More Women in the Kenyan Parliament: Do Numbers Really Matter?

Discussing Substantive Representation with Female MPs in Kenya

being a Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Women's & Gender Studies

in the University of Hull, Department of Social Sciences

&

Utrecht University, Gender Studies Department

by

Violet Nasimiyu Barasa B.A. (Hons)

August 2011

Main Supervisor: Dr. James Turner, University of Hull, Department of Social Sciences

Support Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Ponzanesi, Utrecht University, Graduate Gender Studies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the European Union Erasmus Mundus Program through the GEMMA Consortium, for awarding me a scholarship to pursue graduate studies. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to engage in high-level scholarly thought throughout the two years spent in the partner universities of Hull and Utrecht.

My most sincere thanks also go to Dr. James Turner, for being so generous with his time and editing skills, and for his invaluable insights that has made this thesis worth of an academic piece of work. Special thanks to my support supervisor, Dr. Sandra Ponzanesi, for her time in reading through and evaluating this work. I would also like to thank Dr. Lata Narayanaswamy for her support through the research period, and Dr. Iris van der Tuin for helping me develop the research proposal.

To all my friends, particularly from Christ Church in Cottingham: Eileen, Ruth, Scott, Giovanna, Ellen, Julie, Ian, Loren, Sarah, Elaine and Heather to name but a few; thank you for making me feel 'at home' when I felt outside my culture. And to Philip, thank you for being my overworked editor and technician.

This research would not have been possible without the women who, despite their busy schedules, took their time out and shared with me their views and experiences. Thank you for your trust and confidence in me, and it is my hope that I have done justice to you in this report.

Finally to all my family and friends in Kenya, particularly to my sister and best friend Irene, and to dad, thank you for keeping me strong with your constant words of encouragement, unfailing love and prayers during the most trying moments experienced in the family while I was writing this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study has set forth to explore the relationship between increasing the number of female legislators in Kenya and their impact on gender-related policy, through a critical analysis of parliament and other institutional structures, as well as the individual characteristics of female MPs that influence their legislative behavior. The study builds on the work of scholars such as Susan Carroll (1994, 2001 and 2003a & 2003b), Manon Tremblay (1998), Devlin& Elgie (2008) among others, to create a better understanding of the link between an increased presence of women in the Kenyan parliament and the representation of 'women's issues.'

Methodology: Twenty-seven women participated in this study, all working either as Member of Parliament (MP) or dealing with women's rights issues within the media, government and non-governmental organisations. Semi-structured interviews were used and interviews were transcribed and analysed. The findings in this study are primarily based on these interviews as the main source of data although other sources that will be reviewed in Chapter Two were also consulted.

Findings & recommendations: The findings of this study uncovered two critical components in the study of gender and political representation that have not been explored by scholars, namely; individual characteristics of female MPs and the role of parliament in enhancing gender equality and the representation of 'women's issues.' I recommend structural reforms in parliament to enhance its institutional capacity for gender equality and women's empowerment, and strengthening the networks of female MPs and women's rights NGO's to consolidate a stronger feminist claim among political representatives, and inspire changes that will improve the status of women in Kenya.

Table of contents

Chapter One: Introduction

The study of gender and politics stands at an important point in history as more and more women continue to gain entry into political office and senior positions in government (Carroll, 2001: xi). Whilst the dominance of political scientists and elitist concepts of equity and democratic justice may help explain this trend, feminist scholars are concerned with the impact that the participation of women may have on the political system and the female community as a whole (Tremblay, 1998:436). Consequently, there is a growing body of literature dedicated to these studies with an overriding assumption that increasing the number of women among public officials would lead to the feminisation of policy (ibid: xii; Ford, 2002: 136; Henig & Henig, 2001:104; Tremblay, 1998: 436). However, the extent to which a relationship exists between numbers and impact is an empirical question, and as Henig & Henig (2001:101) observe, at the moment "there is not the necessary empirical material to answer this question."

This study sets forth to explore the relationship between increasing the number of female legislators in Kenya and their impact on gender-related policy, through a critical analysis of parliament and other institutional structure as well as the individual characteristics of female MPs that influence their legislative behavior. The study builds on the work of scholars such as Susan Carroll (1994, 2001 and 2003a & 2003b), Manon Tremblay (1998), Devlin& Elgie (2008) among others, to create a better understanding of the link between an increased presence of women in parliament and the representation of 'women's issues.'

The Major Concern of this study

In the past 10-15 years, the number of women in the Kenya legislative assembly has increased slightly from just 8 female MPs in 1997, to a total of twenty-two in 2007 (Okello, 2010:16). However, there is little understanding as to how this increment has impacted on policies in a way different from previous years. The study will examine these questions using contemporary data obtained through interviews with female legislators in Kenya.

Semi-structured interviews with women who are current or previous members of parliament in Kenya in the period 1992-2007 and other key political elites will be carefully scrutinised in an attempt to explain the trend of numerical representation and political impact in Kenya. Neither the role of women in the executive branch of governments nor the details relating to cabinet members will be examined here. The goal is to create a better understanding of factors which determine effective representation of women, beyond the current focus on numbers by many scholars.

Introducing the terms used in the study

Having introduced the study and stated its scope, I will now briefly introduce some of the key conceptual and theoretical terms that are frequently used in the literature on women and political participation, and which I will refer to in greater depth throughout this thesis, namely; **descriptive and substantive representation, 'women's issues', 'critical mass' and women's empowerment**. I start with a working definition of the forms of representation, guided by Hanna Pitkin's (1967) framework that she uses in her seminal work, "The Concept of Representation". Pitkin (1967:76) shows us that a representation of any kind is two-fold, descriptive and substantive. Descriptive representation is concerned with the representative's characteristics vis-à-vis those whom s/he represents, thus representation is seen from the shared characteristics between the one representing and those being represented.

> [R]epresenting ... depends on the representative's characteristics, on what he *is* or is *like*, on being something rather than doing something. The representative does not act for others; he "stands for" them, by virtue of correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection. In political terms, what seems important is less what the legislature does than how it is composed (ibid: 61).

In this case, and as Tremblay (1998:439) explains, "a female MP [member of parliament] represents women merely by her presence in office, since only women can descriptively represent women."

Mansbridge (1999:629) explains descriptive representation further by noting that descriptive representatives

> can denote not only visible characteristics such as color of skin or gender, but also shared experiences, so that a representative with a background in farming is to that degree a descriptive representative of his or her farmer constituents.

On the other hand, Pitkin's (1967:114) substantive representation involves taking a deliberate action where,

> actions or his opinions, or both must correspond to or be in accord with the wishes, or needs, or interests, of those for whom he acts, that he must put himself in their place, take their part, act as they would act.

For Pitkin (1967:6) therefore, representation is clearly distinguished between 'acting for', (substantive) and 'acting on behalf of' (descriptive, also symbolic representation). Referring to substantive representation, Mansbridge (1999:629) also argues that descriptive representatives (those that share our background, experiences, and values) are likely to substantively represent us ('act' in our favour).

> This criterion of shared experience...increases the representative's common experiences with and the attachment to the interests of the constituents..."Being one of us" is assumed to promote loyalty to "our" interests (ibid: 629).

In analysing the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, I am guided by Mansbridge's (1999:630) argument that "[t]he primary function of representative democracy is to represent the substantive interests of the represented". Like Ford (2002:135), I believe that substantive representation is "the most important form of representation" and 'descriptive representation should be judged primarily on this criterion" (Mansbridge, 1999:630). Applying Pitkin's framework to this study therefore, I will argue that a female member of parliament in Kenya substantively represents women if, as Tremblay (1998:439) also illuminates, "by her opinions and/or, she sustains the wishes, needs or interests of the female population" in Kenya which I will describe shortly.

The second concept that I will discuss in this study is that of 'women's issues[1]', which I will adapt Susan Carroll's (1994:15) definition, and for purposes of this study, 'women's issues' are those

> where policy consequences are likely to have a more immediate and direct impact on significantly larger numbers of women than of men. This definition encompasses many, although not all, issues of concern to the feminist movement.

In Carroll's conceptualisation, I will take 'women's issues' in Kenya[2] to include, but not being limited to, the following: health and child care, education, sexual and gender-based violence against women, female genital mutilation in parts of Kenya, marriage and family law, environment & land-related resources, and free choice on reproduction. The study will therefore consider bills introduced and/or supported by female members of parliament, and that reflect some or all of the aforementioned issues. In other words, I will analyse how female politicians have and do substantively represent these issues in parliament through a closer scrutiny of bills and laws across the ten-year period, and discuss with representatives themselves individually on their view with regards to what they understand to be 'women's issues' and whether they believe that they have a greater responsibility to represent them. I will return to the debate on 'women's issues' later in Chapter Two.

Another concept that will be frequently used throughout this study is that of 'critical mass', a concept often associated with Drude Dahlerup (1988:275) who has argued that size of minority representation matters in the politics of impact. For Dahlerup,

[1] Throughout this thesis I will use the term 'women's issues' interchangeably with 'women's interests'. Although I am aware that there is no clear-cut between relationships between the two terms, I will restrict this usage to the study of Kenya in this case, where these two terms have frequently been used interchangeably. For example many of the women I interviewed understood 'women's interests' as 'women's issues' and vice versa.

[2] I refer to these issues that are important to women in Kenya as far as I am aware first as a Kenyan myself (not to suggest that I am speaking on behalf of all women in Kenya), but more importantly, as one who has been a part of the young women's movement in Kenya. Also some of these issues will be mentioned by women during the interviews, suggesting that indeed the issues are at the center stage of women's concerns here.

> [i]t takes a critical mass of women to make fundamental changes in politics...a qualitative shift will take place when women exceed a proportion of about 30 per cent in an organization. A large minority can make a difference, even if still a minority. (ibid: 725)

Based on this understanding, it can 'easily' be argued that parliaments in countries like Kenya where women have yet to attain a 'critical mass' of female MPs cannot be expected to make a difference, whereas in countries where women have exceeded a proportion of the 30% mark as is the case in Rwanda (56%: ipu.org as of June 30th, 2011), major policy changes can be expected. I will return to this debate later but for now suffice is to say that I do not believe that female MPs will not make an impact until they attain a 'critical mass' in parliament. I will now introduce the last concept that this study will make reference to and that is, women's empowerment.

Before I proceed with the definition of empowerment, I would like to make a note about this concept in relation to the field work of this study. I had previously hoped to interrogate the understanding of the concept of empowerment by female MPs in Kenya and whether they particularly saw themselves as empowered through political participation and access to parliament. However during the interviews I did not get the opportunity to talk about empowerment as all the women interviewed seemed, in my opinion, to be self-aware and came across as confident and independent. This is not to suggest that I did not consider it significant to ask these questions, but that I did not have the opportunity given the power relations between myself and them. Consequently, whilst I recognise the significance of women's empowerment as a central issue in studies of gender and political participation, I will not discuss the issue within this study as I lack the empirical data to do so.

Nevertheless, I will define the term empowerment in so far as I understand it based on Kabeer (2005:14), who conceptualises empowerment as "the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability."

Similarly, Rowlands (1997:13) sees empowerment as the process of,

> bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it. This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making. Individuals are empowered when they are able to maximise the opportunities available to them without constraints

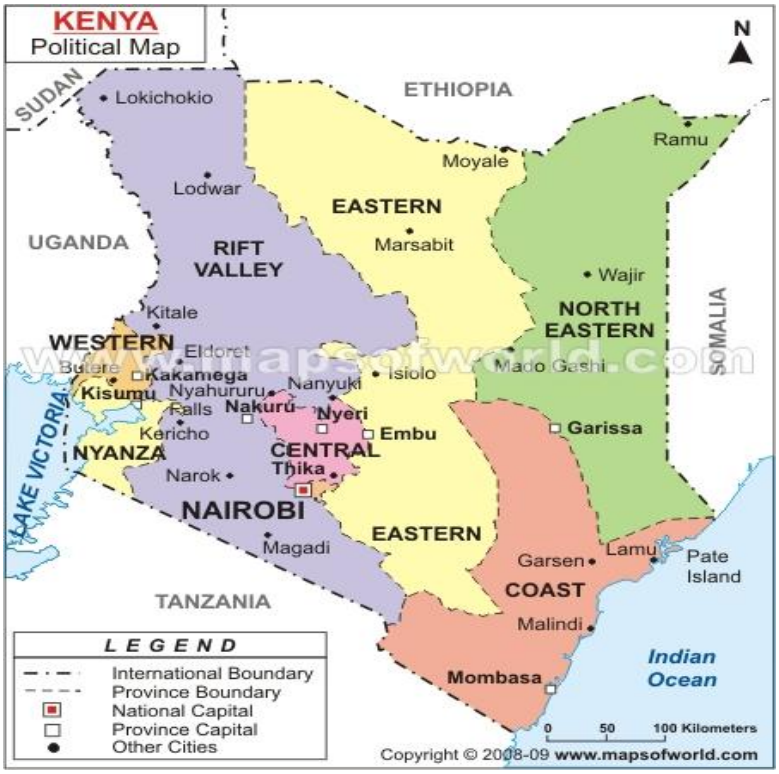
Introducing Kenya

Kenya is a country in East Africa, with a current population of 39.8 million people according to the Census Report (2009). Nairobi is the capital city and also the largest city in the country with urbanization mostly concentrated here, making the city a politically strategic one in terms of national resource power and control (Wanyeki, 2009:171). The country is divided into 8 administrative units known as 'provinces' that are further sub-divided into political and administrative units known as 'constituencies' and 'districts' respectively.

The population distribution per province is tabulated below, with a political map of Kenya showing the political regions as well as regional administrative units.

Province	Male	Female	Total
Nairobi	1,605,230	1,533,139	3,138,369
Central	2,152,983	2,230,760	4,383,743
Coast	1,656,679	1,668,628	3,325,307
Eastern	2,783,347	2,884,776	5,668,123
North Eastern	1,258,648	1,052,109	2,310,757
Nyanza	2,617,734	2,824,977	5,442,711
Rift Valley	5,026,462	4,980,343	10,006,805
Western	2,091,375	2,242,907	4,334,282
Total Population	**19,192,458**	**19,417,639**	**38,610,097**

Source: Census Report 2009. Obtained from http://www.knbs.or.ke/Census%20Results/KNBS%20Brochure.pdf



The Kenyan government was constituted on December 12th, 1963 after gaining independence from the British colonial rule. The country has an executive President with one prime minister and two deputy Prime ministers. The president is head of state while Prime minister is the head of government. The legislative structure is a unicameral National Assembly (Parliament), which consists of 210 members of parliament (MPs) (US Department of State: Bureau of African Affairs, 2011/state.gov/p/af/ci/ke). The MPs are elected to a term of 5 years from single-member constituencies (ibid). In addition to the 210 MPs, there are 12 members nominated by political parties on a proportional representation basis. The president appoints the vice president and cabinet members from among those elected to the assembly, who form a cabinet which oversees the day-to-day operations of government (ibid). Cabinet members head various government ministries dealing broadly with various sectors of the Kenyan society – finance, infrastructure, women's affairs, international affairs - all

of which differ in scope, size and amount of funding allocated per fiscal year. The attorney general and the speaker are ex-officio members of the National Assembly (Kenya National Archives: The Hansard 2010, US Department of State: Bureau of African Affairs, 2011/ state.gov/p/af/ci/ke).

The Political Parties in Kenya

There are over forty registered political parties, with the two major parties being the ruling Party of National Unity (PNU) and the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which dominate the political arena (The Women Shadow Parliament-Kenya, 2008:13). Members of political parties are often drawn from the ethnic groups of the party leadership. An audit of the political parties in 2009 by Women Shadow Parliament-Kenya, a Non-Governmental Organization committed to enhancing women's participation in politics, found out that only 2 parties are headed by women, because women form a minority of founding members of political parties. The report shows that for instance; in PNU, only 10% (73) of the 727 members who participated in the nominations were women. In the end only 13 were cleared by the party to contest the parliamentary election. This was a paltry 9.6% of the total 135 PNU candidates. The situation was the same in ODM. Of the close to 2,000 parliamentary aspirants only 59 were women. Out of these only nine won the parliamentary seats, a paltry 4.7% of the total 190 ODM candidates. In ODM-K, only 6.7% (20) of the 300 parliamentary aspirants were women, although none of them were successful in securing a seat.

The table below illustrates the distribution of female candidates for the parliamentary election across political parties during the 2007 general election.

