuo a etwere barima bo*, literally meaning 'When a

woman buys a gun, it is placed in a man's room or 'it is placed in a man's bosom'; (it is believed that compared to a woman, a man should hold a gun because of his bravery); *Obaa ton nyaadoa, na onton atuduro* meaning, a 'Woman sells garden eggs and not gun powder' (women should not venture into the men's world). The implication of these cultural beliefs and proverbs consistently illustrate the expectation that a woman should submit to a man.

More significantly, in the rural areas, the cultural practices admonished women to operate in the private spheres, enforcing gender inequality in the public sphere of life. In 2003, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reported that it was challenging for a woman to take a unilateral decision to engage in public activities such as politics in Ghana. Thus, compared with a married man who could act more unilaterally, a married woman needed to make her husband, children and other family members aware of her decision to engage in politics. Although men sometimes show their interest in politics with their activities in the communities, a woman may have to inform the family before she starts the community and civic engagement. Thus, she has to notify the family and lobby for social, emotional assistance and financial support. After she had convinced her immediate families to support her, and eventually decided to apply for a ticket to contest an election, the male contenders, not convinced about her status and ability in politics, would make up all sorts of stories about her (Boateng, 2009).

Aside from the intimidation such as insults, and name calling from males and females, the party structures may not have selected her to contest on the party ticket for fear of losing that seat. Despite the differences in the stages of development, in political and economic structures, women's relative status and bargaining power in Ghana have been continuously less than that of men in their cultures (Boateng, 2009; Kessey, 1997).

Gender Roles

Similarly, gender inequality happens through the roles men and women perform in the private sphere as in public domain. Furthermore, patriarchy has been shown to be related to the concept of gender roles, or the set of social and behavioural norms that society considers socially appropriate for individuals of a particular sex (Singh, 2016). For instance, Moser (1993) viewed gender roles from the perspectives of the Triple Roles Framework: Productive, Reproductive and Community functions. In that framework, the female's productive roles entail the production of goods and services for consumption and trade. These roles are the tasks undertaken to earn income, including working in civil and public services and private sector employment. The productive activities take place in the formal and informal areas such as banking, petty trading, fishing, farming, transportation and food processing. In Ghana, women contribute to family maintenance through the income they earn from paid jobs or subsistence production (Ofei-Aboagye, 2001, 2004; Samorodov, 1999). Irrespective of the productive status of women in Ghana, some women find it difficult to access resources such as land, credit and technical assistance that could help them increase their production and probably engage in politics (Bugri, Yeboah & Agana, 2014).

Many females also perform productive roles alongside the reproductive responsibilities or domestic activities. According to Østergaard (1994, p. 5), "... the domestic activities which maintain or 'reproduce' daily life is mainly allocated to women, while the more extroverted and distant income-generating activities are assigned to men." Reproduction was seen as not only involving reproducing children but also maintaining the home including caring for the family and nurturing the sick and the aged (Adu-Okoree, 2012; Dosu, 2014; Kwapong, 2008; Ramashala, 2016). These functions of the female legitimated as an assigned role as being linked to female

biology, ensured that there was a continuous supply of healthy, disciplined and hardworking labour force in various fields of endeavour, which could guarantee national cohesion, growth and development (Kwapong, 2008). In Ghana, reproductive roles are labour intensive, and although they are crucial and significant to maintaining the nation's human resources, the role is barely recognised as work (Horn, 2013). Therefore, the unpaid nature of the typical female role has been difficult to challenge. Put another way, policy formulators and implementers in Africa have not fully recognised these female caring functions (Essoungou & Ighobor, 2012). As a result, the household activities of women are seldom considered real work and are usually unpaid (Oláh, Richter & Kotowska, 2014).

In order to empower women, the gender inequity in the allocation of reproductive tasks need to be addressed through the strategic support of their interests (i.e. provision of strategic gender interest or needs), which include maternal policies, reproductive rights and letting women have control over their bodies and sexuality (Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013). In congruence, Moghadam (2003) asserts that the women needing to be available to attend to reproductive roles required the mentioned above types of protection to offset their disadvantage. Moghadam added that these measures would also challenge the unequal power relations in society. Moghadam's (2003) assertions are consistent with the arguments raised by gender theories and advocates of the Gender and Development (GAD) theory (see Chapter 2). For instance, a woman whose reproductive responsibilities were supported with resources such as nursery facilities in the Ghanaian occupational environment or the political institutions would be able to engage in public activities or attend to her productive, reproductive and community gender responsibilities.

As part of their community responsibilities, women engage in providing support services such as cooking, sweeping, cleaning, carrying ritual bowls and entertaining guests for community members during important life passage rites such as naming ceremonies, puberty rites, marriage ceremonies, festivals and funeral rites (Moser, 1993, 2003).

The women's community roles also include the maintenance of natural resources such as forests, water bodies and land for collective consumption. Studies have shown that the sustainability of the environment and the conservation of nature remain mostly within women's roles as women and girls are often responsible for providing their households with the necessities of life such as food, water and fuel (WomenWatch, 2009; DeVoe et al., n.d). These community roles also include development tasks such as payment of levies, taxes, development funds and the fetching of sand and water for the construction of community projects, which were crucial for community development. Local political activities, such as serving on local committees and community groups are also part of the community responsibilities. All these activities contribute to the advancement of a family, the community and the nation, but these female responsibilities are not acknowledged as part of the public actions such as politics. That is when women perform their community management responsibilities, society perceived their actions as the extension of domestic or private work as they only recognise the women as mothers and wives (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012).

By contrast, the role of men in public events and local politics, which are considered public work, also involve their participation in community engagement as town committee members, traditional politics and local government administration such as the Unit Committees, attract recognition. Unlike women, men were rewarded

directly or indirectly through status, power and prestige in their performance in public and community events. Thus, the Ghanaian socio-cultural, economic and political structures as discussed continue to hinder women's political advancement as many ethnic groups perpetuate the belief in men's superiority over women with regards to public activities (Akita, 2010).

Moreover, the men's roles and the awards they receive enable them to develop networking, communication skills, leadership and political skills, which boost their public engagements in local and national politics. As a result, this has given men an advantage over women in occupying political positions. As the gendered socio-cultural norms determine access to rights, resources and decision-making power positions, the inequitable distribution of resources results in the unequal status of women (Akita, 2010). Also, research has shown that the participation of women in the home and community development was mostly the result of a process of socialisation or gendering that leads them to think of political activity in a different way than men (Chhibber, 2003). According to Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes (2007, p. 266), gender socialisation "influence women's interest, knowledge and ambition regarding politics." Moreover, these gendering and socialisation processes tend to be universal, and women have not been very successful in altering their disadvantaged political and economic standing. Thus, females have not kept pace with their male counterparts in gaining much access to political participation and decision-making positions (Phillips, 1991).

As a result of the inequality in the distribution of the limited resources, in the Ghanaian context, stakeholders, including women's groups, NGOs, feminists and gender activists advocating for justice are frustrated by the difference between the ideal situation of equal representation in decision-making positions and the real situation

where the patriarchal systems, as well as cultural practices, constrain women (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Kabeer, 2001; Mensah & Boateng, 2012; Soetan, 2001; Yazdani, 2003). The holistic view of the Ghanaian society as the features may be similar to many other cultures and that may have prompted the theorists and advocates of gender and development to propose empowerment to minimise the inequality situations in society. Gender and development (GAD), therefore, underpins this study, which is used to discuss references to roles and needs; practical gender needs, strategic needs and interests; access to and control of resources and benefits. Chapter two of this study presents the origin of GAD and its advocacy. Also, reference is made to GAD during the analysis of the study findings.

Aside from GAD, other activities by groups in societies are gradually altering the social structures, and as a result, women's empowerment and support for gender equality have been the agenda of many societies. Also, female education is influencing the social norms, and it has encouraged many to get exposed and aspire to socio-political status, which has enabled them to navigate through these deep-rooted patriarchal structures and systems to occupy positions in government.

From the discussion presented, inequality manifests in access to justice, health, finance, security, energy, agricultural practices, environmental management processes, gender stereotyping, persistent discrimination against women and inequality in politics (Joeke, Green & Leach, 1996; Lawal, Ayoade & Taiwo, 2016). Thus, these cultural beliefs and socialisation processes are interlinked to the roles and responsibilities of a female or a male, which influence their access to opportunity and limited resources in the Ghanaian society have been noted by GAD.

The ensuing part of this chapter presents women's participation in politics.

Participation and Representation of Ghanaian Women in Politics

Previous studies had shown that equal representation of men and women in decision-making posts in the local level government of countries could be used to measure a country's level of development ([IPU], 2015; Kurebwa, 2013). Also, Kabeer (1999) added that since democracy gives importance to the voice of everyone in society, having the voice of women in local and national assemblies and all sectors of decision-making provides its legitimacy. Moreover, the world is advocating for gender equality and having a fair representation of women in decision-making positions re-emphasises the idea of popular participation, and equal rights for females and males, a goal that would have helped reach the MDG 3 (gender equality and women's empowerment). The objective of the local government system under the decentralisation processes in Ghana is to ensure more equitable participation of people in government (ABANTU for Development, 2003), which should include women.

At the local level, women's active involvement in steering and directing public affairs including development activities was critical to the successful implementation of government policies such as the then Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005). Thus, the idea that local governance was right for women being undoubtedly necessary was occurring on a practical level. The GPRS was succeeded by the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agendas (GSGDA) I & II, as national development framework and the roles of women played an enormous part in the successful implementation. GSGDA represented the costing framework for the effective implementation of the policies and strategies outlined in the GSGDA II in many sectors and with expertise in Ghana.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development also aims to promote the economic empowerment of women through access to land, credit, information

technology and business services and networks (National Development Planning Commission [NDPC], 2015). The medium-term policies in the focus area of the NDPC aim at achieving the following key objectives: I. Reduce undernutrition and malnutrition-related disorders and deaths among infants and young children and women in their reproductive ages; II. Ensure effective coordination, integration and implementation of nutrition interventions in relevant sectors; and III. Ensure improved nutrition among all segments of the population. These responsibilities are similar to female reproductive roles that seek to nurture the person to become healthy and strong for the labour force (Boateng, 2009), thereby extending reproductive roles from the private sphere to the public space.

In development agendas, the women become closer to the home and at the local level as there was the need for her to combine multiple roles (reproduction, production and community roles). The argument of combining multiple roles had contributed to the support of the idea that the local governance system was the easiest avenue for women to take part in public decision-making processes (Beall, 2004; Evertzen, 2001; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). Studies by Evertzen (2001), and Thomi, Yankson and Zanu (2000) have shown that local government could be a good place to address gender inequalities in society. Not surprisingly, in many African countries, and Ghana not an exception, women are appointed to head the social welfare department or Women and Children Department or Ministries where the poor and vulnerable, people with disability, and women's concerns and needs are addressed.

In Ghana, since the creation of the hitherto Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs in 2002, which have changed to Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, all the appointed Ministers, have been women. These female Ministers have been responsible to vulnerable persons, women, children, the poor, the abused,

and other domestic and national victims in Ghana. Drafting the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry make these female politicians appear as social workers than playing political roles (Castillejo, 2009), which is equally significant to the development of a nation.

Society recognises the natural roles of females; hence these responsibilities are instinctive and distinctive. It was not unusual to observe local public policy such as gender budgeting aiming at addressing specific gender issues in the districts. However, the district assemblies do not resolve the concerns of men and women equitably in line with their status and responsibilities in society (CWMG, 2004; Handa et al., 2014; Selby, 2011). The problem was that although addressing the individual female constituents' problems such as domestic violence, child maintenance or livelihoods, which involved personal intervention, were undoubtedly the integral part of being a local leader. Since these services are considered female gender roles, they did not attract the deserved policy to addressing the issues as they were unrecognised and not regarded as an integral part of the government processes.

Under the local government system in Ghana, there was no strict observation of the gender mainstreaming, where the concerns of males and females are equally included in the programs and projects of government. For example, there was the limited provision of nursery and nursing facilities for nursing mothers to combine gender responsibilities as only a few females were acting as representatives in the district assemblies as the system did not attract them. Thus, the district assembly elections in Ghana continued to record low numbers of women candidates, which resulted in low numbers of female representatives in the assemblies (Odame, 2010; Tsikata, 2009).

Wanting to establish gender equality in the decision-making positions in government has been a major focus. Many scholars have, therefore, researched and found out the problems influencing the low participation and representation of women in the local government system. These studies have reported the causes of low participation of women in the governance system and in the district assemblies, which suggested measures for stakeholders to enhance gender equality in local government. For instance, Gyimah and Thompson (2008) reported on women's participation in the Nadowli District in Ghana and revealed that intimidation, lack of recognition and illiteracy were among the major obstacles. Also, according to Oguonu (2004), lack of resources to execute planned projects, corruption, ignorance, discrimination and exclusion were factors that inhibit women from participating in local government systems in Nigeria. A report by Reshma and Gowda (2012) on India's local government system or the Panchayat indicated yet other obstacles similar to those identified by Gyimah and Thompson. Reshma and Gowda (2012) emphasised that the patriarchal cultures in India did not allow women to take part in public activities. More so, women who were already in government faced intimidation and discrimination even though there were constitutional amendments since April 1993.

Mahamadu's (2010) thesis even went as far as describing how government officials in a metropolis discouraged women from engaging in government because men were heads of households. Aside from socio-cultural factors, the economic situation also hampered women's interest to engage in politics. For instance, some assembly members in Ghana found it challenging to perform as they were not paid salaries and reasonable sitting allowances (Adusei-Asante, 2012). The studies on less representation of women in decision-making positions as discussed above suggest how

the socio-economic and political systems continue to impede women's representation in government and support the Ghanaian argument.

The emphasis on the obstacles to women's participation in government in the literature was necessary to influence policy decisions to ensure gender equality in government. However, Ukpore's (2009) report resonated with my interest in conducting this proposed study. Although there is dynamism in comparing Ukpore's study interest in sustainable development to this current study, which aimed to explore women's roles to win elected position in government, the focus is on the role women play in governance in spite of the challenges. Ukpore confirmed that there were women who have achieved prominence in modern political and governmental spheres for sustainable development just that they were only a few in numbers. Also, in Ukpore's study, it is postulated that the women's roles, particularly on their skills and strategies they employed to contribute to development at the grassroots level aiming to reduce poverty, were being noticed. This meant that there are significant roles women play in governance that are not recognised. It is similar to women's efforts to participate in government to enhance gender equality, yet their efforts have been overlooked, and stakeholders are concentrating more on the obstructing factors to their low representation in politics. The findings of this study, which presents women's strategies and efforts to win elections could influence policy decisions to enhance gender equality. Also, other women may adopt the strategies to engage in local politics, which may enhance the number of females in the district assemblies.

In Ghana, the details of gender distribution for 1994 to 2015 in district assemblies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Women's Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana (1994-2015)

Contestants				Elected				
Year	Female	Male	Total	Female	%	Male	%	Total
2015	1182	17756	18938	282	4.65	5779	95.35	6061
2010	1376	15939	17315	412	7.95	5681	92.05	6093
2006	1772	13084	14856	478	10.1	4254	89.9	4732
2002	965	12625	13590	341	7.4	4241	92.6	4582
1998	547	14696	15243	196	4.1	4624	95.9	4820
1994	N/A	N/A	N/A	122	2.9	4082	97.1	4204

Reference: ABANTU for Development, (2009); EC (2010, 2015)

Table 1 shows trends of district assembly election results for contested and elected males and females from 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2015. Since 1994 there had been a slow but steady improvement in the female representation in the district assemblies, except for the percentage, which is less than 20%. Also, out of the 965 female contestants in the 2002 district assembly elections, 341 (7.4%) got elected as against the 196 (4.1%) elected in 1998 (Tsikata, 2009). The percentage of elected female members in the district assemblies (DAs) declined from 11% in 2008 to 7% in 2010. Thus, the 2010 district assembly (DA) election results showed that out of a total number of 17, 315 contestants, 1, 376 were females, but only 412 (7.95%) won the elections, compared with the 5681 (92.05%) won by their male counterparts. This trend continued into the September 1, 2015, district assembly elections, which recorded total contestants of 18, 938 with 1,155 as female contestants as against 17,783 males, resulting in 5,779 (95.35%) elected males as against 282 (4.65%) elected females (Paaga, 2016). From all indications, the results from the election presented a decrease in the number of women in the DAs from 412 in 2010 to 282 in 2015.

The assumption is that subsequent elections should record an increased number of contestants and elected representatives, however, the 2015 district assembly

elections witnessed a drop in progression. Some reasons accounted for the decline, and the participants attributed them to first, the major setback; the postponement of the election on two occasions, which frustrated a lot of the females, mainly where they had not gathered enough financial resources to campaign vigorously comparable to their male counterparts. From table 1 it is seen that if many women were to contest elections, more would likely be winning, but in such patriarchal cultural settings, with no gender quotas, many are discouraged from engaging in politics.

Nonetheless, with the steady improvement in the results from the many DA elections, efforts were continuously made to enhance the number of women in the district assemblies. In particular, gender advocates including, NETRIGHT, 31st December Women's Movement (31st DWM), WiLDAF-Ghana, and ABANTU for Development did not relent in their efforts. These organisations and individuals trained and supported more women and increased their economic and political opportunities as they engaged in local politics (Tucker & Ludi, 2012). The exposure to public sphere and activities at the lower level could help raise the status of women and increased their presence in political power and decision-making positions (Little & Lewin, 2011). Ghana continuously emphasised the relevance for females to be in decision-making positions as the electoral system and political system, without the doubt, influenced political representation at all levels of government (Ohman & Lintari, 2015).

Electoral System in Ghana

The electoral system is a set of laws that regulate electoral competition between candidates or parties or both (Maier, Zachariassen & Zachariassen, 2010). In contemporary democratic regimes, elections are central, and much depends on the election rules that provide a primary means of ensuring that governments remain

responsive and accountable to their citizens (Bormann & Golder, 2013). Hence, electoral systems and laws have considerable influence on the structure of partisan competition and representation in governance (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2011; Golder et al., 2015). Electoral systems have three main categories –majoritarian, proportional, and mixed electoral systems (Golder et al., 2015).

In a majoritarian electoral system, the candidates or parties that receive the most votes have won the election. Some majoritarian systems require complete majority systems where the winning candidate or party obtain an absolute majority of the votes. Other systems require only that the candidate or party wins more votes than anyone else. Ghana's electoral system is a majoritarian type or the 'Winner-Takes-All' or 'First-Past-The-Post' (FPTP) electoral system. After a general election in Ghana, a presidential candidate of a party needs to secure 50% plus one-vote to be declared a winner. Also, a candidate in a parliamentary election with a one-vote win against a contender is declared a winner under the winner-takes-all system (AfriMap, OSIWA & Institute for Democratic Governance [IDEG], 2007; Tsikata, 2009). According to Lodge and Gottfried (2011), FPTP works best under a two major party system of governance so that the party that wins in an election would have secured the majority of the votes cast. Ghana's multi-party democracy features two dominant political parties; National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) where the government had been alternating between these two parties. With the central governance system in place, when the two major political parties filed nominations for many females to contest any general elections, the chances for the women to win were high. However, the prevailing social system encouraged party leaders to engage more males than females in political contests. Thus, for fear of losing seats in their strongholds, as said earlier, the leadership of political parties filed many more

nominations for males than females during general elections (Boateng, 2009). Where the leaders of a political party filed a nomination for a male amongst the party faithful, this meant political parties bore responsibilities for the relatively low representation of women being nominated and the opportunity to be elected to government (Ballington, 2012; Paxton et al., 2007; Tsikata, 2009).

Accordingly, stakeholders become concerned about the electoral system, which has resulted in the low representation of females in local and national politics. For instance, they expressed such concerns during the monitoring of the December 2016 General Elections in Ghana. Representatives from the observer groups and international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), European Union Election Observer Missions (EUEOMs), and Commonwealth Election Observer Missions (CEOMs) had similar complaints. They observed the low participation of women in the electoral contest, praising only the high levels of activity by women in the voting process. Also, they commented that only one female presidential aspirant was battling against six male contenders in the December 2016 General Elections. The observer groups' recommendations to the government of Ghana were to create a more enabling environment for women as contestants in elections and participate in government actively.

The observers also recommended that Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) should recruit more women during elections to assume the responsibilities of returning officers, and polling officers, which would encourage other women to engage in public activities (The EU Election Observer Mission [EUEOM], 2016). It can be noted that Chapter 5 of the 1992 Ghanaian constitution guarantees equality of political rights to engage in national and local politics (Tsikata, 2009). However, as a result of the socio-cultural systems in society, gender inequity presented challenges as women faced

many obstacles in the political regime (Sam, 2010). Ghana's commitment to international treaties such as Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce gender inequality meant, the political and governance systems were to be gender friendly to make women part of the political systems through affirmative action policies and other enforceable quota systems.

Political Systems and Governance in Ghana

Since 1992, Ghana had been a constitutional democracy with two spheres of government namely, the Central and Local government systems. The President of Ghana and Members of Parliament are popularly elected by universal adult suffrage through general elections for a four-year term of office, except in wartime, when an extension will be allowed of not more than twelve months at a time beyond the four-year tenure (Tsikata, 2009). The President of Ghana is the head of state and head of government, as well as the commander in chief of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). The Legislature or Parliament is also known as the National Assembly. Ghana's Parliament is a unicameral legislature, and as at 2017, the Members of Parliament (MPs) consisted of 275 including 35 (13%) females, and 240 (87%) of males who performed legislative functions (IPU, 2017).

In Ghana, the three arms or organs of government; the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary share power among themselves with checks and balances that regulate their authority and no branch of the arms of government is bequeathed with excessive power (The 1992 constitution of Ghana). There were provisions in the 1992 Ghanaian constitution on "Local Government and Decentralisation" that created the structural framework for the local administration and decentralisation, which

established significant areas of overlap between the local and central government (Thomi et al., 2000). This relationship between central government and local government affected the provision of public services and influenced the expenditure of public funds between the two levels of government. The relationship takes the form of collaboration and control, which could be found at various levels and in different sectors of the country (Boateng & Kosi, 2015). For instance, at the level of local governance, the district assembly is the highest administrative authority that is close to the day-to-day lives of ordinary people in Ghana (Ofei-Aboagye, 2015).

Under the decentralisation policy, the central government in this circumstance transferred competence and authority, material and human resources to the local areas to encourage widespread participation in the local government system (Ahwoi, 2010). Therefore, it was the responsibility of the central government to afford all possible opportunities, including financial, material and human resources to the people, and allowing for women to participate in decision-making processes at every level in national life (Awortwi, 2011). The local government administration at the grass root level is discussed below.

Local Government System in Ghana

Local government administration has been an essential component of the administrative system in Ghana before, during and after independence (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015). Thomi et al. (2000) described the system of local self-government as dating back to the colonisation of the coastal colony in 1844. Local self-government had devolved from regional and district administrations and constitutional authority, to state councils in the current system of decentralised and participatory local government. Therefore, the reforms in the local government administration in Ghana were aiming to design and establish a local government

system that responded to the political, economic and technological imperatives of the time (Thomi et al., 2000). ¹Various commissions and committees from 1949 to 1982 reformed the local government system and made recommendations that underscored the importance of which the various governments attached to ensuring women's participation, empowerment and capacity building at the local level. These reforms in the local government systems resulted in the promulgation of the *Local Government Law* 1988, *PNDC Law* 207.

Parliament amended the local government law 1988 (PNDC Law 207) in 1993, resulting in the *Act 462*, 1993. The *Act 462*, 1993 continued to be strongly influenced by the PNDC Law 207 that was aimed at ensuring more equitable participation of ordinary people in governance (ABANTU for Development, 2003; Faguet, 2005). The *Act 462*, 1993 was also influenced to a large extent by the 1992 constitution. Thus, *Article 240* of the 1992 constitution established the Local Government System. For instance, the *Article 240 (1)* of the constitution directs the State to have a system of Local Government Administration which should as far as practicable be decentralised.

The provisions stated in *Article 240* of the 1992 constitution and *Act 462* of 1993 were discussed by the government to indicate how they impacted on development at the local level. Local governments have become agents of the national/central government and were home-rule institutions to serve their various communities. Consequently, *section 10, 1-3* of *Act 462* sanctioned the district assemblies, which were the highest administrative authorities at the local government level, to be

¹ The various committees and commissions with established years that carried out reforms throughout the administration of local government were: Watson Committee (1949); Sir Coussey Committee (1949); Sir Sydney Philipson Commission (1951); The Frederick Bourne Committee (1955); Greenwood Commission (1957); Regional Constitutional Commission (1967); Akuffo-Addo Commission (1966); Mills Odoi Commission (1967); Constituent Assembly (1969); Okoh Commission (1974); Kuffour & Sowu Committee (1982). See Institute of Local Government Studies Digest (2009).

responsible for the overall development of the communities through the exercise of deliberative, legislative and executive powers (Ofei-Aboagye, 2004; Boateng & Kosi, 2015). The assemblies within the 10 regions of the country were to perform specific functions including planning, financing, budgeting, infrastructural development and internal security. As a result, people's habitation, markets, food, essential services, sanitation, environments, social interactions and even civic duty became the business of the district assembly (Ofei-Aboagye, 2004). However, there is the unequal representation of women in the decision-making processes to contribute to achieving the business of the assemblies.

The ten administrative regions in Ghana, comprise of Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta and Western. Each region has a Coordinating Council that is the highest regional administrative body. The regions are divided into metropolitan, municipal, district and sub-metropolitan assemblies (MMDAs) (AU, 2012). The subdivisions of the districts, such as the sub-metros are either governed by a Metropolitan, Municipal or one of the District Assemblies (MMDAs). Unless expressly stated, the mention of a district in this study means either Metropolitan, Municipal or District (Ahwoi, 2010). As at 2017, the number of districts was 216 to function under the local government system. The President of Ghana appoints the Regional Minister to head the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to be responsible for the coordination and harmonisation of plans and program of MMDAs under the local government system. The local government system and structure are directly linked to the central government in an intricately balanced five-tier system of public administration and the allocation of functions (Ahwoi, 2010).

The government through the President appoints 30% of members of the district assemblies (Ahwoi, 2010; Institute of Local Government Studies [ILGS], 2010; Sana,

2011). Half of the 30% appointed positions are to be reserved for women, which does not happen all the time as no legal instrument backs the directives. The remaining 70% of members of MMDAs are directly elected by universal adult suffrage during District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assembly Elections (DAEs) for a four-year term in office. The government in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) establishes a metropolitan assembly in each urban area with a population over 250,000 and a Municipal assembly, which is a council for a single town with a population of 95,000 or more. Figure 3 shows the structure of the current local government system in Ghana.

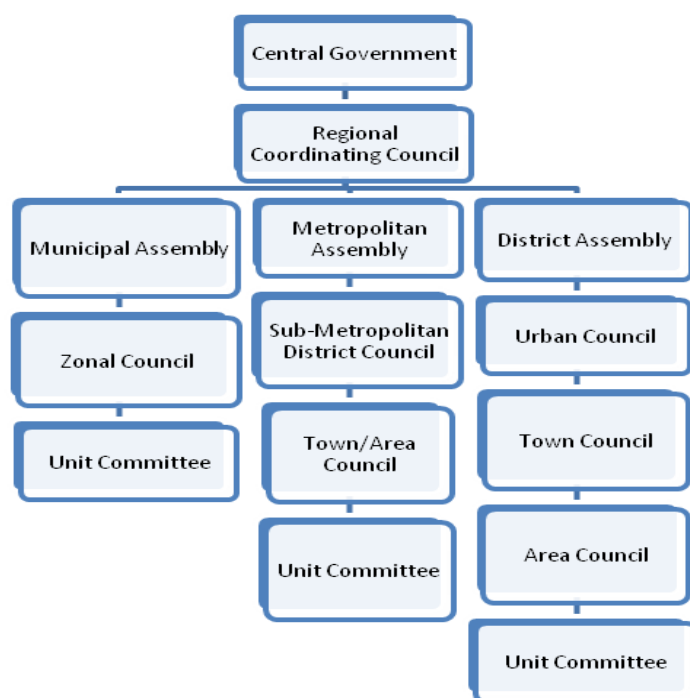


Figure 3: Local Government Structure in Ghana (Local Government Digest, 2008)

Figure 3 above presents how the assemblies are structured. For instance, the Metropolitan structure is four-tiered while the municipal and district assemblies are three-tiered. The intermediate town, area and zonal tiers are the sub-structures or the intermediate-tier councils, and the lower tiers are the unit committees. These sub-structures that composed of representatives of the district assemblies do not hold any

legislative or executive powers as the assemblies' delegate tasks to them. Thus, the town/area/zonal councils are composed of 5 representatives of the district assembly, 10 representatives of a unit committee and 5 government appointees to represent the assembly at the sub-structure levels. The unit committees at the lowest level of the structure are about 16,000 around the country, which compose of elected and appointed members (The 1992 Ghanaian constitution; Local Government Act of 1993).

A centrally appointed Executive Head, known as the District/Municipal or Metropolitan Chief Executive heads the district assembly. Thus, the President of Ghana nominates a District Chief Executive (DCE) for each District Assembly, and the President appoints the DCE with prior approval of two-thirds of the members of the district assembly present and voting. The DCE represent the president of the Republic in the district assembly at the local government administration (Ahwoi, 2010; Nordic Consulting Group [NCG] & DEGE Consultants, 2007). The appointment of the 30% membership of the Assembly and the Chief Executives is performed in consultation with traditional authorities and party leaders and is based on nominees' experience and expertise (Crawford, 2004; [ILGS], 2010; Manuh, 2011). Also, the appointment of the 30% of members of the district assemblies by the central government is needed to facilitate the government's control of developmental policies and also to facilitate the injection of needed technical and other expertise needed at the local level (Crawford, 2004). The 30% appointment positions also provide an opportunity to ensure that there is the representation of key interest groups that would not necessarily put themselves up for election including traditional authorities, women, persons with disabilities.

Previous reports, literature and the media highlight the issue of male superiority in institutions such as the district assembly, which membership has always been a male-dominated one. The discriminatory situation for females depicted how endemic the patriarchal structures and systems were in some parts of Ghana in the period following the 1947 to 1993 local government reforms (Amoakohene, 2004; [CWMG], 2004; Ebila, 2011; Mahamadu, 2010; Manuh, 2011; Sam, 2010). For instance, media reports indicate that the discrimination by some male members of the assembly had often resulted in the rejection of some female nominees for the position of DCEs. Consequently, the rejection of those nominated females often caused protests by women groups and other sympathisers. For instance, an all-female group named NPP Royal Ladies condemned an attack perpetrated by a group of young men who besieged the party in power's (NPP) headquarters in protest against the candidature of the only female contender for the Upper Denkyira East District in the Central Region. The candidate had been a formidable female political activist, but some young men thought the position she occupied as DCE should have been allocated to a male member of the party. Thus, irrespective of the women's influence, educational qualification and social status in the Ghanaian society, potential female politicians and political activists continue to struggle with male dominance. The protests against male dominance, including the showing of placards with inscriptions such as 'Mr. President, Remember, Gender Equality,' resulted in the re-appointment of some of the rejected women nominees for the assemblies' approval. The scenarios present vivid cases of discrimination that attracts scholars to dwell much on obstacles that hinder women's participation in the decentralisation system in Ghana.

The ABANTU for Development had re-affirmed that decentralisation could make government more responsive to the governed by increasing "citizen participation

and governmental accountability while improving the allocation of efficiency and equity in service distribution” (2003, p. 2). Essentially, whereas participation gives residents an important voice in local government decisions, accountability allows the people to hold the local government responsible in ways that could force the reversal of anomalies. Thus, the two central ideas of residents’ participation and government responsibility together are described as the underpinnings of Democratic Local Governance (DLG) (Blair, 2000). Democratic Local Governance (DLG) gives political rights to the citizenry for the reason that it is a “process of decentralisation whereby responsibility and authority are transferred to local bodies that are accessible and accountable to local citizens who enjoy full political rights and liberties” (Blair, 2000, p. 22).

In spite of the decentralisation processes, seeming to be promising as a mechanism for moving towards gender equity, the majority of Ghanaians were ignorant about how the local government system worked, especially because of the complexity of the system as outlined earlier (Ahmed, 2003; Krawczyk, 2013). Also, the Ghanaian populace was dissatisfied with how the local government system operated in Ghana. Notably, local government system had been running without inculcating in the administration of the citizenry and the civic relationship with their central government in a non-partisan manner. That is, the system had become complicated, and though it was supposed to be non-partisan, many people perceived that partisanship was attached to the process. Some members of the assembly, supposed to be apolitical or non-partisan even openly showed affiliation to particular political parties. Local government officials still owed allegiance to the central administration, but these officials were not supposed to be agents of the central government (Ahmed, 2003). For example, a former Local Government Minister in

Ghana commented that “political interests had always tainted the local government process; a situation that made the supposed non-partisan system a mirage” (Myjoyonline.com August 25, p. 1). The partisanship of the system was another reason why women found it difficult to compete with men in local politics, as politics was considered male occupation.

Part two of this chapter presents the issues regarding the under-representation of females in decision-making positions.

Part Two

Global Perspectives of Under-Representation of Women in Government

Women lag behind men in political participation and representation in decision-making positions (Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2012; McGing & White, 2012; UNDP, 2012). Although the global percentage of women in Parliament nearly doubled over a 20-year period (1995-2015), this started from a low proportion of 11.3% in 1995 and still represents a slow increase compared to the UN benchmarks set at 30% female representation in decision-making positions. Also, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) an International body has been reporting on women in parliament (Ocran, 2014). As of June 2016, only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians were women (IPU, 2016). In the same year, there were variations in the average percentage of female parliamentarians in single, lower and upper houses in each region of the world. The percentage rates in these regions were: Nordic countries (41.1); Americas (27.7); Europe excluding Nordic countries (24.3); sub-Saharan Africa (23.1); Asia (19.2); the Pacific (13.5) and Saudi Arabia (19.9) (IPU, 2017; Steichen, 2016). There were 38 States in which women accounted for less than 10% of members of parliament in single or lower houses, and other chambers with no women at all (IPU, 2016; Fortin-

Rittberger & Rittberger, 2015). As such, except Nordic countries, few countries had reached the UN benchmark of 30% women's representation in government (Ballington, 2012; IPU, 2015; Torto, 2013).

In 2015, IPU indicated that throughout the world in 2013 there was a 1.5% rise of female members of Parliament (MPs), but the rate of increase declined to only 0.3% in 2014. According to IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong, "after the optimism and belief in 2013 that gender parity in parliament was within reach of a generation, the lack of significant progress in 2014 was a major blow (IPU, 2015). The IPU report emphasised that a decline occurred in the regions of Africa and the Pacific, thus, despite the indexes showing that these regions included some of the highest-ranking countries.

The African country, Rwanda had the strongest representation of women in parliament with 64% women to 36% male Members of Parliament (Bruce-Lockhart, 2015; IPU, 2015). Bolivia in South America also had strong women's representation in Parliament of 53.1% (IPU, 2015). By the end of 2016, only Rwanda and Bolivia had 50% or more women in parliament in single or lower houses. In 2012 there were 29 (11%) females and males were 246 (89%) among the 275 MPs in Ghana, and after the 2016 general elections, Ghana's Parliament recorded 35 (13%) female MPs and 240 (87%) male MPs out of the 275 Members of Parliament. Although there was the steady increase in the number of female MPs, the analysis by international bodies that recorded women in parliament suggested that there was no much improvement globally.

According to IPU (2017), consistently, the proportion remains static since 2014, and as at January 2017, women in parliament the world over in the lower and upper houses combined, comprised of 23.3%. At the presidency or executive level of

government worldwide, 20 women were serving as Heads of State or Heads of Government, which represents 6.3% of the total number of 315 world leaders in 2017. Thus, there was a decline of 2 in the number of female Heads of States or Heads of Government in the representation of the women world leaders in 2017 compared with the 22 women who occupied the highest political offices in 2016 (Women in International Politics, 2017).

Across Europe, there was great variation in the percentages of female representation in National Parliaments, with men overall outnumbering the women (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger, 2015). For example, in six European countries, including Sweden, Finland, Spain, Belgium, The Netherlands and Denmark, the governments comprised at least 40% of each gender between 2010 and 2015 (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger, 2015). The 2017 European Commission Reports indicated that these affirmative action strategies resulted in reaching 40% of each gender in ministerial representation in the governments of the named European countries (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger, 2015). The reports indicated that the affirmative action strategies could be further enhanced through formal quotas, electoral system reforms, legislation and political will from political parties (Fortin-Rittberger & Rittberger, 2015; Women in International Politics, 2017). Additionally, in India, the 73rd amendments to the Indian constitution and the legislation have reserved seats in the panchayats (local assembly) for women since April 1993. As a result, the number of female elected representatives to the panchayats sharply increased with 33% of reserved seats to change their socio-economic and administrative status of the country (Ahlawat, 2013; Garg, 2017).

McGing and White (2012) contended that one of the significant challenges for equality in democracies had been that women were less likely than men to serve as

elected representatives. Similarly, in the 1995 UN Report, there were many global women's issues addressed, and the report emphasised that increasing women's empowerment in decision-making positions was one strategy that was crucial to achieving the goal of gender equality (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; Miranda, 2005; Ocran, 2014). The UN report also argued that empowering women, giving them autonomy and improving their socio-economic and political status were necessary measures to achieve gender equality. Significantly, the 1995 Beijing Report asserted that the empowerment and independence of women would be essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable governance, administration and sustainable development in all areas of life that would allow for gender equality (UNDP, 1996). In countries where they enforced policies and programs to address gender inequality to empower women, it was the equality of political power between women and men that remained significant (Rai, 2005).

The ensuing section discusses international efforts to address the inequality in decision-making positions in society.

International Efforts Towards Gender Equality

Before the 1970s, in many parts of the world, women were regarded as passive recipients of support and assistance (March et al., 1999) and around this time widespread advocacy for gender equality in political decision-making positions began. Before this, as early as 1848, women activists convened the first women's rights Convention in the United States in Seneca Falls, New York. The Activists created a Declaration of Sentiments, demanding equality and called for women's suffrage because women contribute to the development of society (Ballington et al., 2012). Women's roles have been diverse including their participation in politics, government, and development processes. In global governance discourse, on the whole, the

contribution of women and their efforts in society have been touted as being significant, which has resulted in the widespread advocacy for gender equality.

International advocacy for gender equality intensified to lessen gender differences, particularly when the World Body (United Nations) organised conferences on women. In the early days of the activism, the International Conferences were held every 5 years and then every 10 years, in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) (Hobbs, 2011; Horn, 2013; UNWOMEN, 2016). Since the 1980s, there have been constant calls to address gender inequality and the need to achieve equal status between women and men in political representation in local and national governments (Boex & Simatupang, 2015; Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012; Urbinati, 2006). Each International Conference has been larger and more significant. For instance, the first World Conference on Women (WCW) that took place in Mexico in 1975 coincided with the International Women's Year celebrations, and the United Nations Celebration of the Decade for Women (Moghadam, 2003)². It was during the first such conference in 1975 that the organisers opened a global dialogue on gender equality, and thereby launching a new era in global efforts to promote the advancement of women (Ballington et al., 2012). As a result, the UN General Assembly's aim to ensure gender equality recognised three key objectives: the elimination of discrimination; increasing the participation of women in development; and increasing the contribution of women to world peace. The United Nations' Plan of Action targets, aimed to improve the prospects of women, through

² The second Conference on women was in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1980, followed by another in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. In 1995, the 4th Women's World Conference occurred in Beijing, China. see Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth Conference on Women, 15 September, 1995
http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/pdf/BEIJIN_E.PDF

attaining equality in accessing resources such as education, employment opportunities, political participation, health services, housing, nutrition and family planning, with a goal of fulfilling the targets by 1980 (Alvarez, 2013). Thus, the 1975 initiative of the UN targets focussed on women's advancement and their participation in governance and development (Alvarez, 2013; Moghadam, 2003). The setting of these target objectives marked the beginning of a change for the world to view women as full and equal partners with men, and to have equal rights to resources. Many of these targets were not met by 1980, and in the millennium, the world continued to advocate and to address inequality in many societies.

During their Conferences on Women held in 1975, 1980 and 1985, the UN also mandated governments of member countries to formulate national strategies to promote equal participation of women in all facets of life. After the UN designated 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women, 127 Member States responded by establishing some form of political machinery, through institutions to deal with the promotion of related policy, research and programs. This initiative was broadened on 18 December 1979, when 189 member states signed the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to comply with the UN conventions on gender equality (Hayes, 2005; Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013). CEDAW was a landmark international agreement which continues to be a valuable vehicle for each country to use to achieve progress for women and girls in all areas of society to advance female's empowerment (Fraser & Kazantsis, 1992; Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013).

To acknowledge the efforts by the UN, some of these politically empowered women are presented in the succeeding section.

Profiles of Some Female Political Achievers

The advocating for gender equality across the world has continued, and some women have gained from the social change, and have broken the glass ceiling politically. A few of these women politicians who managed to attain top political positions in their countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America, also had husbands or fathers who preceded them in politics and remained respected. Examples from those regions are President Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, first President of India; and Maria Corazon Aquino who was former President of Philippines from 1986 to 1992. She was the first female President in Asia who proved that she was much more than a 'housewife' (James, 2010). Maria Corazon Aquino was a wife of an opposition leader who was assassinated upon returning from exile to the Philippines (Dohner & Intal, 1989; James, 2010).

In North America, Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton was a famous female politician who had connections within the ranks of political leadership (Myers, 2016). The 2016 American Presidential Elections featured Hillary Clinton, the First Lady to Bill Clinton, the 42nd American President between 1993 and 2001 (Clinton, 2014). Hillary became a US Senator for New York from 2001 to 2009 and contested the Democratic Party's nomination but lost to Barrack Obama, who became the 44th American President in 2008 (Hernandez, 2010). Obama appointed Hillary into government, and she became the 67th Secretary of State between 2009 and 2013. Hillary contested and won the Democratic Party's nomination in 2016 but lost the 2016 American Presidential Elections to Donald Trump, who in 2017 became the 45th American President. Irrespective of her defeats in the presidential contests, Hillary Clinton, remained one of the most influential female politicians in the United States of America.

Elsewhere, in Australia, Julia Gilliard, overcame the obstacles for female political leaders by becoming the first woman Deputy Prime Minister in November 2007 and was sworn in as the 27th Prime Minister from 2010 to 2013 (Harrison, 2012; McCann, 2016). Also, in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female Liberian President in 2005 and was re-elected for a second term. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was Africa's first elected female Head of State in Liberia (Wanyeki, 2012). In Ghana, distinguished females occupied political decision-making positions and contributed to the governance process in the country. For instance, in June 2007, a female Supreme Court Judge named Justice Theodore Georgina Wood was appointed the first woman Chief Justice to occupy the highest legal position. Also, between the years 2009 and 2013, a female Supreme Court Judge, Justice Joyce Bamford-Addo held the position of the Speaker of Parliament. Mention can also be made of Reverend Dr Joyce Rosalind Aryee who have served in the private and public sectors in Ghana. During a military regime from 1981-1993, under the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), Dr Joyce Rosalind Aryee was a Secretary of Information (1982-1985); Secretary for Education (1985-1987) and Minister for Local Government (1987-1988). When the country returned to constitutional rule in 1992, Joyce served as the Chief Executive for Ghana Chamber of Mines for ten years (2001-2011). Dr Joyce was given the Second Highest State Award, the Companion of the Order of the Volta in 2006, in recognition of her service to the nation. She was also the recipient of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana (CIMG); Marketing Woman of the Year Award for 2007 and the African Leadership on Centre for Economic Development's African Female Business Leader of the Year Award for 2009. She continued to function as a Director on many Boards to serve her country and overseas. Reverend Dr Joyce Rosalind Aryee also became the Executive Director of Salt and Light

Ministries a Christian Para-church Organisation (Today, 2017). Those mentioned female politicians relied on their positions and advocated for gender equality and the rights of women worldwide, which served as sources of motivation for other women including Ghanaians.

However, despite the global efforts to reduce inequality in the socio-economic and political systems in member countries, studies have indicated that there are still global patterns of inequality between women and men (Manuh, 2011). The discussion above provides a platform on which to examine the issue of under-representation of women in politics in Ghana. Within this context, the government has made efforts to fulfil its constitutional mandate to curtail discrimination to reduce inequality in the Ghanaian society, which is the focus of the next discussion.

Governments' Efforts to Reduce Inequality in Ghana

Ghana's decision to address gender inequality was strengthened as a result of the UN mandate to member countries to facilitate the advancement of women. In 1986, the country ratified CEDAW to curb discrimination against women and also to empower them. By acceding to CEDAW, Ghana demonstrated a level of national commitment to reducing gender discrimination. In furtherance of the ratification, *Article 17* of the 1992 constitution of Ghana deals with equality and freedom from discrimination. The constitution defines discrimination as "different treatments to different persons attributable only or mainly to their respective descriptions by gender, race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, class, occupation, religion or creed." There are also Provisions in the 1992 constitution such as for maternal health and maternity leave that take care of expectant and nursing mothers. For example, *Article 27 (1)* of the chapter states:

Special care shall be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth, and during those periods working mothers shall be accorded paid leave.

Article 27 (2) also states:

Facilities shall be provided for the care of children below school-going age to enable women, who have the traditional care for children, realise their full potential.

Articles 17(1) and (2) of the 1992 constitution guarantees gender equality and freedom of women, men, girls and boys from discrimination by social or economic status. Also, the National Government improved the legislative environment through the enactment of statutes including the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act No 732), to aggressively tackle gender inequality and to promote the welfare of women and girls.

Significantly, there was a National Gender Policy, which strongly concentrated on the implementation of five policy commitments into national development processes. The policy commitments aimed to mainstream gender equality issues; women's empowerment and livelihoods, women's rights and access to justice, women's leadership, gender roles and relations, and accountability to governance over such issues ([MoGCSP], 2016).

Also, in Chapter 5, the 1992 constitution of Ghana spells out the Fundamental Human Rights of the people. These provisions in the 1992 constitution and the statutes addressed the issues of gender inequality, and the need for women's empowerment, maternal and child health care in respect of the government commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ghana was among the 189 UN member countries and States that signed up the agreement on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2000 to ensure gender equality. Ghana committed to the tenets of MDGs in September 2001 and fast-tracked them into the respective national development policy frameworks to ensure full implementation of the eight goals (UNDP, 2015).

The eight target MDGs were Goal 1: *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*; Goal 2: *Achieve universal primary education*; Goal 3: *Promote gender equality and empower women*; Goal 4: *Reduce child mortality*; Goal 5: *Improve maternal health*; Goal 6: *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*; Goal 7: *Ensure environmental sustainability*; and Goal 8: *Develop a global partnership for development*. The target period for the UN member states to achieve these MDGs was within 15 years (2000-2015) (Chibba, 2011; UNDP, 2015; Hayes, 2008). As a result of the international advocacy for gender equality (MDG 3) and the universal primary education (MDG 2), and for all goals to be achieved, Ghana's efforts among other strategies included educational reforms such as 'girl child education'. The country achieved equality in education in most urban centres, and in total, resulted in the country achieving the MDG 2 before 2015.

Before these achievements in education, there had been challenges in addressing the inequality in the educational sectors in the rural areas since cultural beliefs, and different gender relation prevailed in the rural areas of the country thereby resulting in inconsistent rates of literacy. Studies recorded low educational attendance by females in the early 2000s as the illiteracy rate of women was 44.1% as opposed to 21.1% illiteracy rate for men (CWMG Report, 2004). In 2004, the Coalition of Women's Manifesto for Ghana (CWMG) also reported that the average enrolment rate at the foundation school level was 66.2% for males and 33.8% for females. In Ghana, amongst those aged 15-24 years, the literacy rate among females was 66%, and for males, it was 76% in 2016 (World Bank [WB], 2016). Also, the 2013 Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) Report ranked Ghana the 111th as the country's highest position in Educational Attainment (Hausmann, Tyson, Bekhouche, & Zahidi, 2013). From 2009 to 2013, Ghana had lost five places from the previous gender index and was at the

116th position because fewer females enrolled in primary education (Hausman et al., 2013). For example, at the Junior High School (JHS) level, there was a decrease in school attrition rate from 75% in 2008/2009 to 69% in 2013/2014, and the highest dropout rate was among girls.

Meanwhile, there was much advocacy to make education one of the social changing agents to curb gender inequality in Ghana. Therefore, to achieve the milestone, stakeholders worked hard to brand education a priority in the life of many Ghanaians because school is known to be an effective institution for acculturation in society and also an agent to the socialisation process (Britwum, 2009). Ghanaians gradually showed increasingly positive attitudes towards education as they saw education as imperative for social development in addition to its obvious benefits for individual's employment prospects ([CWMG], 2004). At the national level, levels of completing basic school increased from 45.2% in the early 1990s to 88.5% in 2008 and further rose to 89.3% in 2013/2014. The MDG targets of universal primary education had some benchmark to attain, and these are measured by the gross and net enrolment ratios in schools. The target ratios are pegged at 100% and for a country to reach above targets implies there is a great achievement. Thus, in Ghana, the net enrolment ratio (NER) was at 89.3% in 2013/2014, the level of gross enrolment ratio increased to 107.3% exceeding the MDG target of 100% in 2015 (UN, 2015). The implication is that regarding the number of pupils or students to be enrolled based on the appropriate age, the number of children within that age far exceeded 100% an indication of effective participation of children in the educational system in Ghana.

Similarly, concerning the global indices of gender equality in education, the World Economic Forum (WEF) noted in its yearly report in 2015 that Ghana accomplished in the universal primary education (Schwab, 2015). The positive results

had been achieved by the successive government's efforts to provide education for all Ghanaians sustainably. For instance, the improvement in the level of enrolment in schools occurred as a result of a Capitation grant, which was an expenditure fund for schools to address examination fees, sports fee and stationery that previously parents used to pay. Other factors that encouraged pupils to attend school included: teachers' attendance due to motivation through in-service training, the supply of school uniforms and sandals to school pupils, and the schools' feeding program that catered for the hungry pupils in schools. Although the illiteracy rate was high in some areas in the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions, generally, there were improvements in the literacy rates among the youth in both urban and rural areas in Ghana (UN, 2015).

Moreover, the steps to satisfy the basic needs of food, clothing and school supplies also assisted in the achievement of other goals such as reducing extreme poverty (MDG 1). In 2006, Ghana achieved the target of halving extreme poverty ahead of the 2015 deadline of the MDGs (UN, 2010). The Ghanaian population living below the national poverty line (extreme poverty) had reduced from 36.5% in 1991 to 18.2% in 2006 and declined further from 17% to 8% between 2006 and 2013. In Ghana, by 2006, 7 out of the 10 regions in Ghana had met the poverty reduction target. The goal achievement had concurrently improved the nutritional status of children in Ghana, surpassing the MDG target. For instance, as a result of food distribution outlets for families, there was a decline in rates of children's malnutrition from 14% to 5% in 2014 (Ghana Health Service [GHS], 2017). Food security measures were instituted in Ghana under a management of the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO) that holds food to ensure the competitive pricing of food in the market (Hedzro-Garti, 2010). With these measures put in place, the Ghanaian woman contributes to the

implementation of Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agendas (GSGDA) I & II
(see page 21)

Summary

There has been the improvement in the Ghanaian society to meet the MDGs, but regarding gender equality in decision-making positions, Ghanaians lag behind. Ghana has not been the only country that had not achieved the gender equality goal. Hence, Ghana's efforts to address it was paramount. The assumption was that as advocacy for gender equality continued to create awareness for the increase in women's representation in the DAs, there should have been an improvement in the local election results for better records. In spite of the ongoing social change, the question arising from the literature remains: why the low participation and representation of women in local politics in Ghana? To answer this query, scholars in the gender policy dialogue indicated that as a result of the persistence admiration of some cultural beliefs and practices it makes it difficult for many women to engage in politics (UNDP, 2016). What mechanisms had government and NGOs adopted to address the inequality in governance? Would this be addressed through affirmative action planning or any quota systems?

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is an active strategy designed to correct years of discrimination that made it difficult for women to stand for political office. Historically, the recommendation for affirmative action in governance was approved through a Directive from the office of the President of Ghana. Thus, Ghana governments had used affirmative action since independence from colonialism to address gender imbalances in government (Tsikata, 2009). Especially, when the

country attained First Republican status in 1960, there were no women legislators in Parliament. In 1961, the Legislature passed into law the *Representation of Peoples Amendment Bill* of 1960 (Women's Members) to reserve 10 seats in Parliament for women. The enactment of the Amendment Bill mandated the first President of the Republic, Dr Kwame Nkrumah to appoint 10 women as representatives and legislators to Parliament (Sam, 2010). However, after the overthrow of the First Republican government, subsequent governments abandoned the affirmative action policy.

Furthermore, the quotas for women in appointed membership positions has been practised since 1998 in Ghana, but the directives do not have the legal sustenance. For instance, in 1998, the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), which was the national machinery for women, advised the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to encourage political parties to nominate more women to contest Parliamentary seats in Ghana (Crawford, 2004; Tsikata, 2009). The recommendation for the local government system was to have a 30% quota for women in the appointed positions (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). However, these positive proposals were not enacted into legislation because some stakeholders did not support such policy directives. The lack of support for affirmative action policy was partly because of the discriminatory practices and the many informal systems (i.e. customs, traditions, adages discussed earlier) that upheld male advantage. Also, the institutional relationships were deeply patriarchal and cut across all facets of life, including national and local level government structures (Beall, 2004) making it inflexible for society to witness more women in government.

In spite of the resistance to affirmative action, successive governments made conscious efforts to reduce gender inequality. Through the enactment of laws, the government promoted girl-child education, forbidding traditional beliefs and practices

such as ‘trokosi’³ The traditional practice coerces a girl to atone for the sins she did not commit (ritual servitude), which disadvantaged females in some part of the Volta region in Ghana (Sossou, & Yagtuba, 2009). Moreover, the *Local Government Act 462*, 1993, entreated all district assemblies to establish pre-school facilities in all communities within their districts to alleviate women’s double burden of production and reproductive responsibilities (Baah-Enumh et al., 2005). A new local government law (Act 936, 2016) was also passed in December 2016. The Act had extensive provisions for participation and some recognition for further social inclusion, which presented the prospects it offered women (Local Government Act, 936).

According to the former Minister for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Nana Oye Lithur, the country’s commitment to International Instruments such as MDGs, and the nation’s constitution, as well as the national development frameworks helped to guide Ghana’s objectives towards achieving gender equality ([MoGCSP], 2016). For example, in 2002, the government of Ghana gave a directive to all Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to reserve 50% quota appointment position for females. Thus, in line with the Affirmative Action Initiative Programme (AAIP), which aimed to increase the number of women in the district assemblies, half of the 30% government appointees were to be women who would serve in the assembly (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000, 2004). The number of female appointees increased between 2002 and 2006 to 1,231 as against 2,281 males (Baah-Enumh et al., 2005; Mahamadu, 2010; Osabutey, 2012). The use of affirmative action strategies appeared motivating for women to contest DA Elections (DAEs) as there

³ Trokosi is a form of religious bondage involving mostly young virgin girls. These girls are sent to live and serve in the shrine of a fetish priest as reparation for crimes committed by members of their families. See Robert Kwame Ameh, “Reconciling Human Rights and Traditional Practices: The Anti-Trokosi Campaign in Ghana (2004).

were 965 female contestants in the 2002 DAEs as compared to 547 female contestants in the 1998 DAEs. Subsequent DAEs recorded further increases in the number of females contesting. The political institutions consistently adopted other policies to enhance females' representation in decision-making positions. For instance, in 2008 and 2012, Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) in association with the representatives of the political parties, dubbed Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), agreed to be gender sensitive in the filing of candidates during the general elections.

The EC declared incentives in the form of reduced filing fees to encourage political parties to include a quota to nominate more females before the general elections. The 'Gender sensitivity' issues addressed two concerns: a reward to political parties that filed nominations for women; and supported their candidature during elections. Thus, a political party that promoted women's participation got 5% off the filing fees (Osabutey, 2009). Some political parties such as the New Patriotic Party (NPP) took this initiative further and offered women candidates a 50% discount off the filing fee as a way of boosting the levels of interest among women to contest for parliamentary seats (Myjoyonline.com, 2011 August 23).

Despite all these strategies, there was no legislation in place to enforce these policies by subsequent governments, and so the outcomes were not satisfactory for women and society (Sam, 2010). Meanwhile, in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) (1995), the purpose was *women in power and decision-making*, which recommended two strategies: first, "Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and second, "Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership." These strategies were proposed to be addressed by "Governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers' organisations, research and academic

institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies, and non-governmental and international organisations.” Moreover, according to the review reported in the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in February-March 2005, the goal of 30 % representation (considered a level of critical mass for women to have an impact) in Parliament has been reached only in 11 countries (Miranda, 2005).

Notwithstanding, there is an Affirmative Action Bill before the Parliament of Ghana. The bill gives extensive compliant processes, which may deconstruct some male-dominated systems. Some aspects of the content show that when the bill is enacted into law, it is to ensure that there is gender equality in governance institutions including public service, ministerial positions, Council of State, Independent Constitutional Bodies. Thus, each public sector institution is to have a gender equality policy (Appiah, 2015).

Also, there is the need for transparency in the recruitment in the public service, which is specified to be, in keeping with the spirit of the right to information as far as disclosure of information is concerned. More so, there is the 40% quota for the recruitment of women to the security services, which is defined to include the Ghana Armed Forces, the Police, Prison, Fire, Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Immigration Service, and the Bureau of National Investigation.

The Bill also required that the government ensures the appropriate representation of women in governance and decision-making positions. That is the President is to ensure gender balance in the nomination of persons vetted by the Public Services Commission as District Chief Executives of District Assemblies and for the appointees of District Assemblies.

In the bill, political parties are to adopt measures to overcome obstacles to the full participation and representation of women in party politics. This is to apply to the

parties' machinery as well as in the contest for elections. As political parties are voluntary associations, affirmative action enforcement may be challenging. Hence, the Electoral Commission is to use its organs to reach a consensus for the compliance of affirmative action.

In enforcing the law, monitoring is to be done by the inclusion of gender equality information in the annual report of an institution, a copy of which is to be submitted to the Secretariat of the Affirmative Action Management Board. This is to apply to the general, and to the governing bodies of state institutions. Collaboration with public agencies is essential; the Bill provides for this sense and without the action plan, it will be difficult to have a fair representation of females in the public spaces. Studies have shown that there have been directives and affirmative strategies since Ghana returned to constitutional rule, but there is lack of commitment to the fight against gender inequality in society. By 2017, the Affirmative Bill has not been passed into law to have legal authenticity and there were more men than women in the district assemblies and Ghana's parliament, which was suggestively discriminatory against women and gross imbalance in the country's body politic as indicated by Nana Oye Lithur, the former Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP). During the celebrating of 60 years of Ghana's Independence, the Minister advised that if the conscious effort were not made to pass the Affirmative Action Bill into law, "Ghana would take another 60 years to double the number of women representation in Parliament" (Ofori-Boateng, 2017, p. 1).

It is believed that gender quotas could effectively fix different patterns of office distribution (Kudva & Misra, 2008; Verge & Fuente, 2014). However, the scholars argued that a 'simple' solution could not automatically subvert the free primary sources of male power because gender quota reforms were layering processes in which

someone in a particular situation was renegotiating elements while others persisted in supporting male dominance (Verge & Fuente, 2014). In this way, male power continued along with criticisms against quotas and other affirmative action programmes. Thus, while the affirmative action programmes aimed at enhancing the number of women's representation in decision-making processes, it created mixed reactions (Annandale & Clark, 1996). For example, many people believed that agreeing to quota systems to resist patriarchal systems was in itself a discriminatory strategy (Johnson, 2010). Therefore, it was unclear if an affirmative action could eliminate gender stereotypes (Annandale & Clark, 1996).

In Ghana, it is as if the conditions within the country's political system have been portrayed as 'while there was no deliberate attempt to keep women out of politics, there was also no apparent programme to ensure that they participated in politics'. As a result of this discontent, gender equity advocates and NGOs working within institutions to 'level the playing field' through advocating for changed laws, which required further examination. The efforts also resulted in the review of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. The NGOs supports the system of quota; educate, sensitise and socialise the population to bring about gender equality and social change (Manuh, 2011).

NGOs and Gender Advocates on Gender Equality

In addition to the efforts Ghana governments have made to reduce gender inequalities, NGOs and other gender advocates campaign throughout the country to sensitise and educate males and females on the significance of equalising gender. For instance, in any DAEs, almost all the active non-governmental organisations would be advocating for women to contest, which would contribute substantially towards increasing the number of women in the DAs. The gender advocates, women's groups

and NGOs also picketed the Parliament of Ghana and the Presidency to demand action to address issues of gender inequality. The NGOs included the International Federation of Women Lawyers; Ghana (FIDA-Ghana); Women in Law and Development in Africa-Ghana (WiLDAF-Ghana); the Hunger Project-Ghana; and Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT). Each of these NGOs had specific roles and activities they engaged in Ghana. The NGOs organised programmes and projects for gender activists and advocates, and for women whose interests were in public functions and political activism (Selby, 2011).

These NGOs sensitise Ghanaians and educate them on the concepts and theories that come with gender equality to harness its achievement. These theories include feminism, empowerment, gender, equity and equality. Therefore, in the struggle to address gender inequality in society, it was significant to share reasons for such programs to be rolled out through the NGOs for the Ghanaian populace to understand the advocacy journey, which was the NGOs' passion. Also, it was also necessary to use this study platform to prevail the underlining factors of the NGOs' activities and for readers to comprehend the issues from the NGOs' perspectives as Ghanaian women continue to deal with the inequality situations at certain levels of their lives.

In anticipation to achieve the equality milestone, the activities of these NGOs remind us of the past and sometimes the present on how women had been treated and forged for equality. For instance, through social movements and some actual social change, the stereotypical perception about women have been being revised. As such, although many people around the globe were supporting ill-treated women and had called for gender equality, a lot more understanding was needed in the fields of ideologies on gender. Thus, while various world bodies were geared towards achieving

gender equality, it was necessary for wider society to become more acquainted with theories of gender and goals of gender equality, and women's empowerment. Tadros, (2014) acknowledged that there seemed to be a disconnection between the public and the professionals in gender advocacy, where feminism also takes centre stage when it comes to the relationship between males and females. 'Gender,' 'the relationship between women and men,' and 'the feminist movement' or 'feminism' an ideological movement demonstrates the importance of women and fights for equal rights in society, which have become buzz words (March et al., 1999; [ILGS], 2009; Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Thus, the feminism's primary goal is gender equality in the public sphere and its commitment to equal rights, opportunities and choices for people of all genders (Walby, 1990). Therefore, the significance of the understanding of these ideologies may surge the prospects of the Ghanaian nation to achieve equity goals set by the UN.

In the Ghanaian context NGOs, Gender Activists and women's groups' who rely on the philosophies of feminism and support equality and equity, engaged in continuous advocacy through organising programs for both men and women to understand the goals of gender equality, which was considered to be a necessary step to make equity achievable in an appreciable situation. For instance, organisations such as NETRIGHT, a coalition of NGOs promoting women's empowerment; Pathways Women's Empowerment; Centre for Gender Equality and Advocacy (CENGNSA) with like-minded activists from the markets, academia, labour movements, and Persons with Disability (PWDs) focus to promote gender equality (Apusigah, Tsikata & Mukhopadhyay, 2011; Britwum, 2014; GNA, 2011). ⁴ Consequently, on August 11,

⁴ Not surprisingly, the Convenor of NETRIGHT, Prof. Akua Opokua Britwum who also an academic in gender studies at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana and a feminist, indicated that the discomfort in the use of feminism had arisen due to the superficial insights of its

2011, NETRIGHT organised a forum for women activists who were committed to gender equality to deliberate on a concrete meaning of “feminism” and how it could be translated into the activists’ works (Selby, 2011). This training and formation of mindsets among the feminists in Africa, particularly in Ghana, turned public opinion away from accepting the perception that a woman cannot succeed in politics (Ebila, 2011). Also, International Federation of Women Lawyers in Ghana (FIDA-Ghana) organise training, mentoring programs and capacity building for female lawyers to organise awareness and sensitise activities on laws promoting and protecting women’s rights (African Women Development Fund [AWDF], 2017).

Furthermore, since the 1990s, other training programs are provided for aspirants by gender equality advocates, governmental, and NGOs to facilitate skill training for more women to contest the district assembly elections. More often than not, women who passed through such training programmes competed in the assembly elections and won their bids (Selby, 2011) against some male contenders. Besides, WILDAF-Ghana managed one of such training project titled ‘We Know Politics’ to increase public support for women’s participation in political activities in Ghana. The ‘We know Politics’ project encouraged women to express their views on issues that affected their lives, and actively participate in politics (Selby, 2011).

In collaboration with the European Union, Department of International Development Fund (DFID) of UK, and an international women’s NGO named Womankind Worldwide, the three-year (2014-2017) project of the “We Know Politics II” targeted 20 districts out of the 216 districts in the 10 Regions of Ghana ([WILDAF-

history, traditions and transformative possibilities. She pointed out that there was negative tag given to the word ‘feminist’ due to its negative portrayal of people and others defending patriarchy, and also its purported Western origins and ideas. See Selby, H. (2011, November 30). Ghana: WILDAF Helps Promote Women in Politics. *The Chronicle*.

Ghana], 2011). The significance of the 'We Know Politics' project on subsequent levels of women's electoral victory, established the importance for women to go through education and skill training in the realm of political administration, which would increase the acceptability of women in those roles (Selby, 2011). The underlying premise of such NGO's programs was that if women were actively involved in local government administration, then they could be better than men at representing women's interests and needs in policies (Nkansah, 2009; Paxton & Hughes, 2015).

Moreover, one goal of the 'We know Politics' project included influencing governments and political parties to enact affirmative action strategies that would ensure levels of at least 40% of women's representation in party positions, and in government. For example, WiLDAF-Ghana pressured the two largest political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to adopt criteria specifically aimed at ensuring that more women would be encouraged during electoral vetting to contest for political positions. The NGO also cultivated female government appointees to help them remain motivated while they engaged in public activities. A case in point was WiLDAF-Ghana's encouraging citation to the first appointed female Electoral Commissioner to chair the Independent Electoral Commission in 2015 ([GNA], 2015). NGOs also encourage women politicians as they acknowledge their performance, which is characterised by boldness in the face of challenges from male protagonists in the Ghanaian patriarchal society.

Government agencies, philanthropists and well-wishers continued to add their voices to the call for increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. For instance, the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in Ghana, and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) collaborated with

ABANTU for Development and NETRIGHT to encourage Ghanaian women to socially and politically empower themselves (Boateng & Kosi, 2015). The encouragement from these civil society groups came in the form of advice, training in public speech, campaign strategies, sponsorship seeking, canvassing for votes, and non-formal education. Other motivational packages included conferences for the aspiring female politicians to have the feel of public activities and to prepare themselves to face society as they step out from their private spheres of life (ABANTU, 2003).

As part of their aim to get an affirmative action policy in Ghana, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and the ABANTU for Development intensified their advocacy to have the Affirmative Action Bill laid before Parliament in 2013 (Appiah, 2015; Boateng & Kosi, 2015).

There have also been other empowerment efforts by individuals and collective local government levels to promote women's participation and gender assessments efforts. In Ghana, there is the introduction of the Functional Organisational Assessment Tool (FOAT), which is in line with a performance-based grant system. Under the system, the District Assemblies are assessed on agreed indicators on a yearly basis using the Functional Organisational Assessment Tool (FOAT). The Objectives of FOAT include to provide an incentive for performance for complying with the legal and regulatory framework; to identify performance capacity gaps of the MMDAs and to establish a link between performance assessments and capacity building support. In the context of this study, the researcher looked at how gender mainstreaming interventions are reported through FOAT, which in a way agreed to ensure that there was a gender dimension in the activities of the Assemblies.

Also, there are efforts by the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) to promote women's participation in decision-making in the local government administration in Ghana.

In spite of the significant efforts by other organisations for the Ghanaian woman to win elections to occupy political positions, research into the enabling factors to women's representation in local government administration is limited. The elected women's determined actions, creating the awareness of gender inequality need to be researched to fill this gap, which this study sought to achieve.

Concluding Statement

This study aimed at exploring the enabling factors of women's participation in local government by using the cases of Ghanaian women who won elections to the country's district assemblies, and societal perceptions on factors that may preclude the women's participation in local government. The discussion within this chapter has provided the context for this study. Part one presented Ghanaian demography; socio-cultural beliefs and practices, women's political engagement, electoral system; political systems and governance, and how the local government system operates. Part two explored the contextual environment regarding the under-representation of women in government globally and locally from a Ghanaian perspective, and the efforts being undertaken in Ghana to enhance their engagement in decision-making positions. It was from this discussion that the problem statement was derived.

Problem Statement

The local organisations that scrutinise national level politics nor world bodies such as World Economic Forum and the Inter-Parliamentary Union do not have access to sufficient data on women in local governments. Particularly, in what should have

been their quest to make decisions with governments to support women's political empowerment and addressing gender inequality throughout Ghana. For instance, in 2013, the World Economic Forum (WEF) Report declared that data on local government was unavailable at the global level to be consulted to measure political empowerment index of countries (Hausman et al., 2013). In that WEF Report, Ghana was ranked the 76th among 136 countries on the overall Gender Empowerment Index (GEI). Taking into account each indicator of the empowerment index, WEF ranked Ghana 95th among the 136 countries on the political empowerment index.

Furthermore, interest in gender inequality measures was increasing as the United Nations in its Human Development Report also used the political empowerment index of countries (Alexander & Welzel, 2007). Additionally, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which examined gender equality in decision-making positions of countries, based only on rates of female representation in Parliament (Alexander & Welzel, 2007).

Furthermore, regarding Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment), data on national governments of countries were used to measure the gender empowerment statuses of women.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the only measure used for the countries' Gender Equality Index (GEI) provided by the UN and IPU world bodies is data on women in Parliaments or National Assemblies to the neglect of data from the local government systems (Hancock et al., 2011). Thus, the local government data was expected to be used by stakeholders as they sought to measure gender equality to have unbiased political empowerment and gender equality index about Ghana. However, the absence of data from the local government makes the WEF and other bodies' rankings of countries' empowerment index unrealistic.

Thus, without including measures of local levels, the measurements at the national level only could present biased positions in ranking the countries. The same inadequacy occurred in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Index report where Ghana was ranked 101st among 142 countries and ranked 97th for Political Empowerment Index (Hausman et al., 2014). Thus, women representatives in the district assemblies were not counted and included to have been politically empowered when measuring a country's political empowerment index because of the absence of local government data. For example, as at May 2017, the global proportion of women elected to local government was unknown (Women in International Politics, 2017). The UN Women was set to develop the first-ever data baseline on women elected to local government within the monitoring framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG target 5.5, which refers to improving gender equality in society. Although these international bodies claimed local government data was inadequate globally, that did not defeat the fact that women were elected to countries' local government administration. This study, therefore, sought to provide additional local government data to fill the gap in the literature as the researcher explore the factors that guided Ghanaian women to win DA elections.

Objectives of the Study

This study's objective sought to explore the factors that support women's representation in the DAs and to provide additional data on women in local government administration in Ghana. The study examined the elected women's experiences regarding the success and challenges they faced through gender construction, resistance and empowerment. Thus, it aimed to investigate how the socio-economic and political structures in society had supported or hindered those women to get elected to the district assemblies in Ghana. The study was to present the

opinions of the elected women, and the key informants, for it to give original data on patriarchy and the precluding factors to women's participation in the local level government.

Research Question

This study posed two questions:

- I. What are the socio-economic and political factors that support women as they get elected to the district assemblies and empower them to contribute to society in Ghana?
- II. What are the varied precluding factors that affect women's participation and representation in the district assemblies?

Significance of the Study

Development cannot be realised without the very significant component of women's contribution to governance, development and gender issues (Muleya, 2012). Almost all progressive societies have well-documented stories of the contributions women make towards development as they aspire to decision-making offices (Mahamadu, 2010). The outcome of this study will assist to identify the various factors that support women's political activities and their success at the local government level in Ghana and other societies that seem to experience a similar situation such as in the Ghanaian context. The study seeks to contribute to existing literature on women's representation in the district assemblies by identifying the issues associated with the quest for equal representation of females in decision-making positions. The study presents an account of the experiences of women navigating politics within socio-cultural institutions to empower themselves politically. While national and international stakeholders in their intent to ensure gender equality and empower women in countries may consult data on both national and local government systems to give an unbiased account of gender empowerment index in Ghana, it is also hoped

that the present study will serve to encourage other women to pay attention to successful women in government, which may encourage them to have the interest in local politics.

Scope of the Study

The study gained data from 4 regions out of the 10 regions in Ghana. The 4 regions were Central Region (CR), Greater Accra Region (GR), Brong Ahafo Region (BA) and Eastern Region (ER). In this study, each sampled region was located in either north, south, east and west zones of Ghana. From within these zones, the selection of the study regions was aimed to provide a fair representation of cases from both rural and urban centres. Also, while some of these regions have more women elected to the DAs, there were fewer elected women in the district assemblies of other regions. For example, in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly in the Central region, there was no elected Assemblywoman between the 2010-2015 assembly sessions.

Table 2 presents the districts within each of the 4 study regions.

Table 2: Study Districts in the Four Sampled Regions

Central Region	Greater Accra Region	Brong Ahafo Region	Eastern Region
Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly	Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)	Sunyani Municipal Assembly	Kwahu-West Municipal Assembly
Mfantseman Municipal Assembly	La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly	Sunyani West District	Kwahu East District
Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal Assembly (KEEA)	Ga West Municipal Assembly	Assembly	Assembly
Twifo-Heman District Assembly	Ga South Municipal Assembly	Tano South District	Kwahu South District
Awutu-Senya District Assembly	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly
Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District Assembly	Ga Central Municipal Assembly		New Juaben Municipal Assembly

Reference: http://www.gra.gov.gh/docs/info/all_mmdas_in_ghana.pdf

Table 2 shows regions and districts within which the study was conducted. Central Region is a city with a metropolitan assembly, municipal and districts assemblies, and placed under Western zone. In the Central Region, the research covered 6 districts including the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA), Mfantseman Municipal Assembly (MMA), Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem (KEEA) Municipal Assembly, Twifo-Heman District Assembly, Awutu-Senya District Assembly and Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District Assembly. Also, Greater Accra Region is the capital city of Ghana with two metropolitan assemblies, and other municipal and district assemblies. The Greater Accra region is categorised under the southern zone. The districts in the Greater Accra Region were 5 including Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly, Ga West

Municipal Assembly, Ga South Municipal Assembly and Ga Central Municipal Assembly. Brong Ahafo Region and Eastern Region are both municipal towns with district assemblies and are categorised under northern and eastern zones respectively. About Eastern Region, the study covered 4 districts such as Kwahu West Municipal Assembly (KWMA), Kwahu East District Assembly (KEDA), Kwahu South District Assemblies (KSDA) and New Juaben Municipal Assembly (NJMA). Finally, in Brong Ahafo Region, the study explored three districts, which included Sunyani Municipal Assembly (SMA), Sunyani West District Assembly (SWDA) and Tano South District Assembly (TSDA).

In all, the study covered 18 out of 79 district assemblies in the 4 study regions. Almost all the five major ethnic groups in Ghana (Akan, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Guans and Mole-Dagbane) who have settled across the ten regions of the country, could be found in these selected case study areas. It is also assumed that their traditional beliefs influence electoral results, which favour male contenders. For instance, after the 2012 General Elections (GEs), out of the 29 females among the 275 MPs, 2 were from Brong Ahafo (Akpah, 2013). Similarly, in the Central Region, after the 2006 District Assembly Elections, Upper Denkyira District recorded 1 female out of the 37 assembly members, and Assin North District recorded 3 elected women out of the 29 members. It was, therefore, vital to select these regions and districts with diverse electoral characteristics to solicit information based on the research questions from the respondents.

Limitation of the Study

Although participants were asked the same questions, they provided varied opinions, which could not be assumed to be similar in all societies. Also, while every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the research by representing the experience

of participants, each discussion as shared with the researcher was through participants' subjective lenses. As a result, participants' argument may not be generalised to reflect the experience of female politicians in Ghana. However, the researcher's analysis of the issues in its original form promote the reliability and the robustness of this qualitative study.

Secondly, considering the scope of this study, being limited to local government and district assemblies, it could not be assumed that findings could be extrapolated to other similar women politicians in national politics. Also, the study focused on elected women in the district assemblies, excluding the female appointees in the districts. Although the elected and the appointed were all female politicians, their socio-economic and political experiences may be unique. For instance, while an elected woman may have gone through a vigorous campaign to win a political position in the DA, female appointees may not have gone through that aggressiveness but may have secured the positions because of their public-spiritedness and commitment to their social responsibilities.

Considering the scope of the study, is the working relationship among the 'elected' female assembly members, the 'appointed' female assembly members, the assemblies and electorate similar? Although these female assembly members were all politicians, were the two groups performing similar responsibilities as development agents in the districts? These are among the researchable fields this study could not explore.

Structure of the Study

This study is organised into six chapters. Chapter 1 presents the contextual background for the study. It is from this context that a problem statement was identified. Objectives of the study and the research questions were drawn from the

problem statement identifying the significance and scope of the study. Chapters 2-5 comprise the body of the study, with Chapter 6 providing conclusions and recommendation.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review supporting the objectives and research questions of the study. This second Chapter is divided into three parts. Part one examines the literature underpinning the theoretical framework on the perspectives of women and gender theories in development, thus the gender and development (GAD). Preceding to the GAD's explanation is a brief discussion on Women in Development (WID), and Women and Development (WAD). Part two of this chapter presents the evidence on the concept of empowerment: defines different types of empowerment and scope of empowerment, and explain the concept of resistance. Part three examines the evidence around the major theory, the social capital theory: the reasons for the theory, the origin, social capital dimensions, the level of interaction, and benefits. Although the social capital was the major theory in this study, it is presented after the others to have a coherent analysis of the concepts, theories and their interrelationship in a conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology employed for the study. It discusses the significance of the research approach and the design adopted for this study. This third chapter focuses on and describes the study area, the population and sampling techniques that were employed to explore the study objectives. This chapter describes the processes and procedures for data collection, including gaining community entry, interviews, focus group discussion and data recording. The chapter explains the methods and procedures used and the data analysis tool employed in the study which was transcription, analysis, coding and categorisation of data. Lastly, this chapter

describes the field experiences concerning the researcher's roles and the study ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and discussion of the factors supporting the election of women to the district assemblies (DAs) in Ghana. This chapter has three parts and starts with a brief overview of Social Capital (SC) Theory. A description and discussion of the emerging themes from the results are the supporting factors accounting for the election of Ghanaian women to the DAs. The emerging themes or the supporting factors comprised of Individual Motivational Strategy, Community Support, Civil Society Support, Family Support, and the Campaign Strategy that the women employed to win elections. The analysis and interpretation also refer to the concepts underpinning the study; gender construction, empowerment, resistance, patriarchy and social capital theories.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the precluding factors to women's participation in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. In this chapter, the precluding factors have been categorised into three issues: 'Barriers,' 'Challenges' and 'Discouraging Factors.' Each of these factors is distinct in itself but not exclusive from the others. The 'barriers' are the blocking factors that do not give women the opportunity to engage in politics. The 'challenges' are the hampering issues that were impeding the duties of the elected Assemblywomen to function as members in their electoral areas. These challenging situations did not necessarily deter the women from seeking re-election. Rather, the 'discouraging factors' were those impediments that deterred the elected women from contesting subsequent elections. Thus, the issues under the precluding factors (e.g. harassment, lack of funds, intimidation, male dominance, etc.) re-occur in the barriers, challenging and discouraging factors because they could prevent some women from engaging in

politics but could only seem challenging to others. The discouraging factors were deterrent enough to some elected women, which dissuade them from seeking re-election.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to the study and highlights the most relevant findings to the research questions that were posed in Chapter 1 and related the findings to the underlining theories and concepts of the study. Thus, this chapter provides a coherent outline of theories and conceptual framework and demonstrates linkages with the study findings. From these findings were the recommendations made to the various stakeholders including, women, local and central governments, and civil society organisations. Even though affirmation action laws were not available, women navigated through the patriarchal Ghanaian society to engage in local politics to win DAEs. The chapter discusses implications and the researcher's contribution to knowledge to the existing literature on gender and politics. It suggests areas for further research that may positively influence women's participation in local politics and representation in the district assemblies in Ghana.