Political party	Number of Women Candidates	Total number of candidates (men & women)	% of women candidates	Actual no. of elected/nominated women MPs
ODM	9	190	4.7	6
KENDA	10	170	5.9	1
PNU	13	135	9.6	4
ODM-K	15	133	11.3	0
KADDU	13	97	13.4	0
KANU	8	91	8.8	1
DP	10	86	11.6	0
NARC	17	73	23.3	1
NARC-K	6	59	10.2	0
AGANO	6	55	10.9	0
WCP	15	49	3.1	0

Source: The Women's Shadow Parliament (WSP)-Kenya 2008

The audit also shows that although most parties assert that their election rules and regulations are gender sensitive,

> This is not the case, and as a result, women have been locked out of important party positions and nominations as their marginal position in the party hierarchies ensures that they are not able to influence who gets nominated to represent the party during the general elections (ibid:23).

The nomination process, the report notes, has been discouraging for women as men dominate the decision-making structures of most parties, and therefore decide who to nominate. In cases where women succeed in nominations, there is little or no support from their sponsoring parties.

Women in Kenya Politics: A Historical perspective

The pursuit of equal representation in parliament by Kenyan women has been a daunting journey that started with the fight for political independence from the British colonial rule in the years before 1963 (Midamba, 1990:123), to the end of single party

rule in 1992 (Okello, 2010:64). Through coordinated political organising commencing right after Kenya got her independence, women in Kenya have made major political strides. Nzomo (1997: 232) observes that;

> Kenyan women have had difficulty penetrating the patriarchal decision-making structures and processes of the state and the party. Despite these difficulties, women of the many ethnic and religious backgrounds have employed informal as well as formal channels of political expression in dealing with the successive states and governments (traditional, colonial, modern), sometimes with mixed results.

Manor (1991) discusses in depth that gender inequality in political participation in Kenya was partly a consequence of colonisation, a period during which power was concentrated on individual figures and not institutions (Manor, 1991: 65). The political consequences of this played a critical role in privileging men over women and even some ethnic groups over others with the associated socio-economic and political gains. Bauer & Tremblay (2011:88) similarly explain that,

> [f]or most African women...the colonial period was characterized by significant losses in both power and authority. Colonial officials accepted Western gender stereotypes which assigned women to the domestic domain, leaving economic and political matters to men. As a result...women's economic and political rights often diminished. Colonial officials ignored potential female candidates for chiefships, scholarships and other benefits. Many female institutions were destroyed.

In the two decades following independence however, Kenya remained a single party state (Midamba, 1990: 126) and during this period, tokenism (assignment of powerful positions to serve self-interests) and political brinkmanship characterised political recruitments and the assignment of decision-making positions to individuals. This made it even more difficult for women to manoeuvre through political power, and it constrained their access to political opportunities since power belonged exclusively to men (Okello, 2010: 74).

> KANU [Kenya African National Union), being the only party, enjoyed unlimited political power. KANU's operational formula was heavily informed by and influenced by patriarchal leanings and thus privileged men in nomination exercises, party leadership positions and the ultimate allocation of political resources (ibid: 73)

Maria Nzomo (2003: 56-78) also highlights some of the historical trends which constrained women from accessing political power, in the early years after independence social resistance to women's participation in political leadership informed by retrogressive patriarchal cultures and the feminisation of poverty that constrains women financially as well as women's marginal position in mainstream political parties.

Change occurred after a constitutional amendment in 1991 that paved the way for the return of multi-party politics and expanded popular participation in the democratisation process in Kenya (Okello, 2010:17). Multi-party democracy expanded the space to accommodate freedom of expression, association and assembly for both political parties and various pressure groups including women's rights groups, space women used to lobby for gender equality in political representation (ibid: 18).

Nzomo (2003: 57) notes that the first multi-party general election in December 2002 saw a significant number of women being nominated by political parties to run for parliamentary elections. Out of the 19, only six won the election and none were nominated by a political party to represent them in parliament, which at the time consisted of 212 members. Subsequent elections after 1992, held every 5 years, saw a slight but steady increase in the number of women getting into parliament through elections as well as nominations by political parties. To date, despite the fact that Kenya has ratified various international protocols on the rights of women (Okello, 2010: 83), access to decision-making positions for women remain an uphill task.

The table below shows the trend in the number of Women Members of Parliament (MPs) since (1969-2008) in comparison to men

Year	Male		Total male	Female		Total female
	Nominated	Elected		Nominated	Elected	
1969	11	154	165	1	1	2
1974	10	152	162	2	5	7
1979	11	155	166	1	3	4
1983	10	157	167	2	1	3
1988	11	186	197	1	2	3
1992	12	182	194	0	6	6
1997	8	200	208	4	4	8
2002	6	201	207	6	9	15
2007	6	192	198	6	16	22

Source: Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development – Archives

Although women's descriptive representation in Kenya remains low, even in comparison to neighbouring countries in the region such as Uganda and Tanzania, there has been a steady increase in the number of women gaining entering parliament over the last 10 years (Bauer & Tremblay, 2011:89). Women rights organisations and other non-governmental organisations espousing feminist ideals have been at the forefront of advocating women's descriptive representation in parliament. Organisations such as the Kenya National Committee on the Status of Women (KNCSW) have provided assistance to women regardless of their political party affiliations to run for office (Nzomo & Kibwana, 1993).

Poverty & women's political participation

Afifu (2008: 17) observes that rural poverty is a major challenge for women wishing to participate in electoral politics in Kenya. The economic gap between the rural and urban parts of Kenya is rife. Kenya's urban population is 37% compared to 63% of the population that live in rural areas (Census Report, 2009). As Wanyeki (2009: 23) explains, despite rapid urbanization, many Kenyans still live in rural areas and a majority of these are women who also have limited access to resources, and this makes it difficult for them to compete favourably with men in national politics. And as Ballington and Karam (2005:42) explain,

> [t]he economic crisis in countries with so-called 'developing democracies' has intensified the risk of poverty for women, which, like unemployment, is likely to be increasingly feminized...Eradicating poverty will have a positive impact on women's increased participation in the democratic process. The economic empowerment of women, along with education and access to information, will take women from the constraints of the household to full participation in politics and political elections.

Although the number of women gaining entry into parliament has increased steadily over the years, there have been no studies conducted on the impact of this numerical increment on legislative priorities that expand women's rights and status in Kenya, perhaps because there have been so few women serving in most levels of public office that it seemed premature to ask this question. The situation has changed though during the decade of 1997-2007 thus calling for research in this area and this study is an initial attempt.

In this chapter, I have introduced the scope of this research, stating its major concerns. I have also introduced the reader to Kenya, the area of focus in this investigation, and have discussed in depth the status of women and political participation in the country,

demonstrating how the colonial history, male-dominance of political parties, and socio-economic factors have impacted on women's access to political office. The remainder of this thesis is as follows: Chapter Two begins with the arguments that favour the political participation of women and delves deeper into a review of the literature on descriptive representation, while highlighting some of the institutional platforms that advocate for increased presence of women among public officials. One of these is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), under whose umbrella fall the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the third of which will be discussed in greater depth. Chapter Two will culminate in the development of three hypotheses that underlie this study namely; that women do not necessarily amass power when they are elected or nominated to national parliaments because the political structures in place are inherently patriarchal; that the national parliament itself as an institution is one that lacks the capacity to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and; that it takes individual commitment to feminist ideals such as the desire to improve women's welfare, for members of parliament, regardless of gender, to support 'women's issues' in parliament and pursue the implementation of gender-related policy.

Chapter Three introduces the research method, data collection, and data analysis. Here, I will present the research participants and discuss the feminist research practice used in this study. Furthermore, I explore the power relations between myself and the research participants, and will expound further on some reflexive moments and positionality during the research process. I will then move on to Chapters Four and Five where I will discuss the findings of this study in two trajectories namely; the role institutional competence in enhancing the substantive representation of women and secondly; explore how individual characteristics of female MPs influence their

legislative behaviour. Finally in Chapter Six, I will reflect on the findings in this study and make some recommendations from the lessons learnt.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

"Never before have so many women held so much power. The growing participation and representation of women in politics is one of the most remarkable developments of the late twentieth century" (Jane Jaquette, 1997:23)

Over the past decade, the focus on increasing women's political participation has been a global trend. The drastic rise in women among public officials at the turn of the millennium has been explained in terms of democratic justice and civil progress among many nations of the world (Kittilson, 2011: 67-68). Although women "in the Nordic and Northern European countries with long traditions of gender equality, have been the most successful in breaking through traditional resistance and increasing their representation" (Jaquette, 1997:25), other countries including those in African and Asia are making women's political representation a policy priority. The election of Ellen Jonhson Sirleaf in 2005 as the first female president in Africa (Sirleaf is Liberia's president) opened new windows of opportunity for women with Johnson viewed largely as a role model on the continent that had hitherto not considered women for public roles (Kathambi, 2009:116). Feminist organisations particularly in Africa have used Liberia's example as platform to strengthen their claim for women's right to political participation, and as Carroll (1994:11) explains, this trend is replicated elsewhere,

> [i]ncreasing the number of women among governing elites has been a major concern for many feminist organizations. It is this concern that led, in part, to the creation of the Women's Campaign fund, a political action committee that raises and distributes money to women candidates...mobilize members to work in the campaigns for women candidates, to endorse the candidacies of women and to contribute money to their campaigns

A number of arguments have been put forward to justify calls for increased presence of women in politics, mainly along three basic grounds. The first one relates to equity and democratic justice seen from the point of view of state legitimacy. Carroll (1984:307) argues that, "the paucity of women in public office is inconsistent with fundamental democratic principles and with a representative form of government." Similarly, Henig & Henig (2001:105) stress that,

> women should be entitled to at least 50 per cent representation at all levels to reflect the proportion of women in the population. It is also the case that the legitimacy of democratic political systems will be reduced if women are absent or underrepresented in key decision-making positions; public confidence in institutions may be diminished...'there can be no true democracy if women are excluded from positions of power'

Proponents of this argument maintain that it is sufficient for women to given a chance to participate in public decision-making processes even if they may act in the same way as men (ibid: 105).

The second argument is about the representation of interests where it is argued that,

> "women's interests cannot be properly represented by men, in much the same way that it has been argued that the interests of the working class cannot be fully represented by the middle-class (Henig & Henig:106).

The assumption is often that because women share descriptive characteristics, if elected to public decision-making office the will be sympathetic to group interests by taking actions that are favourable to women as a group. Ford (2002: 134) explains,

> [w]e assume that if someone shares our descriptive characteristics like sex, race, or other defining features, they will also share and protect our interests. Our image and interests are mirrored by the representative who is "like us"

The third argument for women's inclusion into politics is a developmental one based on the utilisation of skills and talents that women bring into politics, thus

> [t]he exclusion of women from the political system or any other walk of life thereby constitutes a waste of available resources, and the inclusion of women should maximise available resources and lead to improved outcomes (Henig & Henig, 2001:108)

Supporters of this argument believe that women contribute a great deal of knowledge, skills and expertise and therefore there exclusion from public decision-making processes slows down the process of development. In fact for many developing countries such as Kenya, women's political participation is often seen as a crucial step in achieving development and alleviating poverty, and as Momsen (2004: 9) explains, "[t]he development focus is now on alleviating world poverty. The empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality...enhances development."

Whilst the first and third argument for increasing descriptive representation of women MPs can be difficult to ascertain given that democracy itself is situated and is not easily measured, the second argument about the representation of interests or 'women's issues' can be empirically tested, and it is here where the core concern for this study lies and to which I will dedicate much of the time.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs) and Descriptive Representation

At the turn of the millennium, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2000) committed its 186-member states to eight internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were designed to end world poverty and achieve global gender equality by the year 2015. 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' is the third of eight MDGs (undp.org/mdgs). Confidence is high among nations that the MDGs form a significant leap toward accelerating the pace of development through strategic planning that would also be a starting point in eliminating gender inequalities in all facets of society (Reilly, 2009: 118-119).

The MDGs have however been criticised by Reilly (2009: 129) who has argued that "the MDG process is simply another top-down fad that will redirect and consume scarce resources without producing the in-depth understanding and action necessary to overcome the obstacles to achieving the Goals." Alston (2005: 765) has also criticized the MDGs from a Human Rights Perspective, arguing that the MDGs' lack human rights focus, are selective, narrow, and state focused, saying that:

> The MDGs represent a one-size-fits-all prescription, and are not tailored to the specific needs of individual countries...The MDG process is a top-down rather than grassroots effort [and is] in effect, an imposition by governments acting through the UN General Assembly.

This study takes issue with MDG3, where one of the indicators chosen to monitor progress on gender equality and women's empowerment relates to the number of seats held by women in parliament. In other words, the focus of empowerment and gender equality is moved to the political arena, "and the struggle for participation and representation in decision-making structures" (Kabeer, 2005:22), in the hope that bringing more women into political office will reform political procedures to make them more gender sensitive and more focused on 'women's issues', hence leading to women's empowerment (undp.org/mdg/goal3). This assumption however ignores the diversity of political contexts and the specific circumstances in which female MPs operate. As Kabeer (2005:22) rightly observes, there are critical factors that determine representation and as I will show in later chapters, 'women's interests' or 'issues' are specific to class, race, religion, age and political cultures. For instance, studies that have analysed the class background of women who make it into parliament show that few of them come from working-class backgrounds;

> at present, the women who enter national parliaments are not generally drawn from the ranks of poor people, nor is there any guarantee that they will be more responsive to the needs and priorities of poor women than many men in parliament (ibid:22).

The implication here is that in a country like Kenya where majority of the women are economically underprivileged as I explained in Chapter One, the MDG3 target will be seen to have been met if a general election were to result in more women gaining entry into parliament. The underlying irony though is that majority of these women would be largely drawn from middle-class backgrounds as Kabeer's (005:22) study show, and this would not be representative of the female population in the country; i.e. gender equality would not have been achieved by virtue of having more (middle-class) women in parliament. As is also argued in the United Nations study,

> In theory, equality between women and men could be achieved in one parliamentary election, if half of the winners were women. In practice the existence of established political institutions slows and orders the pace of change. (UN, 1992: 111)

I agree with Alston's (2005: 765) critic of the MDGs process in what its designers presume to be a "one-size-fits-all" approach to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Besides this, there is also the taken for granted assumption in MDG3 that parliament necessarily empowers female representatives. But the reverse cannot be under-estimated either, i.e. that women may remain 'disempowered' even though they are represented in parliament. In my opinion, parliament like other political institution may hinder or promote the advancement of women and as such, over-emphasising proportional representation of women in legislative assemblies limits empowerment and reduces the complexity of gender relations to a narrow and single set priority.

Kabeer (2005:23) argues that although MDG3 has potential to make a difference,

> unless provision is made to ensure that policy changes are implemented in ways that allow women themselves to participate, to monitor and to hold policy makers, corporations and other relevant actors accountable for their actions, this potential is unlikely to be realised.

In fact it is yet to be established whether a steady increase in the number of female legislators worldwide since the declaration of MDGs has actually led to greater attention on 'women's issues' and a better life for women generally. The MDGs 2011 annual report does not say anything about how numbers have led to an increase feminisation of policy in the countries reviewed.

Gender quotas and the descriptive representation of women

Governments all over the world have increasingly adapted the use of gender quotas to fast-track gender equality in legislative assemblies (Piscopo et al, 2009: 2). Quotas are largely attributed to activists in the Nordic countries in Europe, although Tripp (2005: 52) has also noted a similar trend in Africa, particularly in the years following the UN declaration of the Millennium Development Goals. In Kenya, gender quotas were adopted in 2005 (Fida-Kenya, 2010) and were seen as an important step in enhancing descriptive representation for women. The quota law requires parliament to ensure that one-third of MPs represented in parliament are women and although this is yet to be realised due to slow implementation processes and a lack of commitment from political parties (ibid), it is hoped that the quotas will increase the number of female representatives in the long run.

Dahlerup (2005:141) argues from the point of view of exclusion and stresses that gender quotas draw legitimacy for both the political parties and governments at large. Furthermore, States use gender quotas as a way of expressing their commitment to gender equality albeit such commitment may be questioned especially where presence does not translate to empowerment. According to Piscopo et al (2009: 2), quotas "increase diversity among the types of women elected, raise attention to

women's issues in policy-making processes, change public attitudes about women and politics, and inspire female voters to get more politically involved."