The next chapter, which is Chapter 2 examines the literature underpinning the theoretical framework on the perspectives of women and gender theories in development; emphasis is on the Gender and Development (GAD). Preceding to GAD is a brief discussion on Women in Development (WID), and Women and Development (WAD). Other concepts and theory were the concepts of empowerment and resistance, and the social capital theory, which is the main theory in this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the evidence underpinning this study, around the issues of individual women navigating through patriarchal structures to win district assembly elections. This second chapter is divided into three parts:

Part one examines the literature underpinning the theoretical framework on the perspectives of women and gender theories in development: Gender and Development (GAD) Approach.

Part two presents the evidence on the concept of empowerment: definitions, scope, types of empowerment and resistance.

Part three examines the evidence around the major theory, social capital theory: the reasons for the theory, its origin, definitions, dimensions, the level of interaction and benefits.

Part One: Women and Gender Theories in Development

Research on women and gender theories in development is oriented towards encouraging learning and action for an equitable world, and with the application of knowledge, a study can serve to improve the well-being of people (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000). Therefore, the theoretical underpinning of this study connotes that women's political development is to bring about equal participation in politics, which could be enhanced through empowerment and their social capital to resist the obstructing factors in society.

This part of the chapter reviews the literature on the gender theories in development, with Gender and Development (GAD) but there is the brief discussion

of the Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD) Approach preceding the GAD.

Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD)

Approaches

Women in Development (WID) was a liberal feminist movement, which emerged in the 1970s and it elevated the recognition of women's consciousness and abilities. Instead of characterising women as 'needy' beneficiaries, the WID perspective on women was as partners in the development of society. The WID held that no longer should women be seen as passive recipients of welfare programs but rather as active contributors to economic development (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012). Thence, 'women as partners of development' and 'actors in government' became the catchphrase in the 1970s.

However, by the end of the 1970s, concerns had been raised to include gender relations in development. There was disagreement among WID advocates and, development practitioners, and other feminists critiquing WID for isolating and concentrating only on women's issues. Tensions emerged because there was no 'gender-aware' aspect to the WID's approach to development. In the argument of the critics, there needed to be the declaration of gender awareness in the WID approach because of the interrelations between men and women, which otherwise could result in having conflictual and cooperative dimensions of life (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012; March et al., 1999).

Amid the controversies, Women and Development (WAD) emerged. WAD focused on economic production, and on the relationship between women and development processes rather than purely concentrating on strategies for the integration of women into development. However, focusing on women's productive responsibilities, the WAD neglected women's reproductive roles. Also, proponents of

WAD believed that the subordination of women in society occurred as a result of the development of private properties and capitalism (Parpart, Connelly & Barribeau, 2000; Muyayeta, 2007). Proponents of WAD who were mostly Marxist feminists, therefore, advocated for the abolition of private property and ignored the nature of gender inequality, gender relations and the challenges women face in society (Rathgeber, 1990; Muyayeta, 2007). Undoubtedly, women are among groups of people in society with cultures, practices, systems, patriarchal structures. Therefore, women could not have contributed to development without the possible influence of men and other social relations.

Hence, in the 1980s, some feminists and development practitioners critiqued WAD and indicated that neither WID nor WAD adequately addressed the causes of gender inequality in society. That was the argument from the Gender and Development (GAD) advocates, which this study emphasises because of the gender relations between males and females' aspect in the development theory. For instance, competition in political participation is about males or females contending as this study explores women's experience in a patriarchal society where men are supposedly held superior. Therefore, women could not aspire to political positions without the involvement of men. These issues are needed to be published as NGOs, and Gender Activists continue to engage civil society.

Moreover, women's studies programs and gender studies, as well as gender theories taught at universities, were often supported by some feminist philosophies such as radical feminism, liberal feminism and socialist feminism (Jones, 2016; Walby, 1990). The GAD theory is reviewed and demonstrates advocates' concerns about women's subordination and the various efforts regarding proposals and the promulgations of concepts and approaches to deal with the societal structures that tend to disadvantage women. From the GAD context, their interventions focused on

women's relationship with men and advocated for empowerment (Hyndman & De Alwis, 2003). Thapa and Gurung (2010) stated that empowerment emerged as an important theme in the women's movement from 1975 onwards. Therefore, in the subsequent sections of this chapter, the GAD approach, which is one of the theories in this study in women's involvement in local politics, is widely discussed alongside supporting concepts and a theory such as the concepts of empowerment, resistance and social capital theory, the main theory in this study.

Gender and Development (GAD) Theory

With the failures of the WID and WAD approaches becoming evident, the GAD theory came to prominence. The GAD approach started from a holistic perspective, looking at the totality of social organisation, economic and political life to understand the shaping of particular aspects of society (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012). The GAD theory relates to this study since it proposed more emphasis on gender relations rather than seeing women's issues in isolation (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Also, 'empowerment of women' is central to the GAD approach. For instance, one objective of the present study is to explore the factors supporting women's participation and representation in decision-making positions in Ghana. It recognises that at the local level of governance, there are gendered relationships. The gendered socio-cultural norms in Ghana determine access to rights, resources and decision-making positions, which women's empowerment could be key to address the inequality situation.

Moreover, the GAD theory emerged as a result of the equity approach, in which efforts to achieve change failed to question the interrelationship between power and development. Therefore, the GAD as an approach was more effective for informing policy and planning because it looked at all aspects of society and took into

consideration that a man could influence a woman's life and vice-versa (March et al., 1999).

Equally, the approach analysed the nature of women's contribution within the context of work done both inside and outside the household. The approach suggested that even the home should be considered as a field of bargaining, cooperation or conflicts and therefore, gender issues were needed to be discussed in development. Thus, GAD does not exclusively emphasise female solidarity and does not focus singularly on productive or reproductive roles, or community aspects of women's (and men's) lives to the exclusion of the other aspects. GAD, therefore, welcomes contributions from people, including men who are gender sensitive. It is this difference that makes GAD reverberate with empowerment. Thus, the GAD approach is also known as the empowerment approach or 'gender-aware planning' (Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000; Kaliniuk & Schzodaeva, 2012).

According to Moser (1993), the goal of GAD is the emancipation of women and their release from subordination that aim to achieve gender equity, equality and empowerment through meeting practical and strategic needs. Additionally, GAD theories have focused on the logical connections between gender and development programs and also on feminists' viewpoints (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012). According to Thomas (2004, p. 23) 'Empowerment of women' is central to the GAD approach and was the key element in the campaigns of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) by the network of Third World researchers. The feminists' definition of 'empowerment' is similar to this definition from Batliwala:

Empowerment is thus both a process and the result of that process. Empowerment is manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, castes, races, genders, or individuals. The goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women's subordination); to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (the family, caste, class, religion, educational processes and institutions, the media, health practices and systems, laws and civil codes, political processes, development models and government institutions); and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources (Batliwala, 1994, p. 130).

According to Thomas (2004, p. 23), the centralisation of the redistribution of power in the definition by Batliwala, "underlines the transformative agenda" of feminists who advocate for empowerment. The GAD theories deal with matters such as violence against women, peace building, health, education, economic empowerment, decision-making and leadership. Certainly, GAD encompassed concerns about the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, expectations of women and, of men (March et al., 1999). Notably, GAD was used to draw attention to the differences in the entitlements, access to resources, capabilities and social expectations of men and women as well as boys and girls (Muyayeta, 2007).

The GAD's approach made development bureaucracies, and other organisations became gendered regarding their culture, rules and outcome (March et al., 1999; Goetz, 1995). For that reason, organisation's approach to women was not without some form of gender discrimination. For instance, there has not been the full achievement of gender mainstreaming in governmental institutions such as the local government system. A review of the decentralisation policy in Ghana affirmed that the local government system is thought to operate on a non-partisan basis within a multi-party democratic arrangement for Central Government, but the vast and excessive authority of the Central Government and its appointing prerogatives for District Chief Executives (DCEs), 30% of members of the DAs and other sub-district institutions,

such as Unit Committees, Town, Urban and Zonal Councils, partisanship considerations are becoming more paramount than the assertion of stakeholder involvement and gender balance (Nordic Consulting Group [NCG] & DEGE Consultants, 2007). The consequence is also making it difficult for women to compete with their male counterparts for appointed and electoral political positions.

The inference is that the gendered attitude in organisations was associated with patriarchal systems. The position of the organisations meant their principles of male dominance approach, masculinity, chauvinism, and male protagonists shaped their culture, rules and outcome, which made them gendered (Goetz, 1995; March et al., 1999). Hence, Ghana's decentralisation policy for 2010, which had projected revisions and clear social agenda that included gender mainstreaming.

Kardam (1998) indicated that mainstreaming gender required modification to an organisation's culture and ways of thinking, its goals, its structures and its resources within international agencies, government and NGOs. The implication was that there was a shift from the women-specific projects to mainstreaming women/gender issues at programs and policy levels, and from a reliance on top-down planning to a 'bottom-up' or 'participatory' development strategies. The move to mainstream gender signified growth in the politicisation of development agenda (Kumar & Feldman, 2015).

Consequently, empowerment theory, research and intervention link individual well-being to the larger socio-political environment (Zimmerman, 1995). For example, as part of ensuring gender equity in labour, international, national and community-based civil society organisations have established the Local Government Network (LOGNET), a coalition aimed at sharing knowledge, expertise and information. Also, LOGNET has stimulated collaboration in rights-based work and promoted issues of gender equity during succeeding local government elections related to decentralisation

and local government reform to ensure empowerment of women ([NCG] & DEGE Consultants, 2007).

Part Two

Concept of Empowerment

The increasing awareness of the deteriorating position of women in the Third World following the world economic recession in the 1970s and the second wave of the feminist movement brought the issue of empowerment to the fore (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012). Scholars and development agencies continued to debate gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly when the Millennium Development Goal 3 (gender equality and women's empowerment) became a target to increase women's representation in decision-making positions.

Empowerment means, giving power. According to Hancock, Sharon, Jamie and Edirisinghe (2011), empowerment is a socially constructed status based on the assumption that a person or a group of people may have access to valued resources. Such resources are better education, better health, formal employment, safety, and decision-making positions in political systems and equality in policy change at the national and international levels.

Empowerment is the process of gaining access and developing people's capacities to (or "intending to") participate actively in shaping one's life, as well as one's community in economic, social and political terms (AusAID, 2011). Empowerment for women also means redistribution of work roles, application of women's values and attitudes to the changing world and it involves new kinds of adjustments, understanding and trust between men and women (Prasad, 2012). Prasad (2012) explains that empowerment does not mean setting women against men, but making both realise their changing roles and status, and developing consensus for

harmonious living in society. Society is characterised by gender power relations where individual actors have privileged positions and power, and over others concerning how institutional rules, norms and conventions are interpreted and how they are put into effect. As victims of inequalities in society, women need to use their voice, power, and, capacity to act to access resources and make choices to better their lives.

The concept of empowerment can be explored through three closely inter-related dimensions namely, resources (conditions), agency (voice or process) and achievements (outcomes) (Kabeer, 2001). Agency is one of the central pillars of empowerment, which relates to people's ability to make strategic life choices in a situation where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001; Tursunova, 2014). Central to the empowerment process is the agency, which deals with how choice is put into effect and actively exercised to challenge power relations. Agency is, therefore, exercised through the mobilisation of valued resources such as education, economic opportunities, and decision-making positions, which are the means of power distributed through the various institutions and relationships.

Consequently, when the distribution of resources and agency is skewed in society, they build only some people's capabilities and influence their potentials to enjoy meaningful lives. The outcomes of agency and resources are 'achievements.' Achievement is the extent to which individual's potentials are realised or failed to be realised. Thus, an outcome of individual's efforts, which can only be assessed with initial conditions (resources) and agency (process) is an achievement (Kabeer, 2001). For instance, a woman's ability to achieve political empowerment will occur because she uses her agency (voice, power, capacity to act) to access the available resources such as education, income and decision-making positions.

With regards to 'power' as in empowerment, Rowlands (1997) identified the power dimensions in empowerment and considered them as part of the development

processes. These power dimensions are ‘power over,’ ‘power to,’ ‘power with,’ and ‘power within.’ The ‘power over’ is the ability to dominate, where when one gets power then automatically someone has less power. ‘Power to’ is the ability to see possibilities for change. In its positive sense, ‘power to’ refers to people’s ability to make and act out of their life choice, even in the face of other’s opposition. Dupas and Robinson’s (2015) study reported that violence distorted and disjointed the lives of many women in Kenya in the wake of the political crisis. Therefore, if empowerment is ever to have a meaning, in times of crisis, the women’s empowerment (power to) must enable those women affected by violence to find ways to soothe that pain by their choices. In contrast to ‘power to’ is ‘power over’ that refers to the ability of some actors to override the agency of others through the exercise of authority or the use of violence and other forms of coercion. ‘Power with’ is the power that comes from individuals, working together collectively to achieve common goals (collective empowerment). ‘Power within’ is the feelings of self-worth and self-esteem that come from within individuals (Psychological empowerment) (Boateng & Mensah, 2012). According to Rowlands (1997), all these forms of power are linked and the recognition of the diversity of power beyond ‘power over’ helps in the construction of policies and programmes to assist the powerless. Thus, the individual who is disempowered can be empowered through interventions such as policies, projects and programmes (e.g. ‘we know politics project’ Refer to Chapter 1).

Significantly, gender policy (gender mainstreaming) was concerned with allowing women access to development activities and bureaucracies. According to Zimmerman (1995), through the empowerment construct, individual’s strength and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviours can be harnessed for effective social policy and social change.

Types of Empowerment

The literature describes different kinds of empowerment phenomenon: psychological, social, economic and political (Friedmann, 1992; UNDP, 1993; Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012; Pettit, 2012). Psychological empowerment is an individual sense of potency that is demonstrated in self-confidence behaviour (Friedmann, 1992).

Moreover, social empowerment is the ability to join fully in all forms of community life, without regard to religion, colour, sex, class or race. Having access to certain ‘basics’ of household production, information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organisations, and financial resources is a form of social empowerment (Friedmann, 1992). Also, social empowerment is about changing society (changing norms, rules, laws, policies), so within a patriarchal society, that means women’s place is respected and recognised. The respect and recognition of women’s status in society result in women’s ability to have access to valued resources such as decision-making positions (Pettit, 2012). For instance, when a woman achieves social empowerment it means there is a sense of freedom and self-esteem for the preservation of her integrity, the capacity to demand a fair reward for her work and the ability to participate in politics (Treasure & Gibb, 2010). Education is an agent of socialisation, where families and schools’ structures ensure that individuals get empowered socially. Thus, social empowerment could enhance females’ interest in political participation to ensure their political empowerment (Herz, 1991). For instance, a study by (Addai, 2000) on Ghana, reported that maternal education is the main influence on children’s schooling and suggested that the effect on girls’ education is twice as great, as it is probable that girls will continue to the next grade and in life.

Furthermore, the right to economic empowerment can allow individuals to engage freely in any economic activity. For instance, there have been interventions in

the Ghanaian socio-economic and political system to empower women by the state, NGOs and women's groups. Women's organisations such as 31st December Women's Movement in Ghana have been playing significant roles since the 1980s to empower Ghanaian women to gain economic and political independence (Torto, 2012). The 31st December Movement women's group trained women on soap making and batik tie and dye clothing for sale, which fetched them a lot of money to cater for their families and their wellbeing.

Another kind of empowerment is political, which deals with the level at which individuals have access to spaces and processes of decision-making, particularly those that affect their future and the future of others. Political power is not only the ability to vote but also the power of voice and collective action (Friedmann, 1992). Being empowered politically means freedom to choose and change governance at every level, from the presidential palace to the village council. Political empowerment also entails being able to get involved in government and political decision-making processes (Treasure & Gibb, 2010). A study conducted by ABANTU for Development (2003) reported that they organised a workshop and brought together more than 150 Assemblywomen from 110 districts in Ghana for their consensus to develop the Women's Manifesto. ABANTU's programme was aimed at empowering women to have a voice in the decision-making processes in government in Ghana. The resultant, Women's Manifesto, serves as one of the political reference documents for stakeholders advocating for gender equality in the Ghanaian political system (ABANTU for Development, 2003). Thus, empowerment increases the assets and capabilities of individuals or women's groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2008).

Empowerment also entails a process of change, which often begins from within and, therefore, addresses the need for women's empowerment. Afshar (1998), asserted that women must have confidence in what they do, and must have access to resources for them to perceive that they can make choices. Women's empowerment involves giving equal status to women and giving them the capacity and ways to direct their lives towards desired goals. It is an active process of enabling women to realise their identity, potentiality and power in all spheres of their lives (Prasad, 2012). Prasad's (2012) assertion resonates with the Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development, especially when GAD demanded the equalisation of access to resources for economic development. The emphasis on women's empowerment is based on the assumption that women must be endowed with different spheres of life, particularly, in the household, in the community and the labour market. Their empowerment requires more concerted efforts from all including the women themselves (Mensah & Boateng, 2012).

Women's empowerment has five components; women's sense of self-worth; women's right to determine choices; women's right to have access to opportunities and resources; women's right to have the power to control their lives (both within and outside the home); and women's ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally (Batliwala, 2007; Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2008). Griffen's definition of women's empowerment sums up those components of women's empowerment in more general terms:

To women, empowerment means having control or gaining further control; having a say and being listened to; being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society; and being recognised and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make (Griffen, 1987, p. 117).

Significantly, the social, economic and, political empowerment status of a country determines its gender empowerment index. For instance, in the 2013 report from the

World Economic Forum (WEF), political empowerment was relied upon as a dimension to measure a country's gender empowerment index (Hausman, Tyson, Bekhouche & Zahidi, 2013). In the WEF Report, as indicated in the first chapter of the present study, Ghana's political empowerment dimension; an indicator to measure the country's ranking of the overall gender empowerment index, showed a decline indicating the less efforts towards women's empowerment.

Tucker and Ludi (2012) stated that empowerment ensures equity through the liberation of individuals from poverty and inequality, which enables the liberated individuals to engage in the socioeconomic and political activities in society. In other words, empowerment enables marginalised people to develop the ability and power to resist structures that tend to oppress them. Accordingly, the concept of resistance could help explain how empowerment facilitates the struggle against marginalisation and subordination of women (Cindoglu & Toktas, 2002).

Concept of Resistance

Routledge (1997, p. 361) describes resistance as

Any action imbued with the intent that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes and institutions, which imply some form of contestation...and cannot be separated from practices of domination.

Resistance aims at denying, challenging and undermining power relations. Thus, according to Vinthagen and Lilja (2007), resistance contains the possibility that power gets impaired by the act of the subordinator in the context. Vinthagen and Lilja (2007) explained that in resistance, there is the intention or consciousness of the resister. That is, the action against power is done by someone in a subordinate position regarding power. They revealed that resistance occurs in four phases; an act was by someone subordinate; in response to power; do challenge power, and; contain at least a possibility that power gets undermined. To apply the phases of resistance to this study,

women are considered as being subordinated under the patriarchal system and structures, and therefore, to get elected to DAs, they employ subtle resistance.

Furthermore, the feminists in Ghana and Africa, in particular, do not accept the perception that women cannot make it in politics, which is a form of resistance against the political systems. For instance, to alert the world on gender inequality in decision-making positions, wives of various Heads of State (First Ladies) in Africa including Ghana and other renowned women advocates attended the First World Conference on the Status of Women in Mexico in 1975. Subsequent UN conferences, resolutions, conventions, and goals have been reinforced by some of these first ladies and gender advocates as they lobby governments in their home countries to implement UN Decisions to reduce gender inequality. The advocates' actions of resistance and lobbying aim to deconstruct patriarchal systems and structures to ensure gender equality in decision-making processes (Tsikata, 2009).

Also, the feminists' response to male dominance comes with resistance, which some may argue that women are seen as having room for exercising their influence within a constraining patriarchal system by negotiating a 'patriarchal bargain' with men (Reeves & Baden, 2000). In Ghana, for instance, Boateng (2006) study reported that some Ghanaian women struggled to overcome their obstructing cultural beliefs and practices. Then, they allowed their male spouses to support them with the traditional gender roles and the domestic chores (Boateng, 2006). According to Tsikata (2009), female politicians negotiated with husbands to manage the home while they went into politics and got elected to the district assemblies in Ghana. These negotiations in the domestic gender power relations can be seen as forms of resistance against the socially constructed structures and systems, such as the recognition of women in the private spheres while men are recognised in the public sphere.

According to Scott (1990), resistance, which is not as dramatic and visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war or other such organised, collective or confrontational articulations, is known as ‘everyday resistance.’ Accordingly, such ‘everyday resistance’ is employed with the mechanisms and cooperative strategies to use the same domineering structures and systems they are opposed to, and overcome their negative influence. These cooperative strategies may include networking, friendship, relationships, interconnectedness, which are tenets of strong social capital. For instance, according to Ortega-Bustamante and Steffy (2000), women’s social networks, in particular, are powerful resources for promoting resistance strategies, especially for those marginalised in contemporary society. These marginalised groups could resist as a result of them being empowered through education and exposure to socialisation that encourages new social norms. These women must subtly resist as there are continuous beliefs in proverbs and adages in Ghana that tend to discourage women. These proverbs include, *Mmesiafo de, won de ara ne gyaade*, which translates to ‘As for women, their main office is in the kitchen.’ If this adage is to be observed, then females need not have asked males to support them in the kitchen while they attended political rallies because these would not be going into politics. In the rural and remotest villages in Ghana where patriarchal systems are entrenched, many women do not have the voice to defy their husbands nor resist their male dominance.

Despite the endemic nature of the patriarchal systems in society, throughout history when women have not had equal rights, e.g. to study or to take non-traditional roles, they have often found sympathetic males with influence willing to assist them. Also, in the era of gender advocacy, there is a challenge to the status quo of the perceived male superiority where wives defy their husbands’ disapprovals to engage in the public sphere. Moreover, in countries such as Ghana where there are no

affirmative action laws or gender quotas to reduce discrimination in the political systems, women who are determined had to resist obstacles to their political participation in decision-making positions. Also, women politicians in other patriarchal societies subtly resist such oppressed political systems. For instance, Afshar's (1998) study cited the various ways women in Chile, Brazil, Asia, and the Middle East negotiated for power in their political participation. About Chile and Brazil, it showed that "politics at the national state level frequently inflict violence on women" (Afshar, 1998, p. 3). Afshar's (1998) study also dictates different "negotiating tactics", as women in these countries participate in the democracies through familial bargaining skills (Afshar, 1998, p. 3). The study also showed that in the Middle East, women in Syria used the existing legal structures to negotiate power in the state.

Resistance to societal obstruction to gender equality has been in the form of cultural dynamism, education for all, advocacy for gender equality and equity, anti-poverty interventions, and positive discriminatory directives, which cause social change. These interventions have weakened patriarchal structures, also resulting in the de-construction of stereotypical gender roles and relationships in the traditional practices in some rural areas in Ghana. In other words, social change influences the established constructed social relations and resisted the patriarchal gender power relations between women and men (UN, 2002). As a result of social change and the constant call for gender equality, many females have been encouraged to enrol in education and economic activities and have acquired skills and capabilities needed to engage in local politics. Although opportunities have been given to women to resist patriarchal structures, resulting in the political empowerment of the 5% being elected female members in the district assemblies in 2015, the percentage is inadequate to have a fair representation of females in the decision-making position. However, in some remotest parts of Africa and Ghana, women continue to adhere to the status quo. For

instance, Adibi (2006) asserted that a woman's experiences of disadvantage in society would occur as a result of patriarchal control. Furthermore, feminist theorists argue that women are socialised to accept their inferior positions in society because society treats women's subordinate position as normal (Ebila, 2011; Mahamadu, 2010). In her thesis, Ebila (2011) restated a participant's comment that in most African societies, once somebody was known as being a woman, that was all that people needed to conclude that the person would fail in her political career. As a result of the need to overcome the disadvantages to females, which are embedded within patriarchal structures and systems in societies, most women's groups and advocates in such societies have been supporting gender equality to reduce female subordination in advanced and developing countries.

The United Nations has also been advocating for gender equality among member countries, which makes an impact on their decisions (Zee, 2012). Duncan (1994) and Kay (2005) suggested that gender equality has been touted as having benefits for both males and females, but the disadvantaged position of females urged both radical and liberal feminists to settle on stressing the oppression of women and blaming male domination. Feminism as an ideology and movement, though it has many branches, exhibits advocacy for issues that uphold the importance of equal rights and fights for women rights in society (Smith, Collins, Chodorow, Connell & Butler, 2014). Since the end of colonialism and in the 1970s, feminism in Africa has been pragmatic, reflexive, group-oriented and focused on politics (Ebila, 2011; Mikell, 1984), because of the persistence belief in the socio-cultural values and norms (UNDP, 2016).

Social norms, values, and laws point out how the differences in the status of men and women have implications on the way they participate in a market or non-market work, and in community life (Partart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000).

Consequently, GAD as a gender theory refers to the social values, norms and laws, which fit well with the existing social capital structures. That is society, community and groups influence an individual's development in society. For instance, Mugane's (2007) study on local politics showed that a political aspirant with economic empowerment could participate in democratic governance. Also, the study reported that participation in a social group increases the feelings of efficacy, trust and self-actualisation on the part of the individual that provides a social base for democracy. The next section discusses the literature on social capital and political participation.

Part Three: Social Capital Theory

Getting access to power in politics required long-term investment in relationships; it requires building constituencies and creating supporters who would not only vote but would also take the initiatives, and address the concerns of a candidate (Birch, 2003). It applies to reviewing social capital theory including a consideration of how networking and relationships work in forming successful political alliances and social relationship. Many approaches have been proposed to explain political participation, and one is the agency theory, which focuses on traditional mobilising of organisations in civic society (Norris, 2002). Putnam's account of political participation emphasised the role of social capital, which falls into agency theories regarding social networks and active citizenships including parties, unions, and voluntary associations (Norris, 2002). This review examines the corresponding relationships among certain dimensions of social capital and the theory structures.

Also, the review considers how an application of the social capital theory can have a positive impact on building constituencies that support women's political success and their representation in local government. Dollery and Wallis's (2002)

research on social capital and local government capacity suggested that the social capital theory is a community resource that is built up through a long tradition of civic engagement. The subsequent sections present the origin and the various explanations and definitions of the theory of social capital.

Origin

The idea of social capital can be traced to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and has been in use for over a century (Adam & Roncevic, 2003). The theory was first published in a book in 1916 in the United States. Lyda Judson Hanifan who lived in the years 1879-1932 has been credited with the introduction of social capital as a concept and theory (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002; Putnam, 2001). The practice and ideas behind the use of the theory as discussed in her work described how in some part of the United States neighbours commonly worked together for social benefits including supervising community schools so their children could attend and acquire an education (Keeley, 2007). Since then, and as a result of the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1993), the social capital theory has gained popularity (Claridge, 2004; Walters, 2002).

James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu were the first sociologists to make the social capital a salient theoretical concept within the field of sociology. Putnam, a political scientist, also discussed social capital and its development within political sociology, emphasising civic responsibility, participation and associational life for the health of democracies (Putnam, 1993b). Putnam's concept is regarded as having contributed to a revival of intellectual interest in civil society (Walters, 2002). Concerning, its origin and contemporary situation, social capital combines the very modern language of networks with a much older register of a community.

Definitions

As a key concept in the social sciences, social capital is subject to competing definitions (Walters, 2002). Lollo (2012) asserted that when examining major definitions of social capital, the same ideas reoccurred across time but also reflected their timing, such as in the seventies (e.g. Loury, 1977). Others reflected ideas in the eighties (e.g. Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1988), the nineties (e.g. Burt, 1997; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1994), and within the millennium (e.g. Macke & Dilly, 2010). Although different authors approached social capital with varied explanations, the focuses remained on relationships, social networking, links, norms, rules, shared values, trust, understanding, and community. Social capital can be the resources available in and through personal and business networks, and relationships (Muir, 2000). The resources also include information, ideas, tips, clues, leads, business opportunities, financial capital, power and influence, emotional support, goodwill, trust, and cooperation.

Moreover, due to different explanations claimed to the theory, there have been disagreements about the use of the term ‘capital,’ as being a capital resource in a social relationship (Kilpatrick & Falk, 1999; Hofferth et al., 1999; Inkeles, 2000). Walters (2002) posited that the concept portrays an individual’s networks and a community-level phenomenon, where at the community level, the concept is a property (capital) of relations between the people in the community taken as a whole. Accordingly, social capital can arguably be built out of a norm, or an accepted rule, about how people should treat each other (Putnam, 2000). Baker (2000) suggested that ‘social’ as in social ‘capital,’ meant that this ‘capital’ resource was not a personal asset and that no single person owned it because the resource resided in networks of relationships. Macke and Dilly (2010) defended the social capital concept and refined it to include ‘collective capital’ and ‘personal gains.’ Thus, according to Macke and Dilly (2010),

social capital is the set of characteristics of a human organisation that encompasses the relations between individuals or groups; the standards of social behaviour; and the mutual reciprocity that makes actions possible because they were based on collaborative processes.

Keeley (2007, p. 102) appears to have given the theory its most straightforward definition as: “the links, shared values and understandings in a society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.” Lyda Judson Hanifan referred to it as “those tangible assets that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit” (Keeley, 2007, p. 102).

According to Robison et al. (2002), the definition and application of social capital have depended particularly on the discipline and level of investigation. Coleman and Bourdieu referred to social capital as “the ability of actors to secure benefits by their membership in social networks or other social structures.” Putnam interpreted social capital as “a feature of communities and nations” (Walters, 2002, p. 379). The features of socialisation, such as trust, norms, and networks facilitate coordinated actions that can improve the efficiency of society (Putnam et al., 1994; Putnam, 1995). For instance, Mugane’s (2007) study reported that the level of interaction between people was determined by the structure of the relationship. Thus, as each social structure had norms and values, and trust (i.e. dimensions) that guided individuals’ behaviour as members of a political group.

Dimensions

The dimensions of social capital are the key elements in social relationships for human and economic development. These dimensions are common to members of a specific group that allows cooperation among them to socialise and interact. These

dimensions include social interaction, which comes in the different types; an internal interaction that is characterised by *linkages* or *linking and bonding capital*, and external interaction, featuring *bridging capital*. The other dimensions were *Trust*; *Norms* and *Rules* that govern social action; *Network resources*, and; *informal and formal social ties*, which are considered as other network characteristics (Burt, 1997; Coleman, 1988; Collier, 2002; Fukuyama, 2001; Hean et al., 2003; Liu & Besser, 2003; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Putnam, 1993a; Snuders, 1999). Networking, social interaction, formal and informal social ties could be part of efficient political organisations.

The first dimension identified was ‘social interaction,’ which had been divided into three main categories; *Linkages or linking, bonding capital, and bridging capital* (Aldridge et al., 2002; Keeley, 2007). Lollo (2012) also suggested another form of dimension and named it as *identifying*. Thus, the identity lies in the possibility of recognising and measuring social capital dimensions, which reinforce autonomy and identity of the theory. Therefore, *identifying* became a dimension of social capital, as there was a recognition of the theory. Admittedly, the composition and the influence of each of these forms (*bonding, bridging, linkages and identifying*) differently affects the quality of resources available to individuals, the efficiency within a group, and the level of trust that reinforce social capital (Lollo, 2012).

The *bonding social capital* is a horizontal form of links, which is localised and occurs among people with equal status who live in the same or adjacent communities. *Bonding capital* is based on a sense of shared identities such as family, close friends and people who share culture or ethnicity. In *bonding relationships*, solidarity abounds, and authority is more decentralised (or distributed) as people engage in protective activities, and exercise closed and principled membership (Andriani, 2013; Heffron, 2001; Tzanakis, 2013). Bonding social capital is the social ties that bring

about togetherness among people, particularly with others who primarily are like them. For instance, in affirming the significance of bonding social capital, Keeley (2007) stated that the possible benefits from social capital could be seen by observing social bonds. Keeley (2007) emphasised on the individuals' level of access to help, most often is from families and friends.

Also, Lowndes (2001) on women and social bonds suggested that the female gender may be richer in bonding social capital because of the ties and intimacy among women, families and friends, which has a sociological niche just as themselves. Myeong and Seo (2016), asserted that bonding social capital was easier to build than bridging social capital.

Bridging social capital is a vertical link between communities, which extends to individuals and organisations that stretch beyond a shared sense of identities such as distant friends, colleagues and associates. Under the *bridging social capital*, members operate through formal hierarchical structures, and people are geographically dispersed and engaged in open membership. Also, Lowndes (2001) argued that irrespective of gender, men and women could build bridging links, making reference to their status and class in society. Lowndes' (2001) assumption on men and women's ability to bridge links was based on the situation that women could be considered homogeneous group whose roles in society, example as reproductive responsibilities, tend to get them together such as in an ante-natal group of expectant mothers. And so, if these members in the group stay in touch after child delivery, they may exchange information and contacts regarding future child care or health, employment, and even political activities. Stereotypically, men also reach out to nearby friends and as they come together during soccer and other related activities.

However, Claridge (2004), reaffirmed Putnam cautions against linkages regarding either ‘bridgingness’ or ‘bondingness’ as being superior and about the practical difficulties involved in categorising social capital activities. Notwithstanding this problem, the benefits of each of these types of social capital abound. Thus, the circumscribed influential group is seen as a social capital resource for individuals; and furthermore, there is interest in how this could be valuable especially to those seeking to build their social capital (Keeley, 2007; Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003; Narayan, 2002; Narayan & Pritchett, 1999).

The third form of social capital is termed *linkages*. Keeley (2007) describes links to people or groups that are further up or lower down the social ladder as *linkages*. Dekker and Uslaner (2003) also posit that concerning *linking* social capital or *linkages*, the forms of social capital (*bonding*, *bridging*, *linkages* and *identifying*) are seen as multidimensional as there are continuous ties to people or groups.

The concept of social capital has been developed further, as being multifaceted and mutually inclusive as the different dimensions span from structural to cognitive manifestations (Hitt, Lee & Yucel, 2002; Uphoff & Wijayaratna, 2000). For instance, the *structural* social capital features the *vertical* or *bridging links*, which facilitate mutual and collective beneficial achievement through established rules, procedures and guides, norms and social values, and networks. The *cognitive* social capital is also very much bonding-like and characterises with the horizontal linkages, where there are shared norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that identify people’s shared behaviour and influence them towards communal accomplishment (Krishna & Uphoff, 2002). Consequently, *cognitive* and *structural* forms of social capital are commonly connected and mutually reinforcing. However, they are distinctive as the differences are observed in how people form and maintain trust in social interactions, where trust

also becomes a shared value aligned with the accepted virtues and expectations within a society.

Trust is a significant dimension of social capital. Bornstein, Najemy and Peterson (2008), defined ‘trust’ as the extent to which individuals have confidence that people mean what they say, and will remain committed. Also, the intensity of social exchanges results in a greater sense of community trust (Bornstein et al., 2008). Kuenzi (2008) stated that the most important determinant of interpersonal trust in Nigeria and Ghana is trust in political institutions. Trust in political institutions is referred to as “political trust” (Alemika, 2007; Kuenzi, 2008).

In Ghana for instance, during the transition period from military governance to civilian administration in 1993, the then government tried to build trust in the citizenry by institutionalising Parliament, which indicated that it was capable and interested in promoting the values of multiparty democracy.

In spite of the government efforts, there were criticisms against the authority that since the military ruler contested the 1992 General elections, and won the Presidential seat and majority of the Parliamentary seats, the transition was without change. The condemnations continued when the president appointed members of the erstwhile military government as Ministers (Abdulai, 2009). The issue had to do with whether there would be any trust in the democratic governance if the same military apparatchiks were managing the affairs of the nation. Government and administration function with trustworthy personnel and, therefore, there was the belief that the government did nothing wrong by appointing his cronies. There had been built up trust among these functionaries and were more likely to support each other in governance.

Mugane’s (2007) study for example, reported that when community members did not permit interactions and engaged with others less, members did not know each other, they had less trust and, therefore, were less likely to support each other. Such

members had less opportunity to participate actively in community development. Accordingly, trust sometimes decays and therefore, having a face to face interaction was important to generate trust to enhance active engagement to build communities (Mugane, 2007). Therefore, the relationships in social structures that reveal individuals' earned trust from families and groups could be from the three constructs; trust, civic engagement, and political participation, which are part of social capital (Alesina & Giuliano, 2011).

Consequently, concerning the interactive social dimensions, either *bonding* or *bridging* social capital is associated with a certain type of trust; either 'thick trust' or 'thin trust.' Thick trust is a trust entrenched in personal relationships that are intense, frequent, and covered in wider networks. Bornstein et al. (2008) argue that daily human interactions produce the kind of face-to-face reliance and mutual knowledge of 'thick trust.' Thus, the latter may be the kind of trust one acquires through frequent contact with close professional colleagues. Putnam cited a scenario of 'thick trust' where it could be observed between the families of marriage partners. According to Putnam (2000), 'thick trust' was present in personal patronage and described how networks cemented factions together under the leadership of a dominant family. From the analysis of closed network, as the characteristics of bonding members in a group relationship that reflect on 'thick trust,' it is seen that closed networking was useful. A 'social network perspective' also suggests that relationships among interacting units are imperative, as the players in these relationships have ties they cherish. Thus, the players and their actions are viewed as interdependent, and the relational links or linkages between them form networks for transfer or flow of resources both material and non-material (Mugane, 2007). In Ghana, NGOs collaborate and act for the benefit of members including those who aspire to political positions (ABANTU for Development, 2003; Selby, 2011).

However, in *bridging social capital*, there is a closely related ‘thin trust’ which features distant networking and little reliance on face-to-face relationships (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Myeong & Seo, 2016). Thin trust (or social trust or generalised trust) extends trust beyond an individual’s actual network, into a more implied sense of common networks and expectations of a reciprocal response. General community norm exhibits thin trust as the kind of fragile trust one might display toward those whom one may not know at all but live in the same town, village or neighbourhood. For instance, a popular female politician would be living among her constituents, but may not have interacted with many of the electorate. Thus, the ‘thin trust’ emerges on the basis that constituents would be voting her to any political positions because other connected people might have acknowledged her contribution to the development of their electoral areas.

To Putnam (1994, 2000), Claridge (2004) and Andriani (2013), trust is reciprocal. It is through experiences and face-to-face interaction with people from diverse backgrounds that people discern to trust one another (Putnam, 2000). Bornstein et al. (2008) also gave a scenario that through women’s roles as wives, their status is bound together by two patrilineal families. A patrilineal line of descent is traced through the paternal side of a family. According to Bornstein et al., the wives, therefore, cemented a ‘thick trust’ as their appearance in public had the potential to unbind ‘thin trust’ where people who do not know each other become unified and bridged. The suggestion was that ‘thin trust’ was extended to different groups of individuals who interacted during the marriage ceremony between the two patrilineal families. The ‘thin trust’ unified the community, including people who did not know one another. In ‘thin trust,’ the relationship extended beyond closed and familial relationships to others who may not have known each other (Keeley, 2007; Putnam, 2000).

In the context of Ghana, the mere mention of names trigger ideas about familial bonds because of their communal living and the belief in the extended family system. A native who bears the same name with a political aspirant could vote him or her to power with trust that they may be family related to the same ancestral bond. Also, as a result of the socialisation processes in Ghana, the name of an individual could generate an investigation to ascertain the clan or ethnic groups of such persons. Hence, if it happens that they have same ancestors, trust built automatically, and mainly when they could speak the same native languages, the confidence intensifies.

Thus, in the ‘thin’ relationship the ‘trust’ is also built with the use of networking, socialisation, ‘community spirited’ attitude, and interaction. The Foundation for Community Association Research explains ‘community spirit’ as pride in a community. According to the Foundation for Community Association Research, “the community associations today are neighbourhoods yesterday” (2014, p. 4). Spirited communities such as safe neighbourhood, creates an emotional equity that sets communities apart from the rest of the society. Thus, the researcher names a person who is much concerned about the community as a ‘community spirited persona,’ which may be referred to in this study. With this high level of social capital, individuals and groups could intensify the familiarity, which makes it more valuable, especially for politicians who need to extend their networks for support.

Although in bonding social capital the social ties bring much togetherness among people who primarily are like them; regarding ‘thin trust’ in political organisations, individuals who are not so close could increase the numbers that may contribute to a win to political positions. In democratic governance and electoral political processes, politicians may not contact all supporters, yet the system requires that constituents entrust to politicians their rights of representation in decision-making processes. Hence, extensive networking, the building of constituencies, family and

friend bondages, and trustworthiness, which are guided by norms and rules of society and groups, makes governance function.

Norms and *Rules* are another forms of social capital dimension, which are part of the general social action and are characteristics of both *bonding* and *bridging* social capital. *Norms and rules* act as guides for groups and individuals to function properly in society for collective benefit. Sociologists such as Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988) refer to shared norms as society's unspoken and unquestioned rules. Besides, values such as respect for people's rights including safety, health, decision-making, reciprocity and security are the necessary foundation for many social groups. Shared norms, values, and understandings and "networks facilitate cooperation within and among groups" (Keeley, 2007, p. 103). Social capital, or the value of social networks, partly stems from the norms of trust that flourish through these networks (Bornstein et al., 2008).

Networking is another dimension of social capital, and this term refers to the relationships that exist among groups of individuals or organisations (i.e. who knows whom) (Bornstein et al., 2008). According to the social network theory, ordinary citizens have the potential to influence decisions that govern them (Mugane, 2007). Putnam (2001) explained the popular adage that 'it's not what you know, it's who you know.' This saying sums up the orthodox understanding of social capital that reveals the familiarity of members of a group (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Baker (2000, p. 2) pointed out that "access to social capital depends on who you know; the size, quality, and diversity of one's personal and business networks." Coincidentally, social capital goes beyond 'who you know' and also relies on 'who you don't know,' via being indirectly connected to people through other networks (Savage, Tampubolon & Warde, 2004).

In networking, individuals who could see issues early and more broadly, and translate information to groups and individuals are noted to have been able to access different systems explicitly through their networks (Keeley, 2007; Burt, 2004; Hermans & Lederer, 2009). The structure of social networks and the character of these links among people influence how efficiently the network could produce various results, and whether the network was well integrated (Wollebaek & Selle, 2003). The social capital perspective indicates that networking and social interactions can be useful resources that enable people to build communities and ensure commitment to each other, which in turn brings about social cohesion (Mugane, 2007).

However, *social networks* can be asymmetrical or uneven. For example, networks can be real-world links between groups or individuals, a network of friends, networks of families, networks of former colleagues and network of groups who may not feel close. An example of an asymmetrical network is where an individual in a community could say that a Member of Parliament (MP) was her friend even when the MP did not also indicate that the individual was her friend (Bornstein et al., 2008). The asymmetrical or uneven network is a typical context for the display of ‘thin trust,’ although the working together of the networks to reach an understanding encourages trust.

Hence, access to information and influence through social networks confers private benefits on individuals. As indicated earlier in this chapter, although in the classical sense that Bourdieu used ‘social capital’, it relates to a somewhat fixed arrangement of connections in specific social classes. For political analysis, the term has been explored regarding how it relates to investment in social relations with expected returns, and in which people interact and network to gain a benefit (Lin, 2001; Kreuter & Lezin, 2002). Therefore, as with the theory’s initial implications of social class divisions; in some cases, in more modern contexts, individuals or groups can

garner aspects of social capital, such as accessing information, and use it in ways that exclude others and reinforce dominance or privilege (Keeley, 2007). Regarding calls for gender equality, there is not always progress towards the goal without significant backlash effects such as exclusion and domination.

Informal and formal social ties appear as another form of social capital dimension. Newton (2008) reiterated Putnam's (1998) assertion of the difference between formal and informal networks and termed formal network as a formality of civic engagement, which includes ties to voluntary associations, and partnerships through sports, music, the arts and church. Baum, Calabrese & Silverman (2000) also describe formal networks as those aspects of life most often described as civic or institutional. These include associations with formally constituted groups, as well as non-group based activities. The trust associated with formal ties could be thin trust as relationships are not so close and bonded.

Mark Granovetter (1973) promulgated 'The Strength of Weak Ties' and, explained that it is advantageous for a group to have some weak ties since that leads to a wider range of information which is crucial for the progress of the group. The structure of a group, therefore, determines a network's usefulness to its members. Granovetter (1973) explains how smaller, 'tighter' networks could be less useful than networks with loose connections (ties) to individuals outside the main network. This is because the activities of individuals at the sideline of the groups are crucial as they move between groups as deliverers of new thoughts and information. Consequently, possession of weak ties smooths the flow of information from outside the group that is necessary for a political action, economic opportunities, social support and technical skills (Granovetter, 1973; Mugane, 2007).

According to Putnam (2000), informal ties include those held between family, kin, friends, other intimate relationships and neighbours. Within informal ties, there is

also a distinction between families within and beyond the home, as it is projected that the family unit within one household works together and function in different ways to expand networks of kin beyond the household (Coleman, 1988; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Although networks of family members or kin who reside beyond the household have received less attention in studies of social capital than families within the household, it is believed their associations play a significant role in networking and at some point in time exhibit 'thick trust' among members of the network. In this instance, a network structure such as 'structural holes', is imperative as suggested by Burt in 1992 (Burt, 2000; Mugane, 2007). Accordingly, this network could constrain or facilitate individuals to influence or act as brokers within their networks by bridging two or more networks that are not directly linked (Burt, 2000). According to Burt (2000), the existence of social ties is more relevant than the strength of the ties; bridging ties have extended tentacles when it comes to spreading information. For example, structural holes can describe the nature of the networks and why it is more facilitative to women in political activities than others in bonding social capital. Thus, there can be networks of people with homogenous structures such as families, close friends or neighbours who may not be vigilant regarding the necessity to seek new information from outside their network since no bridges are connecting them outside the network, thereby resulting in interacting among themselves more. However, a female with ambition in politics makes use of the few networks and spread to those who are not connected to her in the community, especially when people travel far and near to vote within the electoral areas where they had lived but may be working far away.

The arguments presented by various scholars on the types and dimensions of social capital showed similar features. For instance, comparing the social capital dimensions, the researcher looked at Cassar, Crowley and Wydick's (2007)

description of *homogeneous* networking and relationships or dimension which have shared values and interests. Homogeneity as a dimension was similar to the *cognitive* dimension where there was a common understanding, shared values and interest, but with the hierarchical dimension, networking can be one single contact, and there can be limited information (Burt, 2000). However, with *structural* dimension, information spreads among group members in the network, so that when a member of a group calls on another member and accesses information, those pathways and the quality of the information become reliable. Moreover, strategically a female politician just as the male politician need cognitive to build support in politics, but an astute politician can also try to win over others from different ways of thinking. In the context of Ghana, the structural dimension such as reliance on the established structures in society including traditional authorities, opinion leaders, community elders, youth leaders could liaise among themselves to enhance development.

It is worth considering the different conceptualisations of social capital amongst the scholars. Liang, Huang, Lu and Wang (2015) identified the *external* dimension in addition to *relational*, and *cognitive*; mainly, as they sought to develop a framework to define and clarify different features of social capital. Liang et al. (2015) related *external* social capital to inter-organisational networks that supported cooperative engagement to achieve their objectives. In another development, Macke and Dilly (2010), and Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) had referred to a *structural* dimension in addition to *relational* and *cognitive* dimensions. Notwithstanding the different argument on social capital dimensions, Narayan and Cassidy's (2001) suggestions were reflective of the ideas raised earlier by these scholars. Figure 4 below shows Narayan and Cassidy's (2001) dimensions.

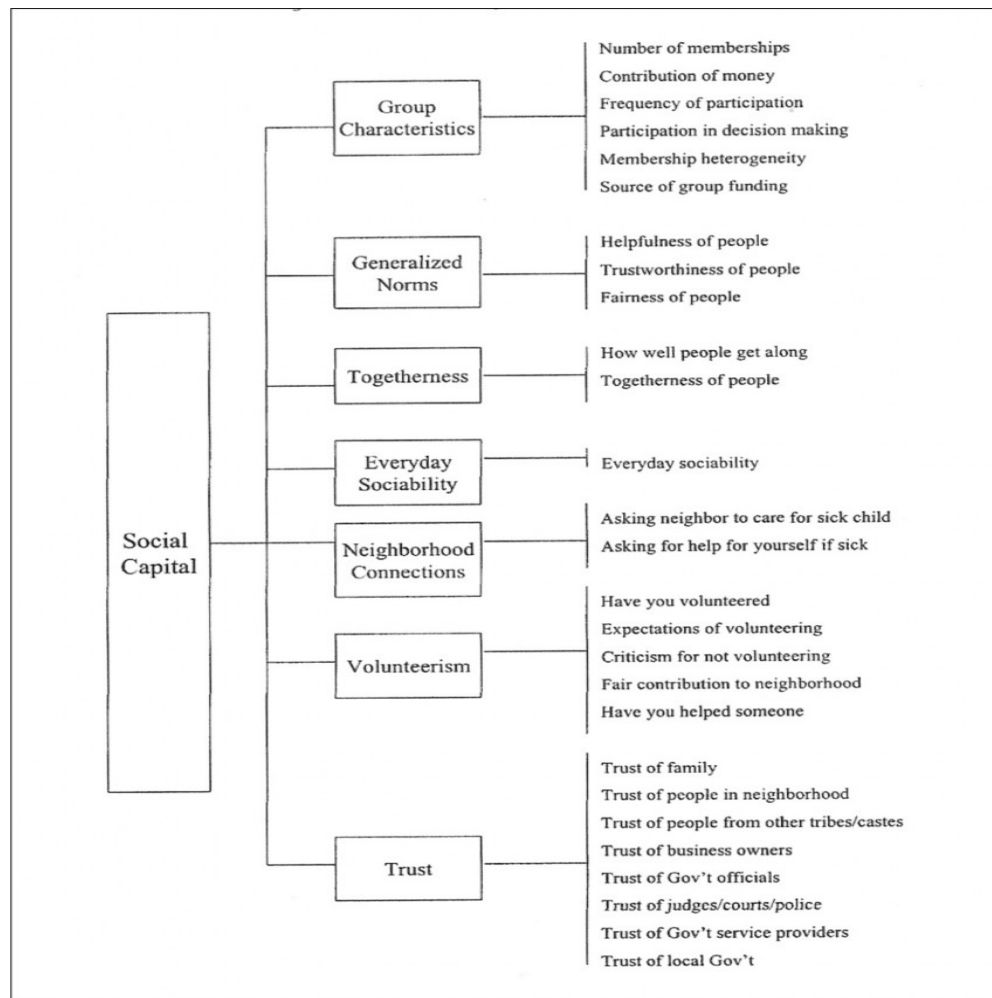


Figure 4: Dimensions of Social Capital (Narayan and Cassidy, 2001)

Figure 4 shows the categorised aspects of social capital dimensions, originally from Narayan and Cassidy's arguments that reflect other scholars' ideas. Narayan and Cassidy's (2001) social capital dimension includes norms, heterogeneity, trust, connection, social interaction that relate to other scholars' argument on the dimension of social capital. For instance, Andriani (2013) indicated that 'trust is reciprocal', thus reflecting on the Narayan and Cassidy's (2001) dimensions.

Moreover, the various definitions of social capital relate to the interrelated dimensions as collective resources resulting in mutual benefits at the levels of interaction between the individual, community and societal development, which is discussed in the next part of this chapter. At the levels of interaction (e.g. individual,

group and society) within social capital are the interrelated dimensions that contribute to the meaning of social capital (Lollo, 2012; Macke & Dilly, 2010).

Levels of Interaction in Social Capital

Social capital and its related social action exists and is evident at any level in society where the individual may identify with groups and have a sense of belonging. The individual can have a sense of belonging to the family, a profession, an informal social group, a formal organisation, the community, an ethnic group, and the country (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Buys & Bow, 2002a; Coleman, 1988; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Newton, 1997; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1995; Slangen et al., 2004). It is within the dimensions of social capital that the levels of interaction function; and it is at the levels of interaction that the dimensions (social interaction, norms and rules, values, trust and networking) make the social capital theory function and contribute to its meaning.

Interactions have been classified into micro (individual/family), meso (group) and macro (societal) levels. More importantly, without the social interaction, and networking (and other dimensions such as norms, rules, values, trust and networking), the individual, group and society (i.e. levels of interaction) cannot function in creating political activities. For instance, McClurg (2003) stated that *politically relevant social capital* (i.e. social capital that facilitates political engagement) is generated in personal networks (social interactions with a citizen's discussants). Hence, when there is an increase in the levels of *politically relevant social capital*, there is the likelihood that citizen will be engaged in politics.

Scholars such as Putnam (2000) and Lollo (2012) explained social capital and theorised it within the levels of societal structures. These authors agreed that the theory was dealing with certain aspects of social structure that enabled social action. Hence,

the foundation of social capital is located in the social structures where the actor is located; having the individual and a collective component (Adam & Roncevic, 2003; Adler & Kwon, 2002). Bourdieu, whose perspective was more on the constraints within social class groups, argued that at the individual level of interaction, social capital is built from titles/names, friendship/associations, membership and citizenship.

Coleman (1988) also asserted that at the family level of interaction, social capital was within the family size, parents' presence in the home, mother's expectation, family mobility and church affiliation. At the societal or macro levels, Putnam, whose perspective is more on how social capital can arise from connections between diverse people, places social capital at the regional or community level and mentioned membership in a voluntary organisation and voting participation (Adam & Roncevic, 2003; McClenaghan, 2000).

More essentially, in a contemporary democratic country where politics is all about numbers, an aspiring politician would aim to interact at almost all the levels of society, and should strategically aim to maximise her influence through building social capital via networking, linkages, bonding, constituencies, associations, clubs and trust to facilitate a successful political career. In Ghana, men have typically had greater ease in making wider social connections, and the patriarchal structure of society has led to them dominating the political activities, resulting in their assumption that women would succeed in their political aspiration as electorate 'trust' to vote them to political offices. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that women who have been elected to public offices got there as a result of high social capital, which means they probably have had scores of supporters in their constituents, personal cliques and trusting members of their electorate who helped them to succeed in their political careers in Ghana.

Benefits of Social Capital

The literature indicates a widespread interest in and application of the concept of social capital (SC) and suggests the theoretical importance of a broad range of social phenomena. Rothstein (2003) stated that the real strength of social capital theory was the combination of macro-sociological (societal) historical structures with micro-level (individual/family) causal mechanisms. Thus, scholars of social capital regard it as being useful to people and communities (Adam & Roncevic, 2003; Durlauf, 2002; Krishna, 2001). When Bourdieu developed the influential theory of ‘cultural capital’, he argued that subtle class signals in speech styles, and aesthetic tastes functioned to keep the class structure stable and to constrain social mobility. However, the more recent approach to theorising about ‘social capital’, is that all social capital is valuable; in so far as democratic elections depend on popularity to win votes, then it is viable for aspiring politicians to consider how the theory of social capital might be informative of strategies to win office.

Social capital is an existing resource at a community level where the theory represents a property (capital) of relations among the people in the community. At the individual level, social capital is taken as a complete resource that people can use to their advantage. Putnam (2000) explained that networks, norms, rules, and trust facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Thus, there is general agreement about the qualities (e.g. trust) of the social relationships that infer social capital. Furthermore, social capital underlies important social goals described in concepts such as social support, social resource integration and social cohesion.

Going further, Porter & Lyon (2006) argued that social capital could shape regional development patterns. Thus, social capital encourages societal wellbeing; the functioning of modern economies, and stable liberal democracy. As a way of ensuring liberal democracy, social capital is an essential foundation for cooperation across the

political sector, and power differences occur as a result of differences in bridging links (Fukuyama, 2001; Porter & Lyon, 2006).

Also, Narayan and Cassidy (2001) and Putnam et al., (1994) argued that increased social capital can lead to a lower rate of crime and improvement in the effectiveness of institutions of government, because of the inter-connectedness. Besides, perceptions of community governance, public institutions and political involvement stem from the fundamental dimensions of social capital.

From an economic perspective, Lollo (2012) asserted that social capital is a productive asset and facilitates financial transactions that enhance trust resulting in cooperation. The concept, therefore, addresses financial problems, and promotes higher levels of growth in the gross domestic product of a country, facilitating the more efficient functioning of labour markets. Also, economic and business performance at both the national and sub-national level is affected by social capital (Aldridge et al. 2002; Putnam et al., 1994; Subramanian et al., 2003). It is impossible to comprehend behaviours of actors in the economic sectors without considering the position of economic agents within the social structures (Granovetter, 1985; Lollo, 2012). Therefore, in this where some women have gained financial sponsorship as a result of networking and have acquired human capital as a result of advocacy for education, it is believed female politicians also achieve economic and social capital for political gain.

In the context of this study, none of the elected Assemblywomen hadn't been to school to develop their human capital. Some hold degree qualification and are working in private and public organisations. Also, through social capital, they were able to win sponsorship packages from networks of philanthropists, organisations and other bonded individuals for their political ambitions.

Moreover, concerning economic wellbeing, there is optimism and satisfaction of life. For instance, social capital is a necessary variable in public health, and educational attainment since interconnectedness ensures that institutional systems for these services do function (Aldridge et al., 2002; Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001; Subramanian, Lochnerb & Kawachi, 2003).

Furthermore, social capital is both a community-level phenomenon and a property of an individual's networks. According to Bourdieu, social capital can be understood at all of the individual, group and community levels. For the *relational* nature of social capital, there are both private benefits for individuals and mutual benefits for the individual and other team members occurring at the meso (group) levels of interactions.

Further, the theory's consideration of agency capacity is relevant to understanding the extent to which individuals and groups take part in political activities (Krishna, 2002). Putnam (1994, 2000) posits that trusting and actively engaged citizens contribute to the emergence of democracy. Walters (2002) asserted that where faith was lacking, people were unable to cooperate politically or to aggregate their interests. Krishna's (2002) study specified that for more active and politically engaged citizens, they are influenced at different levels by macro-level factors such as national institutions, (e.g. State), micro-level factors such as individual's wealth and education, and meso-level factors such as social capital. Krishna (2002) explained that the effects of social capital are realised when agents help individuals and communities connect with public decision-making processes.

Moreover, arguably, from the viewpoint of politician's potential strategy, the more important part of the term social capital is 'capital' since that reflects the resources inherent in the structure of people's relationships in society that can be drawn upon, just as economic capital is in a person's bank account. Another term is

‘human capital’ which refers to a stock of knowledge and skills or personal attributes that an individual can use to derive income from labour (Baker, 2000; Claridge, 2004; Portes, 1998). Thus, human capital resides in the individual as social capital lies in social relationships (Robison et al., 2002).

In Mugane’s (2007) study of women’s groups, it was observed that they met and contributed money to support members who were aspiring to political activities at the local level in Kenya. The trust among members led to them contributing towards the successful election of member candidates for political positions. Mugane’s study further described how the trust and the active engagement of the women in the group were the mechanisms through which those women’s groups could subsequently influence political decisions through the election of their members to local government. Furthermore, in Ghana, the Christian Mothers’ Association, and Women’s AGLOW Fellowship encourage their members to engage in political decision-making positions.

Some of these scholars argue that social capital is not something an individual can give to herself or himself. Thus, it belongs to a group and can be employed by the group or individuals within the group (Kilpatrick et al., 1998; Sander, 2002). Gant, Ichniowski and Shaw (2002) and Glaeser, Laibson, and Sacerdote (2002) have asserted that social capital is embedded within a group, and therefore, could not be traded by individuals who could deal with other forms of acquired capital such as economic and human capitals. These scholars argued that social capital could not be active from the perspective of individual’s networking, associations, duties, and responsibilities unless it is applied to a group.

Nonetheless, Baker (2000), Gant et al. (2002) and Glaeser et al. (2002) overlooked the fact that through social ‘capital,’ the individuals could develop their human capital and capacity for individual benefit and also, for society to benefit. Their

arguments could not side with the levels of interaction as the micro (individual), meso (group) and macro (society), where the individual plays a critical role in the building of social capital. For instance, interpersonal trust, which is an aspect of social capital, developed by individuals is desirable (Bankston & Zhou, 2002).

Some studies have illustrated ways that people develop their human capital from society as they associate with social capital. Lyda Judson Hanifan who first published around this concept indicated that individuals were helpless socially, particularly when they were left to themselves. However, when they came into contact with their neighbours, and other unknown neighbours, there was an increase in social capital, which harnessed to satisfy their social needs. These requirements bore a social potentiality that was sufficient to the substantial improvement of the living conditions for the individual and the whole community (Putnam, 2000).

However, concerning Baker's (2000) proposition that an individual cannot trade social capital, if those members (as individuals) in the community had not availed themselves to guarantee social interaction and support to others, then the levels of social capital being built within the community would not have been high enough to achieve any mutual benefit, as suggested by Lyda Judson Hanifan. The individuals availing themselves to create cooperative services also found through their associations the advantages of help, sympathy, and the fellowship of their neighbours.

In a society marked by patriarchal structures and culture, such as Ghana, women have relative disadvantaged positions compared to men concerning economic power and access to political power, and they are often more constrained due to a societal expectation about their reproductive role, as explained in Chapter 1 of this study. As such, it is tempting to assume that women are less able to have access to social capital. However, Blomkvist (2003) had drawn the attention to the ways women could accumulate social capital, even though their community's organisation tends to

restrict women in being able to maintain wider social ties, which in turns tends to preserve the status-quo of gender relations. Instead of effecting changes in the underlying circumstances of the community, women keep their heads up and still feel empowered even when as men tend to represent them in society (Blomkvist, 2003).

Moreover, social capital is observed as gendered because women tend to build their networks within the locality to sustain themselves in the face of male exclusion (Blomkvist, 2003). Likewise, the concept could be seen as a resource in public sphere and politics that people call on for political benefit. Social capital being a resource empowers individuals with status and recognition as women build their social capital through networking, social interaction, and constituency for political gains (Maxine, Griffith, Osikena, 2005).

Furthermore, social capital features connectedness, shared values, cooperation and interactions that could occur across many different groups. For instance, women symbolise the kind of interactions that build social capital, particularly when they become involved in resolving matters that are characterised by conflicts, intolerance and competitiveness. Blomkvist (2003), therefore, asserted that women also could bring to political movements the consciousness and commonality of goals and shared interests.

A significant aspect of social capital is education. According to Keeley (2007), education seems to bring broader welfare benefits than just cutting crime such as armed robbery. For instance, education had been part of social capital as through the social networking the individuals develop their human capital and empower themselves. Putnam (2000) asserted that citizens with higher levels of education also have higher levels of civic and social engagement. For example, the educated citizens involve themselves more in shaping their communities and take practical steps to help improve the welfare of the societies in which they live. It has also been argued that the

social standing of the most educated individuals might have encouraged them to be politically active as they would be getting close to the echelon of those wielding political power (Keeley, 2007; Putnam, 2000). To Putnam (2000), someone with lower levels of education might not be willing to put themselves forward and would shy away from political engagement, and the person with low-level knowledge may prefer to focus on community involvement.

However, an assumption that a person with a low level of education only engages in community involvement might not always be accurate. In Ghana, though individuals with high-level educational qualification may be motivated to participate in politics, they sometimes lose elections to less educated competitors. Moreover, when the less educated avail themselves to the common need of the electoral areas, they attract electorate's support, which may contribute to their success in politics. Thus, although getting a higher education may serve to raise the confidence of some voters and would, therefore, be an added advantage regarding entering politics in Ghana; it is possible that a 'community spirited' less educated individual could hold more appeal to the electorate. For example, during district assembly elections in Ghana, both the highly educated females and the less educated ones competed for political positions, yet those who were less educated won positions in local government. For instance, in this study, the data on the women interviewed indicated that 15% of the elected women had primary education, 6% had a secondary level of education, and only 4% had a first degree. As a result, in the Ghanaian context, the findings of this study do not support Keeley's (2007) and Putnam's (2000) assertions that mainly people with a high level of education engage in political activities. Until these women in Ghana anticipate contesting seats in Ghana's parliament where the medium of expression is purely by the English Language for policy formulation and

the enactment of laws, a minimal level of education at the local level serves the purpose since native languages could be the medium of instruction on the floor of the assembly.

Moreover, the diverse application and re-theorising of the concept of social capital would suggest that parts of the explanation do not work as well everywhere and at all times. Over decades, debates have arisen about social capital; and some scholars such as Putnam (2000) and Ife (2013) have even maintained that the importance of social capital to modern western society had been diminishing, with individual success replacing community and social solidarity. However, it must be noted that Ife also admitted that there are countries with communities that cherish communal spirited attitudes towards community development and where traditional community structures and ethnic communities maintain common bonds as individuals engage in communal assistance (Ife, 2013).

As mentioned before, social capital is a feature of communities and nations and survives on the features of commonality (Putnam, 2000; Walters, 2002). Walters (2002) agreed with Putnam that at the community level, social capital comprises the resources at hand to overcome the 'dilemmas of collective action.' The significance of social capital has been that individuals, families, groups, and subpopulations could have different levels of access to it. For example, those in wealthy and influential families, including the children usually come together, give each other greater access to social capital in a community than is available to marginalised, ethnic and cultural minority groups; who furthermore may be poor and on low incomes and thus, have reduced the opportunity to mix with the influential set.

Particularly, where the political clout skews towards certain ethnic groups, those people may have access to social capital (Chaskin, 2001) that is denied to other groups. Moreover, regarding reciprocity as a result of social capital, it is contended

that the situation does not guarantee that the minority groups, the poor and the needy will have access to social capital.

However, social class is more enduring as it is easier to separate upper and lower classes, e.g. through school choice and professions, and even in the political class than it is to separate males and females who typically create and produce in families, where each family could also make social capital function. Therefore, in politics, while the affluent may side with the wealthy for campaign benefits, the marginalised could equally use their social and communal spirited capital to also campaign to their advantage. For instance, although by 2017, Ghana had not fully attained the MDG 1 (To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), communal living continued to make it likely for people to reciprocate the trust from other members of the society.

Moreover, in Ghana, people benefited from human and social resources and communal life for the individual, community and nation's development. Examples of social resources available to female politicians included spouses, grown-up children, siblings, and supportive mothers who care for their young children. The supporting gesture from the mother, while the female politician went into campaigning and engaging in politics, indicates how communal living and the mother's caring assistance has been helpful in the Ghanaian society, which is yet to be recognised. Thus, as a result of gender construction and societal perception about female gender roles, the importance of care work as an economic support structure goes unrecognised in society (Horn, 2013). Saggars, Grant, Woodhead and Banham (1994) also stated that society undervalues the works of women as child carers, but women themselves believe that they are highly skilled and valuable. To the female politicians in Ghana, mothers, other women and relations in the family systems serve as social resources and security, social bond, which is generated amongst people with shared vision, interests, motives,

and ideas who trust each other and are willing to offer support to achieve their mutually beneficial goals in society. Thus, social capital provides social support, integration and social cohesion (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Claridge, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Sahin, 2010).

Nevertheless, scholars such as Ahn and Ostrom (2008), and Dasgupta (2005) have proclaimed that though the theory of social capital emphasises that there must be trust, the accumulation of social capital through social relationships within different groups and levels (e.g. bridging social capital) cannot ensure there will be generalised trust. They asserted that the theory does not guarantee that individuals trust one another. Indeed, there ought to be trust among groups and individuals for political gain.

The literature review applied to this present study supported the argument that the constituents voted trusted female politicians to district assemblies and entrusted to them their political mandate in the decision-making processes in Ghana; which this study explored more on the contributing factors to the women's political representation with the theories and concepts to buttress the points in a conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework was developed by examining the objectives, and research questions of the study then identifying the theories that have the best fit to answer the research questions was the idea. The conceptual framework provides the context for interpreting the study findings and explains observations (Jabareen, 2009). Figure 5 below presents a description of the study's conceptual framework, which depicts a model of how political marginalisation of women could potentially be overcome through empowerment and social capital under the banner of GAD.

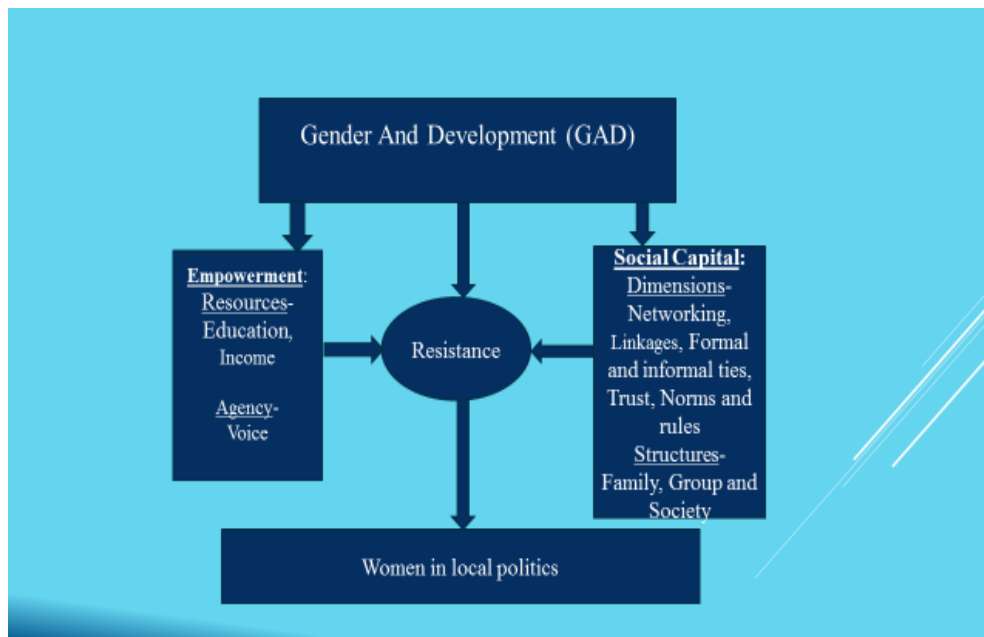


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework (Author's Construct, 2017)

Figure 5 is the study's conceptual framework and shows the interconnection among theories and concepts. As discussed in Chapter 2, the theories that underpinned this study are Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, the concept of empowerment resistance and Social Capital Theory; as the major theory, and. As a gender theory, the GAD provides an understanding of the various aspects of societal structures including gender construction, gender relations, leadership, equity, justice and economic empowerment. Also, GAD shows the contribution of men who share concerns about gender equity. The understanding of these theories and concepts could aid in bringing about the development such as political climate to allow men and women to participate equally in the political environment.

In applying the concept of empowerment, this study argues that marginalised women could gain power; resources and agency to resist the patriarchal systems that hinder them from politics. Furthermore, the social capital theory also explicates how the individual women could leverage on the dimensions and structures of social capital to harness and build constituencies to compete for a political position. Thus, when women are empowered and make efficient use of their social capital to create linkages,

network and build constituencies, they could resist and surmount the socio-cultural, economic and political structures that marginalise them from political participation and representation at the district levels.

Hence, the analysis of the findings in Chapter 4 and 5 presents the various enabling and precluding factors and how they influence women's participation in local politics and their ability to win the district assembly elections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter considered a review of the literature on the theory of gender and development, the concepts of empowerment and resistance as well as the social capital theory. Social capital emphasises the presence of individuals, family, groups, structures in society and society being the level of interaction in organisations, community and the country that make women utilise their social capital to function in the political atmosphere. Also, the review of the theories and concepts aided in the description of the conceptual framework, which situated the discussion of the study results into appropriate perspective. With the presentation of the Ghanaian context in Chapter 1 and the validation from the literature on the key issues of the theory of gender and development; empowerment and resistance; the concept of social capital; the conceptual framework, the aims and the methodology of this study were developed and discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The objective of this study was to explore the factors that support women's representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. The district assembly is the highest administrative body at the local level. The research effort was aimed at ascertaining the social, economic and political factors supporting women as they resist patriarchal norms to empower themselves politically to engage in the decision-making positions at the local level in Ghana. Additionally, the study sought to explore opinions of key informants, such as elected Assemblymen and Women Activists on how women could participate in the local level governance and get elected to the district assemblies in Ghana. The research questions for the study are:

- i. What are the socio-economic and political factors that support women as they get elected to the district assemblies and empower themselves to contribute to society in Ghana?
- ii. What are the varied precluding factors that influence women's participation and representation in the district assemblies in Ghana?

This third chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents the research approach and design of the study. More specifically, the research approach focuses on the phenomenological approach to the study, while the study design describes the overall strategy adopted to accomplish the research goal. It describes the procedures of the study and specifies methods employed including showing the research sites, choosing sampling techniques, and participants' profiles. Also, the procedures for data collection, the instruments for data collection, (i.e. face to face interview, focus group discussion), and data recording are presented in part one of this chapter.

Part two describes the data analysis and presents the framework analysis stages. Thus, this chapter presents data transcription, coding and categorisations of themes from the data. Subsequently, it explicates issues related to the validity and reliability of the study. Part two also presents the role of the researcher, ethical considerations and concludes this chapter.

Part One: Research Approach

A research approach presents the plan and procedures and describes the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, the analysis, and the interpretation of the study. This study adopted the qualitative research approach to address the study objectives as earlier stated. The choice of a qualitative research approach is not only based on the worldview of the researcher, but it is inextricably linked to the objective(s) and question(s) of the research (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Traditionally, there are two types of research approaches. They are the qualitative and quantitative (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Imenda, 2014; Kothari, 2004). However, recent studies literature (Creswell, 2014) suggests that a mixed-method approach has become the third approach.

A qualitative research approach is underpinned by the view that knowledge is socially constructed by individual actors who interact with their world (Merriam, 2002). Also, a qualitative research approach seeks to widen and enhance the understanding of the emerging phenomena of society. In this study, the phenomenon was the lived experiences, which were the supporting and the precluding factors influencing women's participation and their election to the district assemblies in Ghana. The preference for and use of qualitative research approach to explore the socio-economic and political phenomena in the world have led to the use of different approaches within the qualitative research space. The various qualitative approaches

include grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and narrative (Creswell, 2014). This study selected phenomenology.

The phenomenological approach selected to explore this study's objectives and questions was based on the researcher's philosophical orientations and epistemology. The researcher's interest was in creating knowledge on subjective concepts through an understanding of the meaning of the lived experiences of the elected Assemblywomen in Ghana. For instance, Hallett (1995) and Ströker (1993) suggested that the adoption of the phenomenological research approach depends on the researcher's interest in participants' subjective perceptions of their own experiences in their particular situation. The phenomenological study stems from different perspectives associated with the practice of phenomenology (Finlay, 2009; Sanders, 1982; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). This study adopted the descriptive phenomenological approach as it culminates into an account of individual's lived and shared experiences about societal phenomena. According to Shosha, (2012), the two universal concepts in descriptive phenomenology are 'essence' and 'live experience.' Essence implies the basic meaning of particular context (Giorgi, 2005); whereas live experience relates to the individual knowledge about an immediate past event that is re-called (Shosha, 2012), hence, in this study, the data collected was a reflection of the participant's experience.

To engage in descriptive phenomenology, researchers need to describe the phenomenon under study and bracket their biases (Reiners, 2012). Bracketing refers to a researcher's declaration of and setting aside any personal biases as well as any theoretical knowledge about a phenomenon under study (Kleiman, 2004; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Reiners, 2012). Thus, the notion of bracketing is meant to shelve what is already known about the phenomenon of influencing the reality (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

According to Giorgio, (2007, p. 64),

Once the essential features of the phenomenon have been determined, they are carefully described. The idea means that nothing is to be added to or subtracted from what is present to consciousness. A descriptive task is a strict one.

The phenomenological approach is characterised by lengthy interviews, and for this study, the methods used for data collection; the face to face interview and focus group discussions (in-depth interview and group interview) embodied this approach.

Subsequently, the research design described the procedures of the study.

Development of the Study Design

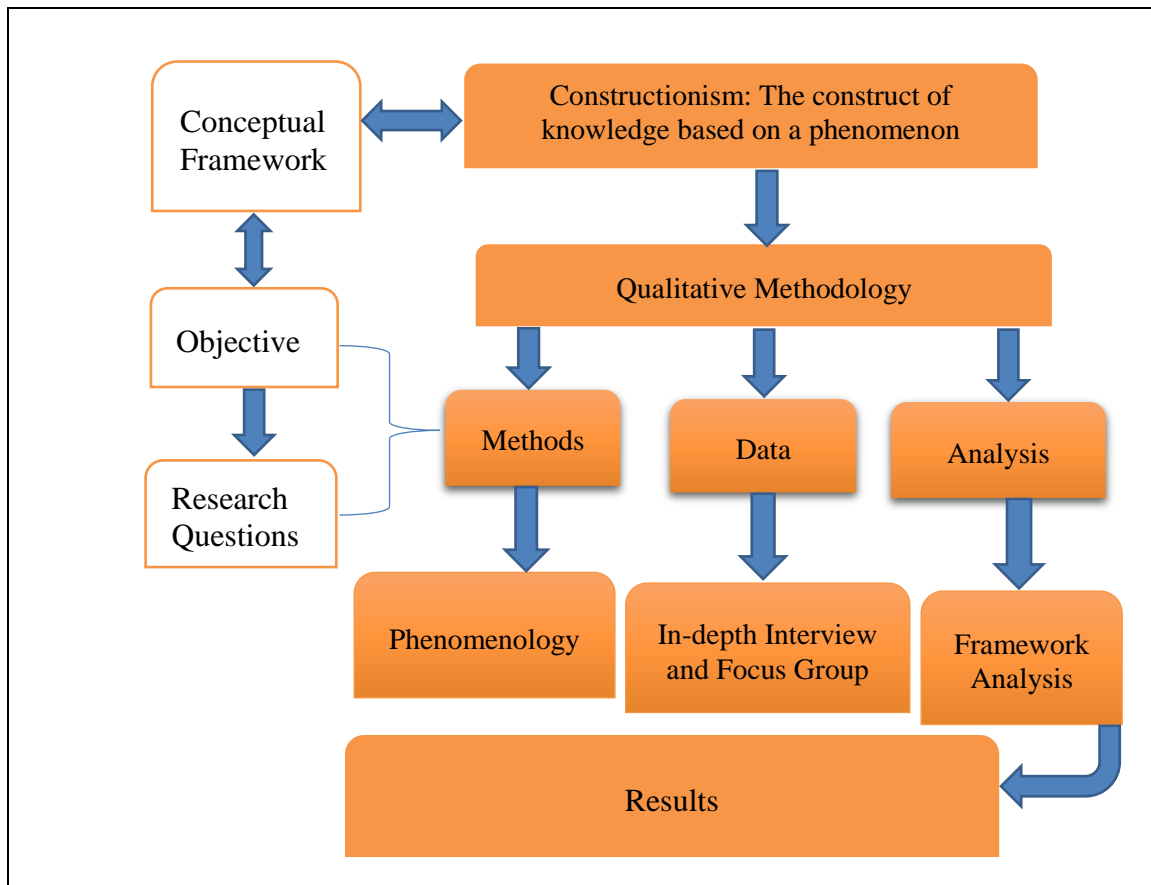


Figure 6: Research Design (Author's Construct, 2017)

This study's design was developed to investigate the objectives of the study, using a phenomenological approach for participant selection, data gathering and data analysis. Figure 6 illustrates the study design and presents the overall research strategy and the connections among the processes in meeting the study aims. Accordingly, Lewis (2003) surmised that qualitative research design could be effective if the design explicitly states the purpose, which inextricably links the research questions to the methods to ensure efficient data gathering (Refer to Figure 6). Thus, a flexible study design will enable the researcher to gain an extensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Kaczynski et al., 2014). The effort to create a study design is not just to describe the scope and purpose of the research, but it is also to show the intellectual credibility of the research (Mason, 2002). As stated earlier above, in this study, it is the lived experiences of the elected Assemblywomen that are being explored.

The purpose of qualitative research is essential to enhance knowledge and understanding of the social world by exploring about people, social, various facets of society and material circumstances (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Mason, 2002; Ormston, Spencer & Snape, 2014). Hence, it is believed that data from individual's interview and group discussion could reveal the social and cultural context of the elected women's understandings and beliefs about their political success and challenges. Following the justification for a qualitative research approach and design discussed above, is the detailed procedures of the study.

Procedure of the Study

Overview of procedures in the study will be presented here. A more detailed description of each procedure follows this section. A specific timeline for the procedures in this study is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Timeline for procedures used in this study

Place/Regions	Dates	Activities
Central Region	September-December, 2014	Travelled to 6 district assemblies and sampled elected women for in-depth-interview, and men for focus group discussion.
Greater Accra	January-March, 2015	Visited 5 district assemblies and sampled elected women for in-depth-interview.
Brong Ahafo	March-May, 2015	Contacted 3 district assemblies and sampled participants for in-depth-interview and focus group discussion
Eastern	June-September, 2015	Contacted 4 district assemblies and sampled participants for in-depth-interview
Eastern	September-December, 2015	Contacted 10 Women Activists for focus group discussion

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

This study was conducted across 4 regions in Ghana which will now be discussed in more detail.