Krook (2008: 360) has however criticised the use of gender quotas arguing that they may be used to "further neoliberal projects, demobilize women's movements, [and] result in the election of non-feminist women." She also questions some underlying policy issues around the design and implementation of gender quotas such as:

> Who mobilizes for and against quotas, and for what reasons...does the apparently widespread support for quotas in fact mask other political intentions?...do they constitute a feminist demand articulated by a new global women's movement, or instead, reflect a more cynical attempt among elites to mask other struggles under the guise of concern for the political status of women? (ibid: 346)

Krook's views are shared by Tripp (2006:124) who observes that such criticism is widespread "even among feminists in Africa, many of whom believe the practice leads to tokenism and can become yet another mechanism in the service of patronage politics." Similarly, Dahlerup (2006:4) cautions that the concentration on the descriptive representation of women ignores an evaluation of their impact on politics and political process. She criticises the use of *quotas* as a means to achieve greater representation of women, arguing that

> The use of electoral quotas challenges our ideas and theories about the relationship between women's political representation and their socio-economic positions, since quotas may lead to unprecedented historical leaps in women's representation without simultaneous changes in women's socio-economic position (ibid: 4)

Although I believe the use of gender quotas could enhance the descriptive representation of women in parliament, as these criticisms show, and as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, if not carefully thought out quotas may serve to undermine the very purpose they are meant to serve. It matters however how quotas are applied

since, as Kabeer (2005:22) notes, "the way that quotas are applied makes a difference to whether the presence of women is 'token' or a legitimate form of representation." Kabeer (2005:22) uses the term "tokenism" to imply a form of political expediency where women are assigned seats to balance a political equation and extent a certain regime in power without a genuine commitment to gender equality.

In what follows, I will return to the discussion on 'critical mass' and show how scholars have theorised and engaged with this concept as a way to explain descriptive representation in parliament.

The 'critical mass' theory

I defined 'critical mass' in Chapter One and noted that some feminist scholars believe that a descriptive representation of female parliamentarians up to the tune of about 30% is needed before female MPs can substantively represent women (Dahlerup, 1988:275; Staudt, 1998:38). Similarly, others like Studlar & McAllister (2002:1) also argue that a 'critical mass' "ranging from 10 to 35 per cent women, is needed before major changes in legislative institutions, behaviour, policy priorities and policy voting occurs".

Based on these arguments and as Henig & Henig (2001: 103) also observe, female MPs cannot be expected to permeate through the age-old patriarchal conventions without a 'critical mass' since in small numbers they would most likely conform to existing norms and the political culture for their own survival as politicians. Arguing from a historical disadvantage point of view, Mansbridge (1999:636) stress that,

> representatives of disadvantaged groups may need a critical mass for their own members to become willing to enunciate minority positions. They may also need

> a critical mass to convince others—particularly members of dominant groups—that the perspectives or insights they are advancing are widely shared, genuinely felt, and deeply held within their own group.

It is not conclusive due to the paucity of studies available, whether achieving a 'critical mass' of women in places where this has happened has led to legislative changes that can be largely attributed to women. Critics have been fast to dismiss this theory maintaining that it cannot be applied to all situations due to the differences in electoral systems and political cultures around the world. Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers (2007:553)claim that the inconsistency in the theorisation of the concept has made it difficult for consensus as there is no threshold number established that reflects clearly what is too small or too large a number for female MPs to influence legislation.

> In the literature, the threshold has been variously identified as 15, 20, 25, or 30 percent...Research employing critical mass as a concept has not clarified the process by which sheer numbers of women might work to advance women's substantive representation. It is not clear whether sheer numbers of women should have a proportional impact, a curvilinear impact, or an absolute numbers impact on policy-making around women's interests.

Studlar & McAllister (2002:6) also add their concerns by arguing that,

> the concept of the 'critical mass' has a vague and shifting meaning as well as a surprising paucity of empirical support. Properly, it should refer to a threshold beyond which there is a change of behaviour through acceleration ('chain reaction'), not just incrementalism. At some point, the characteristics of women become subject to a group dynamic that increases their influence on various political phenomena.

Although only a handful, the studies that have been conducted to investigate how the attainment of a 'critical mass' of female MPs in parliament impacted policy show little connection. Manon Tremblay's (1998: 464) findings of a study carried out in the Canadian House of Commons found that although female MPs did make a difference when their numbers increased, this impact was slight, concluding that, "[t]here is nothing to indicate that with greater numbers women will necessarily be in a better position to intervene on women's issues". Similarly, in a study conducted in

Rwanda, Devlin & Elgie (2008:1) found that "increased women's representation has had little effect on policy outputs." I believe that scholars should move beyond the 'critical mass' theory and establish a more nuanced theoretical framework to explain women's descriptive representation since, doing so will shift the conceptual focus from 'head-count' to practical issues about gender and politics As Dahlerup (1988:276) suggests,

> [m]aybe we should replace the concept of a *critical mass* with the new concept of a *critical act,* better suited to the study of human behaviour. A critical act is one which will change the position of the minority considerably and lead to further changes. Most significant is *the willingness and ability of the minority to mobilize the resources of the organization or institution* to improve the situation for themselves and the whole minority group. For women in politics this constitutes critical acts of empowerment

and as I will illustrate in Chapter Five, it has taken the commitment of particular MPs (both male and female) in Kenya who have performed "critical acts" that have led to a substantive representation of women.

The difficulty in defining 'women's issues'

In Chapter One, I introduced the concept of 'women's issues' and described what I consider to be the 'issues' in Kenya. Beyond my definition is a divided opinion in scholarship about "women's issues". My purpose here is to illustrate how this inconclusiveness impacts the way in which feminist scholars and political scientists make theoretical claims about the relationship between the presence of more women in parliament and the representation of 'women's issues'. As Tremblay &Pelletier (2000:381) warn us, "a causal link is sometimes too easily established between the number of women elected and its consequences for the female population in general." Several definitions of this term are explored.

Sapiro (1981:703) argues that "women's issues"

> refers to public concerns that impinge primarily on the private (especially domestic) sphere of social life, and particularly those values associated with children and nurturance,

and explains that "women are more interested in these issues than others as a result of their "parochial" domestic concerns and the traditional gender roles" (ibid: 703). Similarly, Lovenduski &Norris (2003:84-102) stress that,

> due to their particular life-experiences in the home, workplace and public sphere, women politicians prioritise and express different types of values, attitudes, and policy priorities, such as greater concern about childcare, health or education, or a less conflictual and more collaborative political style.

Phillips (1998:223) compounds these arguments by observing that because women occupy a distinct position in society, for example that they receive lower pay for the same work where men earn more, are primary carers and domestic workers, they have specific needs, interests and concerns that arise out of these experiences, which can only adequately be represented by their descriptive representatives.

For Carroll (1984:307), "women in power will exert a distinctive, sex-related influence on public policy" that is,

> women, because they have been locked out of power, are uncorrupted and thus more likely than men to produce policy free of the influence of special interests...women are more nurturant, more humane, more altruistic, and/or more compassionate than men and these characteristics somehow will affect their performance in office (ibid:307).

The linking of descriptive representation to substantive representation of 'women's issues' is, as Tremblay &Pelletier (2000:381) observed earlier, often untested and lacking empirical support. Theorists assume a causal-effect relationship between shared characteristics (descriptive representation) and shared interests (substantive representation) and in my opinion, this is misleading. To argue as Mansbridge (1999:628) does that,

> descriptive representation enhances the substantive representation of interests by improving the quality of deliberation... In "descriptive" representation, representatives are in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent. Black legislators represent Black constituents; women legislators represent women constituents, and so on

is to fall short of a critical analysis that leads to a more honest contribution to an understanding of the politics of interests and interest representation. In arguing that groups that share descriptive characteristics will necessarily act in a similar way, Mansbridge risks opening up loopholes for essentialist tendencies where people are assumed to have a natural predisposition to 'act' in certain ways by virtue of their descriptive characteristics. It is in the same vein that after the recent unfortunate countrywide riots and looting in England that left many businesses in ruins (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14513517), a renowned English Historian David Starkey claimed during a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) interview that "The whites have become black[3]" and went on to argue that black culture is synonymous to (my opinion of what he implied) gang culture (ibid).

This is also true to the ways in which feminist organisations that invoke the term "sisterhood" and claim to 'stand for' all women where as in most cases this refers to white, middle-class, heterosexual Anglo-American women (Mansbridge, 1999: 638). Black feminists have similarly rejected their portrayal as having a single 'Afrocentric standpoint' (see Mohanty, 1991).

Phillips (2010: 72-73) equally argues that,

> "the problem with essentialism is the attribution of particular characteristics, along the lines of all women are caring and empathetic, all Africans have rhythm; all Asians are community oriented...The problem here is one of over-generalisation, stereotyping and a resulting inability even to 'see' characteristics that do not fit your preconception...There is plenty of research suggesting that the typical correlations are indeed mis-leading and overstated.

[3] I am raising this point here for purposes of illustrating how essentialism works in the sense in which Mansbridge links descriptive representation to substantive representation.

In other words, "the advocacy of descriptive representation can emphasize the worst features of essentialism" Mansbridge (1999:137-8), as it may lump people together on assumed 'shared' traits and mostly observable features such as skin colour, gender and able-bodiedness. I cannot stress enough that "[s]uch an assumption leads not only to refusing to recognize major lines of cleavage in a group but also to assimilating minority or subordinate interests in those of the dominant group" (ibid:138).

Furthermore, findings in Chapter Four and Five demonstrate that the idea of particular shared interests or issues among all women is untenable. Mtintso (2003:571) also explains that "women cannot be subsumed into a unique and singular category called "woman", nor can there be universal interests that all women represent all the time," because women who hold political office differ significantly not only from men but also among themselves in their backgrounds, political ideologies, perceptions, values and needs.

In charting a theoretical way forward, Molyneux (1985:232-233) proposes the use of the term 'gender interests' instead of 'women's interests' to avoid "the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women's interests". She divides 'gender interests' into two categories namely; strategic and practical needs, explaining that where as strategic needs are institutional and requires structural reforms that involve policy interventions like improving child care and maternity services for women or the abolition of sexual division of labour; practical gender needs on the other hand, "are formulated by the women who are themselves within these positions rather than external interventions" (ibid: 233).

Although Molyneux's theorising is criticised by Bauer and Britton (2006-19-20) who argue that there is not often a clear-cut distinction between practical and strategic needs for many poor women, I believe that her approach may serve to position the

debate on 'women's issues' more stably within literature as she leaves sufficient room for different female communities to define their own interests in ways that reflect the reality of their socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances. Having said that, I believe that it is important to recognise that not all women are conscious of their interests and as feminists, we have the duty to raise awareness around issues we believe bear a greater impact on women in society, otherwise we risk being dragged behind by those who have not been a part of the struggle and even losing some of the benefits that have been achieved by the women's movement so far. As Sapiro (1981:703) notes,

> [i]f we were to argue that an "interest group" must be entirely self-conscious and organized, we must then argue that an entirely oppressed group has no special interest and is, in fact, theoretically irrelevant to the political system.

Why should female MPs represent 'women's issues'?

When considering the question of representing 'women's issues', feminists want to see descriptive representatives in parliament being actively involved in advocating for issues that have a bearing on the wider community of women. In fact, Ford (2002:135) insists that the representation of 'women's issues' is "the most important form of representation." The question that is often left out concerns accountability; i.e. whom are female MPs accountable to: is it the women in their society or their electors in general? In whose interest(s) should the MPs act? I will return to answer this question in Chapter Five, but for now suffice is to say that "there is no obvious way of establishing strict accountability to women as a group" Phillips (1995:56), although Carroll (2003b: 4) claims that,

> the linkages between women legislators and women's organizations are sufficiently strong and sufficiently related to their policy-related actions to constitute a weak form of accountability... Women's organizations can play an important role in reinforcing feminist identity and encouraging and supporting women legislators' policy-related actions on behalf of women (ibid: 6-7).

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five however, female MPs do not necessarily feel accountable to women particularly because female voters discriminate against them.

Finally I believe that political transformation can only be achieved when both male and female policy makers directly challenge assumptions about gendered representation and make policies that improve the lives of the electorate in general and the marginalised groups in particular. I have spent a great deal of time talking about descriptive representation in this chapter, where I have also analysed the theoretical debates for descriptive representation involving advocacy for gender quotas and the attainment of a 'critical mass' for women in parliament; assumed by proponents to be a pre-condition for interest representation. I have also presented counter-arguments to these concepts which inform my position in this study. I will now move on to solidify my argument by further scrutinising the assumed relationship between descriptive and substantive representation

The Missing Link between Descriptive & Substantive Representation

As we saw from the examples of Canada and Rwanda, the nature of the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation is neither straightforward nor clear. Research findings concerning this relationship have been inconsistent, and sometimes even misleading. For instance, a study carried out by the United Nations in 1992 involving sixteen countries with a significant number of women representatives in their state legislative assemblies found that in some countries, women had an impact on policy, although there was no direct correlation between their

descriptive and substantive representation since such impact could not be exclusively attributed to women (UN, 1992:110). The report also concludes that

> [i]f progress of women into public decision-making positions is a result of general changes in the status of women, the focus should be on such underlying factors as education, employment and legal status...In theory, equality between men and women could be achieved in one parliamentary election, if half of the winners were women. In practise the existence of established political institutions slows and orders the pace of change. (ibid: 111)

Whilst these findings may sustain an argument that there is no direct relationship between descriptive and substantive representation of women in parliament, they do not tell us why descriptive representation has not led to a substantive one and what it might take for descriptive representatives to substantively represent 'women's issues' in parliament. This study fills this void in literature in two ways. One, it departs from studies of women are an 'essential' category moving beyond this straightforward analysis of representation, to establish the missing links between 'presence' and 'acts', through a critical analysis of how individual female legislators draw upon their personal experiences and opinions in carrying out legislation. My intention here is not to downplay the impact of increased (descriptive) participation of women in politics and decision-making, rather that the assumed horizontal relationship between numbers and policy impact may have been taken for granted and at best over-generalised.

I will examine the diversity among female MPs as well as the interactions between gender and other social forces such as ethnicity, religion, class and the political structure to understand the dynamics of representation in parliament. Secondly, I will scrutinise the parliamentary competence, defined as the creation of an enabling environment where the "breadth in the topics of political debate is guaranteed both by the legislature's procedural law…and its founding statute" (Chaney, 2006: 695), by analysing the rules and procedures governing this and other political institutions such as

political parties in order to find out whether they have the capacity to enhance women's role as substantive representatives. In other words, I will perform an audit of parliament and other institutions that have a greater impact on legislative behavior beyond descriptive representation.

At this point, I will now present the hypotheses upon which this investigation is founded.

Hypothesis

Through groundbreaking empirical research involving face-to-face semi-structured interviews with female parliamentarians who previously served or are currently serving in Kenya's parliament, I seek to understand the extent to which women either can or actually do 'represent' other women, and whether or not increasing the numbers of women elected and/or nominated into parliament has had a significant impact in advocating for feminist gender policies, which in the case of Kenya, will be taken to be touching on policies related to property laws, early marriage, family, health, environment and education[4]. In other words, the theorised assumption that descriptive representation necessarily leads to substantive representation will be carefully scrutinised in this thesis. The study is based on three sets of hypothesis which prompt this investigation; one, that women do not necessarily amass power when they are elected or nominated to national parliaments, because the political structures in place are inherently patriarchal. Power is fiercely guarded by male political elites and their gate-keepers through whom women must be 'cleared' to access political space. Two,

[4] These are the issues which are identified by feminists in Kenya, myself included, as the most pressing and urgent that need to be addressed by the Kenyan government

that the national parliament itself as an institution is one that lacks the capacity to promote gender equality and women's empowerment; and three, that it takes individual commitment to feminist ideals such as the desire to improve women's welfare, for example, for any member of parliament, regardless of gender, to support gender-aware legislation, and, that this does not come automatically with the election and/or nomination of more women to parliament.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Why the focus on Kenyan women political elites?

Although I set out to unsettle the assumptions about women and political power by analysing the root structures which give and/or deny power to women, I also intended to study Kenyan women politicians as an elite, powerful and influential category. Choosing from a largely informed[5] group of female respondents, this study was a deliberate departure from the common anthropological and developmental studies carried out in countries of the global south, which often focus on poverty and represent women from these countries as perennial victims. In her article titled 'Under Western Eyes', Chandra Mohanty (1991: 6) laments such representation, arguing that

> Scholars often locate "Third World Women" in terms of the underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and "overpopulation" of particular Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries

and points to Momsen's (2004) work in which she uses categories of life expectancy, nutrition, fertility and income-generating activities as 'scales' by which women of colour[6] are analysed. The main objectives of this study however are to unsettle the assumptions surrounding women's political participation and to question the assumed representation of women's interests and empowerment as espoused in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG3). Secondly, the decision to concentrate my research on women in Kenya, particularly those serving in political careers and public life, was

[5] I use informed here purely to mean that the participants would be in many ways connected to political power, whether as Members of Parliament (MPs), or feminist political elites. I must note that this does not in any way make these women superior to the ordinary womenfolk in Kenya as the latter would equally be informed in their own right, albeit in different forms of knowledge experiences.