Research Sites

As discussed in Chapter 1, the study was conducted in 4 out of the 10 regions in Ghana. The 4 regions were Greater Accra Region (GAR), Central Region (CR), Brong Ahafo Region (BA) and Eastern Region (ER) (Refer to the Scope of the study in Chapter 1). For this study, Ghana was divided into 4 zones. The zoning helped to create a fair representation of cases from both rural and urban centres in the regions. Figure 7 below shows the location of the 4 regions where the study was conducted.

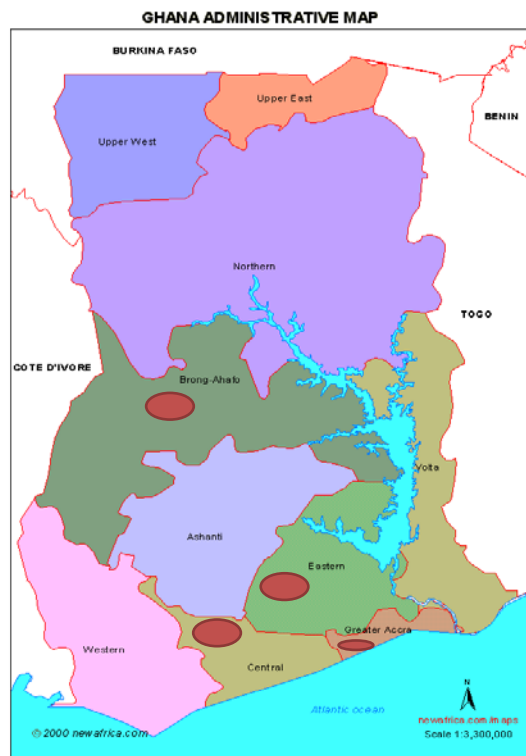


Figure 7: Study Sites in Ghana

(<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/maps.php>)

Figure 7 is the map of Ghana showing the location of the 4 regions (red spotted) where the study was conducted. The researcher visited the study sites and contacted the district assembly administrators for information about the elected members of the assembly of which she identified the potential participants. After the information was obtained, the researcher interacted with the participants through a telephone conversation. Following the phone conversation, a rapport was established between the researcher and participants (Giorgio, 2007). The established rapport created a cordial milieu for both the researcher and individual participants who accepted to participate in this study. One hundred invitation letters were sent out via emails and direct contact with the participants within the 4 sampled regions. The responses to the invitation determined the available participants who were purposively sampled for the interviews. The next description is the sampling techniques employed to select the potential participants.

Sampling Technique and Size

The adoption of a sampling strategy is influenced strongly by a research problem and the types of research objectives and questions. The samples for a qualitative inquiry are assumed to be selected purposefully for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases (Patton, 2002). This study employed purposive and snowball sampling strategies in selecting the participants. Applying the purposive sampling, the researcher carefully chose participant(s) owing to their quality and expertise (Tongco, 2007). Thus, this study adopted a homogeneous purposive sampling technique to select the elected Assemblywomen and Assemblymen. The homogeneous technique is used in selecting participants who share certain similarities regarding experience, perspective, or outlook. In this study, some of the participants have shared experiences. For example, the elected women faced challenges in the electioneering campaign, patriarchal issues and political vindictiveness (Boateng, 2009). Thus, the use of focus groups to gather data (Patton, 1990; Suri, 2011) enabled these issues to be spoken and recorded. The key informants included the elected Assemblymen in the DAs and Women Activists in the study regions, who engaged in the focus group discussion. Table 4 presents the profile of the recruited participants and the methods for data collection.

Table 4: Participants in the study

Participants	Number of Participants	Instruments for Data Collection
Elected Assemblywomen Newly elected and those served more than once	40 (10% of elected Assemblywomen)	In-depth Interview (IDI) (i.e. Face to Face Interview)
Elected Assemblymen (key informants)	40	Focus Group Discussion
Women Activists (key informants)	10	Focus Group Discussion
Total Number of Participants	90	From 4 out of 10 Regions in Ghana

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

A total number of 90 participants were recruited for this study. Of the 90 participants, 40 were elected women selected for the in-depth interview (IDI). As at August 2014, the selected 40 women constituted 10% of the total elected women in the 216 district assemblies (DAs) in Ghana. The sampled elected Assemblywomen comprised of newly elected ones and those women who had served more than one term as members in the DAs. Also, the key informants such as the 40 elected Assemblymen were purposively sampled as they had benefited from the patriarchal structures when participating in local level politics to compete with women.

The other sampling technique was the snowball or chain referral sampling technique that the researcher employed to select 10 Women Activists from the Eastern region for the focus group discussion. The snowball technique yields a study sample through referrals made by people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Loh, Calleja & Restubog, 2011; Overton & Diermen, 2003). The choice of the snowball sampling was based on the notion that friends with a similar social network share similar experiences. For instance, in this study, the 10 Women Activists were in different towns in the Eastern region, yet they were very connected. When it was challenging

for the researcher to identify and contact the Activists, the reliance on the referrals of some Women Activists helped her to contact the other Activists. Subsequently, participants' profile is presented in this chapter.

Profile of Participants

The 90 participants' views were solicited because they understood the patriarchal system and its implication on women's chances of being elected to the DAs in Ghana. For instance, the elected women's lived experiences (phenomenon) in society and their opportunity for one term or more times as members in the district assemblies were explored in this study. The goal of sampling the elected Assemblymen was to solicit their perspectives on the role of women in the DAs. Also, the elected Assemblymen had competed with the elected Assemblywomen during the district assembly elections and had seen how the women resisted any obstacles such as insults and intimidation to be empowered politically. Furthermore, the Women Activists championed the cause of women's socio-economic and political rights in Ghana. These Activists were somewhat aware of the Ghanaian patriarchal system and, therefore, they organised programs and trained women on leadership skills and developed in the women the confidence in public speaking.

In any research activity that involves the use of human participants, the issue of confidentiality is of utmost significance as it was a necessary condition to be cleared before a project of this nature could be approved and then undertaken at Edith Cowan University (Refer to Appendix D & E). Also, it was up to the researcher to ensure that participants' identities were not compromised from the process of obtaining data to reporting the data (Kaiser, 2009). Otherwise, the researcher may present the profile in a manner that would lead to deductive disclosure, which "occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports" (Kaiser, 2009, p. 1). In this study, to ameliorate the possibility of ebbing into deductive disclosure, the

researcher used pseudonyms instead of the real names of the participants. Also, some selected socio-economic demographic information that made it impossible to trace or associate the social and economic variables with any individuals were enhanced (Refer to the subsequent page). Table 5 presents the profiles of the elected women interviewed.

Table 5: Demography of Participants

Participants	Case No	Age Range	Education	Occupation	Term of Office	Location Status
Abay	C1	60-69	Post-Sec	Seamstress	1 st	Rural
ALizzy	C2	50-59	1 st Degree	Educationist	1 st	Urban
Becca	C3	50-59	Secondary	Trader	2 nd	Urban
Bee	C4	60-69	Middle Sch	Farmer	1 st	Urban
Bechem	C5	50-59	Middle Sch	Trader	3 rd	Rural
Cathe	C6	40-49	Middle Sch	Hairdresser	1 st	Urban
Cecil	C7	50-59	Middle Sch	Unemployed	1 st	Rural
Charty	C8	50-59	Middle Sch	Baker	1 st	Peri-Urban
Charllot	C9	60-69	Post-Sec	Educationist	2 nd	Rural
Christ	C10	50-59	Secondary	Trader	1 st	Urban
Conny	C11	50-59	Middle Sch	Trader	1 st	Urban
Diploma	C12	40-49	Post-sec	Teacher	3 rd	Rural
Dor	C13	60-69	Middle Sch	Trader	1 st	Urban
DorcA	C14	30-39	Junior High Sch	Seamstress	1 st	Urban
DorcS	C15	50-59	Post-Sec	Trader	3 rd	Rural
Dors	C16	40-49	Post-Sec	Trader	1 st	Urban
Eliz	C17	50-59	Middle Sch	Farmer	2 nd	Peri-Urban
Estee	C18	50-59	Post-Sec	Trader	1 st	Urban
Felics	C19	50-59	Secondary	Trader	1 st	Rural
Felcn	C20	50-59	Post-Sec	Caterer	1 st	Urban
Franklin	C21	50-59	Post-Sec	Educationist	1 st	Urban
Ful	C22	20-29	Secondary	Student	1 st	Urban
Gaw	C23	40-49	1 st Degree	Educationist	1 st	Rural
Grac	C24	50-59	1 st Degree	Educationist	1 st	Rural
Hajia	C25	40-49	Middle Sch	Beautician	1 st	Urban
Hamshet	C26	30-39	Secondary	Trader	1 st	Peri-Urban
Jane	C27	40-49	Middle Sch	Baker	1 st	Peri-Urban

Just	C28	60-69	Middle Sch	Trader	1 st	Urban
Kat	C29	40-49	Post-Sec	Secretary	1 st	Urban
Lucy	C30	50-59	Secondary	Trader	1 st	Rural
Choba	C31	50-59	Post-Sec	Cook	1 st	Rural
Margi	C32	60-69	Middle Sch	Trader	1 st	Urban
Marth	C33	60-69	Post-Sec	Educationist	1 st	Urban
NAmoa	C34	60-69	Post-Sec	Nurse	1 st	Urban
NAku	C35	60-69	Post-Sec	Educationist	1 st	Rural
NAma	C36	40-49	1 st Degree	Journalist	1 st	Urban
Okant	C37	50-59	Secondary	Trader	1 st	Rural
Rose	C38	40-49	Middle Sch	Trader	1 st	Urban
Tess	C39	40-49	Post Sec	Secretary	3 rd	Urban
YFio	C40	40-49	Middle Sch	Farmer	2 nd	Rural

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

In Table 5 above, cases were numbered as codes. For example, C1, C10, etc. were used to minimise the possibility of tracing or identifying any of the participants especially in Chapter 4 and 5 of this study where the researcher had to support the findings with quotations from participants (Cases).

Additionally, the number of times participants were elected to participate in the DAs have been designated as 'term of office' (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd term). Moreover, each focus group is presented as either 'Female Eastern Zone,' 'Male Northern Zone' and 'Male Western Zone,' where each zonal category is represented by either a female group or male group in different zones of three; Northern, Western and Eastern. Data was collected from these participants and analysed for the study. The next section discusses how data was solicited from the participants.

Data Collection and Instruments

In this qualitative research, the sampled smaller numbers of the elected women helped to gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic and political experiences that contributed to their successful representation in the DAs. In this

phenomenological study, the researcher employed the interview approach to generate qualitative data from the participants. Thus, the phenomenological approach influenced the selection of the methods or instruments for the data collection. The interview approach involved a semi-structured in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion. The interview was a face-to-face discourse between the researcher and the participants, out of which data or information about a specific phenomenon was elicited for the study (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

To generate rich data, the researcher relied on a range of interview experiences acquired from formal training programmes and previous qualitative interviews conducted. It is argued that an interviewee perception of a researcher's astuteness influences the way an interviewee responds to interview questions (Taylor, 2005). As a result, the researcher demonstrated her understanding of the Ghanaian local government system, but not about the phenomenon being explored. At the beginning of the data collection process, participants were given information letters which explained the nature and purpose of the study. They were presented with a consent form on which they notified their willingness to participate in the study freely. Also, the participants were informed through the information letter that the face-to-face interview and the focus group discussion would be audio recorded and that the information they provided would be confidential. Participants were told about their right to quit their participation any time as the study was a voluntary project (Refer to Appendix E).

The face-to-face interview with each of the elected Assemblywomen was undertaken at public places such as community centres, town halls and district assembly halls in the 4 study regions. At the start of each IDI session, the researcher gave a complimentary remark such as *Madam; you are a brave woman to be in local politics in Ghana*. The comment made the women smile and felt relaxed. The interview

as a method of data generation was consistent with Husserl's philosophical approach to scientific knowledge acquisition. As explained earlier above, in all the interview sessions, the researcher tried to 'bracket' her experiences and biases (see page 151-152). Also, to sustain the participants' interest, the researcher shared her experiences, especially with the elected Assemblywomen. The idea of sharing experiences strengthened the rapport and created a context where the participants felt comfortable to provide in-depth information about their socio-economic and political experiences. Also, to ensure that the researcher did not wrongly infer what participant express, she used descriptive words such as *can you explain further; please can you describe what you mean by ...* and so forth to encourage the participants to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon. This action ensured that the researcher bracketed her biases; thereby she did not allow her theoretical understanding of the phenomenon influence what the participants express (Jasper, 1994).

Furthermore, time and safe places of convenience were agreed between researchers and participants to ensure minimal distraction during interviews. As Creswell (2014) pointed out, the interview site must be free from interruptions to create the needed cooperation to ensure productive interview and convenient discussion. In one instance, the researcher had to meet a heavily pregnant Assemblywoman in her house at night to collect the data. The face to face interview took place at 19:00 Greenwich Meridian Time (GMT) as the expectant mother was indisposed during the day. The interview was conducted in the open where she was accompanied by one of the male members of a Unit Committee. Although some of the probing questions could influence a response from the committee member, he did not interfere with the interview, which made the encounter very fruitful.

The advantage of using the interview for the data collection was that it involved personal interaction and, the interviewer could probe for more information (Harrell &

Bradley, 2009). In this study, the researcher or interviewer showed dexterity for interviewing to unearth the appropriate information (Patton, 2005). The In-Depth Interview (IDI) with the elected women was carried out using semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions that led the researcher to generate the data for this study. The open-ended questions facilitated further prompts and probing questions to elicit more views and experiences from the participants. The questions in the interview guide were directed towards exploring how the elected Assemblywomen were able to surmount the socio-economic and political systems to become representatives in the district assemblies. Samples of the open-ended questions in the interview guide included: *What factors enabled you to take office in the local government system? What did you do to get elected to become a representative in the district assembly? Looking at the Ghanaian society, what do you suggest should be done to empower women politically?* (Refer to Appendix A). The interview lasted between 45 minutes and 60 minutes, which was consistent with many of the interviewees. In all, 40 In-Depth-Interviews (IDIs) were conducted in the 4 sampled regions.

Consistent with homogeneous sampling, the researcher employed snowball sampling method to select the key informants. The key informants comprised of elected Assemblymen and a women's group (Women Activists) (Refer to Table 4). The focus group discussion consisted of 50 participants (key informants). The 50 key informants were grouped in single-sex sets of 5 for the group discussions with each focus group comprising 10 members. Of the 5 groups, 4 groups were made up of only elected males from the regions sampled for this study. Thus, males only or females only were grouped for the group discussion. The formation of single-sex sets of groups and the maintenance of a balanced power and status among the focus group members minimised biases in their contributions and interactions. Thus, information was

elicited based on gender balance perspectives. For instance, the group discussions with the only females' focus group aim to explore the Women's Activists' perspectives on Ghanaian women's participation in local politics and DAs to provide depth and make recommendations if there was a variation of thought concerning the supporting factors. As Activists, they have been mobilising training and encouraging women to get involved in local politics.

Also, the group discussion with the key informants helped in collecting enough data for the study. During the discussions with the elected Assemblymen, the researcher addressed them with a statement such as *I am privileged to have a discussion of women and local politics with honourable Assemblymen*. As stated before, the rapport was to create an enabling atmosphere for the men to express themselves freely.

The groups' discussion was conducted using semi-structured question guide. To have a match of verbal and non-verbal interaction when data was interpreted, during the focus group discussions, a capture camera was used to record the expressions of participants. Conversely, in situations where there was technical difficulty or the participant refused for certain statements to be recorded, those comments were handwritten in detail (King & Horrocks, 2010).

An hour or two was allocated to have extensive deliberations for each focus group discussion. In this study, all interviews and discussions were conducted within the specified period; hence there was no repeated interview session. This study's IDI and the focus group discussion spanned from September 2014 to December 2015.

A field log was used, which helped to account for how long the researcher took on-site and the transcription of the data; as well as the data analysis stage (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, a field notebook and field diary were used to document

observation to systematically record my thoughts, perceptions and experiences on-site, which was used during the analysis phase (Creswell, 2013, 2014).

Part one of this chapter presented the research approach (phenomenology) to the study. This part provided a detailed discussion of the study design adopted to accomplish the study aims and questions. The discussion of the study design described the procedures of the study and specified methods employed including showing the research sites, choosing of sampling techniques, and presenting participants' profiles. It also provided the procedures for data collection, the instruments for data collection and recording. The next part of this chapter presents the data analysis undertaken for the study.

Part Two

Data Analysis

An analysis is a challenging and exciting stage of the qualitative research process. It requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection (Lewis, 2003).

The decision as to which specific approach to use in analysing qualitative data can be a difficult task as there are varied approaches; also these varied approaches share a lot of features in common (Parkinson, Eatough, Holmes, Stapley & Midgley, 2016). In this study, the data analysis was to identify common themes in participants' descriptions of their experiences so that the analysis reflected the shared meanings and consciousness of the participants. Therefore, this study used Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Framework Analysis (FA) to examine the data. Although Framework Analysis is not a qualitative research approach such as ethnography and grounded theory, the framework analysis derived its guiding principles from diverse epistemological traditions within the field of social science (Ritchie, 2003; Ward, Furber, Tierney &

Swallow, 2013). Thus, the Framework Analysis is a flexible tool that could be adapted and used with a qualitative approach such as the phenomenological approach that aims to generate themes from the data (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013). The phenomenological approach makes use of the field data to derive the structure of analysis, and employed interviews and focus group discussions, which aligns well with this study.

Accordingly, Srivastava and Thomson (2009) opine that Framework Analysis can suitably be used for qualitative inquiries that are limited in time frame, which has specific objectives, defined sample and a priori matters. It is also argued that as a matter of principle, the Framework Analysis could be modified for other types of textual data (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000). Besides, its primary reason for data analysis is to describe and interpret the essence of the phenomenon; it can be used to generate theory (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The Framework Analysis is principally appropriate for cross-sectional descriptive data (Lewis, 2003) and as this study was limited in time and also cross-sectional, it seemed an appropriate fit.

The Framework Analysis, therefore, analyses and interprets a phenomenon, and particularly in this present study, the lived experiences of the participants. Also as an inductive analytical tool with a diagnostic feature, Framework Analysis would help achieve this study's objectives of unearthing the factors that enabled or supported women to participate in local level politics to get elected to the DAs in Ghana. The Framework Analysis would identify the barriers women face, as well as challenges and discouraging factors they faced as Assemblywomen. As can be identified, this study determined a Framework Analysis was deemed the more apt analytic mechanism as it provides transparent but sequential and interconnected stages in analysing qualitative data.

The study's data was analysed using the five-stage process of the Framework Analysis; *familiarisation; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation* (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Table 6 presents the Framework Analysis with the detailed description of each stage with how it was employed to analyse the phenomenon of this study.

Table 6: Framework Analysis Stages

Framework Analysis Stages	Description
Familiarisation	Become more accustomed to the transcripts of the field data
Identifying a thematic framework	Develop themes and sub-themes from emergent issues from the data
Indexing	Tag or label the data to determine a theme or concept (Coded using Nvivo)
Charting	Summarise the indexed data from participant into understandable meaning (used Nvivo)
Mapping and Interpretation	Map patterns and ideas, and their relationship to the research objectives

Reference: Adapted from Ritchie and Spencer (1994)

Familiarisation

Familiarisation involves a process whereby the researcher becomes more accustomed to the transcripts of the field data. This stage highlights the importance of the immersion of oneself in the data to ensure accurate data analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, 2002). To apply this stage in this study, the researcher first listened to the audio tapes and read the transcripts to generate a basic understanding of what participants talked about to familiarise herself with the data. The reading of the transcripts aided the researcher in noticing the thematic issues, and the nexus between concepts and their context (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007). The next stage after familiarisation is identifying a thematic framework.

Thematic Framework

The thematic stage is the practice of developing themes and sub-themes from emergent issues from the data, which is an iterative process and is subject to modifications (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The researcher used the study's objectives, research questions and the interview guide as the a priori issues for farming out the initial themes to help identify the study themes. As the researcher re-read the entire transcripts, she noted down facts, specific details and other information from the interviewees that seemed to repeat themselves. Based on the familiarisation, the researcher was able to generate some preliminary categories which were used to organise the data. In all, 11 'nodes' and 76 'child-nodes' were observed and below is a sample of the a priori factors, a node and child-nodes as preliminary categories that were used to organise the data initially. Furthermore, the researcher scrutinised the data to go further than the study's objective, research question and the interview guide to explore and ascertain the 'core' issues as expressed by the participants. It must be noted that the farming out of the thematic framework was iterative, which led to modification of themes as new but interesting concepts emerged in the process. Figure 8 shows the photo of data coding process.

FACTORS SUPPORTING THE WOMEN TO GET ELE		
+	Demand factors from parties and community member	26
+	Campaign Team formed	6
+	EC Platform for interaction and orientation	3
+	Family and Friends Support	5
+	Female Electorate Support for Women Apirant	5
+	Financial strength of Aspirant	18
+	Male support for a female candidate	4
+	No woman had won that seat before	8
+	Opinion leaders in the community	17
+	Political group support	5
+	The only female candidate	17
+	Vote for a woman was a campaign message	2
+	Government Directives	2

Figure 8: Photograph of Data Coding Process (Author's Photograph, 2016)

Consequently, 11 themes were gleaned from the data. The following was used as the framework structure that aided indexing and coding in the next stage of the framework:

1. Self-determination and encouragement
2. Individual political behaviour
3. Individual political interest and ambition
4. Campaign strategies
5. Community members approach
6. Male support
7. Philanthropist
8. NGOs
9. Group affiliation support
10. Spousal support
11. Family and friends support

Indexing

The indexing stage involves systematic labelling or tagging of primary data to determine the theme or concept to which it relates (Ritchie et al., 2003). After the thematic framework has been established, the researcher used the identified concepts and ideas that emerged most from the transcripts to undertake indexing and coding.

Coding is a process of assigning labels to segments (i.e. words, sentences, paragraphs) of the transcripts to organise and manage qualitative data. Coding aims to classify the data so that it can be compared systematically with other parts of the data set (Gale et al., 2013). In this study, the coding was electronically done using computer software, Nvivo version 10. The use of a computer software was most useful as it crystallised the process of coding and aided in the retrieval of information at later periods of the analysis, and the report writing. The Nvivo also helped in the storage and organisation of data, but it is unable to perform analysis of data like statistical software packages. Once the coding was done, which enabled the data to be reduced into manageable form, the researcher re-organised the emerged codes based on their similarity and relatedness and came up with themes, which directed the researcher to process the subsequent stage (charting) of the Framework Analysis.

Charting

During the charting process, the researcher summarised the indexed data from each participant into understandable meaning. Thus, the next activity that the researcher undertook after the indexing was charting of the interview texts, which is the fourth stage of the Framework Analysis. At this stage, the aim was to paint a comprehensive picture of the data in its entirety, by further sifting through it to identify and lift data from each transcript, those that apply to the 11 thematic references. The charting was done using the Nvivo version 10. This data management software automatically tagged and linked the terse (brief statements) in the framework to the relevant portions of the individual and group transcripts. Table 7 below is an example of the charting of themes by the various cases.

Table 7: Charting of Themes by Individual Cases

Case	Individual interest and ambition	Community Members Approach	Group Affiliated Support	Family/Spousal Support
22	<Internals\\IDIs\\Ful> I had interest in leadership positions ...I realized it's about myself.	<Internals\\IDIs\\Ful> - ...then when I came back from the workshop, the community also selected me that "we want you to be an Assembly Member"	<Internals\\IDIs\\Ful> - I was working with NGO, which was into women empowerment; they gave me money, which I used during my campaign	<Internals\\IDIs\\Ful> - The family was divided into two; some supported me and others were not in support.
40	<Internals\\IDIs\\YFio> - I had an ambition to become a leader... I needed to humble myself before leaders and know how to talk to electorate.	<Internals\\IDIs\\YFio> - Some elders came from my community to ask me to contest in the DA elections; they assured me of their support.	<Internals\\IDIs\\YFio> - I am in a particular group and they came in their numbers to support me.	<Internals\\IDIs\\YFio> - ...my husband agreed to support me.

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

Qualitative data can be voluminous. Hence, Table 7 represents a charting sample, which shows summarised and reduced data that have been indexed into manageable and understandable from each participant (Ritchie et al., 2003; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Parkinson et al., 2016). According to Gale et al. (2013), there is the need for qualitative data to be summarised and managed to aid data analysis as an hour interview could generate between 15 and 30 pages of textual information. This charting assisted the researcher in the process of retrieval, exploration and examination at the final stage of the framework (Parkinson et al., 2016). Thus, in the last stage of the Framework Analysis, the researcher is required to move beyond data management (Gale et al., 2013) to the mapping and interpretive stage.

Mapping and Interpretation

The final stage of the Framework Analysis involves the determining of the characteristics, ideas and patterns, and their relationship concerning the research

objectives after sifting and charting the data based on the thematic areas (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, 2002; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Parkinson et al., 2016). Thus, in this study, guided by the objective, to explore lived experiences of the elected Assemblywomen, the researcher at this stage provided explanation and interpretation of the emergent themes. Thus, the socioeconomic and political factors facilitated the women's participation in local level politics and their election to the district assemblies in Ghana. Also, the mapping and interpretation showed the barriers any prospective female politician could face, the challenges. It shows the discouraging factors the Assemblywomen faced while serving as representatives in their electoral areas. These were explained by the characteristics, ideas and patterns in the context of the social capital, empowerment and resistance.

Consequently, the researcher identified that there were some patterns of relationships between some of the charted themes, those themes that shared some characteristics were classified under key thematic areas. The development led to five key themes and ten sub-themes (See Table 8 below as an example of the key themes and sub-themes). The researcher ensured that the explanations and interpretation of the themes reflected the thoughts, perceptions and ideas of the participants (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009), which the researcher attained through bracketing, as stated earlier in part one of this chapter. At this stage, the bracketing ensured that the researcher reflected deeply across the various stages of qualitative inquiry that resulted in unique themes, which replicated the data (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Table 8 presents a sample of the key themes and sub-themes.

Table 8: Sample key themes and sub-themes

Key Themes	Sub-themes
Individual motivation	Self-determination and encouragement Individual political behaviour Individual political interest and ambition
Community support	Community members approach Male support

Reference: Author's Construct from the field data (2016).

Table 8 shows a sample of the analysis data that resulted in themes, which are exhaustive and saturated for the interpretation of the phenomenon. Accordingly, data collection methods such as interviews and focus group discussion, as have been employed in this study, have been recommended as methods that yield data saturation and analysis (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Mason, 2010). Fusch and Ness (2015, p.1409) stated that the use of both in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group methods for data collection ensured “the use of probing questions and creating a state of epoché in the phenomenological study design assisting the researcher in the quest for data saturation.” Walker (2012) explains that data saturation can be reached when additional information cannot be attained from a dataset; thus, when further coding from the data collected is not plausible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Scholars have linked data saturation to the sample size of qualitative inquiry (Mason, 2010). In contrast, Fusch and Ness (2015) argue that it is not the relatively large or small sample size that determines qualitative inquiry data saturation. Rather it is the richness (quality) and thickness (quantity) of the data that will bring about saturation for analysis (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012; Dibley, 2011). The in-depth interviews and

focus group discussion used in this study culminated in reaching data saturation. Subsequently, the next discussion presents the validity and the reliability of the data.

Validity and Reliability Strategy

In recent times, the validity and reliability of the concepts have become an important feature of the qualitative inquiry even though the two concepts have mostly been associated with the positivist paradigm (Golafshani, 2003). For instance, Patton (2002) stated that qualitative researchers should ensure that their study designs bring valid and reliable (quality) results. However, Golafshani (2003) pointed out that the concept validity and reliability are not applicable to qualitative research.

Furthermore, though Creswell (2013) acknowledges their minimal significance, he further explicates that the meaning and processes of validity and reliability strategy in qualitative research are not the same as in quantitative paradigm. As a result, some strategies have been opined by scholars to bring rigour in qualitative research methods. Some of the strategies include triangulation, member checking, use peer debriefing and so forth (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher used triangulation as one of the validation strategies to ensure the rigour of the study from its inception. The methodological triangulation strategy which involves the use of two or more data sources was used in this study (Mays & Pope, 2000). Thus, the researcher employed in-depth interview and focus group discussion method to collect the study's data. According to Hussein (2009), in-depth interview yields confirmation of results, and it carries more weight than using a quantitative procedure to triangulate.

Also, the researcher used reflexivity as a way of validating the study. Reflexivity refers to "sensitivity to the researcher, and the research processes have shaped the collected data, including the role of prior assumptions and experience, which can influence even the most avowedly inductive inquiries" (Mays & Pope, 2000,

p. 51). In the entire research process, as already stated above, the researcher bracketed personal biases and the theoretical knowledge related to the study. To ensure reflexivity, the researcher declared her personal bias at the initial stage of the project. Accordingly, this self-reflection ensured that the researcher's engagement in the entire process of the project was open and the lived experiences of the elected women were honestly recounted (Creswell, 2013).

Lastly, the study used thick, rich description to present the findings which were mainly participants' words and thoughts. The thick, rich descriptions from participants include detailed description of the context (Refer to Chapters 4 & 5) and emotions as well as facial expressions to enable readers to appreciate and comprehend the lived experiences of the participants concerning the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Besides, the researcher used a relatively large but diverse sample to obtain the thick, rich data. Morrow (2007) for instance, puts forth that sufficient numbers are significant to ensure adequacy of data. Morrow (2007) further argues that the sampling strategy (e.g. snowball) and the purpose of the study such as trying to achieve homogeneity also contribute to attaining full, rich data. As stated earlier, the procedures of the study were carried out with researcher's ability to engage in epoche, thus, bracketing her thoughts about the phenomenon. The discussion below gives details of the researcher's unbiased role in this study.

Role of the Researcher

One of the key features of practising Husserl's philosophical approach in a phenomenological inquiry is the concept of epoche, where the researcher brackets her thoughts of the lived experiences of the participants. A researcher's ability to engage in epoche is crucial to the phenomenological research processes (Tufford & Newman, 2010). As indicated earlier, during the data collection processes, the researcher

employed the concept of bracketing and temporarily suspended her personal biases, beliefs, perception and presumptions about a phenomenon under study (Sander, 1982).

I reflected on how in 2004 at age 30 while pursuing a postgraduate (Master's degree) programme at the University of Ghana, I had faced similar cultural beliefs and structural challenges such as prejudice and stereotypes when I contested for a financial management position, a position commonly reserved for males. I had competed for the post with three men, and another female, whom I perceived were better positioned to compete regarding their campaign and promotional products such as wealth, T-shirts and Posters. However, I won the elections because I was the only graduate student. Also, I had prepared a persuasive manifesto with an effective and efficient campaign manager, who gave me a campaign name 'Lady J.' Also, the election contest happened within an academic environment, and considering the educational levels of the candidates, someone pursuing a postgraduate program was preferred to occupy the position. The argument is that being the empowered female with higher educational privileges such as the only graduate gave me confidence, which meant that in some situations, merit would be prioritised over prejudice. Moreover, at age 17 in 1991 I had observed the challenges my mother faced when she stood as an Assemblywoman in her electoral area. In a twist of events, her husband (my father) mounted the platform on which the wife was campaigning, and indicated his displeasure regarding his wife's seeking re-election to a district assembly. The husband's action negatively influenced the votes that the wife obtained after the elections as she lost the re-election to a male contender. Significantly, the husband was a sub-chief with 4 other wives and the fifth (my mother), was educated up to the post-secondary level with a profession and empowered to know her political rights. Having a husband with typical traditional attitudes towards women in public office was challenging. However, because of her contribution to development in her electoral area, the community leaders, party

officials, and chiefs recommended to the President of the Republic of Ghana that she be appointed to serve on the district assembly. She became a government appointee and served in the district assembly from 2008 to 2016, without going through the rigorous election campaigns with promotional products and persuasive manifestoes. For political campaigning, promotional products are used as marketing techniques to boost candidate's name, recognition and association with appealing messages to increase vote potential. Typical products are posters, media adverts and pamphlets with candidates' photos and catchy phrases, T-shirts, hats, caps, bags, drink bottles, pens and other items that recipients may wear or use in public. The cost of promotional products is usually beyond the means of individual candidates, and sponsorship commonly covers these expenses.

In undertaking this study, I ensured that all these past experiences from my school days, from a typical Ghanaian traditional home setting, the personal beliefs and theoretical understanding relating to this phenomenon under study were set aside because I stayed open minded. The epoche or bracketing enabled me to have an open mind to objectively draw out the thematic areas from the data and reported the lived experiences of the elected women.

Ethical Concerns

Approval was sought from Edith Cowan University (ECU) Ethics Committee before this study was conducted. Respondents were informed that the data collected will be used in such a way that any information and evidence given cannot be traced to them. They were also assured that under the Edith Cowan University guidelines, the data would only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisors. ECU Ethics Committee approved the information letter that was offered to the participants before the interviews, and the focus group discussions were conducted (Refer to Appendix D). In other words, participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality as they

were encouraged to give the full account of their views and experiences (King & Horrocks, 2010). Participants were also informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable (Refer to Appendix E). Respondents were informed about the aims of the study and the expected benefits that would be derived from the findings. After participants had been fully informed about the survey, those who agreed to take part were asked to sign an informed consent form (Refer to Appendix E). King and Horrocks (2010) indicated that if the consent form is to be used, then confidentiality should be included to commit participants, particularly the key informants, to honour and respect views expressed by other members of the focus groups.

Conclusions

This chapter presented the researcher's epistemological position and subsequent choice of the research approach, conceptual framework, methodology and procedures identified to undertake this study. It presented Framework Analysis as a flexible tool to analyse the data and achieve the study's objectives of unearthing the factors that enabled or supported women to get elected and participate in local level politics in Ghana.

The next chapter employs the conceptual framework in developing the themes and sub-themes about the enabling factors that aided in getting the women to be elected to represent their electoral areas. This chapter also discusses the themes and sub-themes in the context of gender and political participation and representation literature and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 4

Women and District Assembly Elections: The Supporting Factors

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the factors supporting the election of women to the district assemblies (DAs) in Ghana. The chapter has three parts and starts with a brief overview of the Social Capital (SC) Theory. Next is the description and discussion of the emerging themes from the results, accounting for the election of Ghanaian women to the DAs, which is discussed in part two. Part three of this chapter presents the findings from the interviews, focus groups and the discussion of the results.

Part One: A brief overview of Social Capital Theory

As discussed previously in Chapter 1, Ghana represents a patriarchal society, particularly in the rural areas. This patriarchal system poses a significant barrier to Ghanaian women who wish to participate in the political economy of the country. This chapter begins with a brief reference to Social Capital Theory to provide context for the reader to situate the emerging themes in the data gathered. In the social capital discourse, as discussed in Chapter 2, scholars such as Ife (2013) and Putnam (1993a) stated that communal aspect of social capital of modern western society has been diminishing while individual success replaces community and social solidarity.

Nonetheless, there are still places with communal spirit where traditional community structures and community bonds are maintained through ethnic communities to engage in mutual assistance to make the social capital function (Putnam, 1994; Ife, 2013). Moreover, there are collective resources (i.e. dimensions or key elements) of social capital for mutual support (Walters, 2002). Such key elements include trust, norms and rules, reciprocity, networks, social interactions, informal and formal social ties that are at hand to overcome the ‘dilemmas of collective action.’

These dimensions facilitate the levels of interaction or the structures of social capital (i.e. individual (micro), group (meso) and society (macro)) to function and contribute to the meaning of the theory. At the individual level, scholars look at the person's social relationships, networking and social interaction to identify social capital (Kilpatrick & Falk, 1999).

In furtherance to Kilpatrick and Falk (1999), Claridge (2004) suggested that social capital could be located on the individual's level, informal social group, at a formal organisation, at the community level, the ethnic group level, and at the nation as a whole. For example, at the individual and group levels of interaction, it is argued that social capital 'capitalises' political engagement, hence social capital enhances individuals' capacity to join the collective action to resolve common problems or ensure that governments address such issues (Lowndes, 2001).

The findings of this study are that the Ghanaian elected Assemblywomen had joined together with the electorate in collective action to resolve common problems in their electoral areas, particularly when the elected women attributed their political success to their determination, confidence and other assistance to win DAEs. The women have built constituencies, networked, interacted and established relationships. Thus, in the midst of the patriarchal structures and systems, the women relied on their robust social capital to win district assembly elections. The subsequent section of this chapter presents the themes that emerged from the data on the enabling factors to women's representation in the DAs, followed by a discussion within the framework of the social capital theory.

Part Two: The Supporting Factors

Five key themes emerged from the data as presented in Table 9, about the enabling factors of women's election to the district assemblies in Ghana. Broadly,

these emergent themes included Individual Motivational Strategy, Community Support, Civil Society Support, Family Support, and Campaign Strategy.

Table 9 shows the thematic factors, their descriptions, and reference codes (i.e. the number of times the categories appeared under the themes).

Table 9: Supporting factors to women's representation in the DAs in Ghana

Emerging Themes: Supporting factors	Description	Coded References
Individual Motivational Strategy	Women's personal characteristics such as self-confidence, ambition, interests, determination and ingenuities that aided them to get elected to the district assemblies (DAs).	736
Community Support	Emotional and financial assistance from members of an electoral area in a district that encouraged the women to participate & represent electorate in DAs.	524
Civil Society Support	The civil society support was from NGOs Women's Groups, and Political parties, which aim to empower women through skills training in communication, public speaking and financial sponsorship. Political parties sponsored the campaigns for women to participate in politics. These groups also sensitise by encouraging and educating the public to support the promotion of gender equality.	430
Family Support	Emotional and financial assistance from family and help with home duties from social resources including spouses, mothers, family relations and close relatives.	271
Campaign Strategy	Strategies in the form of manifestoes, house to house meetings, face to face campaign, and appealing messages/manifestoes from the women to convince the electorate to vote for them.	74

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

The detailed discussion of the emergent supporting factors with statements from the elected women and other respondents are described and interpreted in this

section. The statements were entirely the participants' opinions on their experiences relating to the participation and representation in the DAs in Ghana. Significantly, the emergent themes confirmed many of the tenets of social capital (e.g. networking, social interactions, ties, linkages) that facilitated the successful political career in the DAs.

Table 9 specifies that the individual motivational strategy seemed to be the most important supporting factor with 736 coded references from the data. Thus, the women's characteristics such as self-confidence, determination, interests and personal traits (e.g. friendliness and ingenuities) resulted in winning the District Assembly (DAs) elections. Undoubtedly, the women's confidence and determination informed the other support from the community, civil society groups, families, and campaign strategies. Community support in the form of emotional assistance, financial, material from male and female electorate within an electoral area was the second highest influencing factor with complete reference codes of 524. Support from civil society groups was the third most frequent theme with 430 reference codes. This is followed by family support where the respondents referred to it 271 times. The final enabling factor in this study was the campaign strategy the women employed to win the DA elections.

The data is presented in two categories; the first part is data from the face-to-face interviews, followed by opinions from focus group discussions. Gale et al. (2013) suggested that to distinguish participants in a study, the letter C must represent the interviewee as a 'case' (C). As stated in Chapter 3, in this study, each focus group is presented as either 'Female Eastern Zone,' 'Male Northern Zone' and 'Male Western zone' where each zonal category is represented by either a female group or male group in three different zones: Northern, Western and Eastern.

Individual Motivational Strategy

In this study, an identification letter (C) represents the individual woman as a 'case' in the in-depth interview.' For instance, each case, e.g. C2, C22, C24, C33 and C40) stated that they had a passion for being a leader and were ambitious to be a public figure working towards development, and felt equal to their men counterparts. Other cases were of the view that they could contribute their knowledge, kindness, and affection as women, to help develop the society and the country as a whole. Some of the elected women also thought it was about time women saw themselves as capable of taking decision-making positions in the local government administration.

The women stated they got involved in local politics, as they believed getting involved could help them petition the governments to address women's needs and concerns. These prospective female politicians had developed the enthusiasm to engage in public activities as global advocacy for gender equality continues. These prospective female politicians could socialise, network and build constituencies that supported them in their political careers. Specifically, cases C4, C8, C10, C14 and C35 indicated that they were friendly and sociable or approachable, and therefore, were receptive to all manner of persons in their constituencies, towns, villages and electoral areas even before they declared their intentions to contest the DA elections.