[6] I use women of colour here interchangeably with women from the *developing world* as do many other scholars including Mohanty (see Mohanty, 1991:7). However, I am aware that although there are some commonalities between women of colour in the *developed world* and those from the *developing world* in terms of their shared social experience of race, huge differences do exist among these women. For example, the ways in which African-American women experience racism may not be similar to that of African women living in Africa.

inspired by the desire to redress the historical silencing of women's voices and contribution in general. The majority of the social science research undertaken in Kenya has concentrated on men as key informants, whilst ignoring women, who are often seen as having "nothing to say" (Kathambi, 2009: 15). Taking a broader perspective, Holstein & Gubrium (2003: 74) acknowledge that studying women is important because, "this way of learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women". The authors also note that some of the key achievements of feminism have in fact been "exposing and redressing women's invisibility as social actors" (ibid: 75).

Recruitment of respondents

Potential female parliamentarians for this study were identified through women's NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) networks across Kenya. I approached the NGO secretariats and obtained permission to access files, statistical surveys and reports with information on women parliamentarians. This included details of the MPs contact information, constituencies represented, age, education background, length of service as an MP, major achievement (s) in one's political career, and commitment to feminist ideals. The NGOs which offered information included, among others: the Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya), Africa Woman & Child Feature Services (AWC), The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and the gender division of the Kenyan Ministry of Gender and Children services. It was initially hoped that at least 50% of women parliamentarians would be interviewed, since there are only 22 female MPs (about 9%) out of a total of 224 MPs forming Kenya's

current legislature. All women MPs were contacted to request for interviews and more than half of them agreed to be interviewed.

Among the 12 parliamentarians interviewed, four held cabinet positions in government (cabinet members are presidential appointees heading various ministerial portfolios in government)[7], seven were serving at least a second term (one term is for five years); three were first-time MPs while two were both first-time and nominated (appointed by political parties and not through competitive election by the electorate). There was a fifty-fifty representation from the two major political wings; six from Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) which is also the main opposition party in Kenya, and six from the ruling Party of National Unity (PNU). Age was also considered in the recruitment, with MP ages ranging from 35-65. Geographical distribution was also factored in, as this shapes the way politics is conducted in Kenya. In this case three MPs were from Nairobi province, two from Western region, two from the Coast region, two from the Eastern region, and one each from Nyanza, Rift Valley and North Eastern regions respectively. (For information on the geographical regions of Kenya, refer to the map in Chapter One of this report). To ensure that a diverse range of views are represented on the question of women's perspectives on the politics of representation, I conducted further interviews with key civil society leaders, civil servants, feminist political elites, university professors, policy analysts working with various Think-tanks, and journalists. The table below provides an overview of the respondents interviewed, and captures some of the key views held:

Qualitative methods of research and analysis were used for this study, drawing on feminist research praxis based on feminist standpoint and research methodology as theorised by Nancy Hartsock (1999). I believe that a mixed-methods approach is

[7] The impact of female Cabinet members specifically will not be explored here. The study is limited to members of parliament (MPs) and the listing of women serving as both MPs and cabinet members or those doubling up as executives (chairs of special parliamentary committees for example) is only here for the purposes of clarity.

preferable, as it helps to facilitate the exchange of the gendered experiences between the researcher and those being interviewed. The adoption of qualitative research strategies in particular facilitated the collection and analysis of political experiences of women in power, the commonalities and

Participant	Field of work	General opinions	Gender-specific issues	Age of participant	Education level
Civil servants	3, all working in gender departments	All said gender departments were under-funded	All believed they had less power to influence major policies than their counterparts in other departments.	Aged between 33-45	All Bachelor's degree and above
Members of Parliament	6 PNU 6 ODM 6 parliamentarians of rural constituents. & 6 from urban constituents.	3 out of 12 claimed they were feminists, 7 said they were not, 2 were from an activist background	Most MPs viewed the Minister of Gender as the least powerful portfolio in government	Aged between 35-66	4 hold doctoral degrees, 8 have at least college education
Civil Society Executives	2 Women's rights-based 3 Think-tanks	All believed increasing numbers of female MPs will lead to better representation	All thought women MPs were not vocal enough, accused them of lack of commitment to feminism goals	Aged between 29-48	All Bachelor's degree and above
Women's Studies Academics	2 professors 1 writer	Professors thought gender awareness was still low in Kenya	All said cultural barriers hindered women MPs from effective participation in parliament	Aged between 40-62	2 Professors 1 Master degree
Media owners/journalists	3 feminist journalist 2 women media owners	women's issues do not receive much airtime in prime-time news	All said traditional portrayal of women in the media affected how masses regarded female politicians	Aged between 24-39	All Bachelor's degree holders

differences in such experiences and the women's own understanding of their roles and responsibilities as parliamentarians.

The elite Interview

Elites generally refer to the top occupants of socio-economic, political, religious or cultural power, although this definition of elites is not exhaustive (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; also Gillham, 2005). It is important to analyse them 'as' elites, because as Holstein & Gubrium (2001: 299) make clear,

> Interviewing elites can be distinguished from interviewing non-elite groups or individuals; 'elites generally have knowledge, money, and status, and assume a higher status than others in the population'.

As a junior researcher coming to carry out a study for a master's thesis, deciding to do an elite interview was perhaps, in my view, a break from the traditional researcher-researched convention (where the former is assumed to be in a more powerful position than the later), and indeed in my case, my research participants were in a more powerful position than I, and some of them had much more experience and knowledge of politics and feminism[8]. Some scholars have noted that because elites act to protect themselves against outsiders, they are difficult to access even beyond gate-keepers (i.e., personal assistants, lawyers, secretaries), and where accessible, are less open to being scrutinised. They are often experts or more knowledgeable on the research topics than the researcher, and are therefore a sophisticated group to interview (Harvey 2010; Holstein & Gubrium 2003; Gillman 2005; Sabot, 1999:330). Sabot (1999:330) also notes that because of the nature of the elite class, some of their activities are often masked in secrecy and privacy.

[8] My judgment that some of the women I interviewed were more knowledgeable and experienced in feminist issues comes partly from my own insecurity as a younger academic compared to most of my participants. I do not imply here that just because these women were older and had dealt with the issues much longer than I, they would be more knowledgeable than any younger or a much less experienced researcher

Herod (1999:315) explains that when arranging an elite interview, several factors ought to be considered to facilitate access, some which include; knowledge of their operation and familiarity with their organizational behaviour because,

> [s]imply gaining access...can be extremely difficult and frustrating when one is perhaps less familiar with foreign organizations...for example, the timing of contacting organizations can greatly influence whether one is granted access.

I was asked in some instances to supply a list of questions in advance to personal assistants and secretaries prior to the interview. Since this was not a structured interview, I drew up a rough draft of some the issues I was interested in for my research which included; interrogating the MPs understanding of substantive representation, their views on what they thought could constitute 'women's interests' and what they understood as being their major roles as MPs. These suggestions were only used as a guideline for the interview and to facilitate the search for personal experiences from the participants. They were in no way imposed upon the respondents as doing so would take away the control from the respondent. Scholars have pointed out the importance of asking questions which leave participants with significant control of the interview process (see Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 1993). I also followed what Harvey (2010: 1) has outlined as the three elements a researcher should observe when preparing to carry out an elite interview:

> Providing flexibility when designing research projects and conducting interviews...ensuring transparency when communicating with elite members [, and], maintaining good etiquette with all participants to ensure the highest professional standards.

Having talked at length about the elite interview, and having classified the women whom I scheduled interviews with as being elite, I believe it is now an ethical obligation for me to formally introduce myself vis-à-vis these women. As England (1994:244) rightly observes, reflexivity is necessary as it offers the opportunity of being

critical and reflexive of one's postitionality within the research process, not as "a confession to salacious indiscretions," "mere navel gazing," and even "narcissistic and egoistic, [gesture]" , but rather because,

> Reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical *scrutiny* of the self as researcher. Indeed reflexivity is critical to the conduct of fieldwork; it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions. A more reflexive and flexible approach to fieldwork allows the researcher to be more open to any challenges to their theoretical position that fieldwork almost inevitably raises.

My name is Violet Nasimiyu Barasa, a twenty-six year old middle-class Kenyan woman, ethnically Luhya,[9] born in Bungoma (a middle-sized town in Western Kenya) and a long-time resident of Nairobi. I also identify myself as a Christian feminist.

Although I would not consider myself as elite because of my own discomfort with the term, the elite women I interviewed did perceive me as one, and did not seem to see me as being socially distant from them. As a result, the interview sessions were rather relaxed and the women talked to me like a social equal. Stanley &Wise (1990:47) have advised that a reflexive approach to research requires acknowledging one's own "intellectual autobiography" so that one can then critique and unpack how this may have influenced the data collection and analysis. In my case, this meant returning to some recent events in my own academic and professional life including where I studied and worked within the elite networks. First, prior to enrolling for my master studies, I had worked for an elite policy think-tank which partnered with various government officials working on social and public policy, during which time I met and interacted with different members of the political elite in workshops and other related events. In other words, the interviews were not the first encounter I was going to have with some of these people. In fact one of the MPs whose daughter attended the same school[10] as I did invited me to her home for the interview and asked me if I would find time to come

[9] Kenya is made up of 42 ethnic groups of which Luhya is the second largest.
[10] This is the institution where I studied for my pre-university entry examinations in Kenya.

back later and talk to her daughter, which I did. In another instance, my interviewee made reference to my previous participation in a global conference call a fortnight before the interview, which she had held with Kenyan students in the Diaspora. After these exchanges, we forged a very friendly relationship for my entire research period, and she even organised for me a 2-week access card to the parliament building where all MPs offices are located.

This social closeness to some of my participants facilitated my entry and allowed me access to the elite class raises some ethical issues; one of them being that participants may have given information much more freely based on this relationship rather than solely out of my role as a student carrying out an academic research. This has also been encountered by other scholars doing feminist research (see for example England, 1994; Stacey, 1996), who observe that, while feminist research principles put greater emphasis on mutual sharing between the researcher and the researched, it could unintentionally lead to participant exploitation than it would be the case with traditional methods of doing research. However, I believe it is important to note, as Plowman (1995:20) argues, that reflexivity goes beyond a focus on one's own subject positions and encompass an examination of "how participants may position you, the researcher, in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual identity and class". I wish to note though as does Herod (1999:320) that my identity during the research process was not unproblematic and it kept shifting depending on whom I was interviewing. It was helpful though to know beforehand what to expect in an elite interview and this enabled me to plan adequately, including allowing for flexibility with time and venues and observing dress codes for different audiences.

I interviewed a total of 27 elite women who in my opinion were representative of the diversity of views that this study sought to solicit. I was inspired by Holstein &

Gubrium's (1995:74) views that, "[t]he idea is not so much to capture a representative segment of the population as it is to continuously solicit and analyse representative horizons of meaning". All the 27 interviews were face-to-face, and lasted between 15-45 minutes. The average interview time was 25 minutes. The interview locations varied from one respondent to the other, although majority of the interviewees preferred appointments within Nairobi, either in their offices, homes or restaurants, and this preference was respected. There were however two interviews that involved travel; in one case 500 km (between Nairobi and Kitale – see section on 'Kenya'), and in the other a combined return of 1,200 km (Between Nairobi and Malaba). To protect the identity of participants, all names used in this study are pseudonyms. Participation was voluntary and participants had the option to stop the interview or not respond to questions and withhold comments if they wished so.

Why semi-structured interviews?

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to achieve what Holstein and Gubrium (2003, 74; see also Gillman, 2005) have described as getting "access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories, in their own words, rather than in the words of the researcher." Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions have also been described by Walsh (2001: 65) as one in which the interviewer lets the "interview [process] develop as a guided conversation, according to the interests and wishes of the interviewee". This method of data collection was suitable for this research, which mainly focused on the political elite as it enabled them to 'feel' free to speak about their personal experiences as female members serving in public life. It was also possible "to avoid too much pre-judgement where the questions [weren't] predetermined. The

researcher can obtain interviewees 'real' views and beliefs" (Walsh, 2001: 66). Another reason for semi-structured interviews was the opportunity it gave me to inquire more deeply into the issues raised by respondents, thus improving the depth of the information obtained. It was also necessary in achieving what Seidman (2006: 15) describes as the desirability to "have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study", in this case avoiding my presumptions and focusing on what she terms as the "subjective experience of the participant" (ibid, 85). One of the greatest opportunities I had with this kind of interview technique was that respondents directed the interview, and this brought out some information about their views, outlooks and prejudices, some of which I had not even considered myself.

Tape recording

Alongside observational notes taken by the researcher, all interviews were digitally recorded with granted permission by participants. Tape-recording the interviews is advisable since as Rubin and Rubin (1995: 126) note,

> [r]ecording interviews on audiotape helps get the material down in an accurate and retrievable form [...] some interviewees [also] appreciate being recorded because they see the tape as a symbol of your ability to get their message out accurately.

Similarly, (Riessman, 1993:56) advices that, "[t]aping and transcribing are absolutely essential to narrative analysis" It was even the case that respondents were reluctant to take part in interviews if there was no assurance that they would be recorded, I believe because they wanted to avoid leaving any room for misquotation. For instance, Rukia, one of my respondents and a city MP inquired before the interview:

> I hope you have an audio-recorder? I cannot participative in an interview where I could easily be misquoted like I have experienced in the past.

During the process of transcribing data, I presented the participants views in their own words without any alterations in most cases, and where this was not be possible , I compared transcripts with the notes made during the interviews to achieve an accurate analysis. Also, an agreement to destroy the original tape once it has been transcribed was reached between the researcher and the participants.

Some challenges encountered during field work

Political tensions at the time

The actual fieldwork took approximately six weeks, spanning 15th March to the 2nd of May 2011. This period was around the same time that the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Netherlands had issued summons to six powerful politicians in Kenya whom the ICC Prosecutor suspects of masterminding the election violence which preceded the 2007 general election (Daily Nation 7th March 2011)[11]. As a result of these summons and although none of the women MPs were amongst the six politicians summoned, political tensions in Kenya were generally high and politicians were less enthusiastic about participating in research at this time[12]. As I have discussed earlier, it was relatively easy for me to secure interviews because in my opinion the elite women did not see my research as a political threat although a participant asked me if I was a journalist initially before I had introduced myself. I am not sure if she meant that she would not have given the same interview to a journalist or not.

[11] The ensuing skirmishes led to the deaths of some 1,200 people and displaced nearly a million people (Kenya post-election violence: a human rights report 2008).

[12] I had earlier spoken to a friend who had been unable to secure any interviews with the politicians and had given up the project entirely, deciding to focus on something else entirely.

Negotiating my 'Insider'/'Outsider' status

Sandra Acker (2001) elaborates on two standpoints of insider/outsider positions that one conducting a feminist research is confronted with, explaining that insider positions are often assumed by ethnographers who tend to spend longer periods of time with the research community, learn their values and understand their culture more closely than do one-off researchers conducting research for a short period of time. Since the later have limited understanding of the local community's value systems, they are often regarded as 'outsiders' by the researched community. Herod (1999:320) however problematises this argument by noting that the tendency of scholars to assume a simple and clear dichotomy concerning the researcher's positionality as either being an insider or outsider is misleading because

> [T]he issue of validity and one's positionality - that is to say whether one is (perceived as) an "outsider" or an "insider" - is more complex than this dualism would initially suggest.

I agree with Herod's analysis because in my case I had initially assumed that my own positionality was fairly unproblematic since, as someone doing interviews 'at home' (meaning in my own country, and city), I was effectively an insider, in "a privileged position from which to understand processes, histories and events as they unfold" (ibid: 320).

Yet I found that in some instances during the research, I was considered by some of the respondents as an 'outsider', particularly when I mentioned that I was a Masters student in the UK coming home to conduct research. As I said earlier, my positionality did not remain stable; it shifted from time to time depending on whom I was interviewing so that on one level my familiarity with the local cultures and values,

particularly about women and political participation, positioned me squarely as an insider but on the other hand, in order to enable me to gain specific information, I had to 'defamiliarise' myself with the cultural understanding, in what Wolf (1992) (cited in Acker, 2000:156) explains as;

> cultivating an attitude of distance that enables one to see cultural arrangements as worthy of analysis rather than as taken for granted features of social life. Presumably an insider researcher has to make greater efforts to create that distance, or else reject the notion that distance is required

and this I did consciously in some cases,

> [P]laying up social distances between [myself] and interviewee, on others playing down such distances...This is to say, the researcher's positionality is not necessarily fixed in some absolute sense - 100% "outsider" or 100% "insider". But it may translocate through categories and identities, such that at some times and places the researcher may emphasize certain positionalities and identities and not others (Herod, 1999: 321).

For example, that I am ethnic Luhya with a family[13] name which obviously identifies me with a particular ethnicity afforded me relatively easier access to MPs who share my ethnicity as compared to participants from other ethnic groups. I must clarify though that this was not always the case, and in fact some participants did not consider this an issue. As Herod (1999:321) has also noted, I took advantage of some familiarity and distances to secure interviews with participants who would been otherwise difficult to access. For instance I had learned about the good relationship which exists between Kenyan students abroad and the local political elite[14] which I invariably used to gain access to some MPs. On the other hand, when my positionality shifted (in how I was perceived) to that of an 'Indigenous Outsider' (Banks, 1998:6) – one socialized within the indigenous community but coming in from a different culture, I was seen by some

[13] The naming system in Kenya is such that one has two official names the first of which is commonly an English name in my case Violet, and the second name is ethnic in my case Nasimiyu. Because second names always correspond to one's ethnicity (other ethnic signifiers being, but not always; accent and physical features) this identity becomes problematic when doing research as it may position a researcher in what Acker terms as an outsider within, an outsider, an inside outsider, an insider or both of these at the same time. All these positions tend to have implications for research.

[14] There is a networking relationship between Kenyan students in the Diaspora and local politicians That involves participation in open debates on leadership and democracy and to which I have frequently participated

respondents as an 'outsider' with a Western feminist agenda, which was widely considered to be in opposition to the local culture:

> The indigenous-outsider was socialized within the cultural community but has experienced high levels of desocialization and cultural assimilation into an outside or oppositional culture or community. The values, beliefs, perspectives, and knowledge of this individual are indistinguishable from those of an outside culture or community. This individual is not only regarded as an outsider by indigenous members of the cultural community but is viewed with contempt because he or she is considered to have betrayed the indigenous community and "sold out" to the outside community (ibid: 6).

Generally, it became easier for me to continually position myself as an insider, emphasising my own interest in local politics and how women participated in order to draw attention and link my participation to the study.

Authenticity in data analysis

I will now comment briefly on the authenticity of data analysis. To provide strong groundwork for constructing a credible qualitative study, I took several steps during the entire process of planning the research, carrying out the interviews, transcribing and analysing, and the final compilation and presentation of this thesis. Firstly, I have been reflexive of my own bias; including being self-critical of how my positionality during the research might affect how I perceive myself as a researcher and the effect on the process. I have been guided by considerations and moral reflection in order to (re)present the information obtained from the women who gave me their time and trust during this research project, as accurately as possible, and in a way that does not compromise their trust. It is possible however that what I understood from interviewees as 'truth' may not be what they themselves understood as such and I am consciously aware of what Philips (1997:104) has argued that, "the researcher's perspective alone

does not necessarily have authoritative status, but neither do the stories of the participants." In which case, where they may be any (mis)representation of the participants' information, it is not my intension to do so.

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological framework which this study employed; in particular, I have noted that I followed a feminist research methodology in which I have given a great deal of attention to my own positionality and I have been keenly reflexive of this positionality (ies) vis-à-vis those whom I researched because it is an ethical obligation on my part to do so. In the next chapter, I now follow on to present the analysis of this research based on the two sets of hypothesis explained in the literature review section, but first let me present the hypothesis here.

I set out to do this field work with two sets of hypotheses; the first one focuses on the political structure and structural barriers to women's political participation in Kenya, namely; the national parliament as an institution, the political parties through which women are 'cleared' to run for political offices, and the positions of power which women occupy within political institutions. The second hypothesis was that, because examples of women in the highest positions of political power like Britain's Margaret Thatcher and India's Indira Gandhi, "whose behaviour while in power were not particularly marked by actions favourable to women" (Tremblay, 1998:436), that in my view, it takes individual commitment to feminist ideals, for any member of parliament regardless of gender, to support gender-aware legislation, and, that this does not come automatically with the election and/or nomination of more women to parliament. Chapter four will cover the findings arising from my first hypothesis, whereas chapter five will provide the analysis based on the second hypothesis.

Chapter Four: Analysis One

Critical analysis of institutional competence in the substantive representation of women

As Busche (2010:3) argues, institutional competence is crucial for the attainment of substantive representation of women in parliament. We have seen that descriptive representation is necessary but not sufficient condition to achieve policy outcomes that favour women. I identified two critical components that I believe should go hand in hand with a greater numerical presence of female politicians in order that they can substantively represent 'women's issues. I begin here with the analysis of the first component which is institutional/ structural space for the activism of 'women's issues'.

Although it was not a central concern for this study to initially interrogate institutional power in relation to women's positioning within the political power structures in Kenya, it has become necessary to deal with this issue because a majority of the women I interviewed about their substantive role in parliament responded in a way that linked their political impact to the institutional 'separate spaces' through which successful negotiating of 'women's issues' would occur. This makes it imperative that I talk about power and it is to this that I turn my attention now.

Asking questions about power is always, as Rothstein (1988:242) puts it, "methodologically difficult." The question of how women access and utilise power and influence decision-making processes has been raised by scholars (ibid: 242). Perhaps it is important here to do what Petersson (1988:147) has attempted to consider, that is, analysing the significance of institutions in power relationships. It seems obvious that

certain institutions or departments within governments have privileged power positions compared to others, and there is always a temptation for political men and women to wish to be at the helm of such institutions.

With this in mind, I sought to locate the exact positions which female MPs in Kenyan politics occupy within government, and establish in which ways women used such power to influence feminist legislation. Studies (UN, 1992; Henig & Henig, 2001) have shown that women occupy less powerful positions in government and therefore do not often wield sufficient influence to change unfavourable policy conventions. The UN (1992:117) report notes that, "...women have been given responsibility for social areas but not economic or political ones" Similarly, Henig & Henig (2001:60) reiterate that, "...it has been the case that women who have reached government have been placed in 'soft' ministries such as social affair, welfare, education and health." Duverger (1955:99) had much earlier lamented this marginalisation of women into the so-called 'ministries of reproduction', arguing that,

> [v]ery few women gain entry to the innermost sphere of political leadership, the government itself...They have also had to deal with technical questions (social problems, public health, child welfare) rather than with political problems...The departments of which they are in charge are not political in character.

These scholars further argue that the relegation of women to social and welfare ministries "replicates the compartmentalised position of women throughout society" (Henig & Henig: 60), and that, "it remains the case that in general these ministries are less powerful than, for example, financial portfolios." (ibid: 61). The case in Kenya seemed to confirm these views as the table on the next page demonstrates.

From this table, it is clear that women in Kenya are under-represented at the top of the political ladder, where, needless to say, power lies. Of the six Ministerial positions held by women, five are social service and welfare-related ministries, which are often under-funded

Rank as at May 2011	Women	Men	Women in%	Men in%
President[15]	0	1	0	100
Prime Minster	0	1	0	100
Deputy Prime minister	0	2	0	100
Cabinet Ministers	6	34	17.64	82.46
Assistant Ministers	6	46	11.5	89.5
Members of parliament	22	200	9.9	91.1
Permanent secretaries	7	37	15.9	84.1
Ambassadors/High	11	29	27.5	72.5
Chief Justice	0	1	0	100
Court of Appeal Judges	0	11	0	100
High Court judges	18	29	38.3	62.7
Magistrates	118	181	40.5	59.5
Khadhis	0	18	0	100

Sources: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development Report 2010

and do not attract high investments. Many of the female politicians I interviewed cited under-representation in key government positions as the main challenge to their effective participation. Mary (MP) told me that women are unfairly put under pressure to achieve when, in an actual sense, they have little power to do so even when they are serving in government. "Power is in their hands [the men]" she said, adding that "we are always relegated to second-class positions." Similarly, I spoke to a female high-court judge who reiterated that "the culture of regarding women as second-class citizens and therefore only suitable for deputy positions had naturalized the negative ways in which women viewed themselves and what they believed they deserved". She cited the recent recruitment for a chief-justice (CJ) position in Kenya where no single woman applied for the position, but nearly 20 female candidates turned in their applications for the deputy CJ position.

Several other MPs expressed similar views, saying they did not have sufficient power to influence policies because they occupied less powerful positions.

[15] The executive positions of president, prime minister and cabinet portfolios will not be discussed in this thesis which shall be limited to discussing MPs.

> "All of us are assigned insignificant ministries which have no influence to national politics. The men assign themselves to influential roles like those responsible for finances, international affairs, infrastructure, tourism etc, while we get women's affairs portfolios. It is difficult to change things when you are only a women's minister" –Irene, MP

> "I could only do much if I was a president or a prime minister in that case, but who can give you that? Even the voters don't trust us [women] enough to elect us as presidents. As an MP you can only influence your constituency by ensuring your voters are satisfied with your work, you cannot change a lot nationally" –Nanjala, MP

In this case, it became apparent that these women did not necessarily believe that *women's ministries* in government gave them power to 'act' and 'modify' or change legislative processes. They seemed to know where actual power and influence lie within political structures. This realisation however struck me in more ways than one; firstly because, it contradicts the very arguments for equal participation of women in political sphere where it is believed that increasing numbers of women political actors will advance the welfare of women in general by focusing on 'women's issues'. In my opinion, what the women were expressing was that in order for their political participation to be effective, the focus should be on how power works within the political system, i.e. where power is believed to lie, and what influence this brings on the general legislative process.

'Women's issues' in my opinion could be advanced in all departments within government and public service, be they finance, foreign affairs, or military portfolios, because issues of gender, and even more particularly those which have systematically affected women such as domestic and sexual violence, poverty, international chain of care and the myriad of gender-related discrimination, could be effectively addressed within the military, foreign affairs ministries (to curb sex slavery and illegal immigrant labour, which affect more women than men for example), and sex tourism which can be managed within the departments of tourism. These are broader issues faced by many governments today and which cannot be 'ghettoised' into the traditional women's

ministries alone. Of course having said this, I do not wish to negate the significance of setting aside certain ministries within government to deal with issues specific to women. What I argue instead is that such portfolios should first and foremost be allocated significant funding so they can be viewed as playing a central role in society, and secondly, they should not be the only areas where women are relegated to serve, nor should they be the only avenues through which women's issues are channeled, instead gender must be mainstreamed within the Kenyan political system as a whole.

Getting women into parliament is one thing, but the question we need to ask is whether parliament as an institutional structure creates 'separate' spaces for women to articulate 'women's issues' independent of which ministries or portfolios are held? The idea is that women can achieve the 'political autonomy' within the institutional framework and feel 'enabled' to advance their thoughts on issues of importance to them and others. At the moment in Kenya, the situation seems to resonate with what Tamale (2000:12) found in her study of female parliamentarians in the Ugandan parliament that

> it is still extremely difficult for women to achieve political autonomy. Gender inequality affects the social interactions of male and female legislators, and remains an integral part of the parliamentary institutional framework

In other words, it cannot be assumed that once women ascend to parliament they would automatically be in a position to represent 'women' effectively. The entry into parliament is but one among many hurdles that confront women political leaders in the pursuit for gender equality. Busche (2010:3) notes that giving women access to parliament should not be mistaken for "legislative commitment to an agenda for women's issues." I turn now to the next section where I will scrutinise the Kenyan parliament as a site for gender for gender equality.

The Institutional context of Parliament

I mentioned earlier that it is assumed by UN MDG3 that increased numbers of women elected and/or selected to national parliaments are a pre-cursor to women's advancement. Needless to say, this assumption implies, theoretically at least, that "equality between men and women could be achieved in one parliamentary election, if half of its winners were women" (UN, 1992:111). In reality however, and as Mackay (2006:2) observes, the study of substantive representation is too complex and requires a "whole-system approach rather than a narrow focus on whether or not women representatives 'act for' women."

The institutional context in parliament presents a critical dynamic in the ways in which female MPs participate in politics. As Franceschet and Krook (2008: 16) explain,

> [s]ubstantive representation occurs at multiple stages of the legislative process: Women's interests are promoted when legislators introduce women's rights bills; when they seek to mobilize support for these bills…when legislators vote for and pass laws that promote women's rights… outcomes are influenced not merely by the sex of the representative but by the gendered power relations that are reflected in the institutional rules, operating procedures, and informal norms of legislative bodies.

In other words an analysis of substantive representation that disconnects the legislator from her legislative context is inadequate in making as understand the critical links between women's descriptive representation and legislative outcome.

For this study I examined how women participate in the debate process in parliament by inquiring about their perception of the legislative environment and process inside parliament. The respondents echoed what Tamale (2000:12) found in her study of Ugandan parliament, that parliamentary institutional frameworks can

perpetuate gender inequality and affect the way female MPs participate in debates and motions during parliamentary sessions.

> "Sometimes I feel uncomfortable to talk in parliament since it really feels male. The fact that you are talking before an overwhelmingly male audience sends me numb. Because we are very few women within a male-majority parliament, I think parliament should have a rule that women speak first, and uninterrupted by men. I say this because I was once introducing a motion about increasing the maternity leave for women and I was booed down by tens of men in parliament. It made me sick. I don't speak much anymore since that time" – Leah, MP.

> "I think parliament is a battle-field for gender supremacy rather than an institution which I would think can empower us to make major legislative decisions. Sometimes I am frustrated by the fact that women are too few in parliament in comparison to men, and many times we can't have it our way because motions require a minimum threshold vote to go through. On the other hand, men can easily amass enough votes to pass a favourable legislation due to their numbers. The rule there is simple: if the male MPs like you, they support your motion and the reverse is also true." – Wandia, MP.

> "I believe parliament is an important site for women and one where they can make the most impact to advance women's welfare because this is where all laws are made. However, as it stands now, I don't think it has the institutional capacity to give omen space to participate effectively. The reason being that the structures in place were inherited from the colonial government, most which bordered on draconian laws that governed the way business was conducted in the house. They were discriminating on the basis of gender; they gagged media coverage of parliamentary proceedings so that the public could not audit what was going on inside parliament etc. There's a need to open up parliament and engender its structures including standing order, house business units and laws to ensure everyone participates equally without fear or favour." – Wandia, Feminist political activist.

An analysis of the structural barriers emanating from parliament itself and the actual process of legislation which was carried out by the Women's Shadow Parliament (WSP-Kenya, 2008) revealed a strong correlation to the minimal impact which women MPs in Kenya have had on policy across time (1997-2007).

The above responses also suggest that the competence of parliament as an institution is strongly related to the substantive representation of 'women's issues' by female MPs. On the question of voting in parliament for gender-sensitive legislation, analysed bills that had been introduced, withdrawn, passed/supported, or currently in the debate process of debate vis-'a-vis the gender of the MPs. My goal here was to find

out whether female MPs, more than their male counterparts, introduced, supported, or voted for 'women's issues' in parliament, and here opinions were mixed, although it was generally the case that female MPs did not view their primary role in parliament as that of substantive representation.

> Well...sort of, but not really. I think that parliament has its own mood and it does set the stage for what kinds of motions have the chance for further debate. If the mood is positive for a discussion of gender matters then yes I talk about them, but if not I do not. –Bertha, MP

> I talk about issues that affect women when they come up in parliament but that is not my primary role you know...I cannot come from nowhere and introduce a motion of women without getting 'clearance' from various circles. –Pamela, MP

> I really do not think our female MPs act for the common good of women, because they seem to be more concerned with the popular motions in parliament which are often dealing with huge financial deals or real estate matters because they also want a *share of the cake.* –Awiti, feminist scholar

> There are a lot of men who support women's issues sometimes even more than women do in terms of proportion. I think women are satisfied more with their own presence in the house and they do not normally even talk much. They ask for our votes promising to prioritise issues which affect us but when they get to parliament they disappoint us. –Wendo, feminist

I analysed bills across six parliaments with increasing numbers of female MPs to ascertain whether there was a tendency for numerical increase to impact on the number of gender-related legislations, but again this analysis did not show a consistent or increased feminisation of legislation, nor did it indicate that only women supported women's issues. The table on the next page illustrates this analysis.

Some of the bills which have been pending[16] since 1996 were hoped to be passed by the eighth parliament, which has the highest number of women representatives in parliament. Yet Kihara, a parliamentary commentator, told me that all

[16] There are seven stages through which a bill passes to become law. According to the Kenya Hansard (also in the Standing Orders Of the Kenya Legislative Assembly 1963:15-173); a motion is first introduced to floor of the house whether as a private members bill/motion, a private -public bill or a co-operate motion. It is read through before parliament once after which it will be re-introduced after fourteen days and a second reading occurs. Members present have to vote either in favour or against the bill to give a go-ahead for discussion or dismissal. If discussions go on successful further voting is carried out after 21 days for a select committee who are often experts on the pending bill, and are required to scrutinize and interpret the content and impact of the bill, they report back to the House after a further 14 days where a final vote is taken to either endorse or reject the bill (the majority wins). The overall period for bills to be *processed* into law, all factors remaining constant is between 3-6 months.

the four Bills related to marriage and property ownership introduced in parliament within this period are still pending. This is because marriage is a very sensitive issue in Kenyan society and has traditionally been marred with controversy over two conflicting laws regarding its constitution and termination (Nzomo, 1997: 123). Though male members of parliament were particularly unsupportive, with only a paltry 5% supporting the Bill which if passed would harmonize the two laws, not all women supported it, and as a result, it failed to garner the required votes to be passed. In the Kenyan parliament a Bill or motion introduced by a member of parliament, the government or a private citizen requires a two-thirds majority vote by members present in parliament at that session for it to be passed to the president for assent into law (Hansard, 1995). Let me explain here the Kenyan laws as they relate to marriage to illustrate how structural barriers such as the *masculinisation* of parliament (I use masculinisation loosely to refer to a male-majority and hence male-always-have-a-say in parliament), and the paucity of women's numerical presence in parliament has delayed the passage of a crucial law which has had disproportional impact on women. I single out this Bill because it generates controversy in ways in which both male and female MPs view it, and being a central 'women's issue' why more women than men, in terms of proportion in parliament have not supported it.