Moreover, cases C9, C11, C21, and C26 made it clear that they were determined and dedicated to the development of the community, including the construction of drainage systems, bridges, places of convenience and markets in their areas. The data indicated that 14 women had had the desire to engage in politics, hence were determined to get elected to the DAs. C3 and C21 announced their confidence in their preparedness to aspire to the Member of Parliament position, while with an enthusiastic smile, C2 declared her aims to be ascending to the Presidential status of the Republic of Ghana.

Furthermore, 18 out of the 40 women explained that they had leadership aspirations, and had desired to share their potentials and expertise to create unity and harmony with and among other persons. Some of the women believed that they needed to develop their electoral areas and seek the wellbeing of the citizens. The interviewees complained that their predecessors did little towards the development of the communities. For instance, an assembly member is responsible for educating and informing electorate on the policies, programmes and projects from the government, yet the predecessors failed to live up to expectation. Many of the elected Assemblywomen believed that they needed to lead in their electoral areas on behalf of other women and the people. Therefore, with their leadership aspirations, they raised their concerns with the people in the electoral areas and the authorities at the district assemblies. For instance, some of the cases explained that to secure employment opportunities for the people and to solicit for sponsorship packages for the youth to further their education, they needed to be representatives in the DA to take part in the decision-making processes.

Out of the 40 elected women, 30 of them described their concern about the disadvantaged positions of females in the localities. There were the issues of teenage pregnancy, school dropout among girls, poor women, and single parenthood. Hence, some of the prospective women aspirants and female politicians trained some female electorate on seamstressing and hairdressing that had been yielding money for the disadvantaged women's upkeep.

Furthermore, other cases such as C3 and C2 acknowledged decentralisation as a policy that was enhancing citizens' participation in governance and ability to contribute at the grass root level to addressing concerns about water, sanitation, food, and employment. These Assemblywomen suggested that collaboration with the

electorate and the assembly could develop the local areas and improve the lives of the people.

Consequently, 32 cases affirmed that they had developed the interest in being part of the decentralisation processes for local level development. The women believed that it was time for them to get involved in leadership positions to work hand-in-hand with government to address the concerns of all, especially women in the community. Thus, these elected women in the local areas had developed bridging links or bridging capital with local authorities and the district assemblies.

As discussed in Chapter 2, in social capital, bridging capital is the vertical connections between communities, which extends beyond individuals and organisations (Narayan, 2002; Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003; Keeley, 2007). Under the decentralisation policy, some of these women had become leaders and members of the Unit Committees and leaders. These Committee members operated in a formal hierarchical structure at the grass root level where the women developed their interest in local politics. For instance, C33 said, she wanted to be a public servant and share with people her potential and expertise to develop her electoral area. She, therefore, contested for an Assembly Member Position and served one term in office. C2 wanted to see a brighter future for the community than what she witnessed previously when her family settled in the electoral area, hence saw herself as a leader.

Similarly, although C40's educational background was only primary, she was ambitious and determined to become a leader in harnessing unity and harmony among others for development in her electoral area. She became sociable and abstained from rude behaviours just to make her likeable to the constituents to fulfil her ambition as an assembly member. C40's action was a sturdy determination, which had guided her to serve for two terms in office as a member of the Assembly.

In another scenario, C24 wanted to be a leader when she was only in the primary school and had admired a famous female politician, named Joyce Aryee who was a female minister in the government and a gender activist. Looking at the enormous achievement of Dr Joyce Aryee in the private and public sectors (see page 45), C24's assertions of Joyce being her mentor was convincing. C22 also stated that she had occupied leadership positions at the grass root level, which made her develop an interest in local politics. The elected women, including C22, C24 and C40 held the ambitions to become public figures, and the role models of other women. Besides, these women had developed linkages upon their encounter with the people at the grassroots during their participation in public activities and other communal events such as funerals, wedding ceremonies, festivals and communal labour.

Significantly, the aspiring female politicians needed to abide by the 'norms and rules' of social action as they aimed to engage in politics, which C40 admitted had been her guide as though they were conditions for a successful political career. Others had to adhere to the social values and being friendly and approachable in their relationship with the electorate, became their strategies to win the DA elections. According to C30, "Personality is something that counts a lot, and I have an inviting face; when people have an inviting face and friendly behaviours, wherever they go that alone can convince people to vote for them." The strategy they used to become successful politically was that they were available at community functions and events, and were cooperating with the people for community development.

Equally, before C31 became an Assembly Member, she could organise working tools such as spades, shovels and wellington boots from the district assembly and worked with men and women during communal labour in the area. Others including C8 and C10 could reach out to the electorate to inform them about government activities, policies and programmes. Politics is about numbers, and

therefore, these women adopted strategies to attract votes. C8 for instance, socialised to the extent that she could play with children to win their parents' support.

Some of the women such as C31 relied on their employment circumstances and established the formal and informal networks. As a food vendor, C31 was receptive towards people in the communities that earned her their support. Steel, Ujoranyi and Owusu (2014) asserted that women constituted about 2/3 of informal street traders, popularly called hawkers in Ghana and, therefore, exposed to the electorate. As a vendor, C31 was constantly in touch with the electorate as she smiled at everyone and avoided problems.

With their public activities, these women could establish networks and built constituencies for their political career. Their efforts to conform to the social norms were following the literature as Putnam (2000) identified that individuals and groups adhere to 'norms and rules' as they are seen as dimensions of social action that make social capital function. Thus, the women's pro-activeness indicated how strong they were in developing their social capital for mutual benefits in their communities.

Also, the approachable and interactive behaviours of the aspiring women were examples of the recognised conventional norms as far as building a high social capital was concerned. Determination, a personal character of a woman also served as a strategy as C9 for instance, professed her confidence. She boldly declared her preparedness to compete with men for positions in the district assembly and had served two terms of 8 years in office. She said,

I am a person who fears nothing; I am confident and was not intimidated by the four male contenders; some boasted of being graduates and engineers but I indicated I had no qualification but passion and experience to work with people. I won the DA election with full margins.

C11, on the other hand, had persistently contested the DA elections until she succeeded on the third attempt. She detailed that

I first contested the DA elections but lost. After four years I contested again and lost. It was the 3rd attempt thus, after eight years that the electorate realised that even though I was not yet assembly member, I had been bringing development to the people in the community, which convinced them to vote for me.

In some parts of society, there is a negative perception of women's ability to deliver as well as men (Norris & Inglehart, 2004), and C11 had suffered from similar negative stereotypes. For C26, negative attitudes towards 'women in politics,' did not deter her. She did not listen to anybody who tried to discourage her and fought on till she won against four contenders. C21 also said, "I am capable and confident to be an Assemblywoman and can contribute on the floor of the assembly and speak on other women's behalf." Notably, being determined meant these women were educated and exposed to knowledge; they were confident and were empowered to choose their life opportunities.

In this study, almost all the 40 elected women had formal education. Four out of the 40 were 1st Degree holders (Bachelors). Besides, 15 women had a post-secondary education (i.e. a certificate from a teacher or nursing training college or in other vocational professions), and 6 of them had undertaken upper secondary school education. The remaining 15 elected women had their primary education in either Junior Secondary School or the Middle School levels. Having some form of education reflected the individual woman's capability as she engaged in political activities to make the social capital function well within their communities. Thus, education is an important resource to make the social capital function. Although the Assemblywomen's educational levels were not so high, they attributed education as one of the encouraging processes that facilitated their involvement in local politics. Keeley (2007) reiterated Putnam (2000) suggestion that because of education, the high social status of individuals may encourage them to become politically active, as they would be getting close to the echelon of those wielding political power. C36 affirmed

that the period where women were denied education because of gendered roles and the childcare burden had since changed. She pointed out that women were going to school to become educated and enlightened; women could care for their children and engage in local politics at the same time in modern Ghana. C36 further acknowledged women's intelligence and their ability to multitask with many responsibilities. She reiterated that determination could make the Ghanaian woman engage in local politics. According to C36, men appreciate intelligence, which supports C12's assertion that women could engage in politics if only they were educated well. C12 specified that until women developed themselves, they could not be accepted to have the intelligence to participate in local politics.

Explaining the processes of traditional socialisation, she emphasised the nurturing of females in some rural areas, making them incapable and prohibited from either speaking or interacting with males in public, which upholds male superiority. Hence, these women in the remotest areas could not contest men for position in government, attributing education as a pathway to their political positions.

The women's consciousness guided them to respond to social, economic and political issues within the political systems in Ghana. Primarily, the individual women had invested in their 'community spirited persona,' and had established friendly relationships with members of the electoral areas before gearing themselves up towards winning the DA elections. It is presented that investing in one's 'community spirited persona' reflects on the concept of 'social capital and individual's benefit.' As stated earlier in Chapter 2, Lollo (2012) reiterated Bourdieu's suggestion that at the individual level, social capital is built from titles/names, friendship/associations, and membership and citizenship

Individual qualities identified in the focus group

This section reports comments from the key informants in the focus group discussion. During the discussion, the Assemblymen further supported the personal views expressed by the female interviewees.

Being ambitious

During the group discussion, the Assemblywomen were presented as ambitious and determined. Many male discussants raised the importance of an individual's self-motivation as a facilitating factor towards their political success. On the women's determination, statements from the focus group included, "I see that it is as a result of the women's decision to be in national politics and Parliamentarians in future that they were ambitious and, therefore, patronised public activities such as communal labour, which helped them to win DA elections" (Males, Northern & Western Zones).

Further discussion revealed that being ambitious could not have been enough for the women to win elections; rather, with personal qualities such as self-confidence and courage, passion, interest and patience that appealed to the electorate for votes. The participants explained that if those women were not endowed with such personal characteristics, they could not have competed with male contenders.

Similarly, the female focus group in the Eastern zone suggested that the individual personal characteristics such as passion, determination, and good interpersonal relationships could help a woman win an election. The discussants pointed out that prospective female politicians should have good personal relationships with the people. They suggested that women should be particularly friendly with the youth, community leaders and chiefs in their communities who could influence their win in politics. Thus, their cordial relationship could guarantee them the win.

However, when women realised they were less likely to win political office, they might be hesitant to put themselves forward to compete for votes (McGing & White, 2012).

Analysis from the focus groups further revealed that, while 20 out of the 40 men (50%) would prefer the encouragement of women to partake in local politics, 10 out of the 40 elected Assemblymen would prefer a limit to women's access to political positions. As such within the focus group, there was some evidence that the traditional negative stereotype and perception persisted.

However, even those Assemblymen were convinced that as women got exposed to changes in society, education and advocacy for gender equality, they would increasingly engage in politics. They also acknowledged the men and female electorate who anticipated to having women as their representatives in the assemblies. According to some of the men, community members assisted those determined women with financial and emotional support to contest the DA elections. The male participants admitted that during the campaign with teams, particularly when the women were moving from house to house, these community members gave them money for refreshment and transportation fares, which helped the women.

Community Support

Community support became the second influencing factor that enabled the women to win DAEs (Refer to Table 9). During the in-depth interview, the elected women were of the view that support from members (men, women and youth) in the electoral areas had contributed to their political success. In many instances, support came directly and, particularly from community members who pledged allegiance and formed campaign teams to rally behind the women. For instance, C17, C22, C24 and C40 indicated that some community members approached them and suggested they represented the electoral area in the DAs. C24 for instance specified that traditional

rulers and elders in the area approached her and suggested that she represented the people at the district assembly to continue with the development in the community.

According to C24 because she was involved in a development project by World Vision International Project (WVIP) and another project by the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) that both tend to address poverty and female reproductive issues. With these activities, C24 performed her community roles and responsibilities to enhance the wellbeing of the people. The opinion leaders in the communities who could also decide any development programs for the community or who could sanction community members on political, social, and cultural matters were convinced about C24's capacity and therefore, became influential in supporting her to win DA elections.

Notwithstanding this assurance, C24 faced fierce competition from another female contender who was contesting for the second time. The implication was that although the female contender had been known in the electoral areas, C24's 'community spirited persona' contributed to her success in the elections.

Equally, when C22 returned from a training workshop that was organised by an NGO to empower women to be self-sufficient, the community members selected her and implored her to be an Assembly Member to represent them in the DA. In another case, C40 stated that while she was in another town for business activities, community members such as elders and other opinion leaders from her hometown approached her and assured her of their support for her to contest the DA elections.

Also, members of the community believed that for a quick response from the district assembly to address issues concerning women at the grassroots, it was ideal to have female representation during decision-making processes in the DAs.

Community support also took the form of philanthropic monetary donations and material assistance, which facilitated the campaigns that eventually led to the

women's political success. Thus, apart from the elders and leaders, philanthropists in the community also assisted these aspiring women. In the first instance, the contributors or donors were convinced to support the women as trust had been built as a result of the women's continuous care for the people and community development. More importantly, social capital relates to investment in social relations with expected results (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002).

The philanthropists and other donors believed that the 'community spirited women' could continue with their care for the people when elected to the district assemblies and therefore, supported them with funds and materials including t-shirts and posters. When asked whether they used their money in the electioneering campaign, with a spontaneous reaction C24 replied, "Not at all! I did not use my money to campaign; I got a philanthropist who prepared the posters for me." Equally, C4, who was in her first term in office said, she "did not pay a pesewa" as family friends in the community sponsored her and helped her with the cost of the campaign posters. C29 also explained that before she was elected to serve her first term in office, a Regional Minister who had seen the potential in her to contribute to the development of the community had sponsored her campaign with posters.

According to the elected women, the philanthropists had anticipated that being women representatives, they could collaborate well with organisations and other bodies to further develop the community. For example, C24 stated that the donor's support came as a surprise since she was not pre-informed about the sponsorship package. She indicated that she was unaware the donor had used her photo in a group picture for the printing of the campaign t-shirts and posters, which was a surprise because she was not asked to pay for anything for the promotional products. The support from the donors helped the women to campaign sufficiently to win the DA elections.

Additionally, some men in the electoral areas keenly supported the women with the expectation that the women would bring development projects to the electoral areas. The men assisted in the form of building campaign teams and creating solidarity messages to rally behind the women as they had also anticipated for female representation in the DAs because it was only men who had been winning the DA elections but had not brought much development to the communities. For instance, C9 stated, “The men also gave me their support indicating that if they had been voting for males all those years, they needed to try a woman this time around.” C10 also stated that some young men within her electoral area knew how reliable she could be as a representative and therefore, supported her.

Likewise, C22 said that the few men with her in the campaign team were active, energetic, supportive and influential in her campaign. Similarly, C31 said, seven men had followed and helped her in the door to door campaign during DA elections.

The male support could be due to social changes resulting in the advocacy for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Thus, the men’s involvement in the campaigns sent signals that the world is changing as a result of social change and women’s empowerment. The support from the male electorate towards women contestants against men contenders would have until now been considered unusual because of the patriarchal nature and the socialisation processes that assign gender roles for women to be in the private spheres of life. Also, in this study, the men’s willingness to assist women arose from the structure of the women’s social relations; and it was because the men valued their social networks with the women (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Individuals interact and network to benefit from social relationships, networking to build a high social capital.

In addition to male support, the female electorate had offered assistance when the female candidates appealed to them during campaign tours and from political

platforms. The female electorate had shown confidence in the women becoming representatives in the district assemblies as they hoped that the elected women could help address their needs and concerns including marital grievances and discrimination in society. These Assemblywomen testified about the female support they received from the electorate. For example, C5 stated that anytime she contested the DA elections, women in the community helped her as they always sensitised others in the electorate to vote for her. C5 also stated that the women in the community acknowledged her assistance in addressing their concerns such as getting sanitation containers for them and also addressing their marital issues.

Likewise, C9 established a crèche facility and cared for the children whose parents were employed outside their jurisdiction. The childcare assistance attracted reciprocated support from the working parents who voted for her. C13 also stated that because she had been helping young girls through training in hairdressing and seamstressing occupations for employment, she got support from the female electorate.

Moreover, some female aspirants benefited from colleague female candidates and friends who campaigned alongside them with solidarity messages. For instance, C27 stated that she got help in the form of joint campaign strategies as she and other female colleague aspirants campaigned on each other's behalf.

Besides, for community enhancement and cohesion, these elected women were seen attending social activities such as funerals, marriage ceremonies and sports that cemented the bridging links between them and community members; and the assistance was reciprocated through community support for their political career. The trust was intensely built when the women were interacting with community elders, opinion leaders, and involved in public development activities such as communal labour and clean-up programmes. This aided in the led attainment of bridging capital.

Bridging capital or links are characteristics of ‘thin trust,’ in which networking and social interactions go beyond the individual’s closed networks. Regarding social capital theory, ‘thin trust’ is also known as the social trust or generalised trust. Bridging capital extends beyond an individual’s actual and informal network into a more implied sense of common systems and expectations of a reciprocal response (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Myeong & Seo, 2016).

In this study, the opinion leaders, philanthropists, traditional elders also reciprocated the actions of the ‘community spirited women’. The members had developed trust in the ‘community spirited’ women and had entrusted to them the development of the community, and because of trust, they gave them their mandate to represent them in the DAs. They believed that the women could win the DA elections; hence, there was an implied expected reciprocal response from their female representatives in the form of support from the local government for community development if the women were elected as their representatives.

The elected women’s acknowledgement of support from other women and community members and their descriptions of the assistance was consistent with discussion from focus groups that female political aspirants had strong community support.

Community support identified in the focus group

In this section, I will present results from focus group discussions. The point that was emphasised the most in the group discussions was that women supported other women because of the belief that female representatives were better placed to understand women’s issues.

Moreover, some male participants spoke of the importance of encouraging women to step out from their private homes into the public realm as many men were ready to support them. Correspondingly, many of the participants stated or agreed with

the comments that encouraging women to engage in local politics enhances the women's confidence. They reiterated the benefits particularly when men got involved in the fight against gender inequality because, in the typical Ghanaian cultural setting, many men still perceive that women should not be leaders or lord over men.

Male participants in the Northern, Western and Eastern zones affirmed that some community elders approached the seemingly capable and courageous women and suggested to them to contest DAs elections. Similarly, it was found out from the focus groups that men support brave, bold and intelligent women to aspire to higher political positions. For instance, an elected male member of an assembly in the Northern zone emphasised that men tend to dominate in the district assembly, yet they had supported a female assembly member to become a District Chief Executive (DCE). Thus, they indicated that when the President of Ghana nominated a female member among them, they voted and elected her to occupy the DCE position because of her persona; she was affable, confidence and hardworking and the community members liked her. Also, in the Western zone, an elected male assembly member acknowledged the essence of supporting female politicians stating:

Women know how to speak their languages, and hence the male members encouraged other females to get elected to the assembly. I think women should continue with the education and sensitisation to help other women to get involved in local politics.

The sensitisation and the education could be on a chain as networking among these women would expedite encouraging action from prospective female politicians, enhancing the benefits social capital brings.

Moreover, from that part of the discussions, it emerged that the stakeholders supported the women in anticipation that when elected they would collaborate with all and sundry, including civil society groups, such as NGOs and Friends' Clubs to ensure development in their electoral areas. These civil society groups were already prepared in some capacity to assist in the advancement of the areas and had fostered

relationships with women political candidates. Sander (2002, p. 11) described social capital as “those voluntary means and processes developed within civil society to promote development for the collective whole”; as such, interestingly, even the male politicians recognised the value of the women’s social capital that they thought would be useful to the wider aims.

Civil Society Support

Civil society groups in this study including non-governmental organisations have been fighting against gender inequality in Ghana. Hence, support from civil society groups emerged as the third most important theme (Refer to Table 9). Civil society groups organised skill training programmes in communication and public speaking to equip women to engage in civic activities and politics effectively. Some of the civil society groups also educated the public on gender equality. Relevant to this study, the support groups included ABANTU for Development (NGO), National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) (political parties) Christian Mothers’ Association (CMA) (Women’s group), WiLDAF and NETRIGHT.

In this study, 30 elected women benefitted and succeeded in their political careers through the civil society support. For instance, C3 who had served for two terms in office as an Assembly Member stated that during the DA elections, it was only the NGOs such as ABANTU for Development and Foundation for Female Photo Journalists (FFP), which were helping the women regarding information on how to campaign for sponsorship. Similarly, C13 confirmed the civil society support and indicated that some NGOs organised training workshops in her district and helped the women to build their communication skills. Other women who worked with these NGOs benefitted from their financial support. C22, for instance, said, “I was working with an NGO that was for women’s empowerment; they gave me money for my electioneering campaign.”

Apart from NGOs, political parties as groups sponsored some of these women to win the DA elections. C40 admitted that district assembly elections were non-partisan, but she was in a particular political group where members were there in their numbers to support her. She confirmed that some other parties also came out openly to help other female and male contenders to win. The support from the political parties included financial, emotional assistance and mentorship. For instance, female parliamentarians were seen moving in the electoral areas within the districts with some women aspirants during the district assembly elections, and commissioning projects and visiting the electorate. The female parliamentarians were elected to the political office on the tickets of political parties, therefore, going about the constituencies with female aspirants served as a boost to their support in winning the DA seats. The affiliated political parties were providing psychological support, and the encouragement through the female MPs motivated the women aspirants as they felt more confident and in a way emotionally assisted to aspire to the political positions.

On the contrary, legally, the Ghanaian constitution does not permit political parties to recruit aspirants during any DA elections. Hence, the women had to contest the elections as independent candidates. Similarly, since the local government system is non-partisan, elected members in the DAs were not to be identified with any political party.

Despite the supposed non-partisan rules, in the interviews for this study, some of the Assemblywomen declared their affiliation with the political parties that sponsored them. Coincidentally, it is perceived that electorate is affiliated to political parties. Therefore, the support from the parties could be through any person connected, and covertly, would be helping the aspiring women in the name of their parties but the law could not deal with them. The Assemblywomen admitted that the support from their political parties provided them with an opportunity to the local assembly, which

was critical in their political careers. Thus, in particular, considering that out of the 40 elected women, 24 expressed their aspiration to contest general elections on the ticket of the political parties, which they were assured of the parties' support. These elected women indicated that because their political parties supported them during the DA elections, they had to work extra hard to maintain the trust the parties had in them.

Subsequently, the discussion below presents focus group discussants' perspectives.

Civil society support identified in the focus group

The only female focus group from the Eastern zone revealed that political parties sponsored some ambitious women whom the party saw as courageous and vocal in the electoral areas. Also, the group acknowledged their activities such as through the Christian Mothers' Association (CMA), which they explained was established to address women's concerns. Specifically, CMA's primary objectives were to create an enabling environment for advocacy to educate and sensitise the public on women's participation and representation in decision-making positions. The women's group frequently organised training workshops for female members of the organisation and non-members who aspired to political positions. In the discussion, it emerged that aside from holding workshops and encouraging women to engage in politics, CMA educated them on how to appeal to the electorate for a vote.

Similarly, from the focus group discussion, it emerged that civil societies were giving financial support to contestants. Male focus groups from the Northern and the Western zones admitted that many civil society groups typically came to the aid of the women candidates with money during their campaign periods because some women lacked monetary and material resources. A male participant in the Western zone acknowledged that he was a member of an NGO that sponsored some female aspirants. During the discussion with the male focus group in the Western zone, reference was

made that a particular party sponsored a woman to contest DA elections because she was an influential executive member of the party.

Figure 9 below is a photo showing men in a focus group discussion with the researcher in Western zones.



Figure 9: Male Focus Group Discussion 1 (Author's Photograph, 2015)

Figure 9 shows a male participant describing to the researcher how his NGO within the Western zone supported a female aspirant named in this study as C22 to win DAEs in the municipality.

The discussions with the focus groups and the in-depth interviews indicate that the support from the civil society groups offered assistance in the form of financial and material packages as well as skill training, similar to that provided by political parties. Notably, the women explained how the continuous support from the various civil society groups sustained their interests in local politics. For example, realising the importance of family in political participation of women in Ghana, these civil society groups particularly the CMA encouraged women to balance their gender roles in their homes and in turn gain support from family members to strive for their political careers. These supports were considered to have guaranteed the women the win in any

re-election in so far as it gave them opportunities to become well-liked among the electorate and it had assisted them to gain approval and practical support from close family relations. The next discussion is on family support to the women.

Family Support

Family support was the fourth emerging theme identified from the data with 271 coded references (Refer to Table 9). The elected women had attached commitment to their family, and therefore, needed the family support as they perform their triple roles (reproduction, production and community responsibilities) in both private and public spheres of life. Engaging in politics is the period in the women's political career that needed emotional and financial assistance from these close relations including spouses, siblings, mothers and grown-up children. Family as a structure plays a role to make the social capital function. For instance, Heffron (2001) identified the family as a structure that establishes bonding capital or bonding links as far as social capital was concerned. As earlier stated, bonding capital or bonding relationships are based on a sense of shared identities, shared culture or ethnicity with family, close friends and people with similar background.

The elected women interviewed for this study who had praised their families shared their lived experiences with the research team. For instance, C2 indicated that her husband had been solidly behind her decision to be in the assembly and sometimes he prompted her when she was running late for assembly meeting. C40 also said, "all the money I used for my campaign was from my husband and me." In this study, it was discovered that other members of the family also supported the women during the DA elections. C38, who was in her first term in office, gave credit to her mother for the support she provided when she decided to engage in local politics. She said, "I left my children in the care of my mum before I left for the campaign." Also, some of the elected Assemblywomen stated that although their mothers were ready to support them

with the management of the homes, they had to provide the necessary resources such as money and food for the house so that they continued to benefit from the mothers' assistance.

Family Support identified in the focus group

Furthermore, discussants in focus groups stated that help from family relations was essential for a woman to be successful in politics in Ghana, which this section revealed. To the discussants, the women needed their husband's consent before they could engage in politics as without the agreement the couple could face marital challenges. In the Northern zone, some elected male members in the assembly in the group discussion said that most of the successes of the political careers of women in Ghana were based on their interactions and agreement with their husbands. They emphasised that without the husbands' consent, the women could never work well especially when they were still married.

Similarly, the female focus group in the Eastern zone impelled that for example, when it came to political meetings in late evenings, once the men understood and accepted their wives' decision to be in the Assembly, they also supported them in the children's upkeep. The group acknowledged that some husbands respected their wives' interest and were always ready to care for everything when the women were not available to perform household duties. The female group stated that just as the women would have done for peace to prevail in the home at all times, an understanding husband supported a wife to engage in politics. Primarily, social capital relates to the support or the advantage individuals stand to gain from their families, friends and associates, which constitute an asset in times of the challenges of engaging in public activities (Woolcock & Narayan, 1999). Likewise, GAD Advocates believed that the relationship between a man and a woman could spark controversy, particularly, when they were a couple, and there was no cordial agreement in their decisions.

Evidently, compared to other supports, family support was in the fourth position, indicating that many of the women did not have support from their families, probably because of gender stereotype. The lack of massive support from the family could be attributed to the Ghanaians' perception about women's place being the private sphere; for a woman to opt for public sphere activities such as political engagement appeared to be negating the conventional beliefs. For instance, C10 said that her husband tried to talk her out from engaging in politics, especially when she was doubling as a care provider for their two children and as Women's Organiser for a political party. C10 revealed that when she did not heed her husband's demand, he divorced her. C10's situation explained the importance of gaining spousal support if a wife needed to maintain her marital relationship either in a monogamous or polygamous marriage, and be successful in her political career in Ghana. Hence, the women required significant support from their families, which was not much pronounced in this study. Thus, although an emerging theme from the data, support from family members was coded 271 times from the framework analysis as shown in Table 9.

The understanding and support from some family members gave the women courage to engage in their political activities successfully. As revealed in the social capital discourse about a family and the linking bonds, family, therefore, should have been the significant bonding network that the female aspirants could benefit as the principal supporting factor. Heffron (2001) asserts that bonding links are with the family and close friends who could be committed to drawing up campaign strategies with aspiring contestants to compete in the DA elections. Subsequent section presents the discussion on campaign strategy.

Campaign Strategy

From Table 9, the data shows that campaign tactics were the fifth emerging theme and supporting factor that contributed to the women's political success in DA elections. In this study, when asked about the strategies they adopted, 20 women stated that campaign was important as they carefully selected members in their electoral areas to form their campaign teams. For example, C25 said, "You can't go to elections without a campaign strategy." C40 also stated that "Yes, I set up a campaign team." In this study, the women indicated that they sometimes campaigned on feminine issues. For instance, C2 said that during DA elections, her campaign slogan was 'try a woman this time and see.' C2 acknowledged that men had done their part, and therefore, she asked the electorate to support, believing that she could do it. Equally, C14's campaign message was 'a woman is equally capable of contesting for a position.' At campaign rallies, C14 pointed out to the female electorate that there were so many men in the assembly and inquired how women's needs, concerns and grievances were presented to the decision-making body to address them. C14 convinced the electorate that until such a time that women represented females at the decision-making tables, women's concerns would not be adequately addressed. Out of the 40 elected women, 24 had appealed to the electorate to vote for them because of their gender.

C8 also used different strategies and said that she visited churches and spoke to congregants, requesting that they supported her to represent them in the assembly. C8 reported saying, "I am the only female among two other men so vote for me." Similarly, C13 went from house to house during her campaign and appealed to the electorate stating that no woman had ever been given a chance to represent them although the area was large. She asked the women to vote for her to represent females in the DA.

Also, C11 indicated she used her money to print the T-Shirts and posters and distributed them to the electorate at rallies and in the community. Likewise, C18 started with the door to door campaign and called for meetings, and sensitised and educated the electorate on the need and the importance for women to get involved in governance. Some of these ‘community spirited’ women had earlier availed themselves and worked together with the electorate during communal labour, and therefore, they won the DA elections without much difficulty.

Coincidentally, advocacy for gender equality plays significant roles to contribute to the support the women may gain as a result of their campaign messages on gender issues and gender line of argument. Most interestingly, in contemporary times society seems to recognise women’s concerns and the idea that women could equally perform better in politics and decision-making same as their male counterparts, may also have given a boost to the support they gain during the DAEs.

The narrated campaign experiences of the women were established during group discussion as the subsequent part of this chapter presents the deliberations.

Strategic campaigning identified in the focus group

The groups’ discussion showed that female political candidates were aware they had to form campaign teams if they anticipated winning any DA elections. Aside from campaigning on feminine issues, some female aspirants had all males in their campaign teams, which showed how both women and men were supportive of women’s involvement in politics and to vote them as representatives in the DAs. The all-male support also confirms how men have the interest to be involved in anything politicking. A male participant in the Northern zone confirmed his involvement in a woman’s political campaign and added that all members of the campaign team were men. He stated, “As for that lady, I can attest that people encouraged her to go to the Assembly where she served her third term in office.” The support expressed by the

male participant during the group discussion showed a positive sign towards achieving gender equality in political decision-making processes.

From the campaign strategies, the women had chosen slogans, appealed to the electorate on gender lines; they had moved from house to house or door to door, they had formed campaigned teams, some comprising only men, and they had defended the manifestoes on campaign platforms.

In this study, the majority of the elected women had contested the DA elections for the first time. Thus, 32 out of the 40 elected women were newly elected and had not previously served in the DAs in any capacity. With the remaining 8 members, 4 had served two terms, and the other 4 were in their third term as Assembly members. This is probably as a result of the many discouraging influences that dissuaded some elected Assemblywomen from seeking re-election. For instance, one of the women activists had confessed that as for her, the only politics she could do was what she did; she was not going to engage herself in politics again.

Part Three: Discussion of the Data

In this study, I have presented the enabling factors that assisted Ghanaian women in their district assembly elections. The findings revealed that the women were elected based on the interconnection between the individuals' persona, the community (electoral area), civil society, family and the campaign strategy they adopted to appeal to the electorate for votes. McGing and White (2012) suggested that the influences that make a prospective politician come forward to pursue political career include the availability of resources such as political experience, time, funds and network. Other resources were motivational factors (interest, confidence and ambition), and this argument is reflected in the study findings.

Ghanaian patriarchal society features structures that uphold male superiority and therefore, in the political system, men are in the majority in the decision-making

processes. Consequently, Ghanaian women had to develop a strong social network and build constituencies to rally for support during district assembly and general elections. Unlike other African countries such as Rwanda and South Africa that have affirmative action policies (e.g. quota systems and reserved seats) to increase the number of women in political decision-making positions, as at 2017 Ghana had not passed the affirmative action bill into law to compel subsequent governments to enforce the legislation to the later. Hence, the persistence barriers and challenges to the aspiring female politicians.

The study's findings suggest that some of the challenges to the Ghanaian patriarchal society have been impacted as a result of the advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment. The 'community spirited women' were further empowered through sensitisation to engage in local politics. Thus, Ghanaian women have been exposed and educated as they stepped out from their private spheres of life to participate in public activities such as engaging political decision-making positions, which is seen as a valued resource to ensure gender equality.

More so, this study revealed that the elected Assemblywomen had been empowered through socialisation processes and their agency urged them to have a political voice. They had been empowered through education, social interaction, networking, joining associations, and forming groups, where they availed themselves to campaign for support. Contemporary situations with the onset of telecommunication and media landscape have made women relied on their gender roles, particularly their community responsibilities to engage the outside private sphere of life, which empowered them socially.

Social empowerment has been noted to improve the conditions of women's lives and their position in society (Scheyvens & Lagisa, 1998). It manifests itself in strong women's organisations, high status, freedom of movement, access to

development activities, excellent communication between males and females at the household level, and subsistence work (productive and reproductive) is valued (Friedmann, 1992). Economic empowerment also constitutes one of the fundamental building blocks in the overall empowerment of women. It includes women's participation in formal economic activities and their control over their income. Economic empowerment relates to resource allocation, rights and opportunities in society. Political empowerment of women enables them to participate in the local, national and international decision-making processes. Political power is enhanced when women have representation on community and broader decision-making bodies and are consulted on all the key development initiatives planned for their families, communities and nations (Paxton et al., 2007).

Lollo (2012) reiterated Bourdieu's approach to social capital relating it to individual and class benefits from the personal relationships and socially shared values. Bourdieu suggested that social capital is considered a property of the person because it provides personal advantages (Macke & Dilly, 2010). Thus, as an element, social capital is what the actors or individual in groups, society use to maintain or enhance their status and their power in society (Bourdieu, 1986 cited in Macke & Dilly, 2010). In other words, consistent with theories of social capital, Ghanaian women used their personality (determination, confidence, interest and ambition), their shared and personal network, and their campaign strategy as the basis of their social capital to enable them to get elected. Thus, to build high levels of social capital and make it function, the elected Assemblywomen had adhered to the many of the community's social norms, shared values, rules and standards, and customs as they engaged in the participation in local politics. Adhering to the social norms following social change, these women also challenged patriarchy.

From the analysis of the study's findings, it could be argued that through socialisation processes (e.g. through education about gender equality and sensitisation), the prospective women politicians developed and empowered themselves politically. The women had observed most of the norms and values of society (e.g. respectful interactions) and had developed their human capital, got employed, and earned income to satisfy their personal, economic and societal needs, which were strong pillars to build high economic social capital. With such social and economic empowerment, the women could become representatives in the local government to respond to the people's social, political and economic needs.

According to Bénabou and Tirole (2001), people's self-confidence affects their social interaction. Obviously, one of the attributes that could urge an individual to develop confidence is to interact with other social beings. Besides, political ambition contributes to a decision to engage in the local government system and take up a role as an assembly member in Ghana (Adusei-Asante, 2012). In effect, persons with strong self-confidence are likely to engage in politics. Politics is an occupation, which persons with confidence could easily engage in as with the social interaction, they would be building constituencies to harness political support.

In this study, for instance, when the research team located an Assemblywoman to be interviewed, she was busily distributing electricity poles in her electoral area; and during the face to face conversation with her, she indicated she had been negotiating with the Electricity Company of Ghana to supply the communities with electrical poles. She had been doing that even before she contested the DA elections to become a member of the assembly. She seemed popular among the community members, and one could see the satisfaction on her face as the constituents worked alongside to perform her duties. The Assemblywoman had been building her social

network, which earned her the political position as a result of the constituents' trust in her.

Bornstein et al. (2008) argue that social networking is the second key component of social capital stemming from the norms of trust in human relationships to build society. The argument has been that the conceptualisation of social capital relates to investing in social relations with expected returns as individuals interact and network to benefit (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002; Lin, 2001). The trust from these community members was earned because of the confidence, ambition, determination and the interest the women showed towards becoming political representatives as a collective whole that would benefit (Putnam, 2000).

The social capital concept then becomes a norm or 'an understood rule' about how people should treat each other (Putnam, 2000). As earlier stated, as a result of the mutual interaction, the women built bridging capital with the people and those social actors such as community elders, opinion leaders and philanthropists who were not very close and did not belong to their social class. These social actors supported the women to get elected to the district assemblies, in anticipation of reciprocal response in the form of development in their communities. For example, the philanthropists had also sponsored these women for a reciprocal response from the female representatives as they represented the people to bring development to their communities

Also, the beliefs about men agreeing with females concerning politics have been reinforced by this study to the extent that some men supported their spouses and other women they considered capable. Thus, it is believed that some men continue the advocacy for gender equality. According to Keeley (2007), the shared values and understandings in society enable individuals and groups to trust each other and therefore, work together. The components of social capital (e.g. links, ties, trust,

bonding) and its association with the level of interaction (i.e. individual, group and societal) and the individuals' motivation (e.g. self-confidence, interest, ambition, and determination), serve as the dimension for mutual and collective benefits for both individual and society. In this study, the support from community members and other groups in society reflected on the women's ability to network. Civil society groups, therefore, showed interest in the women's efforts.

These actions reflected on Putnam (1993) reference to the social capital concept where he emphasised on civic responsibility, participation and associational life for the health of democracies towards the revival of intellectual interest in civil society. Social capital exists, and it is evident at any level where the individual feels identified and belonging. The person could feel belonging either to the family, profession, informal social group and a formal organisation. The individual could be happy with the community, ethnic group, and even the country (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995; Newton, 1997; Portes, 1998; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Kilby, 2002; Buys & Bow, 2002; Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Kilby, 2002; Slangen et al., 2003). Thus, accordingly, this study reflects on Putnam's (2000) argument that the individual felt belonged to the family where they have a collective identity.

The individual gained family support because of the social bonding and commitment, and the close relationships they had with their mothers, spouses, children, and friends (i.e. the social resources). According to the order of importance, the family could have been the most significant because of the associated thick trust or the bonding relation. However, due to the patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society, some family members continued to perceive that woman's place is the home. To the traditional Ghanaian, the woman needs to perform only her sexual roles and cater for the children and husband. It will, therefore, be argued that the family could also be a precluding factor to women's representation in politics (Refer to Chapter 5). As

indicated in Chapter 1, the family is a patriarchal agent that sometimes advocates for the maintenance of the status quo of male superiority. Many of these family members rather support aspiring male politicians. Therefore, their support for the aspiring female politicians this time around could be described as firm and solid since they may have understood gender equality and women's empowerment. Also, with the family support, the aspiring women were able to make strategic decisions, particularly with team members who strategically campaigned for them to win the DA elections.

O'Day (2003) stated that candidates in any political campaign are the most important individuals as they happen to be the effective campaigners and fundraisers. Therefore, the individuals' time was the essential resource needed to make any campaign effective. Also, the effectiveness dwell on whether the campaign team had done the necessary research, set strategically campaign goals with campaign teams, analysed the targeting voters, developing a campaign message, developing a voter contact plan and then implemented the plan (O'Day, 2003). In this study, and from the women's narrative accounts, they had done extensive campaigning during the district assembly elections. Suggestively, a woman's persona as a politician was essential, as her networks, norms, and trust facilitated the coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993).

Social Capital also 'capitalises' on political engagement (Lowndes, 2001). Hence, nothing regarding their representation in the DAs would have been possible if the women had not availed themselves to abide by the norms, rules and to the training programs. Social Capital and agency capacity are important factors affecting the extent to which individuals and groups take part in political activities (Krishna, 2002a). Accordingly, the social capital theory enhances individuals' capacity to join in the collective action to resolve common problems and or to ensure that governments address such problems in their political communities (Putnam, 2000). As earlier stated

in Chapter 1, the district assemblies are the highest administrative authority at the local level and are mandated by the 1992 constitution to solve many of the issues at the grass root level. However, when government and local government authorities are not providing the solutions to community issues, the enthusiastic individuals who desired to win any political position at the grassroots level had to spend on the people's concerns to gain their trust.

Studies show that some assembly members in Ghana found it challenging to perform their duties and functions as they were not paid salaries and the allowances, for sitting and transportation paid to them are not sufficient enough to move around to attend to the most pressing issues (Adusei-Asante, 2012). However, in this study, while some of the elected members saw the limited financial resources as discouraging and de-motivation to make them contest subsequent DA elections, others saw them as only challenging, which did not deter them from seeking re-election (Refer to Chapter 5). The empowered individual women were determined to succeed in their political careers and therefore, relied on their political environment to win in the electoral process. Figure 10 below describes how the interactions among the structures and dimensions of social capital led to the successful representation of women in the district assemblies in Ghana.