The Marriage Bill was first introduced to the floor of the house by a female MP in June 1997. At the time there were only six female MPs out of 210 total MPs. This Bill has been re-introduced again three times (1999, 2002, 2007), and even with an increasing number of women MPs across the same period, it has not received enough votes to be discussed in parliament. The Bill received the lowest support from male MPs since they regarded it as a severe threat to the traditional, often male-centred, marriage structure**.** In terms of property ownership between married couples, women's right to property is unequal to that of a man and if a wife does not have male children,

they could lose all that they worked for in a lifetime if their husbands die or a marriage ends (Wanyeki, 2009: 27).

Voting for gender related bills from 1996-2008: An analysis

Year	Bill		Introduced by: MP		Bills supported	
	Pending	Passed	Female (F)	Male (M)	Female	Male
1979		Children's Act		M	100%	50%
Nov 1996		Beijing Platform for Action	F		100%	20%
1999		Establishment of Gender Equality Commission		M	80%	70%
1999		Equality Act	F		100%	90%
2006		Sexual Offences Act	F		80%	60%
Jan 2007		Employment Act		M	100%	100%
May		Political Parties Act		M		
Aug 2007	Special seats for Women Bill		F		35%	10%
Aug	Marriage Bill		F		80%	5%
Sept 2007	Family Protection Bill		Vote post-poned			
Sept 2007	Equal Oppor-tunities Bill		F			
Oct 2007	Affirmative Action		F	Shelved to allow for 'wider'		
Feb 2008	Affirmative Action 2		F		50%	33%

Sources: Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers, Kenya (2010:22-29)

I asked a female MP who had indicated that she supported the Bill what she thought about it, and she told me that:

> I supported this bill because it would give women the long needed freedom to make significant decisions that affect their lives, for example like leaving an abusive marriage, sharing spousal property in the eventuality of divorce, since at

> the moment, women have no right to family property as everything is under a husband's name –Terry, MP

In brief, the Bill "seeks to consolidate all laws relating to marriage by among others" (Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers-Kenya (FIDA-K), 2010:21) harmonising all marriages by providing for rights and responsibilities that are similar in all marriage unions. If passed into law, this Bill could have the following provisions as outlined in FIDA-K (2010:21):

- The unification of marriage laws to minimize the complexity, unpredictability and inefficiency occasioned by the multiplicity of laws on marriage. Currently, there are five Acts of Parliament relating to marriage namely; The Marriage Act, The African Christian Marriage and Divorce Act, The Matrimonial Causes Act, the Subordinate Courts (Separation and Maintenance Act), The Mohammedan Marriage and Divorce Registration Act. These laws complicate the legal settlement of marital conflicts including separation and divorce, as their provisions override one another, and women are often at the receiving end of such complications (ibid).
- The liberty to contract marriages in either civil form or according to the rites of a specified faith.
- The presumption of marriage where a man and a woman having the capacity to marry have lived as husband and wife for two or more years.
- The Centralised registration and issuance of marriage certificates for all forms of marriages.
- The establishment of the age of marriage as 18 years for both parties and invalidation of child marriages.
- The liberty of partners to subsist to marriages contracted under Customary law (traditional law which recognizes polygamy as a form of marriage) which have not been registered, and to apply to the Chief Registrar or District registrar for the registration of marriage.

- The recognition of both polygamous (more than one wife) and monogamous (only one wife) marriages.
- The liberty to convert potentially polygamous marriages into monogamous marriage.
- Declaration of the rights and duties of parties in marriage and its dissolution.

Because of the sharp divide between those for and against this legislation (both male and female MPs), I sought another opinion from an MP who did not particularly support it to understand what she felt about it. She told me that

> I could not support the marriage bill because disagree with some parts of its content. It was proposed by an unmarried member and I think this law is a threat to the traditional institution of marriage in Kenya. I am a staunch Christian and a married woman who believes marriage should be preserved in all its totality. – Ida, MP

Ida's response introduced another very important dimension which, in my view, influenced women (and men)'s political impact[i] on gender-related policy and that is: religious values. I will return to this later in the next chapter, but for now, I let me illustrate how political parties influence the legislative priorities of members.

Political Party Structures and clearance of women candidates

The roe of political parties in determining the legislative choices for party members came out strongly in this study where it was established that political parties have a great influence on attitudes and legislative behaviour of politicians, both men and women. Tremblay (1998: 441) has noted that political parties may limit cross-party cooperation of women on 'women's issues' and hence undermine female MPs' impact on policy. Similarly, the audit by Women's Shadow Parliament-Kenya (2008) found that since political parties in Kenya engaged in electoral rivalry r, cross-party co-

operation is not always possible and women have found themselves being co-opted into such inter-party politics at the expense of consolidating around feminist issues. I spoke to female MPs about this and it was apparent in their responses that political parties did influence their political behaviour. For instance, Ida's party espouses conservative[17] views concerning children and family and she said "I could not support the marriage bill because it would introduce abortion and divorce on demand, something which we do not support as a party and our members nation-wide". On the other hand, Rukia, a member of a political party that promoted more liberal[18] views supported the bill in parliament. Other female MPs also confirmed that party affiliations hugely influenced how they acted politically, saying, for example, that:

> In our party, we want to prioritise rural electrification as a policy agenda, and because this is what has made us more popular than other parties, I do not necessarily think that I should propose a focus towards women's issues. I do not see them as a party priority, well; my party certainly does not. –Deborah, MP

> You see political parties are like two football teams in a competition, you cannot belong to both; it is either one or the other. Inter-party co-operation is very difficult and in fact my party leader would withdraw my membership if I was seen coalescing with women from enemy parties. –Zubedah, MP

> I ran on an ODM [Orange Democratic Movement] ticket and was very easy to win since the party was already very popular at the time, and still is. Also the fact that our party leader was a presidential aspirant who was very popular with people nationally made it really easy for us. The downside though has always been that we put the party interests first before our own so it is difficult to talk about women's issues in parliament if my party does not find this a priority. –Maxi, MP

Similarly, Duverger (1955) and Chaney (2006) have shown as that in fact party affiliation, more than gender, explains the priorities and voting patterns of female MPs. Chaney (2006:697) explains that,

[17] I use conservative here loosely to refer to traditional views about such issues as family and children within the Kenyan society. Traditionalists argue see divorce and abortion as the greatest threat to the family institution and political parties which encompass such thinking tend to have a huge following mainly from the majority overwhelmingly Christian population in Kenya.

[18] By liberal I mean the sort of anti-traditionalist thinking that is now emerging on the Kenyan political scene, a group of political activists who are questioning some of the cultural traditions which have undermined progress towards a fair and equitable Kenya society. Some of the things which liberal thinkers have stood for in the recent past have been; pro-choice, promoting gender equity, recognition of homosexuality and the protection of persons with homosexual orientation from prejudice etc.

> "because of its potential influence on the gender dynamics of political debate and the substantive representation of women. It operates in relation to both party political and legislative institutional contexts and shapes how political parties address gender – and other modes of – equality in their political programmes and day-to day politicking. At a party level ideology is important.

Lovenduski (2005:59) stress that, "political parties institutionalise ideas about politics that have gendered implications."

Gender quotas and Substantive Representation in Kenya

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the introduction of the law on Affirmative Action and gender quotas in Kenya in 2005 was an important step in regulating the operational structures of political parties and it was hoped that it would enhance women's independence within the parties. The law requires political parties to reserve 30% of their parliamentary nominations for women. However, many respondents I spoke to said this did not always translate into actual policies. In fact, during the last general election in Kenya in 2007, only 7 women got nominated through quotas out of a possible of 42[19] (if quotas were implemented to the latter). Quotas and reserves have also not been found favourable particularly by women themselves. Women who are selected to Parliament through quotas are seen as weak representatives and their participation undervalued in legislative processes.

The feminist scholar Muthoni Wanyeki who I spoke to argued that quotas weaken and delegitimise those who are appointed through them. I interviewed an MP who was nominated through the quota system, and she said:

> I do not feel very confident to make contributions in parliament since I often get the feeling that I am politically inferior to my colleagues who came in through

[19] If all political parties were to implement quotas as is required by law, 30% women in all the 12 major political parties in Kenya would put the number of nominated women MPs to 42, but since not all parties implement this requirement, only a few of them have nominated women through the quotas

> competitive elections. It is like I could not go through campaigns because I would not make as a woman and something had to be done.

Writing on the issue of quotas in India, Shirin Rai (2000: 163) explains that, should the quotas "not recognize multiple oppressions, it can lead to political exclusion – on the grounds of gender as well as gender/caste/race for example – it loses legitimacy over a period of time as the sub-elites within targeted groups assume disproportionate importance" an observation that is consistent with this study's findings.

Besides political ideologies and party-related quotas impacting on the substantive representation of women in Kenya, more popular political parties also often tend to be concentrated in urban areas where elite networks finance and sustain them, locking out many women who are mostly living in rural areas of Kenya (Nzomo & Kibwana, 2003:17). In rural areas, economic constraints as well as proximity to natural resources make it difficult for parties to wield much influence since they are not as popular nationally; hence candidates from such parties are less likely to win political positions which demand nation-wide endorsements (ibid:18). It is therefore apparent that women would have to overcome hurdles around party structural issues, ideologies and affiliations in order to effectively participate as party members, candidates and MPs.

In this chapter I have analysed why increasing female representation has not concurrently led to an increased representation of gender issues in the Kenyan legislature and in particular analysed institutional power and the effect on the general perception of women's ministries in Kenya, the role of parliament as a crucial structural component that facilitates and/or hinders effective participation by female MPs, in how the House rules and how operational framework may exacerbate gender inequality in how male and female MPs discuss motions and the potential for successful deliberations. I have finally discussed how political party ideologies, party quotas and

popularity influence the legislative behaviour of parliamentarians and impact on substantive representation of women in the Kenyan politics.

Closely related to the question of institutional structures and their role in enhancing women's substantive representation is the issue of political activism itself and here I refer to the individual characteristics of female MPs i.e. the 'who?' of substantive representation. In other words who does it take to represent a claim for 'women's issues'? To answer this question I turn now to the next chapter to analyse the beliefs and actions of those women who are elected.

Chapter Five: Analysis Two

How Individual Characteristics of Female MPs influence their Substantive Role

I begin this chapter with a little ethnographic moment I experienced while on my flight from Heathrow airport in London to Nairobi to commence this research. When I boarded the plane and sat down in my seat, I did not know that I would have my first interview right there before I even reached the field! I was lucky to sit next to a very elegant lady who looked to be in her early 60s. I later learnt that she was a former Ugandan politician who had served in the cabinet as head of various ministries for more than fifteen years. She told me about her experiences as a female Member of Parliament, the only woman to hold a full ministerial position at the time. She said that in Uganda, affirmative action has been severely abused by powerful men who amended the constitution to allow their spouses to serve with them in government. I also learnt that in Uganda, the majority of the female Parliamentarians are in fact wives of powerful men in the same government, who exercise absolute power over the women, and said this made it very difficult for women there to drive their own agendas.

This exchange aboard the flight enhanced my belief that my hypothesis was likely to be valid, as I did not believe that the sheer increase in numbers of female MPs would automatically lead to a better representation of women's issues, partly because different women represented different interests depending on how they got into power in the first place (as the Ugandan case above suggests), but mostly because women are not homogeneous. As Carroll (2001: xv) rightly observes, "[t]hey differ not only from

men but also among themselves in their backgrounds, their political ideologies and their perception of their roles as public officeholders." Besides, Tremblay (1998) has argued that not all women are committed to the feminist cause, as they may simply not be feminists. Lovenduski and Hills (1981) have also found in previous studies that some women in political decision-making positions felt little or no obligation to represent 'women's issues'. I found this to be true with some of my interviewees, as the comments below illustrate,

> "When I am in parliament, I am a people's representative first and foremost, before I am a woman. I do not see myself as a woman first because I am not there only to represent women. I am not voted in by women alone." –Rukia, MP
>
> "My constituency is made up of both men and women in all their categories of age, religion, ethnicity, marital status, education, social status etc. I cannot represent any category at the exclusion of the other. That is not being a representative!" –Atieno, MP
>
> "I am not a feminist first and foremost. I am married, have a husband and children who are both boys and girls. I do not buy into this Western feminist views about representing women's rights as a politician, since, this means asking for equality between men and women which is impossible. I want to be a family woman as well as a politician, not a feminist" –Virginia, MP

The MPs' opinions support my critique of MDG3, in which it is presumed that increasing the proportion of women in national parliaments will automatically lead to better representation of women's interests on the national agenda, lead to political empowerment for women and improve women's welfare in general (UNDP MDG3). The responses also challenge the assumptions that because women share some descriptive characteristics of gender, they will automatically protect women's interests in parliament. Ford (2002: 136) has noted explicitly that:

> simply electing more women to office will not directly translate into the adoption of feminist policies [as] there is considerable diversity among women as a whole, as well as among women office-holders.

I agree with Lovenduski and Hills' (1981) observation that, women's welfare can only be improved when other factors are improved and not just by merely increasing their numerical representation in parliament and the political arena in general:

> In order to change an unfavourable economic, social and domestic condition, women must seek not only to enter the political arena in greater numbers, but also expand it to include 'private' issues on the public agenda. Women currently in positions of political leadership bear major responsibility for initiating this dual strategy. Unfortunately there is evidence that many women in such positions feel little obligation to their sex (ibid: 328).

Although I concur with Clark (1991:64) that,

> [r]epresentative government is justified on the assumption that the representative body is a microcosm of the entire population and can be readily substituted for a democratic convocation of the whole people,

I do not necessarily agree with the assumption that, "an office holder represents constituents whose social characteristics he or she shares. The leader hence empathises with that constituency and identifies its interests with his or her own" (ibid: 64).

My doubts stem from the responses of the MPs when I asked them individually what they believed to be their greatest motivation to join politics was, and as shown below, except for Rukia, most of the respondents did not see their role in parliament as that of substantive representatives of women.

> Rukia: "I have always had a desire for social change and particularly promote women's rights and I believe parliament gives me a greater platform to address these issues".
>
> Renea: "Because my family has always been a political one".
>
> Nancy: "I think I enjoy being in the public domain. I make new friends nationally and internationally".
>
> Atieno: "My career aspiration was always to become a career politician. This is why I studied political science in America".

> Terry: “To represent my local community. They always motivated me to join politics and for me, serving them in this office is really satisfying”.
>
> Cherono: “My friends have influenced me a lot towards politics. Also my husband is a politician and he has supported me a lot”.
>
> Onyango: “mmh, actually a terrible tragedy got me into politics. I lost someone so close to gunmen in my town and I wanted to protest this insecurity so that no more lives could be lost. I decided to run for office and got elected”.
>
> Debora: “I have had a long friendship with a politician, and when they asked me to consider joining politics I actually did”.

As evidenced from the opinions sampled here, the diversity in motivation and political ambition for participants reflects their heterogeneity.

On the other hand though, these responses challenge any assumptions that female MPs would substantively represent women because they share similar descriptive characteristics. As Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers (2007:554) argue, electing more women in parliament

> maybe necessary but insufficient cause of women’s substantive representation. It is also possible that sheer numbers of women are not a necessary condition for legislating women's policy issues and that small numbers of women who are well-situated may be able to deliver women's substantive representation.

The authors are skeptical of descriptive representation arguing that, ‘[e]lecting more women could mean electing fewer women motivated by the absence of women in politics to "act for" other women or it may make no difference at all (ibid:554). Similarly, Ford (2002: 144) argues that,

> [s]imply having women represent women does not in itself result in substantive representation. Rather, “it is the election of feminists which constitutes the best guarantee that a correlation between *standing for* and *acting for* representation will be established [since] it is feminists who are more likely to speak and act in favour of women’s interests.”

Ford raises an important question regarding women non-feminists, and though there are different kinds of feminisms, the fact that the central goal of feminists in Kenya is to

redress systemic discrimination against women is a reasonable starting point when gauging whether or not feminist politicians 'act for' other women.

It was striking when I interviewed women who did not consider themselves feminists particularly in the way they vehemently shunned this 'label'. Manuela Picq (2011) a researcher on indigenous people's rights in the Amazon (Brazil) makes similar observations about the 'stigmatisation' of the feminist 'label' in Latin America. Picq observes that although the participation of women in Latin American politics has increased drastically over the last decade especially with the democratic election of women as heads of states (Latin America now has 4 of the 19 female heads of state in the world-ipu.org),

> [y]et female candidates have so far refrained from invoking women's rights to win elections. In fact, it was a man who first used a feminist argument against his female opponent... none of the female presidents was elected on a feminist platform. As strong leaders, often with feminist credentials, they frequently advance women's rights once in office but do not make gender an electoral focus during their campaigns (Al Jazeera.net August 4th, 2011).

In Kenya, it is not uncommon for women to shy away from the feminist identity even if their views and opinions reflect one. Others perceive feminist ideology in a negative way often associating it with male-bashing and they therefore reject any association with it. Renea for instance was slightly offended when I asked her if she was a feminist. She answered: 'I don't like women who think men are bad, I hate it (frowning), and I would never become one of them'. When I asked her whether she thought there was any link between female politicians and feminism, she answered with an affirmative "no" and asked back: "are you one of them [feminists]? Are you? I would not do an interview with you if all you were asking me was about gender things. I owe nothing to gender. I have fought my way to politics, not through gender". Renea's response echoes Margaret Thatcher's, who, when asked about her opinion of the

women's liberation movement, responded: 'what's it ever done for me?' (New Statesman 7th October 1977), and provides strong evidence that merely electing more women into parliament only provides a probability but does not determine the substantive representation of women (Chaney, 2006:691).

Feminism and English language as neo-colonial 'imposition'

The issue of language has been raised by feminist post-colonial scholars such as Mohanty (1991) and Ponzanesi (2004) among others, who ask critical questions about the tendency in feminist scholarship to privilege the use of English language over other languages in (re)presenting the experiences of women of other cultures particularly those from the global south, which paradoxically links them to the oppressive colonial history. As Ponzanesi (2004: xiv) illuminates,

> [T]he undisputed role of the English language within the post-colonial debate and literatures signals the need to address these neo-colonial allegations in their manifold articulations. Since language is embedded in power relationships, it is crucial to address the source of the present linguistic hierarchies and the effects that these protracted colonial hegemonies have on the representation and consumption of cultural difference.

Engaging the female MPs on the issue of articulating 'women's issues' in parliament and among their constituents was not unproblematic as MPs responses drew my attention to feminism as a political thought and the issue of language . I was particularly struck by the frequency with which I heard opinions which tended to classify feminism as a foreign, Western idea. Awiti for instance told me that,

> Feminism is bad for Africa. It is a neo-colonial concept that is used again to represent us [African women] as backward and in need of deliverance by Anglo-American feminists. These feminists advocate for divorce, gay marriage, and abortion on demand, issues that are "anti-African"-Awiti, MP

Similarly, Onyango told me that she could not translate feminist scholarship presented in English to her constituents.

> If I ask the male parents in my culture to send their children to school regardless of their sex because it is good for our societal development, they will listen and do it. But when I use foreign [translated 'Western'] words like 'gender equality' as the motive behind my argument [asking parents not to discriminate between the sexes of their children when giving them educational opportunities] parents will reject this all together. So you see why language makes all the difference when talking about gender issues to communities?

Having said that, I understood what some interviewees meant when talking about their own political expediency in the way they used words to appeal to their constituency and achieve certain goals. In essence what the MPs were telling me was that they recognised that language is not innocent and that and although changing the words did not imply necessarily changing the goals of achieving a better representation for women in Kenya, it is necessary to be critical of the power within the language.

'Women's issues' are not homogeneous, they are situated

I demonstrated in Chapter Two how scholars have engaged with and theorised the notion of 'women's issues' without arriving at a conclusive definition of the concept. Carroll (2001: xiii) has noted this difficulty in defining what women who hold public office are expected to distinctively represent, stressing that often it is distilled into the "static and essentialised conceptions of the category women and of concepts such as women's interests". The traditional understanding of the concept of women's interests has always been the interests of white, middle-class; heterosexual women whose interests have been collectivised and universalised without regard to women in other contexts who experience completely different lived realities (ibid: xiii). Indeed feminist scholars of subaltern groups such as Mohanty (1991) have raised a red flag

over such generalisations, arguing that they exclude the experiences and 'interests' of non-white, non-middle class and non-heterosexual women. Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers (2007:554) have equally observed that because women's experiences are socially constructed, and they vary widely based on the specific processes of construction, 'women's issues' differ from context to context, across and within states and across time. The authors further explain that,

> [w]omen's issues in the U.S. in the nineteenth century included, for example, temperance, suffrage, child-labor, public libraries, etiquette, and children's discipline. At the same time in Britain, women's issues focused on women's rights as autonomous citizens in marriage, married women's property ownership, women's rights in divorce, and child custody...in parts of Africa and the Middle East, female genital mutilation, veiling, citizenship rights, and early marriage are the substance of political and social movements on behalf of women...Because women's substantive representation differs across time and space, what it means to be successful on behalf of women's interests is governed by dynamics of culture and history. (ibid: 554)

Participants in this study unsurprisingly also had divided views on what they regarded as 'women's issues' although most of their responses reflected traditional views about motherhood and caring, and this reinforced my position that there can be no homogenous 'women's issues' that covers all women everywhere and at all times.

> For me anything that deals with family, children, farming and welfare constitute women's issues. We are the mothers, wives, farmers, nurses, teachers so anything that touches on these areas is a women's issue –Atieno, MP

> That women have better health care and they can have efficient and accessible ante-natal and post-natal care is important to me and other women who are mothers –Onyango, MP

> I think it's everything about home-making and motherhood. It is important that mothers are supported to help raise stable families so that there is no such thing as divorce or single motherhood –Nancy, MP

> Women's issues are everything that affects us as women: HIV/AIDs, Female Genital Mutilation, the burden of traditional gender roles, discrimination in schools, poverty, and marital violence, sexual and gender-based violence and early marriage for our girls – Rukia, MP

What was even more striking from the female MPs responses was how they responded to the next question, when I asked whether their own understanding of 'women's issues' influenced their support for such and related bills in parliament. I asked them if they supported the marriage bill (explained above) and if they did not, the reasons why:

> I could not support the marriage bill because I disagree with some parts of its content. It was proposed by an unmarried member and I think this law is a threat to the traditional institution of marriage in Kenya. I am a staunch Christian and a married woman who believes marriage should be preserved in all its totality. I don't like unmarried members in parliament because they are too radical and their views are inconsistent with our traditional values. –Ida, MP
>
> I supported the bill because marriage is the single-most institution in Kenya where most women suffer as a result of a lack of comprehensive laws to deal with marriage. As I told you, early marriages affect more girls than boys in this country, and a law which criminalises early marriage would make parents more responsible for their children and support their education. –Rukia, MP
>
> Do you support divorce and homosexuality? [She asked me directly, also unexpectedly!] I don't and will never support this bill unless it is amended to remove the clauses which make it possible for couples to be granted divorce on demand nor would I ever support any attempt to recognize *unethical* [italics are mine because I disagree with her terminology] sexual behaviour. –Onyango, MP

In order to elaborate these responses further, I will now show how religious beliefs play a role in determining feminist legislation politics in Kenya.

According to the Census Report (2009:74), approximately 80% of Kenyans are active Christians, about 10% practice Islam and less than 1% other religions including Hindu, Baha'i, Sikhism and traditional African Religion. Very few people are atheists. I was raised Christian and I categorise myself as one to this day, and therefore as a Christian feminist academic interviewing an overwhelmingly Christian political women it was challenging to embody my subjectivities especially when I had to ask some *sensitive* questions (or regarded so among Christian groups), which implied to my interviewees that I had already taken a position, in many cases seen as *un*-Christian. This happened for example when I told Onyango after the interview that I do not support homophobia because I see it in the same way as I see racism or other kinds

discrimination based on gender, ability, ethnicity etc. She was shocked because in her opinion, all feminists were anti-Christianity/religion, in the same way that I encounter some feminists thinking that religion is anti-feminist. I believe that there are lot synergies between religion and feminism which could be explored, but it must be stated that the most commonly expressed religious views that I encountered were in opposition to what I have characterised as being feminist, particularly with regards to the amendments to the laws surrounding marriage.

Beside comments on religion which came out quite often, other factors that influence what women defined as 'women's issues' included:

Age &Marital status- Older women MPs were for example less likely to support progressive legislation than were younger members of parliament. Onyango (above) is in her late 60s and she told me she had a 'moral' duty and political responsibility to preserve African family values, and could not therefore support laws which threatened such values. On the other hand, Rukia and others in their 30s and 40s were vocal and supportive of laws which allowed divorce and criminalised sexual offences including marital rape.

Education- Interestingly, did not seem to influence the legislative behaviour of MPs significantly. Although more educated female MPs were likely to conceptualise their roles within the representational framework such as representing specific interests, this was not always reflected in their legislative choices, and due largely I believe to the factors discussed in the previous chapter relating to political parties and other structural factors.

Descriptive networks-There were also networks forged around commonalities shared among female MPs along such lines as ethnicity, age, ideological opinion, political background (grassroots activism or affiliation) etc, and within these networks women rallied support around one another, but did not necessarily support (in parliament) other women whom they did not feel close to.

Voter discrimination of women candidates

The debate on whether or not women support female candidates has not much attention from scholars, and yet voter attitudes towards female parliamentary candidates in this study were found to have some impact on the substantive representation of 'women's issues' by female MPs. Wood (2009:203) has argued that women tend to scrutinise political candidates more than men, saying that,

> Women's performance tend to be more scrutinised than men's and judged by stricter standards, making it harder for women to be perceived by others as competent...male candidates tend to be judged as whether they show promise, whereas female candidates tend to be judged on accomplishments.

In Kenya, female MPs told me they are less likely to be voted in by other women, and when they succeed they are evaluated on factors such as; marital status, political ideologies, social status and track record.

> Women could not vote for me because I am unmarried. They preferred a male candidate who in my opinion very undeserving, politically unmotivated; his only qualification being that he is a married man –former parliamentary candidate.

> Muslim women did not vote for me because they said I did not wear a veil. This is in spite of fighting to have the government allocate money for electricity in my constituency during my previous term – Maria, former MP.

The MPs also told me that because of a lack of support from the female community their motivation to support 'women's issues' was weakened;

> I know many women fight me and do not give me their votes. I am here because men voted for me. Women do not believe in fellow women. I fight more for men because without them, I would not be here – Lenah, MP

The table below illustrates this problem clearly, showing that despite there being more female voters than male there is still a very low success rate for female candidates. This is perhaps the clearest illustration that women rarely support female candidates:

Province	**Male**	**Female**	**candidates vs elected**	
Nairobi	1,605,230	1,533,139	41	3
Central	2,152,983	2,230,760	47	4
Coast	1,656,679	1,668,628	22	0
Eastern	2,783,347	2,884,776	57	3
North Eastern	1,258,648	1,052,109	2	0
Nyanza	2,617,734	2,824,977	17	0
Rift Valley	5,026,462	4,980,343	48	6
Western	2,091,375	2,242,907	15	0
Total Population	**19,192,458**	**19,417,639**	**249**	**16**

Source: Census Report 2009.

The Eastern province for instance, which has the second highest female population in Kenya, and had the highest number of female parliamentary candidates (57), only voted in three female parliamentarians. However, according to Women's Shadow Parliament-Kenya, an NGO which supports women's bid to parliament, Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces stood the best chance of producing the highest number of female parliamentarians, since female candidates there were running on the tickets of the major political parties. Of the 48 female candidates in Rift Valley who were running for the parliamentary seats only six were elected, while in Nairobi only three out of the 41 candidates made it through. The North Eastern province, which has a total of 11 constituencies, only had two female parliamentary candidates, both of whom lost the election. Four provinces (Nyanza, Western, North Eastern and Coast) with a combined female population of nearly 10 million did not elect any female candidates to

parliament. Clearly, these figures demonstrate that women did not generally support female candidates for parliamentary bids in the 2007 general election. This further downplays the assumption that women would 'act' as a block whether as voters or office-holders, and that it is necessary to address the underlying cultural attitudes and stereotypes about women and power in order to change the way society views women.

Voter discrimination and accountability for women

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the question of whether or not female MPs are accountable to women is a difficult one to answer. Although I illustrated that some scholars like Carroll (2003a:4) would like to see female political actors become accountable to the women's movement, the views of MPs expressed above indicate that this would have to depend on whether women overwhelmingly support female candidates for parliament. Without a show of solidarity form the community of female voters, it becomes unrealistic to expect female parliamentarians to feel 'obligated' to represent 'women's issues'. Besides this and as I have argued elsewhere in this report, ignoring the individual characteristics of female MPs and the diversity in thought and preference obscures the complexity of political realities for women and the circumstance sin which they make certain policy preferences and not other. And as Lovenduski (2005:3) has observed,

> [w]omen representatives operate in a context in which expectations are insensitive not only to sex and gender differences, but also to the constraints of different political arenas, cultures and processes or of the real achievements that have resulted from feminist interventions in politics.

The last two chapters have contributed to our knowledge of gender equality and 'difference' in politics. I have demonstrate and as we also saw in Chapter Two that female MPs in Kenya, as anywhere else, are not homogenous and cannot therefore be expected to 'act' so given the differences in cultural beliefs, age, ethnic background, personal motivations and allegiances. I have also illustrated that descriptive representation is not sufficient for substantive representation to occur, and that there is need to confront other critical components of representative politics like ensuring institutional and political good will as well as building the capacity of feminist politicians to work as a group in order to realise greater representation of 'women's issues in Kenya. The goal has to go beyond mere numbers or the attainment of a 'critical mass' of female MPs and focus on structures that enhance and promote women's access and participation power in the Kenya politics, but it is also clear that increased female representation would be a 'good' thing, and that one of the reasons for this not occurring is the voting habits of the population, including the women. Both Chapters Four and Five have demonstrated that ignoring the aforementioned fundamental links obscures research validity and reduces the possibility for researchers to make honest conclusions on the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation of women in the political arena. I will now move on to the Chapter Six which will form the conclusion of this report, and it is here that I will explore recommendations that may inform policy interventions toward enhancing substantive representation of 'women's issues' in Kenya.

Chapter Six: Recommendations & Conclusions

This research is the first empirical attempt to study Kenyan women in political decision-making that explores the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in public offices. The purpose of this research was to establish the missing links between descriptive and substantive representation of women. This study has confirmed my hypothesis that institutional competence and individual characteristics of female MPs are critical factors that could enhance attention to 'women's issues' in parliament.

From the findings in this study, there is sufficient ground to support an argument that descriptive representation of women in the Kenyan parliament is necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the substantive representation of 'women's issues'. This conclusion is similar to that of Tremblay (1998) and Devlin & Elgie (2008) who carried out similar studies in Canada and Rwanda respectively. These findings also challenge the linear accounts of representative democracy found in much of literature on women and political representation, particularly the 'critical mass' theories by demonstrating that beyond the 'critical' numbers, it takes specific actors and an enabling structural/institutional environment for political representatives to commit to an agenda of 'women's issues' in parliament. As I illustrated in Chapters Four and Five, even if gender matters in terms of equal representation, it does not provide the guarantee that women will view their role as that of 'women's representatives.' Sheila Meintjes (2003:236) advises that gender mainstreaming must mean more than simply increasing descriptive representation in what I described in Chapter Two as 'tokenism' arguing that women who are integrated must nurture the political will for feminist ideas, and

that links between parliamentarians and the women's movement and the civil society must be strengthened in order to achieve a gender transformation of politics (ibid: 236). In other words, although it is important that both men and women are equally represented in politics, substantive representation by female political leaders also requires structural and institutional commitment to gender equality that goes beyond the 'politics of presence[20]'in both parliament and other institutional appointments. In addition to institutional structures, there is need to consolidate an active and influential feminist group both inside and outside parliament that has strong and sustained links to women's rights NGOs in order to caucus around 'women's issues', create awareness about them in the community and effectively politicise them as part of a feminist claim.

'Critical actors' and not 'critical mass' make change

Although female political representation in the current Kenya parliament is a mere 9.9%, this study has found little indication that attaining a 'critical mass' of female MPs is likely to have a drastic impact on feminist legislation. I showed in Chapter Four that the increasing numbers had little tangible bearing on policy impact and that in most cases party affiliations played a major role in policy decisions to an extent that in certain political parties, men[21] supported 'women's issues' proportionately more than women of differing party affiliations.