Figure 10 shows the relationship among the facets of social capital and its effects on women's representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. At the apex of the Social Capital and Women in Politics Framework is the empowered individual woman. Following the empowered individual woman are the social capital dimensions, *Interaction, Trust, Norms & Rules, Networking, and Formal & Informal Ties*. The dimensions enable the structures of social capital to function and contribute to the meaning of the theory. Next, are the structures of social capital *micro (individual), meso (group) and macro (society)*. The structures are interrelated, and

constitute the various levels of interaction of social capital. The effectiveness of the different structures is dependent on the dimensions, which are considered the wheels of social capital. Social capital facilitates the accumulation of human and economic capital, which enable individuals to undertake a venture of interest effectively. Thus, interactions contribute to the individual's ability to utilise society to build their capital to function for mutual benefit. Figure 10 presents the relationship among the tenets of social capital and enabling factors of women's participation in politics.

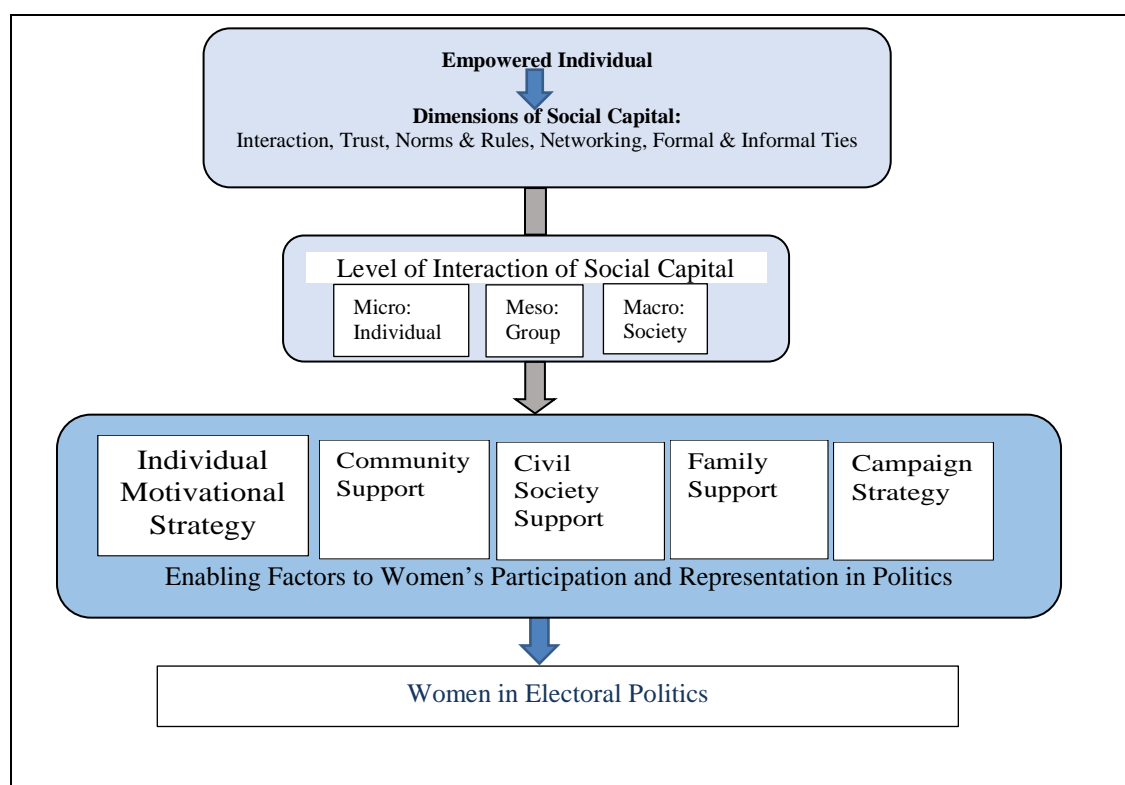


Figure 10: Social Capital and Women in Politics (Author's Construct, 2017)

From figure 10, it is argued that both the dimensions and the structures of social capital influence the enabling factors to women's participation in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies. A woman's social capital brings to bear her individual motivational strategy, which embodies personal traits such as confidence, interest, ambition and determination. These personal qualities are essential especially for women who are disadvantaged in society as a result of socio-cultural beliefs and

practices. Thus, as the disadvantaged women in the remotest areas interact with individuals, groups and society, they develop their self-esteem and agency, which are critical to access valued resources such as political decision-making position.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the ‘individual motivational strategies’ of self-confidence, interest, determination and ambition were the major supporting factors that contributed to the successful election of women to the district assemblies in Ghana. At the grassroots level, women candidates for political positions were able to mobilise and develop extensive network systems as well as resources through close relatives and friends and members of the community. Thus, individual women could leverage either bonding or bridging capital or links from the social relations to their advantage. Hence, individuals’ social capital could be observed in their interpersonal relationships as they develop more networks during social events and build trust in the community in which they live and the society as a whole.

In this study, the networking and collective action in the electoral areas, communities and the Ghanaian society where women were successful in winning the political position depended on the amount of commitment showed during the female’s participation. For instance, in a country considered as patriarchal particularly in the typical traditional places where cultural beliefs and practices dominate females, and there are no legal affirmative action policies, which meant that governments and political parties were not obliged to adhere to directives or action policies of previous authorities to enhance the number of females in decision-making positions.

Hence, females needed to work extra hard to win political positions. Accordingly, it was the individuals’ motivations that urged them to interact actively with other persons and groups, with the observation of rules, norms, social values to

make the social capital function. The study's findings were that 'individual motivational strategies' was the most important factor behind their social capital. Theorists may have to find the 'individual motivational strategy' as an added knowledge of the literature on social capital discourse.

The next chapter presents the findings and discussion of the factors that preclude women's participation in politics.

Chapter 5

Women and Local Level Politics: The Precluding Factors

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the various precluding factors to women's participation in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. This chapter is in four parts. Part one presents a brief description of the precluding factors in this study beginning with the 'barriers' that obstruct some women to engage in politics. Following the barriers are the 'challenges,' that the elected women face as they perform their duties as members of the assemblies, which are discussed in part two. Then part three of this chapter presents the 'discouraging' factors that deter the elected women's representatives from seeking re-election to the district assemblies. The fourth and final part presents the discussion of the various precluding factors in this study, relating them to other empirical pieces of evidence by other scholars.

Using Ritchie and Spencer's (1993) Framework Analysis, three main themes emerged from the field data as precluding factors to women's engagement and representation in local government in Ghana. The emergent themes for the precluding factors comprised barriers, challenging factors, and discouraging factors. According to the respondents, the 'barriers' to women's engagement and representation in local government system are the obstructing factors that did not give women the chance to engage in politics. The 'challenging' factors are the factors that were impeding the duties of the elected Assemblywomen to function as members of the Assembly. The 'discouraging' factors are the deterrents that stopped the elected women from contesting subsequent DA elections.

In this study, regarding the operational definition of each component of the precluding factors, the context of each factor was distinct in its influence on the

affected woman depending on the category she fitted into and her manner of dealing with the situation. The precluding factors against the women were categorised into three groups, barring factors, challenging factors and discouraging factors according to the coding processes. For instance, the first category was made up of the ‘barriers’ that prevented women who were yet to engage in local politics, but the barriers affected their decisions. Hence, they did not have the chance to participate in politics. The second category comprised of challenging factors affecting the elected Assemblywomen who were performing their duties, yet they planned to contest subsequent elections. The third category featured the discouraging factors that influenced the duties of Assemblywomen and, deterred them from seeking re-election to the DAs.

The categories give the understanding of the steady increases and sometimes the decline in the number of women contestants and the elected in the DAs. The elected Assemblywomen and men, as well as other focus group discussants, considered the precluding factors as issues that negatively influence women’s participation and representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. The emphasis is on Ghanaian women’s abilities to surmount the difficulties they faced when considering entering politics. Some women were able to overcome them, while others could not engage in politics due to the impact of the barriers. The precluding factors have similar operational definitions, but according to the affected the woman, each component is distinct. For instance, lack of funds is a barrier, it is also a challenging factor and a discouraging factor to women’s political participation and representation in the district assemblies. The researcher, therefore, discusses the precluding factors separately and explains how each influenced the women’s decisions on political participation and representation in the local government system.

Part One: Barriers to Women's Participation in Local Politics

A rationale for increasing women's representation in local politics is that they are abler to tap into the issues affecting the female electorate and address them through development decisions. In this study, the data analysis showed the emergent themes as the barriers, the challenging factors and the discouraging factors that negatively influence women's participation in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. Table 10 below represents the barriers, their descriptions and coded references.

Table 10: Barriers to women's representation in the DAs in Ghana

Barriers	Coded References
Male dominance (prejudice)	486
Cultural beliefs and practices	197
Lack of self-confidence	153
Gender roles	86
Abuse and harassment	85
Limited funds	73
Partisan nature of the assembly	32
Unsupportive family	29
Total	1,141

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2015)

The most significant precluding factors found in the sample were barriers. A total of 1141 coded references were generated from the field data as presented in Table 10. In this study, barriers refer to the obstructing factors that do not give women the chance to engage in local-level politics. These factors included male dominance (prejudice), social and cultural beliefs about female participation in politics, lack of confidence, gender roles, abuse and harassment, limited funds, partisan nature of the assembly and unsupportive family.

In Ghana, women face many barriers in their quest to participate in politics, and it was, therefore, necessary to unearth the precluding factors from the perspectives of the elected women and the perspectives of the key informants during the focus group discussion. In this chapter also, each Assemblywoman was represented with an identification letter (C) as the cases and zones were for the focus groups.

The following section provides an analysis of all the barriers identified by women in this study. The theme ‘male dominance’ in the transcripts of both individual women and participants from the focus groups was referenced 486 times and constitutes one of the significant factors (within the theme of barriers) that put women off from engaging in local politics. The concept of male dominance (prejudice) relates to men not allowing women to occupy public space or disallowing women from taking part in political decision-making processes. In other words, men have most of the socio-economic and political power that could influence decision-making processes, with concern that it is used to uphold the male supremacy at the expense of the female. As previously indicated in Chapter 1, the patriarchal nature of Ghana has led to male supremacy. The situation has resulted in men dominating the socio-economic and political spheres, and public activities such as politics and therefore, a female’s interest in public office tend to interfere with the status quo. For example, Cases C2, C3, C4, C12, C13, C14, C16 and C24 stated that male dominance in society was one of the plausible reasons why women do not engage in politics. According to C13, even discussion at district assembly meetings tended to be male-centred, and when women try to draw the men’s attention, they shut them down to keep quiet. Perhaps, patriarchal structures which are archetypal features of societies such as Ghana have imbued with men and women the norms and values which enable men to dominate women. In effect, it has led to electorate preferring male contenders to represent them at the decision-making positions and in public sphere (Casas-Arce & Saiz, 2015).

Moreover, the features of patriarchal systems influence the concepts of ‘false consciousness’ (a way of thinking that prevents a person from perceiving the true nature of their social or economic situation) and ‘hegemony’ (Dominance of the society’s other classes in maintaining the socio-political status quo) (Akita, 2010) these ideas also underlie the rationale for the sensitisation and education against gender inequality.

Another emerging theme and obstructing factor with 197 coded references was cultural beliefs and practices. The cultural beliefs and practices are the norms, values, customs, and marital and religious practices, which are imbibed through gender construction. The assimilation of Ghanaian cultural beliefs and practices have led to differentiated gender roles for women who wish to be in politics. Although gender roles seem universal, Ghana’s socialisation processes tend to emphasise the roles that women should play. These female gender roles are influenced by their cultural values, beliefs and practices. As Iwanaga (2008) indicated, the lack of interest to participate in local politics is linked to the nature of gender construction which tends to restrict and psychologically hinder women from aspiring to public office. In other words, the internalisation of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices from childhood through to adulthood largely determine the nature of activities and jobs men and women do. For instance, Cases C12, C16, C18, C19, C21, C22, and C30 said that cultural beliefs and practices are obstacles to women developing an interest in local politics. For example, in some traditional Ghanaian homes, females are socialised and encouraged to marry early and give birth to a large number of children to expand the family lineage. In contrast, fewer men are encouraged into early marriage, and their capacity to engage in public life is less constrained by nurturing children. As further evidence of how the socio-cultural beliefs and practices had influenced the thoughts and behaviours of the Ghanaian society, Cases (C16 and C18) asserted that members of their communities

held the belief that men cannot stand by for women to lead them. Thus, the notion that men ought to be leaders has been a product of gender roles and socialisation, which have resulted in men and women developing different attitudes and behaviours toward the socio-economic and political activities and jobs (Crespi, 2004). Besides, C21 asserted that society sees women as belonging to the kitchen and therefore, it believes that they should leave politics up to men.

A lack of confidence was another theme identified by the Assemblywomen as barriers to women's political participation, which was referenced 153 times. For instance, C3, C6, C39 and C40 posited that lack of self-confidence was part of the reasons that account for the low participation of women in local politics. Self-confidence is the belief in one's ability to perform or undertake an activity or a job. Bénabou and Tirole (2003) asserted that one's ability to engage in social interaction shows his/her self-confidence. In the context of this study, confidence relates to women trusting themselves to break through the glass ceiling efficiently (Vliet & Temming, 2017) and, interact, network to engage others and to perform executive roles and duties. According to C17 and C19, many women question themselves and harbour fears about venturing into politics. Besides, C13 and C14 stated that some women underrate themselves due to fear that they would be ridiculed if they entered into politics. The reasons women have a low level of confidence with regards to political activities stem from the nature of gender role socialisation within patriarchal societies. This leads to women having little confidence about venturing into businesses or jobs described as fitting for men.

However, the literature suggests that when women's relative resources such as their level of education and social status are increased, their self-confidence improves and their share of housework decreases (Evertsson & Nermo, 2007). There may be two-way effects as the women's social status, and self-confidence may urge them to

develop the interest to engage in local politics, not to mention their relative freedom from time and energy consuming domestic chores.

Gender roles are “behavioural activities associated with sexes in a social or interpersonal relationship in a particular culture” (Azuh, Fayomi & Ajayi, 2015, p. 107). In this study, analysis of the issue of gender roles with 86 coded references found that it was considered to obstruct women’s participation in the public sphere at the local level. These functions are linked to the socio-cultural beliefs and practices of society. Thus, in the process of imbuing the social beliefs and practices in children to the adolescence stage, the agents of socialisation such as family systems, marriage, and religion emphasise a boundary between male and female roles. In effect, gender norms reinforce the definition of masculine and feminine identities and responsibilities in society (Azuh et al., 2015). For instance, C2, C18, C23, C30 and C35 affirmed that gender roles hamper women’s involvement in local politics. C18 explained that the low participation of women in politics was due to duties they had to undertake at home to maintain the household. C30 concurred and said that women are restricted by the customary practices such as cooking at home. A woman who attempts to surmount the gender roles phenomenon or seek spousal assistance while she attempts to engage in public activities would likely have to then deal with intimidation and abuse from insults, ridicules and harassments from members of her family and the localities. Otherwise, women would have to resist through negotiation with spouses to be able to engage in local politics.

Violence against women in politics not only obstructs women from participating in politics but also challenges the concept of good governance (Erturk, 2008). In this study, abuse and harassment with a coded reference of 85 emerged as another factor that serves as a barrier to women’s engagement in local politics. Some women including C4, C5, C6, C8 and C29 revealed that abuse and harassment deter

some women from participating in local politics. Specifically, the women described some of the abusive and harassing comments as coming from members of their communities. C29 said that “if men stopped calling women who express interest in politics ‘names,’ and stop perceiving them to be whores and adulterers, it would help.” Additionally, C26 asserted that some members of her electoral area had said she was going to use her body in exchange for the needs of the people in the electoral area. Possibly, violence against women is so persistent and pervasive due to gender discrimination and patriarchy (Anaeme, 2012).

Gender discrimination is a global phenomenon. In some cultural settings, women and girls, men and boys have unequal access to education, healthcare, adequate housing and employment, which are part of many religious and cultural traditions as a result of patriarchal systems (Anaeme, 2012). Accordingly, the daily discriminatory acts women contend with occur as a result of patriarchal systems, which at the same time influence the socio-political and economic structures (Sultana, 2011).

Another barrier identified by women in this study was the lack of financial resource. As a factor, lack of financial resource was referred 73 times. Engaging in politics require some financial outlay on the part of an aspiring candidate to get campaign programmes running. However, the call for women to enter public life is hampered by most women starting out with less financial muscle compared to men, so that if they were not sponsored and helped out, they would not succeed in their political careers. For instance, the elected women including C8, C9, C21, C23, C25, C28, C29, C31 and C35 reported that lack of funds limited the quest for females to participate in local politics. C9 said, with assembly election, one would need money and logistics for campaigning purposes.

Familial support is very important for a political candidate because family defines the identity of an individual (Umar, 2011). This study found that women who

were not supported by their families were deterred from seeking public office at the local level. The unsupportive family factor had 29 coded references to the family's discouraging actions and distracting comments that dissuade women from politics. In general, the interviewees stated that women do not venture into local politics because they lack the support they need from their families.

More specifically, C34 revealed that her children asked her not to contest the local elections and they demanded she stepped down after she won the slot, because of the intimidation and insults from some of the electorate. Sometimes it becomes difficult for the prospective female politician to choose between her decision and that of the family. Perhaps, as a result of the encountered sexist insults and the stigmatisation, "families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye" (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000, p. 4). A woman who attempts or ventures into politics is judged concerning the dogma that 'good' women do not indulge themselves in public spheres (Castillejo, 2009).

These barriers have been obstructing many women from venturing into local politics, yet some women surmount them and have access to decision-making positions in the DAs. Thus, when they win the DAEs, this is where the barriers appear to be challenging, though not deterring enough to make them quit local politics. The subsequent section of this chapter presents the challenging factors to Assemblywomen's representation and performance in the electoral areas and communities in Ghana.

Part Two: Challenging Factors

In every field of work, individuals face some challenges. As a result, the researcher endeavoured to find out the challenges the elected Assemblywomen were confronted with, and the extent to which the problems could deflate their quest to perform at the local level. The challenging factors also have to do with testing the

resilience of the elected Assemblywomen whiles undertaking their duties in the communities and DAs. This section discusses the emergent challenging factors as listed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Challenging factors to the elected women in the DAs in Ghana

Challenging factors	Coded References
Uncooperative electorate	163
Unsupportive assembly	136
Abuse and Harassment	93
Partisan nature of the assembly	50
Limited funds	43
Male dominance (prejudice)	24
Security problems	15
Total	524

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

Challenging factors with 524 coded references from the field data appeared as the second precluding factor that impeded the duties of the elected women as they function as members of the Assembly. These challenges included uncooperative electorate, unsupportive assembly, abuse and harassment, partisan nature of the assembly, limited funds, male dominance, security issues and personal problems. The challenging factors made the day-to-day activities of the elected Assemblywomen very frustrating. As public officers undertaking their community responsibilities, the women had to contend with these impediments to perform to the satisfaction of the electorate. However, some members of the electorate were not showing support, and that was a challenge.

In this study, uncooperative electorate emerged a challenging factor with 163 coded references. The uncooperative electorate included constituents, and sometimes the chieftaincy institution that did not assist in community growth and development. According to some Assemblywomen, the process of engaging the electorate at the

local level and the actions of some constituents impeded community growth and development.

Moreover, some of the electorate whose personal needs and unreasonable demands were not fulfilled were not cooperative making the duties of the Assemblywoman very challenging. One could support the argument from a respondent that some people were yet to comprehend that females could also lead and 'instruct' elderly men in the community to attend communal labour. For example, C1, C13, C18, C21, C28, C32 and C33 pointed out that some actions and inaction of the electorate in their communities did not make them function efficiently and that frustrated them. More specifically, C21 and C32 asserted that when they announced communal labour and other public activities, some electorate did not turn up to support.

C28 also insinuated that some constituents demanded money and drinks after communal labour and public activities. These women revealed that the unsupportive nature of the electorate made their interests in local politics wane. Other elected women thought the electorate attitudes could not dissuade them from seeking re-election. These motivated Assemblywomen continued to visit the electorate in their homes, in the markets, community centres to remind them of their support to develop the electoral areas, these included the campaign strategy they fashioned out to seek re-election. These women also wondered if the district assemblies could support in educating the voters on their civic responsibilities, which was one of the assemblies' responsibilities.

The district assembly is the highest administrative authority at the local level to facilitate the concept of decentralisation, which aims to bring governance closer to the doorstep of the citizenry to ensure widespread participation in community development. However, the district assembly had been unsupportive, which also

emerged as one of the challenges the elected Assemblywomen had to deal with as they undertook their functions. Obviously, the major challenge the assemblies face was the delay in the release of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) from the Central government to develop the districts. The unsupportive assembly had 136 coded references and according to these women; C3, C17, C26, C28, C29, C32, C37, C38 and C39, the DAs were not honouring requisitions made to solve some of the problems within their electoral areas. C3 and C8 stated that most of the problems were from the district assemblies as Assemblywomen's requests for needed logistics did not receive responses on time, which was a problem. More precisely, C8 expressed that the unsupportive nature of the DAs could make it difficult for her to influence the electorate to seek their vote if she decided to bid for re-election as she believed the electorate might refer to her unfulfilled promises.

In similitude, it has been argued that elected women thought the lack of development projects tended to affect their re-election (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). It could be claimed that the elected women's inability to deliver their promises may confirm the negative stereotype that politics was a vocation for men, which led to casting innuendos.

Globally, the phenomenon of sexism, harassment and violence against women are factual and does occur in varying notches in all countries (IPU, 2016). Analysis of the data indicated that abuse and harassment, which had 93 coded references, was one of the challenging issues the elected Assemblywomen had to overcome. For instance, when C3, C5, C13, C18, C22, C32, C33, C34, C35, C36, C37 and C39, assumed office as members of the assembly and performed their roles, the constituents, and especially male members of the district assemblies abused them. For example, C5 said, "Insults on me by the people became the order of the day." In most instances, the attack could be against the female's persona, her character and morality including sexual

innuendoes (Castillejo, 2009; Krook & Sanín, 2016). The factor had been a barrier to some women who could not engage in local politics, and when others had surmounted it, it still became a challenging factor. An indication that some men are yet to understand fair representation in the decision-making positions. C3 stated that sometimes people made comments such as ‘obaa akokonini,’ thus ‘female cockerel’ literally meaning a woman behaving like a man. The harassment appeared intimidating more when the assemblywoman commanded authority, particularly in the rural areas where the cultural beliefs were endemic. For instance, C18 stated that when she called for meetings, public gatherings and communal labour/activities, the people felt reluctant to bring their views and ideas with that stereotypical perception: ‘Why a woman... why should a woman lead us....’ According to C8, although they were doing their best to accommodate such intimidations, to bring development in their communities, negative perceptions and stereotypical statements were challenging issues to the Assemblywomen.

Figure 11 presents a face-to-face interaction between the chief investigator (Researcher) and an elected assemblywoman.



Figure 11: Face-to-Face Interview (Author’s Photograph, 2015)

Figure 11 shows an interview with an assemblywoman with the researcher in attentive position recording information. The interview took place within the premises of the Assemblies in Ghana.

Performing their duties, C28 and C35 revealed that in their attempt to explain some governance processes and procedures, some constituents verbally abused them. C22 suggested that the voters should be educated to stop labelling Assemblywomen as ‘prostitutes’ as the nature of the assembly required getting touch with everybody. The dealing with the abuse and harassment phenomenon in Ghanaian politics is argued as worrying and could make the women’s interest in politics wane. Thus, the decision of some of the women to disengage from local level politics may stem from the psychological difficulty they may have gone through in the Ghanaian political system, where men dominate. IPU (2016) noted that harassment and violence of a sexual nature were pervasive in the political arena. However, although the women were often abused and harassed for taking on public roles, C3 and C34 were hopeful and ready to contest subsequent DA elections and aspire to partisan politics.

In Ghana, the law that established the local government system ruled out partisan politics, and therefore, the system is non-partisan where the involvement of a political party in local elections is considered illegal. For the Ghanaian women, the significant effect of the local government reforms was the flexibility and its non-partisan nature that offered them the propensity to participate in politics at the local level (Allah-Mensah, 2005). However, one of the challenges that the elected women grappled with was the partisan trend that had manifested in the DA processes and procedures. The partisan nature of the assembly had 50 coded references, and it was related to assembly members and constituents ascribing assembly members’ actions and inactions to a political party. Thus, according to C5, C11, C15, C32 and C35, some assembly members and constituents attributed their action and inactions to an affiliated

political party. Such attributions negatively affected the relationships among assembly members and impacted on Assemblywomen-constituents' relation, which adversely affected the women's chance for re-election. For instance, when an assemblywoman was perceived to belong to a party and those constituents were not affiliated with the same party, they did not commit themselves to assist the member to undertake cooperative activities and projects. According to C32, some of her constituents turned against her as they thought she worked with people from the other political divide. Consequently, those who turned against C32 decided to support other individuals to contest her in a DA election.

Additionally, C11 narrated the way her unit committee members took a partisan position and abandoned her because she had refused to align herself with a political party. C15 also stated that some political parties sponsored other women to contend her, and in these instances, those women tried supporting male competitors to unseat her. The issue of partisanship in Ghana's local level politics had become a thorny issue as it was affecting the functioning of the DAs. One school of thought called for the introduction of party politics to the non-partisan local government system. Natalini (2010) indicated that the election at the local level should be politically inclined since they were affected by government influence as stated in the laws. For example, in Ghana, the Head of State and Head of Government, is a leader of a political party before they were elected to the office. Therefore, when the law mandates the President to nominate a Chief Executive for an Assembly, there is political interference. Financial resources from the central government to the local government level, known as 'District Assemblies Common Fund,' depicts that there is political interference in the activities of the local authorities (ILGS, 2010). The effects negatively influence women's political participation, which needs to be addressed to have many females to engage in local politics.

Although the government of Ghana transfer money to the district assemblies, the elected women identified a lack of financial allocation to support their performance as members of the assembly. Lack of finance is a barrier and a challenge to women's quest to participate in politics at the local levels. Thus, when the women managed to overcome the obstacle at the local level and got engaged in politics in the DAs, they were confronted with financial challenges as they embarked on their duties. The economic challenge factor had 43 coded references. Notably, C4, C5, C10, 13, C19, C21, C22, C28, C29, C30, C31, C35, C37 and C39 categorically stated that finance was a challenge. They talked about the problem of unreasonable constituents' demands; the issue of commuting to and from the electoral area to the DAs for meetings; and also follow-ups and checks on requests laid before the assemblies for community advancement.

Unlike the national level where Parliamentarians are paid monthly salaries, the local level assembly members were not paid monthly salaries, but as at 2015, they were given the allowance of 50 Ghana Cedis (USD 10.58) for a quarterly assembly sitting. Thus, until the assembly organised a meeting every quarter of the year, assembly members would not get the allowance, which was given to only those present at the meeting. The allowance was not enough for transportation and community development. For example, C12 said,

When I go to the electoral areas in the villages, sometimes, I have to walk about 4 miles before I can get there. In case I had no money for transport, I have to walk in the scorching sun because I might have promised the people of meeting them at a scheduled time.

C12 stated that when she was desperate in such situation, she walked alone. She said, "...this makes me stop sometimes and ask myself questions such as Why have I put myself in all these? Why did I engage myself in this assembly work"?

Also, C5, C10, C12, C13, C21 and C28 stated that their constituents called on them to make financial demands from time to time. Some people requested money to pay their bills for hospital services, light (energy), and school fees. Other constituents also invited them to funerals, wedding, and naming ceremonies with the intent to get them to donate at such functions. According to C13, “When we fail to honour such invitations to the functions, it could spell doom for us than our men colleagues since women are trying to convince the electorate to vote us into political office.”

The implication was that compared to their male counterparts, the women’s inability to meet electorate financial demands affected their re-election. The privileges of the men could largely be due to social structures that give them the opportunity to acquire socio-economic and political skills to build networks, linkages and high social capital. For instance, men received financial assistance promptly than their women counterparts who needed to make numerous pleas over an extended period (Allah-Mensah, 2005).

The challenging factors had been impeding the performance of the Assemblywomen, but they were not deterred from quitting local politics and sought for re-election. The women gave enough solid reasons to remain resolute in spite of the challenges they faced as Assemblywomen. These elected women had vigorously campaigned to contribute to the development of the people and the communities, and therefore, they were not prepared to allow the real barriers they had surmounted to curtail their responsibilities since they were only challenges. C24 said,

In fact, the men are the problem...the fact is that the men do not want the women to talk because I think there may be a position, which they think we can compete with them, so they do that to prevent us.

C24 explained that when women tried to bring an idea on board for discussion at the assembly, they were often told by men to shut up. She stated that at one meeting she was shouted at and embarrassed, so much that she avoided responding to the abuse

and walked out of the assembly for few minutes and returned. C24, who had complained about abuse and harassment insisted that that was the only challenge she faced and said, “once I find myself in the assembly, I care less about insult since I know that it is part of the work and if Jesus Christ was humiliated, how much more me.” Mentioning Christ showed her Christian faith and the motivation and confidence she exhibited to resist the patriarchal structures as she performs her roles in the community. C24 stated that she was in the Assembly to serve her people and would not allow intimidation from her male colleagues to discourage her. She emphasised that the girls in the community were her targets to develop and wished to encourage them to attend to school, which may reduce teenage pregnancy, early marriages and infant or maternal mortality.

The research team asked the elected Assemblywomen whether they would be discouraged to continue as members of the assembly. C11 said, “nothing will discourage me because, I don’t think there is anything; I mean, there is nothing to discourage me from seeking re-election.” She went on to give the planned development projects such as markets and roads that her office would construct if the electorate re-elects her to the district assembly. Once these challenging factors did not worry some of these women, it may probably mean they challenged them for a time and did not wholly deter them. However, other Assemblywomen found the challenging factors very discouraging enough to deter them from seeking re-election, and that is the discussion in the subsequent section.

Part Three: Discouraging Factors

This segment of this chapter looks at the discouraging factors from the perspectives of the elected women in the DAs in Ghana. The third precluding factor that emerged from the field data was discouraging factors with 90 coded references.

The United Nations has stated that a 30% threshold of women in public decision-making arena is significant to guarantee that the needs of women are reflected in public policies (Ballington, 2012). In effect, the 30% threshold would ensure that the women bring their unique experiences into politics, which are very different from men (Driedger, 2013). Therefore, since the number of women in politics, particularly at the local level is low, there is the need to understand the factors that tend to discourage the very few women in the DAs from pursuing their political careers. Addressing the concerns of the elected women in the DAs would not only encourage women to pursue the political career but could also bolster other women's interest.

The discouraging factors relate to issues that made the elected women lose enthusiasm to seek re-election in the DAs. In other words, these discouraging factors were impediments that tend to deter them from further participation in local politics. The fanning of and the sustenance of women's zeal in politics, especially the elected women at the local level is paramount to ensuring gender inclusiveness in public policy decision-making. However, the female politicians' passion could wane, and the inclusiveness of women's view in public policy would not be realised when the elected few felt discouraged. Table 12 below shows the emergent theme and its descriptors.

Table 11: Discouraging factors to the elected women in the DAs in Ghana

Discouraging Factors	Coded References
Unsupportive assembly	23
Personal problems	16
Undelivered promises	13
Limited funds	11
Uncooperative electorate	11
Abuse and Harassment	11
Male dominance	4
Partisan nature of the assembly	1
Total	90

Reference: Author's Construct from field data (2016)

From the field data, unsupportive assembly emerged as the leading discouraging factor with 23 coded references. The unsupportive assembly factor connotes the DAs' inability to meet the Assemblywomen's requests on the constituents' needs in a timely way. From the perspectives of C1, C5, C7, C8 C9, C18, C20, and C27, the DA's delay in responding to their requests quenched their enthusiasm and interest, which negatively influenced their keenness to seek for re-election. Specifically, C8 pointed out that the assembly only collected the request, but when she did a follow-up, she learned the request could not be traced, as the requests letters from the members were sometimes misplaced. For example, C38 recounted her frustration and said,

I have contacted the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), the Presiding Member (PM) and the Member of Parliament (MP) for support but they all said nothing; therefore, there was no way I can seek re-election.

Maybe the assembly lacked the financial and the material resources to meet the needs of the assembly members, C38 said. In fact, some of the elected women indicated that the assemblies were not having any policy or any particular arrangements to make its work very encouraging for the females in the assembly.

Moreover, C18 stated that the electorate expected her to honour their request(s) as they (constituents) had reposed in her their trust. As a constitutionally mandated development agent, C18 found it tough to deliver development services in the electoral area because of the assembly's delay in honouring her requests. The unsupportive nature of the assembly shattered her ambition, which discouraged her from seeking re-election. Although the male colleagues could face a similar situation, failure on the part of Assemblywomen to meet their constituents' needs could result in the electorate not supporting and not voting for them during re-election, thus, reducing the percentage of females in the DAs. In other words, the women face the wrath of the electorate since they had anticipated much from the women upon campaigning that the electorate should vote for them instead of the men. Hence, the women needed to do extra work to maintain their spot in the assembly, but when the assemblies do not support by responding to the requests from the small number of the elected women in the assembly, then the women risked gaining support to win any subsequent elections.

The district assemblies do not have any affirmative action strategies where they could give priority to women. Thus, they attended to the requests of all members equally, irrespective of their gender. However, this scenario is only on paper according to the Assemblywomen. Since the men were many and domineering, many of the elected women found it difficult to get their requests addressed. Thus, although the assemblies responded equally to their applications, it did not imply that they could provide all their demands for them to fulfil all their promises. The issue of unfulfilled campaign promises is an essential aspect of social capital as there is the failure of the reciprocity and trust.

The quest to undertake an activity was not only determined and influenced by socio-economic and political factors but also by the physical health and wellbeing and circumstances of an individual. In this study, some of the elected women remarked

that nothing could discourage them from contesting the local level elections except their problems. The problem involves an issue of physical strength, ill health, and to some extent family demands. C4, C5, C6, C8, C9, C26, C34, C35 and C40 said that their problems would be the only factor that would discourage them from participating in local politics. C4 and C9 explicitly stated that they would not contest again because of their lack of physical strength. C6 indicated that some electorate had been asking her why she did not want to contest again because if she did, she would win. C6 told them it was because she did not have much energy and strength. She stated that the assembly work demanded a lot of time so if people did not have time, they would not succeed and that was part of the reasons why after serving two terms in the assembly, she decided not to go for another term. Thus, C6's decision not to seek re-election was as a result of her poor health. The women's decision not to contest the local level elections, mainly because of lack of strength and poor health was apt because if they persisted and failed to deliver on their promises to the electorate, it would spell doom for other women in future elections at the local level.

Significantly, 65% of the elected women interviewees were within the age range of 50-69 years. Obviously, some of these women with advanced ages of 50-69 years would have challenges when performing their roles because of the vigorous nature of Ghanaian politics such as not getting enough sleep, having to walk through campaigning and getting insulted and sometimes getting jostled. Although life expectancy for females in Ghana was high at 64 years in 2010, compared to males at 62 years even in 2013 (Appiah-Denkyira, 2015), the Assemblywomen complained that as a result of them walking on foot to perform their responsibilities, their work became tedious. Their movement was characterised by foot walking because they were not given vehicles to travel around their electoral areas. Hence, their activities affected

their health and strength, compared to their male counterparts whose health is not changed so much.

Moreover, for C35, her children overseas demanding she took care of her many grandchildren (a phenomenon in many Ghanaian families) could be the only factor that would discourage her from contesting the subsequent DA elections. The situation is peculiar to women as males are not asked to leave their political careers to babysit. This discouraging factor tends to replicate the very barriers such as reproductive responsibilities that obstruct young women from engaging in politics. These ‘community spirited women’ would not seek re-election and then not perform to the satisfaction of the electorate because of other engagements. It will amount to not able to fulfil their promise.

Evidently, making promises to influence electorate in politics is a global phenomenon (Aragonès, Postlewaite & Palfrey, 2014). However, these promises could later become a source of worry to politicians when seeking re-election, particularly when most of the assurances were not honoured (Aragonès et al., 2007). Possibly, C4, C18, C28, C29, C35, C36 and C38 were aware of what their chances at the polls would be if they failed to honour their promises. They categorically pointed out that undelivered promises would discourage them from seeking re-election at the local level. Specifically, C4 noted that it would be difficult for the electorate to vote for her as she could not get a bridge constructed, which was a campaign promise. C28 also explained that it would be difficult to convince the constituents as they would refer to the unfulfilled promises as if it was their fault that development was not happening, but indicated that they need not blame the electorate. C28 said, “In the face of such challenges, one needs to be patient because if you do not get patient with them and you try to deal with them, you will end up not being able to live with them.”

Equally, C18 posited that once an Assemblywoman fails to get funds or logistics to honour campaign promises made to the electorate, the woman would be discouraged. Aragonès et al. (2007) pointed out that to ameliorate this challenge, political contenders should manage their promises and to consider about the future elections. They could tone down the rate at which they make unrealistic promises when they mount the political platforms and also by promising the electorate what if push comes to shove they could fulfil those promises without necessarily relying on the assemblies' common fund. It must, however, be noted that the decision for the constituent to vote the women into the helm of affairs had been as a result of some Assemblymen's failure to perform. It is, therefore, disappointing to the women to fail the electorate of which it may mar their re-election.

However, not many of them were unable to fulfil their promises. The beneficial aspects for some Assemblywomen were that their husbands and philanthropists sponsored their projects. For instance, C11 stated that she had a lot of networks of friends, Ministers and other politicians that supported her development projects and that made her fulfil most of her promise to seek re-election. While unfulfilled promises were not peculiar to women, those who had sponsors could win their re-election bid, even against male contenders who may have failed as a member. The situation is such that when there are not enough funds to fulfil their campaign promises, there is the issue of class, and not gender as such, where it is the less well-off women and men who are most affected. C11 had employed her social capital to the maximum, not only in elections and political campaigns, but even when she had been elected member of the Assembly.

Limited funds have been noted as barrier and challenge to Assemblywomen and men. Apparently, it also emerged from the field data as one of the factors that discouraged elected Assemblywomen. The limited funds related to the difficulty the

elected women had to endure while performing their functions to get the constituents needs satisfied. Evidently, the succeeding elected Assemblywomen such as C8, C12, C15, C27, C35, and C39 stated that they felt discouraged; hence they would not contest for re-election. C27 said, “Due to the financial constraints, I will not get involved in local politics again since I did not get any funding as an assembly member to perform my responsibilities.” On the part of C12, the electoral area was a distance away, which made it difficult as she had to commute many times before she could get community issues resolved. This phenomenon presupposes that some form of financial assistance would have helped to sustain the interest of Assemblywomen, which would directly increase or keep their numbers in the assemblies.

The nature of local government system and the decentralisation policy in Ghana require citizenry active and efficient participation in the developmental processes in their local area. However, the electorate indifferent attitude and behaviour towards community task and the ‘unnecessary demands’ such as money or drinks for undertaking work were a source of discouragement from the uncooperative electorate to the Assemblywomen.

In this study, the uncooperative electorate, though a challenge, also emerged as one of the factors that could deflate the enthusiasm of the elected Assemblywomen. Accordingly, C12, C17, C25 and C32 alluded that they were discouraged by the unsupportive nature of some constituents. More precisely, C17 pointed out that she felt demoralised when electorate did not turn-up, mainly after the announcement was made for communal labour. Hence, she thought it was time for someone else to continue the assembly duties. Additionally, the belief that assembly members must share money tends to discourage some. C 32 stated that she would not seek re-election due to the belief that she would have to dole out money to the electorate.

Abuse and harassment of women in public decision-making positions and politics are considered as forms of gender-based violence which are now receiving global attention from actors (Krook & Sanín, 2016; Vega, 2013; World Health Organisation, 2013). While some of the Assemblywomen saw it as only challenging, it appeared discouraging to C4, C12, C32, C33 and C40. C4 revealed that sometimes she had to restrain herself from retorting back when people insulted or maligned her. The situation had been unbearable, returning in her decision not to seek re-election. C32 also stated that she never anticipated that she would be sexually harassed, after winning the DAEs. C33 confirmed the existence of sexual harassment in the assembly, revealing that some district assembly officers demanded sexual favours from her before they would process her request to the assembly. The applications of financial and logistic resources from assembly were meant to solve community problems to improve the wellbeing of the people. Accordingly, the officers' attitudes towards C33 portrayed a kind of psychological tactics that were abusive and harmful. The mental abuse and harassment were caused by social conditions or structures such as patriarchy, which is recognised by society (Doherty, & Berglund, 2008; Sultana, 2011).

The next section discusses the experience and opinions of the participants in the focus groups.

Precluding Factors, the Perspectives from the Focus Groups

In this study, each focus group is presented as either 'Female Eastern Zone,' 'Male Northern Zone' or 'Male Western Zone.' (Refer to Chapter 3 p. 24). It was revealed that issues of limited funds, male dominance, abuse and harassment, partisan nature of the assembly, and cultural beliefs and practices appeared as barriers, challenging and discouraging factors to women's participation and representation in

DAs. Moreover, uncooperative electorate and unsupportive assembly, personal problems and security issues remained the challenging and discouraging factors to only the elected Assemblywomen.

It was revealed during the focus group discussion that prospective women politicians at the grass root, lack self-confidence, unsupportive family, and their traditional gender roles were the predominant factors that barred them from active politics. The presentation, therefore, demonstrates how the three zonal areas (Western, Northern & Eastern) perceived the influences these factors (barriers, challenging and the discouraging factors) had on the three categorised women in the Ghanaian society. Discussants from the three zones admitted that limited financial resources could be a barrier to prospective women politicians. A male participant in the Northern zone disclosed that

Since the financial strength of many women is weak, one thing that could prevent women from engaging in politics will be limited funds. Besides, a woman would not want to spend her limited financial resources on politics, whiles she had children to care for.

Moreover, another male from the Western zone stated that “There is the need to spend money as an assembly member. Hence, any woman who anticipates engaging in politics should secure employment or income for such a course.” For that reason, prospective women politicians without money are prevented from venturing into politics. A male participant from the Western zone stated that “The electorate expected assembly members to address their issues such as bailing a suspect from police custody, payment of school fees, and health insurance.” Furthermore, assembly members would have to honour an invitation to attend social functions and events, which were very challenging.

The Western zone participant also emphasised that an assembly member had to travel round to address community problems, which should have been supported by the

Common Fund (government grant) from the district assembly. Also, as they found it difficult performing their duties in those circumstances, some elected women had been discouraged and were quitting their political careers.

Furthermore, a female participant in the Eastern zone shared her personal experience, and said, “When I wrote my husband and told him I wanted to engage in local politics and contest the DA elections, his response was, do you have money? She said, “no matter who you are, as a woman, there would be the need for you to have a lot of money to cater for issues at the constituents.” A male discussant from the Northern zone stated that in Ghana, politics was about money and so everyone needed money before they could take part in political activities. He revealed that since men spend much money in politics compared to women, a substantial financial support to a female would go a long way to boost her chances to make inroads into their political career. They, therefore, advocated for monetary and material sponsorship packages from donors, NGOs and governments for prospective female politicians.

All three of the zonal areas revealed information on male dominance as a factor that influences females’ representation in decision-making positions in government. They all attributed male dominance to the Ghanaian traditional culture and systems that uphold the male superiority in the society. During the discussions, male participants including spouses stated that they disagreed with their wives or any woman who decided to engage in politics. For instance, one of the men suggested that he could say that sometimes they, the men tend to suppress women because, for instance, they would not encourage any woman to engage in politics. An assenting response from another male avowed the dominance nature of males. He stated that

If we encourage women, they will jump onto our necks because when I supported a woman in my company to become Union Chairperson, she contested me for the position, won and took over from me. A woman can get an education and encouragement, but she must know many things including respecting male superiority. We should just encourage them to do their best, and when they can't talk because of shyness and stage fright, we still make them do it, and when they try, we move on...they will jump unto our necks.

From his revelations, there were mixed reactions from the other male participants, with some supporting him and others disagreeing. Many male participants in the Western zone feared that once females aspired to be politicians, they would have a propensity to deny their husbands the sexual satisfaction. The issues have been laid bare as a result of the perception associated with women's engagement in politics. Hence, a female politician suffers from insults, intimidation and name calling that are associated with the status.

A male participant in the Northern zone said,

Even though we are recommending to encourage women to engage in politics at the local level, the challenge is our traditional system. When a woman is seen moving with different men all the time, we perceive her as bad and think she is having a sexual affair with other men, observing her as a prostitute, fornicator and adulterer, which results in problems between her and the husband. However, the Assembly work demands that one always gets closer to people, and so, until we change our perception, it will be difficult for women.

In the Western zone, 6 out of the 9 male participants said, men would not encourage women to venture into politics. A discussant's reminiscent action revealed the adage: *'mnesiafo de, won de ara ne gyaade'* literally meaning, as for women their main office is in the kitchen. Hence, he would not advise his wife to step in even when he was not contesting subsequent DA elections. These adages had been stated among other male participants in different zones, and by individual women, which showed the extent to which the Ghanaian cultural beliefs and practices were ingrained in men and, therefore, did not allow women to engage in public activities. Participants in all the three zonal areas stated that the perception of a woman's place being the kitchen was endemic in

the Ghanaian society. A male member in the Northern zone shared an experience with his culture and said that “women are relegated to the background, and after marriage, they are told to go to the kitchen to cook for us every day.” They admitted that it had been long since the cultural practices made the kitchen the place of females, which had been affecting their opportunity to be in the public space. A female participant from the Eastern zone stated that the Ghanaian culture sees women as subordinates to men and therefore, husbands could forbid their wives from participating in politics. From the social capital point of view, the mistrust of husbands towards their wives is one that restricts women’s capacity to build social capital.

Male domineering tendencies were also exhibited in the form of harassment, abuse and insults. Abuse, harassment and insults appeared as one of the factors that deter women from engaging in local politics. The traditional Ghanaian beliefs make people perceive the idea that a woman seen moving with many men could be a prostitute, which had resulted in branding many female politicians as ‘politicians with immoral character.’ Men also could use a woman’s marital status to campaign against her, particularly when she was still single or divorced. Even when the woman was married, the husband was teased as to why he had allowed his wife to engage in politics to be among other men. Thus, the behaviours and instigation of other men force these supportive husbands into believing that their wives may be having extra-marital sexual affairs with other men. Thus, the negative perception of women in politics and men threatening their wives to choose between politics and marriage discourages many women from engaging in politics.

Figure 12 shows male only focus group discussions.



Figure 12: Male Focus Group Discussion 2 (Author's Photograph, 2015)

Figure 12 presents a male participant in the Northern zone contributing to the focus group discussions, as the researcher listened and recorded information. Figure 12 also shows men who were in the attentive sitting position to respond to issues in the dialogue, whereas others were in folded arms and trying to comprehend the issues under discussion.

Figure 13 below shows a female focus group gearing up for the discussion.



Figure 13: Female Focus Group Discussion (Author's Photograph, 2015)

Figure 13 shows members of the female focus group in a discussion on the women's participation in local politics. Compared with figure 12, figure 13 represents women who were ready to tell their stories with arms beside them and in relaxed sitting

positions for the discussion. The males' perception was as a result of women being recognised in the private sphere and considered responsible for the home management and child reproduction (Baden et al., 1994; Odame, 2014; Zee, 2012).

As a result of the deep-rooted patriarchal structures and systems that categorise expected men's and women's social status and responsibility, the abuse and harassment also reduced women's self-esteem and confidence. Peoples' pronouncements included, 'Women are incapable of doing anything good.'; 'As for women, what can they do for society?' 'Mainly contesting to be in a political position without any impact'? Such negative perception highly prevented women from participating in politics. Besides, men put fear into prospective women politicians and cautioned them they were going beyond what society expected them to do. Such male behaviours affect the confidence level of females in the Ghanaian society. Thus, when a man belittles and puts fear into a woman with the belief that they should be maintaining the status quo of male superiority, it results in losing her self-esteem (Male Northern Zone).

According to a female discussant in the Eastern zone who was a former member of the assembly, the ordeal that discouraged her from contesting the subsequent DA elections was the insulting behaviour. She stated that "no matter the status of the assembly members, either old or young, a female or male member, the electorate did not care and would insult them." She explained further that any voter who abused a member of the assembly used vulgar words, and that was disheartening when the victim heard such words. As she shared her experience as a former member of the assembly, she stated, "as for me, the only politics I can do was what I did; I am not going to engage myself in politics again" (Female, Eastern Zone).

Furthermore, the assigned gender roles and responsibilities allocated to the female and the male in society, which Moser (1993) termed the Triple Role

Framework, thus, the triple role of the productive, reproductive and community functions, influenced some women's roles in a public sphere. Although community roles and responsibilities include community management and organisation, which comprises of public functions, a woman's role in the public sphere is considered part of her extended private functions. Moreover, for a woman to leave the private home to engage in politics and occupy positions in the public spheres had been considered to be deviating from the status quo since politics had always been the preserve of men. Compared with her male counterpart who performs a similar role in the community, the female's community roles are typically unmeasured and unrecognised. Male participants in the Western zone and Northern zone declared that among the traditional Ghanaian practices, as part of acculturation, once a girl child is born in a family, she is assigned gender roles and responsibilities. The male participants said that society burdens girls with all kinds of duties at home, liberating the boy child of the domestic chores and depriving him of learning for his future upkeep. Eventually, the boy would marry, assigning every household chore to the wife, and the girls also becoming women and wives responding to the expected domestic roles. The continuous inculcation of these gender roles from generation to generation is predisposed to place the female always at home and the male in the public space.

Moreover, in some traditional communities in Ghana, women were not supposed to sit with men to publicly adjudicate cases (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008). For instance, in the chieftaincy institutions, there is traditional arbitration in the chief's or king's palace that adjudicates local cases among people, and the council is made up of men only. Sometimes, the queen mother sits in such gathering when the matter concerns a female. All these hindrances negatively influence female's confidence level to have the idea of undertaking any political activities.

Partisan nature of the assembly or political party politicking in the assembly appeared a barrier, a challenge and as a discouraging factor that influenced women's participation as well as representation in local politics. Discussants from the three zones all expressed their views on this precluding factor.

According to a male participant in the Northern zone,

On the issue of encouraging women, we are told politics at the Assembly is non-partisan but in some way, it is partisan because there can be encouragement from a political party. For instance, if a party sees that a particular woman can influence the electorate in an area, they can decide to sponsor that lady. I think that kind of decision has helped some women in winning the Assembly elections.

However, after the female had surmounted the partisan nature and won local elections to the DAs, she was confronted with partisan nature of the assembly on the floor of the house. The action was a challenge to the elected women. Besides, a male participant from the Northern zone lamented that the partisan nature of the assembly in Ghana's local government had brought about all these challenges where politicians gave a lot of promises to the electorate.

Part Four: Discussion of the Data

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the precluding factors that obstruct, challenge and discourage women's participation and representation in local level politics in Ghana. The importance underlying the quest for the increase in the number of women in politics is understood at a global level. From the substantive perspectives on women representation in politics, a proportional upsurge in women's participation and representation in politics would lead to functional difference since the priorities and experiences of men and women are dissimilar when looking at them in political matters. Therefore, women's inability to participate in politics amid the public decision-making sphere of a democratic state limits the inclusiveness that is needed to bring about gender equality in society. Significantly, democracy is more inclusive

when it creates the ambience for women's participation in politics, especially women as electoral contenders. As a result, much effort has been made to get more women into the public sphere, but globally, women continue to encounter more socio-economic and political obstructions compared to men.

In this study, based in Ghana, exploring women's possible pathways into local government positions, the precluding factors included limited financial resources, abuse and harassment, male dominance, and partisan nature of the assembly as the major factors that were negatively influencing women's interest in politics. These factors were also found to be challenging and discouraging to the elected women in the DAs. Moreover, lack of self-confidence, gender roles and cultural beliefs and practices, as well as unsupportive family, were barriers that were much affecting the women yet to engage in local politics.

Perhaps, this could be attributed to women's lack of economic resources as they possess a minimum share of the resources in the world (Ohman & Lintari, 2015). Also, in particular, Ghana where inheritance rights are in favour of males, consequently, women tend to fail when money dominates in politics (Shames, 2015) as politics has been progressively commercialised (Bari, 2005).

The limited financial resources could be as a result of limited politically significant networks (Alvarez, 2013). Additionally, the researcher discovered that abuse and violence were barring women from participating and representing in local government administration. Violence against women in politics includes verbal abuse and intimidation of sexual harassment and rape (Krook & Sanín, 2016). Krook and Sanín (2016) pointed out that violence against women in politics as a kind of violence does not only affect the individual victim but indicates to other women in the society that women should not engage in politics. Evidently, women's visibility in politics is

a nuisance to some members of society; therefore, they use political violence against women (Hughes, Paxton & Krook, 2017).

However, some of the male participants thought otherwise and acknowledged that the negative stereotype of women was outdated and it was the time they encouraged women to engage in politics.

Furthermore, this study draws attention to the unsupportive family members as they tend to block women's ambition and interest in politics. The family as a unit of society influences the political career of women in Ghana as the cultural beliefs and practices also reinforce the families' decision on any support the prospective female politician may receive.

Gender is a significant factor in electoral politics (Fowler & Lawless, 2009). Male dominance (prejudice) was one of the major barriers to women's engagement in local politics. Thus, male may dominate as a result of the patriarchal system in societies, which shapes men for politics compared to women (Eisenstein 1984). However, when the women surmounted male dominance hurdle to win DA elections, its effects reduced, resulting in the reference codes of 24 and 4 codes each as challenging and discouraging factors respectively. The indications are that once the women got elected to the DAs, they managed the male attitudes to women in the DAs. However, Crawford (2004) asserted that the persistence of gender stereotypes and male power impedes the participation of women.

In spite of the low female representation in decision-making positions, there have been positive results over the last decades of the struggle against gender inequality in government.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the precluding factors, which obstructed, challenged and discouraged many women's quest to participate in politics in Ghana actively. Although some of the precluding factors were over-lapping, such as the challenging and the discouraging influences, they indicated the extent to which some Assemblywomen in the DAs were overwhelmed by the circumstances.

Notwithstanding their frustrations, some women suggested the means that could be supportive of their work as development agents in the districts. They suggested that a section of the Members of Parliament's Common Fund (financial grant) be allocated to the assembly members to work with, since they were dealing directly with the people at the grassroots, emphasising the essence of local politics. Since the women were resolute to pursue their political careers, they also advocated for government and civil societies' continuous encouragement to women who showed interest in local politics. Thus, despite these barriers, Ghanaian women are challenging the political structure of Ghana and the limited financial resources, as their struggle continues with the increase in strength because they have already become strong agents of change in the Ghanaian society.

The next chapter presents the study conclusion, recommendation on further political research in this space.

Chapter 6

Conclusions of the Study

This chapter is organised into four parts. Part one presents what the study set out to do and the methodology used. Part two discusses the findings and recommendations. Part three presents the contribution to knowledge, and the areas for future studies are suggested in part four of this chapter.

Part One

The study objectives intended to ascertain the social, economic and political factors supporting women as they resisted patriarchal norms to empower themselves politically to engage in the decision-making positions at the local level.

The constructivist philosophical orientation guided this study's methodology. A qualitative approach was therefore adopted, and data was gathered from local levels assembly members such as the elected Assemblywomen and Assemblymen, as well as Women Activists in the 4 study regions in Ghana; Central, Greater Accra, Brong Ahafo and the Eastern. The purposive sampling procedure was adopted to select 18 districts from the 4 regions. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were also adopted to select the participants. Overall, 90 participants were chosen, which comprised of 40 elected Assemblywomen for the in-depth interviews, 40 elected Assemblymen and 10 Women Activists from women's group, for the focus group discussions. Also, the study used primary and secondary data sources. Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Framework Analysis was adopted to analyse, describe and interpret the data, notably, the socio-economic and political experiences of the elected women, and views from the key informants on the participation of women in local politics, to achieve the study's objective.

In this study, the reviewed theories and concepts in Chapter 2 presented gender and development (GAD) theory, Social Capital Theory as the major theory, the concept of empowerment and resistance, all underpinned this study. More importantly, the review of the GAD theory explicated gender construction and highlighted on gender roles, gender relations, gender differences, social status, and entitlements of females and males in society. The theory also explained how men and women could equally access valued resources such as political decision-making positions, as advocates of GAD believe that equality between the sexes could be achieved through empowerment. The concepts of empowerment and resistance were reviewed to analyse how an empowered individual could resist domineering systems and structures in an environment. The review of the social capital theory explains how women could employ their social relationships, networks, social interactions to build constituencies for political gain.

Part Two: Study Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The conceptual understanding of the theories in this study showed that as empowerment remains essential. The GAD approach to reducing gender inequality, it provides women with the requisite resources and agency. The application of these theories and concepts contributed to the understanding of women's participation in local politics and their representation in decision-making positions in the district assemblies in Ghana. As noted in Chapter 1, the Ghanaian society is characterised by the socio-cultural structures that allocate the responsibilities and roles of males and women, but to the disadvantage of the prospective female politicians. This study shows the extent to which women relied on their high social capital and won district assembly elections in Ghana.

The objective of this study was to explore the enabling factors that support women to win district assembly elections in Ghana. The first research question focused on the socio-economic and political factors that support women as they get elected to the district assemblies and empower themselves to contribute to the development of the Ghanaian society. In this study, the findings reveal that Ghanaian women's ability to win district assembly elections are attributable to the support of their motivational strategy, their community, civil society groups, family members and the campaign strategies they adopted. Thus, the principal support factor that aided Ghanaian women to get elected to the district assembly is their motivational strategies. The *Individual Motivational Strategy* involves confidence, interest, trust and the determination that enable a woman to develop networks: both formal and informal networks to build a constituency to support her in the political career and win elections. With inspiration from their individual motivation, the external motivation is a support, which enhances the women's interest to engage in public activities and to succeed in local politics.

The study findings indicate that social capital becomes a community resource that is built through networking of the individual's long tradition of civic engagement and communal labour. Therefore, the study's findings lend support to the social capital theory, thus, in bridging and bonding networks. Hence, if people trust others and cooperate, they are motivated because social networks hold together individuals' interests (Davis, 2014). On the individual motivational strategy, the study concludes that in the Ghanaian patriarchal society, any female who wished to win district assembly elections needed to be motivated, develop the interest, establish the networks and be determined to engage in community involvement and local politics.

The triple gender roles (reproductive, productive and community responsibilities) of the female had been used to the women's advantage. That is, as they showed empathy to community members and availed themselves to support

during festive occasions such as funerals, wedding ceremonies, festivals and even visiting the aged and the sick, their community responsibilities to the members of the community communicated how those women could be helpful in the community growth and development.

Consequently, community support became the second most important factor to their political career while the individual women participated in civic engagement and communal labour. They established the social networking in their electoral areas as the communities recognised their contribution to their development, this study found that in a reciprocal response, these community members supported the women to succeed in their political careers. In response to community support and how communities responded to development efforts by a woman, the gender and development (GAD) theory explains the shaping of society and the relationships between females and males, which makes people understand the totality of social organisation, economic and political life of the people. The GAD approach welcomes contributions from people, both men and women, who are gender sensitive and aims at empowering women in political activities in society. In this study, community members supported female candidates, as 70% of the aspirants formed campaign teams, comprising men and women from the electoral areas, which even campaigned against male contenders for the women to win the DA elections. Thus, the Assemblywomen had been politically empowered through the assistance from those that the socio-cultural and political structures had been favouring with privileges such as wealth, social status and inheritance. On the community support, this study concludes that the continuous advocacy for gender equality influences social reforms to ensure equality in the Ghanaian society. These reforms come about as a result of the subtle resistance to having equality in education and improving female representation in political positions in society. Thus, with the advocacy to enhance gender equality in

the governance processes, people including men who are gender sensitive champion the cause of women to be part of the decision-making positions in society.

Consequently, changes in society (social change) reinforce civil society groups to continuously advocate for gender equality and for women to be involved in governing processes. This study found that the third most significant support to women's representation in the district assembly in Ghana was from the civil society groups. The study findings relate to the empowerment processes as women voiced out to contribute to community development because of their capacity to participate actively in improving their lives and their community in social and political terms. The civil society groups' efforts were to develop the women through training, mentoring, communication skills and networking, which empowered them.

As victims of inequalities in society, these civil society groups, particularly the NGOs advocate that women needed to be trained to use their voice, power, and, capacity to act, access resources and make choices to better their lives. Also, empowerment for women means redistribution of work roles, application of women's values and attitudes to the changing world and involves new kinds of adjustments, understanding and trust between men and women (Prasad, 2012).

Moreover, the findings reflect the subtle resistance during the empowerment processes as women resist patriarchal systems for reforms to be included in local government administration; the subtle resistance such as stepping out from their private spheres to engage in public spheres, which undermines the dominant structures in society contradicts the cultural beliefs of traditional Ghanaians. As stated in Chapter 2, Vinthagen and Lilja (2007a) indicated that it takes a conscious effort by a subordinate to undermine power to empower themselves through resistance. The goal of GAD was the emancipation of women and their release from subordination to achieve gender equity, equality and empowerment (Moser, 1993). Thus, this study

shows that some subordinate females had the voice in a patriarchal Ghanaian society, to navigate through these structures, which reflects their successful representation in DAs. Per the analysis of empowerment and resistance, this study concludes that the empowerment of females gives them the voice to contribute to community development, which attracts civil society groups to encourage them to participate in the decision-making processes in a country. Also, through empowerment processes, females find it motivating to avail themselves to voice out and subtly resist social structures to participate in politics.

As society makes efforts to equalise gender in governance processes, families of potential female politicians lend support to their aspiring relations. The findings of this study show that close relations such as spouses, mothers, and children assisted these female political aspirants in the management of their homes, financial resources, child care, and campaigned on their behalf during the district assembly elections. Although the women complained about conflicts among couples upon their decision to engage in local politics, some Assemblywomen admitted that their male spouses supported them. The revelation reflects the GAD's focus on gender relations and the unequal power relations within the relationships between men and women. The GAD proponents argued that the interrelationship between men and women have conflictual and cooperate dimensions in different settings including political life. However, this study reveals that although the socio-cultural practices in Ghana tend to make wives and daughters (females) adhere to husbands and fathers (males), family members acknowledged their potential female politicians and supported them. The study, therefore, concludes that the impact of social change and then advocacy for gender equality in decision-making positions in politics and government could influence members of a family to support their relative female politicians.

In this study, the campaign strategies the aspiring female politicians adopted during the electioneering periods complemented their motivation, the support from communities, civil society groups and the families. Thus, the Ghanaian woman employed her ‘negotiating tactics’ during the electioneering campaign to win support from their constituents. The study concludes that irrespective of the support from other members of society, an individual politician needs strategies in politics to win an election.

The second research question of this study was to explore the various precluding factors that influence women’s participation in politics in Ghana. As a consequence, these precluding factors include the barriers, challenges and discouraging factors that impede female’s participation in local politics. This study revealed that most of the barriers turn out to challenge the women’s performance as representative in the district assemblies. The challenging factors were uncooperative electorate and unsupportive assemblies, thus, the uncooperative electorate were the constituents, and sometimes authorities in the chieftaincy institutions who did not support the Assemblywomen’s work, partly because of the unsupportive attitude from the district assemblies. Also, the elected women’s problems and security issues became challenging, which informed their decision to step down. Unfortunately, such decisions could reduce the number of female representatives in the district assemblies.

Moreover, these challenging factors sometimes discouraged many of the elected Assemblywomen from seeking re-election. In this study, the barriers to the participation of women in local politics as explored, complement the studies by Gyimah and Thompson (2008), Ofei-Aboagye (2004), Mahamadu (2010) and ABANTU for Development (2003). For instance, Mahamadu (2010) stated how government officials discourage women from engaging in politics; Ofei-Aboagye (2004) said, lack of financial resources for women to participate in politics, and

Gyimah and Thompson (2008) indicated that intimidation of females in politics also hinder them. Therefore, this study concludes that acknowledging the enabling factors and the precluding factors to females' participation in local government administration enhance the understanding of the dynamics of political involvement in government in a patriarchal society.

Based on this study, it is reasonable to conclude that the individuals' empowering abilities and their determination to engage in politics influenced their social capital in the form of secured networking and good interpersonal relationships to build constituencies for their political careers. Although the women faced challenges, their positive personality traits and attitude appealed to community members, civil society groups and families for support and with their dynamic, campaign strategies, they won DA elections. The subsequent section presents recommendations from the conclusions.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made regarding ways to potentially influence decisions of stakeholders such as governments, NGOs, and women's groups to move further towards fairness through gender equality in decision-making positions and processes during assembly elections in Ghana. It is hoped that the recommendations may also motivate more females to strive to achieve positions of responsibility at all levels of the Ghanaian society.

1. Education should be accessible to all in Ghana irrespective of sex. Although Ghana reached the MDG 2 (universal primary education) before 2015, there were many illiterate females and males (Refer to Chapter 1). Also, the study findings show that it was not necessarily only the highly educated who could engage in politics and win elections, the survey revealed that a formal education was always ideal for prospective female politicians, which may

assist in building confidence, encouragement and interest in national politics, particularly when these females aspire to become members of Parliament.

2. Special development fund should be set up by the government to support Assemblywomen to perform their roles and responsibilities within their communities regularly. Such funds may help them fulfil their promises, which may encourage them to seek re-election that may maintain the few elected assemblywomen in the district assemblies. Although male aspirants face similar financial challenges, the motivation that society could give to women to encourage them to engage in politics must be backed by financial support, which a lot of women lack in Ghana.
3. The district assembly common fund should be on time to facilitate development in the electoral areas, which may enhance women's continuous representation in the district assemblies.
4. Female politicians should mentor other women; as the potential female politicians avail themselves, the mentors may support them build the confidence required to engage in local politics and to aspire higher positions in the political office.
5. The persistence admiration of some cultural beliefs and practices that makes it difficult for many females to engage in politics, support the idea of quota systems, hence the Affirmative Action Bill should be passed into law and seats reserved for women to participate in government and other decision-making processes.
6. The decentralisation processes in Ghana must function and may be done well when the populace understand the system. Therefore, there should be intensive education on the local government system and the policy that may enhance its effective operation.

7. The linkages among the various NGOs and other civil society groups that advocate for gender equality could be strengthened and the structures enhanced for the advocacy roles, which may encourage more women to engage in politics to bridge the gender gap in decision-making positions.

Aside from these recommendations, the researcher suggests from this study that one way to significantly enhance the political participation of women in Ghana was to provide them with substantive evidence of factors that contribute to the successful representation of females in government. The researcher, therefore, analysed the supporting factors and recommended an analytical tool dubbed gender equity and a social capital tool to serve as a reference guide to prospective female politicians, which may enhance women's representation in government and their political empowerment. With the tool, women could develop political skills such as effective campaign plans, and rely on their social capital to seek tangible and intangible resources for political gain.

Intangible resources include political or social means that determine the people's roles, claims, rights, friendships, membership of networks, communication skills, and an experience of working in the public sphere. Other intangible resources include self-confidence and credibility, status and respect, leadership qualities, and time (that should be available for females). The tangible resources include campaign souvenirs such as t-shirts, income, sponsorship packages, persuasive manifestoes on boards, and campaign posters with candidates' photos. An empowered woman who has interest in politics and gearing up her political could use the tool to supplement her strategies, and with such knowledge in the tangible and intangible resources, she may be sure of an opportunity to access political office. The tool dubbed *Gender equity and a social capital tool* is attached to the appendix of this study (Refer to Appendix C).

Part Three: Contributions to Knowledge

One of the objectives in conducting this study was to make contributions to the literature on gender and local government system, in particular, females' political activities in Ghana. This study creates the awareness to improve gender equality, as recommendations have been made for stakeholders to challenge the disadvantaged positions of women. The world is changing rapidly, and as a result of the social change, policies, and laws, there have been open opportunities for women to participate in social, economic and political life. This study provides insight on how some Ghanaian women could represent the electorate in elected decision-making positions even though there were no quota systems. The study explored the socio-cultural, economic and political experiences of elected women in the district assemblies in Ghana, and upon data collection and analysis, the emerging themes added knowledge in the study field of social sciences.

The findings identified the supporting factors to women's representation in a decision-making position in the district assemblies in Ghana, which are essential in the era of advocacy for gender equality. Moreover, this study is unique in having explored the perspectives of the elected women themselves, with findings of influential factors being the individual motivational strategy (personal traits), Community Support, Civil Society Support, Family Support and Campaign Strategy to advance the existing body of knowledge of women in local politics. The identification of the enablers in a more in-depth than a lot of the existing material; knowledge on elected assembly members' aspirations for re-election or continued performance in the assembly is an area which does not appear to have been studied. The knowledge also fills a gap in the literature on political empowerment of women as they complement the literature on the obstacles to women's participation in politics. This study has reinforced the beliefs about men agreeing with females concerning politics to the extent that some men supported their

spouses and other women they considered capable, thereby continuing the advocacy for gender equality

Notably, this study identified the ‘personal characteristics’ (confidence, interest, ambition, and determination), regarding the dimensions of social capital. For the reason that the components of social capital (e.g. links, ties, trust, bonding) and its association with the level of interaction (i.e. individual, group and societal), the ‘personal characteristics’ (self-confidence, interest, ambition, and determination), served as tenets that social capital functioned for mutual and collective benefits of the women and society. As a result, the support from community members and civil society groups depended on the enthusiasm from the ‘community spirited persona’ which was a reflection on her ability to inter-relate, network, interact to aspire to political office. Equally, stakeholders could rely on women’s ‘personal characteristics’ to enhance their social capital to gain their political empowerment.

This study supports social capital studies in gender and politics that had examined how social interactions and networks facilitate women’s access to public life. This study shows that irrespective of the female’s triple gender roles (production, reproduction and community) that many scholars describe as a double burden, the connections and trust formed through these roles enhance prospective female politician’s efforts to build social capital. The social capital, in turn, becomes an individual, group and community resource that can be employed to win elections, which especially, seemed to assist the less educated female political candidates.

Therefore, in the era where there is advocacy to increase gender equality, stakeholders, including governments, NGOs and women’s groups, would also rely on the individual’s interest and determination to encourage them engage in politics. The findings suggest that some are already drawing upon women’s social capital as a strategy to enhance their chances of successfully attaining political empowerment.

There are implications that from this study's findings, such potential could be harnessed more efficiently for supporting prospective women politicians.

Finally, this study is consistent with the body of literature on gender and politics that has examined barriers to women's participation in local politics and their representation in the district assemblies. The findings of this research have brought to the fore the need to segregate the various precluding factors to women's participation in politics into barriers, challenging and discouraging factors. Accordingly, some of these women could surmount the many barriers they faced and won elections, but later found a number of them very challenging once they started to function as members of the assembly. Thus, while some women found them only challenging, others observed them as sufficiently deterring to discourage them from seeking re-election, and therefore, this reduces the potential number of women in government. This study's findings of the precluding factors may be the useful addition to the more generalised literature on this topic, and there is potential for stakeholders to consider these findings when designing their programs to enhance and maintain the representation of women in decision-making positions.

Part Four: Areas for Future Research

This study explored the enabling and precluding factors to women's participation in local politics and their election to the district assemblies in Ghana. Further study could be conducted to expand the literature on female appointees' experiences with the electorate, district assemblies and elected Assemblywomen and Assemblymen. Below are areas that could be further researched.

1. The uncooperative electorate and unsupportive assemblies were bigger challenges to the performance of their duties as elected Assemblywomen. Were the female government appointees facing similar challenges?

2. Given the evidence from respondents about non-support by assemblies, the institutional issues, effects of efforts made through legislation, policy and institutional re-structuring, gender-responsive programs and the prospects they offer women were not extensively explored, which could be next area of follow up research.
3. As indicated in Chapter 1, the structural arrangements about the local and central government duties as prescribed in the 1992 Constitution presented significant responsibility overlap, thereby affecting the provision of public services. Further study could be done on the situation.
4. Although local government system in Ghana is non-partisan, the partisanship element constraints space for women in local government administration. Therefore, the effects of the interventions of political parties and partisanship could be another area of further research.
5. A comparison of resistance and political experiences along the lines of the elected women's age, educational levels, number of elections contested, location (either rural or urban) could be a further study.

Summary

The growing interest in gender equality in political participation and decision-making positions and process have long been recognised. Local level politics has been seen as a preparatory ground for gaining political experiences that can aid national level. For instance, women's involvement and organisation in local level politics could equally ensure the rise in the numbers of women in politics at the national level. However, in the gender policy dialogue in Ghana, stakeholders also admit that the persistent lack of attention to gender equality and women's participation in political

leadership is largely due to institutionalised socio-cultural beliefs. Hence, reserved seats could enhance the number of females in politics in Ghana.

Also, there is the prevalent masculine nature of politics in Ghana, which efforts are being made to address it gradually but it is taking long. This study has provided some fresh insights into old knowledge and gave an understanding of the dynamics that preclude women's engagement in politics. The study also presented factors that contribute to the successful representation of women in local governments, which may serve as a guide to encourage women into local and national politics as the governmental and non-governmental bodies attempt to equalise the gender disparity in the country.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Guide for Face-to Face Interview

Qualitative: Face-to-Face Interview

Edith Cowan University

School of Psychology & Social Science

Joondalup Campus, Western Australia

Project Title: Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender Construction, Resistance and Empowerment

The purpose of this interview is to explore the women's political participation in the district assemblies in Ghana. The questions are meant to elicit information on what you know about women's involvement in the local government systems. The questions are not more than ten and will take 60 to 90 minutes to complete. This study is meant for purely academic purposes. As part of this study, your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous however, you may withdraw from answering any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you engage in politics at the local level?
2. What influence do traditional gender roles have on your participation in government at the local level?
3. What factors enabled you to take office in the local government system?
4. How were you encouraged to get elected to the District Assembly?
5. What did you do to get elected as a representative in the District Assembly?
6. In your opinion, what will encourage or discourage you from participating in Government?
7. Can you share with me any challenges and prospects as a member in the District Assembly?
8. What do you plan to do continue to be a member in the District Assembly?
9. Can you share with me the best way to deal with low representation of women in the district assemblies in Ghana?
10. Looking at the Ghanaian society, what do you suggest should be done to politically empower women?

BACKGROUND

Locality.....

District....

Region.....

Age: a. 20-29 b. 30-39 c. 40-49 d. 50-59 e. 60-69 f. above 70

Gender:

a. Female

b. Male

Position:

a. newly elected

b. served more than once

c. Women leader

d. Gender advocate

Level of Education:

a. 2nd Degree

b. 1st Degree

c. 'A' Level

d. Post-Secondary

e. Secondary

f. Middle School

g. No education

h. Other (Specify).....

Occupation:

a. Teaching

b. Nursing

c. Trading

d. Farming

e. Other (Specify).....

Appendix B: Guide for Focus Group Discussion

Qualitative: Focus Group Discussion

Edith Cowan University

School of Psychology & Social Science

Joondalup Campus, Western Australia

Project Title: Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender Construction, Resistance and Empowerment

The purpose of this discussion is to explore women's political participation in the district assemblies in Ghana. The questions are meant to elicit information on what you know about women's involvement in the local government systems. The questions are less than ten and will take not more than 90 to 120 minutes to complete. This study is meant for purely academic purposes. As part of this study, your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous however, you may withdraw from answering any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think of women's engagement in politics at the local level?
2. What influence do traditional gender roles have on women's participation in government at the local level?
3. What factors enable women to take office in the local government system?
4. How are women encouraged to get elected to the district assemblies in Ghana?

BACKGROUND

Locality.....

District....

Region.....

Age: a. 20-29

b. 30-39

c. 40-49

d. 50-59

e. 60-69

f. above 70

Gender:

- a. Female
- b. Male

Position:

- a. newly elected
- b. served more than once
- c. Women leader
- d. Gender advocate

Level of Education:

- a. 2nd Degree
- b. 1st Degree
- c. 'A' Level
- d. Post-Secondary
- e. Secondary
- f. Middle School
- g. No education
- h. Other (Specify).....

Occupation:

- a. Teaching
- b. Nursing
- c. Trading
- d. Farming
- e. Other (Specify).....

Appendix C: Gender Equity & Female Politician's Social Capital Tool

Supporting Structures	Intangible Resources	Tangible Resources
Individual Motivational Strategy	Personal characteristics: acquire education, self-confidence, interest, determination, networks, communication skills, leadership qualities, 'community spirited persona' and time.	Financial: income, savings, loans, friendships with school mates, working colleagues.
Community	Engage in public space & gain recognised social status, experience communal & emotional assistance; community members' approach with encouraging messages	Material & financial support e.g. flyers, T-shirts, souvenirs, posters from philanthropists & donors.
Civil Society	Be a group member, affiliate with NGOs & gain skill training on communication, public speaking	Sponsorship packages including financial and material resources to access public & political space
Family & friends	Gain emotional and practical household assistance from social resources e.g. spouse, mothers, children, family & friends	Financial and material: funds, campaign logistics such as posters, T-shirts, fliers.
Campaign Strategy	Promising and persuasive campaign messages and individuals' contributions on bill boards, flyers & banners.	Persuasive display of tangible contributions to society on campaign placards, bill boards, & attend public functions & rallies.

Reference: Author's Construct (2017)

Appendix D Information Letter

Project Title: Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender Construction, Resistance and Empowerment.

My name is Janet Serwah Boateng. I am a student pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program at the School of Psychology and Social Science at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Western Australia. My thesis is about Political Participation of Women in Local Government System in Ghana. The objective of this study is to explore women's representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. Ghanaian women are participating in Local Government Systems but studies have not focus much on their representation in the district assemblies. There is therefore, not enough data on local government systems, particularly on the factors that enable women to get elected to the district assemblies. The outcome of this study will significantly contribute to the existing literature on local government systems and women's political activities in Ghana. The research project has ethics approval from Edith Cowan University Ethics Committee.

For undertaking my research and writing my Thesis your participation is vital with utmost importance. If you choose to participate in the project you will be expected to answer questions on women's participation in local government system and their representation in the district assemblies in Ghana. The study will involve face-to-face interview and focus group discussions. The face-to-face interview is expected to run for 60 to 90 minutes including short breaks. Each focus group will comprise of single gender, thus only males or females. This will allow participants to freely express themselves. The focus groups discussions are expected to run for not more than 120 minutes including short breaks.

As part of this study, your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. All data provided will be used only in the analysis without identifying any person or organisation at any time and any place. In addition, if you agree to participate in the study, it will involve voice/video recordings only for the purpose of accuracy of data. If recordings are not possible, only notes will be taken. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. If you wish to have a summary of the final thesis, it can be sent to you upon request. All data and documents will be preserved in a secure place. Other than my supervisors, no one will have access to any data we collect during this research.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. I do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in this research project. Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time if you wish to.

If you require any further information concerning this research, please contact:

Student Researcher: Janet Serwah Boateng
Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science
School of Psychology and Social Science
Email: jboateng@our.ecu.edu.au
Mobile: +61404645953

If you have any concerns of complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive,
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for your time.

Appendix E Informed Consent Document

Project Title: Women in District Assemblies in Ghana: Gender Construction, Resistance and Empowerment.

I, the participant, have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter that explains the research study with the above title. I have read and clearly understand the information provided. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had the questions answered to my satisfaction. I am aware that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team. I understand that I am to participate in either face-to-face interview or focus group discussions. The interview is expected to run for 60 to 90 minutes whereas the focus group discussions are expected to run for not more than 120 minutes with intermittent breaks.

As part of this study, I understand that my responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. All data provided will be used only in the analysis without identifying me as a person at any time and any place. In addition, if I agree to participate in the study, it will involve voice/video recordings only for the purpose of accuracy of data. If recordings are not possible, only notes will be taken. The information will be presented in a written report, in which my identity will not be revealed. If I wish to have a summary of the final thesis, it can be sent to me upon request. All data and documents will be preserved in a secure place. Other than the supervisors, no one will have access to any data that will be collected during this research.

I am informed that there is no anticipation of risks with participating in this research project. Participation in this project is voluntary and I am informed that I have a full right to withdraw from this project at any time.

If I require any further information concerning this research, I should contact the research team:

Student Researcher: Janet Serwah Boateng
Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science
School of Psychology and Social Science
Email: jboateng@our.ecu.edu.au
Mobile: +61404645953

If you have any concerns of complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, I may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive,
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

If you would like to take part in this project, sign at the bottom of the attached consent form and give it back to the student researcher.

I willingly agree to participate in this study.

Participant	Date.....
Investigator	Date.....