These compounded findings strongly point to a move beyond numbers and 'critical mass' to 'critical actors[22]' and a study of individual 'acts' that lead to a

[20] This is a term theorised by Ann Phillips (1995) and commonly used in the context of descriptive representation to refer to women's numerical representation and the advocacy for 'women's issues'

[21] I did not interview men but I came to this conclusion by analysing the gender-related pieces of legislation that were supported by both male and female MPs, as well as reading through different party manifestos

[22] The term was first used by Childs & Krook (2009:126) to refer to "those who act individually or collectively to bring about women-friendly policy change. I use it in the same way here.

representation of 'women's issues'. I illustrated earlier that in 2005, an action of one nominated female MP in Kenya, the Hon. Njoki Ndung'u (2002-2007) who introduced and lobbied for the passing of the Sexual Offences Bill, now a Law in Kenya. The law criminalises all forms of sexual violence including marital rape and all kinds of sexual assault. As Okello (2010) notes, Hon. Njoki Ndung'u is one clear demonstration of the influence and impact that committed female leaders ('critical actors') can use to shape the country's policy-making processes. On the other hand, significant bills that could drastically impact on the lives of women in Kenya such as the marriage bill discussed in Chapter Five, are still pending before the post-2007 parliament which also has the largest number of female MPs in the country's history. If women's influence is to be measured by their ability to get their legislation passed by Parliament (in the case of Kenya), since the passage of legislation means new advantages, then the findings in Kenya cast a bleak picture on the relationship between the numbers of women and their influence in Parliament. As I have argued before, perhaps the election of feminists and not just women in greater numbers is a better guarantee for substantive representation.

Participants in this study also warned of divisions among female representatives fuelled by male MPs. Rukia, one of the vocal female parliamentarians I interviewed told me that there is "a divide and rule mechanism used by men to destabilise the women's vote especially when the motion is unpopular with the men". She explained that the increasing visibility of women in parliament had not gone down well with men, who, fearing that the status quo will be destabilised, have done everything possible to pit women against themselves and divide their positions on crucial legislation that had the potential to empower women. Another respondent told me of how her Bill to introduce a 50-seat reservation for women in parliamentary and civic elections was shot down by the female parliamentarians, who "bought the male argument that such a law would lead

to appointing unqualified women to parliament" - Deborah MP. She explained that it was difficult to mobilise women to speak in one voice over legislative decisions, because of opposing party stances and political loyalties, which women owed to their party leaders. Some women (like men), are more concerned with strategising for re-election rather than focusing on legislation, since, "securing re-election is always uncertain." She also cautioned against the assumption that Parliament is a site for women's empowerment, noting that "if women are not strong, political participation could compromise their integrity and personal commitments to issues they held important before entering Parliament."

The views expressed by the participants above demonstrate a need for forged unity among female parliamentarians, supported by feminist organisations and other NGOs working to consolidate and strengthen women's political base and enhance their independence. Female MPs need greater support in organising for caucusing events such as retreats and motivational workshops that will create a platform where feminist MPs can inspire one another to take up feminist causes.

This argument is in no way however a closure to the debate on 'critical mass' and substantive representation. As I showed in Chapter One, Kenya is still doing very poorly with respect to women's representation in public offices. With only 9.9% of women represented in parliament, the lowest across the larger Eastern African region and one of the lowest in the world (see ipu.org), more women should be facilitated into leadership positions in Kenya and future research should seek to find out whether attaining a 'critical mass' will have a drastic and gendered impact on the Kenya politics.

Towards a substantive representation in Kenya: Further recommendations

This study has attempted a deeper understanding of the relationship between 'standing for' and 'acting for' women in order to find out how the gap between these two forms of representation might be closed. I have presented data here which sustains an argument that strengthening the institutional capacity or competence of parliament to commit to gender mainstreaming and create genuine platforms for female MPs is critical towards enhancing their substantive representation of 'women's issues'. Secondly, I have demonstrated the need to address societal attitudes towards female political leaders through awareness creation and media campaigns that project women as political equals regardless of their marital status and personal lifestyle since it is not uncommon in Kenya for voters to discriminate against unmarried women candidates, or those who do not seem to adhere to certain norms (notice that one Muslim MP said she could not be re-elected because she did not wear a veil during campaign even though her previous record of leadership was laudable).

Finally in charting the way forward to a substantive representation of 'women's issues' in Kenya, Ballington & Karam (2005:251-2) provide important insights to consider, and these I have illustrated in this study as well. Firstly, I agree with the authors that the establishment of institutional support for 'women issues' that monitors the implementation of policies and recommendations made by various stake-holders in the women's movement is of paramount importance. Secondly, in view of the findings in this study, particularly where weak institutional structures and gender-insensitive operational rules in parliament mean that after women get elected to parliament they

still have to confront gender biases and intimidation by male-majority parliament. This study recommends a review of Standing Orders during parliamentary debates in order to give pre-eminence to female MPs to speak first so that they do not feel intimidated by an out-spoken male majority in parliament.

I also recommend the use of incentives to enhance the capacity of women leaders both in electoral politics as well as female organisers to give them confidence and equip them with skills in public speaking, political campaigning and overall leadership. I suggest the use of women's leadership training schools and creating media programs that utilise female public officials as role models for other women who aspire to for public careers. In addition, awareness-raising around the issue of 'women's rights,' particularly using the platform already created by the women's movement in Kenya would inspire a greater sense of solidarity among women and consolidate support for gender-sensitive legislation. This would involve training women as grass-roots leaders and enhancing their capacity to provide leadership among rural women, increasing active participation and holding government to account, thereby creating an enabling environment for women's engagement and contribution in politics and public life.

This report being an initial investigation should only be seen as the beginning of the debate about women's political participation and their gendered impact on policy in Kenya politics. It provides a starting point for further research into the gender and politics of representation in Kenya and beyond, and it is my hope that the findings and recommendations of this study will be of use to those who, like me, would like to see a constructive transformation of the Kenyan society into a gender-aware nation and one that is responsive to the diverse needs of its citizens.

Bibliography

Acker, S. (2000), 'In/out/side: Positioning the researcher in feminist qualitative research', *Resources for Feminist Research* **28** (3/4), 153–172.

Afifu, Tom (2008), 'Party Clearance: Women in Kenya Politics' Nairobi: Women's Shadow Parliament-Kenya

Alston, P. (2005), 'Ships passing in the night: the current state of the human rights and development debate seen through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals', *Human rights quarterly* **27** (3), 755–829.

Banks, J. (1998), 'The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in *a multicultural society', Educational Researcher **27** (7), 4–17.*

Ballington, J & Karam, A., eds. (2005), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Bauer, G. & Britton, H. (2006), *Women in African Parliaments*, Lynne Rienner Publishers

Bauer, G. & Tremblay, M., eds. (2011), *Women in Executive Power: A Global Overview*. London: Routledge

Beckwith, K. & Cowell-Meyers, K. (2007), 'Sheer numbers: Critical representation thresholds and women's political representation', *Perspectives on politics* **5** (03), 553–565.

Busche, Heidi. (2010), 'The Missing Link: Examining the Relationship Between the Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Women in the UK'. *Western Political Science Association.* Available : http://ssrn.com/abstract=1581168. (Accessed on 2 August 2011).

BBC News: England Riots: 'The Whites Have Become Blacks', says David Starkey@bbc.co.uk. Posted on 13 August 2011(Accessed on 13 August 2011).

Carroll, Susan. (1984), 'Woman Candidates and Support for Feminist Concerns: the Closet Feminist Syndrome', Political *Research Quarterly* 37 (2), **307-323**

---------- **(1994).** *Women as candidates in American politics***.** Bloomington: Indianan University Press

---------- **ed. (2001),** *Impact of Women in Public Office.*_Bloomington: Indiana University Press

---------- **ed. (2003a),** *Women and American Politics***:** *New Questions, New Directions.* New York: Oxford University Press

---------- **(2003b), '**Are U.S. Women State Legislators Accountable to Women? The Complementary Roles of Feminist Identity and Women's Organizations', St. John's College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 2-3,

Chaney, Paul. (2006) 'Critical Mass, Deliberation and the Substantive Representation of Women: Evidence from the UK's Devolution Programme', *Political Studies,* 56, 691-714.

Childs, S. & Krook, M. (2009), 'Analyzing Women's Substantive Representation: From Critical Mass to Critical Actors', *Government and Opposition* **44** (2), 125–145.

Clark, J. (1991), 'Getting there: Women in political office', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* pp. 63–76.

Dahlerup, D. (1988), 'From a small to a large minority: women in Scandinavian politics', *Scandinavian Political Studies* **11** (4), 275–298.

---------- **(2005) '**Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas**,'** in **Karam, Azza. & Ballington, Julie.eds. (2005),** *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Revised ednn. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
---------- **(2006)**, *Women, Quotas and Politics*. London: Routledge

Duverger, M. (1955), *The political role of women,* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

Devlin, C & Elgie, R. (2008), 'The Effect of Increased Women's Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda'. *Parliamentary Affairs,* 61 (2) pp. 237-254. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1442268 (Accessed 05 August 2008)

Elliott, B. (2005), *Using narrative in social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches,* London: Sage Publications

England, K. (1994), 'Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research', *The Professional Geographer* **46** (1), 80–89.

Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers-Kenya (FIDA-K). (2010), 'Gender Audit Study of the 10th Parliament,' Nairobi: FIDA-Kenya.

Franceschet, S & Piscopo, J. (2008), 'Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina. *Politics &* Gender, 4, pp 393-425 (Online)
Available:http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=2183572 (Accessed 1 August 2011)

Franceschet, S. & Krook, M. (2008), 'Measuring the Impact of Quotas on Women's Substantive Representation: Towards a Conceptual Framework' Paper Presented at the

Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, Boston: MA , August 28-31. Available: http://krook.wustl.edu/pdf/Franceschet_Krook_APSA_2008.pdf (Accessed on 10 August, 2011)

Ford, L. (2002), *Women and politics: the pursuit of equality*, Houghton Mifflin College Div.

Gillham, B. (2005), *Research interviewing: The range of techniques*, Open University Press.

Hartsock, N. (1999), *The feminist standpoint revisited and other essays*, Westview Press Boulder, CO.

Harvey, W. (2010), 'Methodological Approaches for Interviewing Elites', *Geography Compass* **4** (3), 193–205.

Henig, R. & Henig, S. (2001), *Women and political power: Europe since 1945*, Psychology Press.

Herod, Andrew. (1999), 'Reflections on Interviewing foreign elites: Praxis, Positionality, valididty, and the cult of the insider' Geoforum, 30 (4) pp 313-327

Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1995). *The active interview*. Qualitative Research Methods Series 37. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Holstein, James A. & Gubrium, Jaber F. (2003), 'Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns' in James A. Holstein & Jaber F. Gubrium (eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*, London: Sage, pp.3-32.

International Women's Democracy Centre (2011), *Women's Political Participation* Available: http://www.iwdc.org/resources/fact_sheet.htm (accessed on 19/02/2011)

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2011, Feb 28), 'Women in National Parliaments'. Available online at http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm, (accessed 29 July, 2011)

Jaquette, Jane. (1997), 'Women in Power: From Tokenism to Critical Mass' *Foreign Policy,*
108, pp. 23-37. Available: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1149087 (Accessed on 9 August 2011)

Kabeer, N. (2005), 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: a critical analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal', *Gender and Development* **13** (1), 13–24.

Kenya National Official Archives (1963), Hansard.

Kenya National Archives (2010), Hansard, pp 27-33

Kenya Census Report, 2009

Kathambi, K. (2009), *Women in Politics: Female Legislatures in Kenya.* Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.

Kittilson, M. (2011), 'Women, parties and platforms in post-industrial democracies', *Party Politics* **17** (1), 66.

Krook, M. (2008), 'Quota laws for women in politics: Implications for feminist practice', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* **15** (3), 345.

Lovenduski, Joni & Hills, Jill (1981), *The Politics of the Second Electorate.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Lovenduski, Joni (2005), *Feminizing politics.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Lovenduski, J. & Norris, P. (2003), 'Westminster Women: the Politics of Presence', *Political Studies,* 51 (1) 84–102. Available: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9248.00414/full (Accessed 8 August 2011).

Manor, J. (1991), *Rethinking third world politics*. London: Longman

Mansbridge, J. (1999), 'Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent "yes", *The Journal of Politics* **61** (03), 628–657.

Meintjes, S. (2003), 'The Politics of Engagement: Women Transforming the Policy Process — Domestic Violence Legislation in South Africa.' In **A. M. Goetz, & S. Hassim eds. (2003),** *No Shortcuts to Power: African Women in Politics and Policy Making.* New York: Zed Books, 140-159.

Midamba, Danson. (1990), *Women in Kenya Politics: Independence and After***.** Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (2010). *Bi-Annual Report*. Republic of Kenya.

Mohanty, C. (1991), 'Under Western Eyes', in **Mohanty, T., et al., eds. (1991)**, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Molyneux, M. (1985), 'Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Studies* **11** (2), 227–254.

Momsen, J. (2004), *Gender and development*. London: Routledge

Mtintso, T. (2003), 'Representivity: false sisterhood or universal women's interests? the South African experience', *Feminist studies* **29** (3), 569–579.

New Statesman, October 7, 1977

Nzomo, M. (1997), 'Kenyan women in politics and public decision making', *African feminism: The politics of survival in sub-Saharan Africa* pp. 232–255.

Nzomo, M. & Kibwana, K. (1993), 'Women's Initiatives in Kenya's Democratization', *National Committee on the Status of* Women. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers

---------- **(2003),** *Women and Politics in Kenya*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers

Okello, R (2010), *Beyond Numbers: Narrating the Impact of Women's Leadership in Eastern Africa.* Nairobi: African Woman & Child Feature Services

Petersson, O. (1988), 'The Study of Power and Democracy in Sweden', *Scandinavian Political Studies* **11** (2), 145–158.

Piscopo, J., et al (2009), **'**The Impact of Gender Quotas: A Research Agenda'. *American Political Science Association*, Toronto: Canada Available: http://krook.wustl.edu/pdf/FKP%20APSA%202009.pdf (Accessed on 6 August 2011)

Pitkin, H. (1967), *The concept of representation.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Piqc. Manuella, (2011), 'Stigmatising feminism in Latin America' @Al Jazeeera.net/English uploaded on 4th Aug, 2011 Accessed on 6th Aug, 2011.

Phillips, A. (1995), *The Politics of Presence.* Oxford: Clarendon Press

---------- (1998), 'Democracy and representation: Or, Why Should It Matter Who Our Representatives are?' *Feminism and politics* pp. 224–240 in A. Phillips (ed) Feminism and Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

----------(2010), 'What is Wrong with Essentialism?' *Scandinavian journal of social theory*, 20 (Online) Available: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/30900/(Accessed on 12 August 2011)

Plowman, S. (1995), 'Engaging reflexivity and positionality', *New Zealand Geographer* **51** (1), 19–21.

Ponzanesi, Sandra. (2004), *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture: Contemporary Women Writers of Indian and Afro-Italian Diaspora*. Albany: State University of New York Press

Rai, Shirin (2000), *International perspectives on gender and democratisation.* London: Macmillan

Reilly, N. (2009), *Women's human rights*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Riessman, C. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* (Vol. 30). Qualitative research methods. London: Sage Publications.

Rothstein, B. (1988), 'State and capital in Sweden: the importance of corporatist arrangements', *Scandinavian Political Studies* **11** (3), 235–260.

Rowlands, J. (1997), *Questioning empowerment: Working with women in Honduras*, Oxfam Publications.

Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (1995), 'Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data'. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Sabot, E. (1999), 'Dr Jekyl, Mr H (i) de: the contrasting face of elites at interview', *Geoforum* **30** (4), 329–336.

Sapiro, V. (1981), 'Research Frontier Essay: When Are Interests Interesting? The Problem of Political Representation of Women,' *The American Political Science Review* pp. 701–716.

Seidman, I. (2006), *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*, 3rd edn. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stacey, J. (1996), 'Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?' in **Gottfried, Heidi., ed. (1996)**, *Feminism and Social Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, pp. 88–101.

Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1990), 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in **Stanley, Liz., ed. (1990)**, *Feminist praxis: Research, theory and epistemology in feminist sociology*. London: Routledge

Staudt, K. (1998),' Women in Politics: Mexico in global perspective**',** in **Rodriguez, V.E (1998),** *Women's participation in Mexican political life*, Westview Press

Studlar, D. & McAllister, I. (2002), 'Does a critical mass exist? A comparative analysis of women's legislative representation since 1950', *European Journal of Political Research*, **41** (2), 233–253.

Tamale, Silvya. (2000), ''Point of Order, Mr. Speaker': African Women Claiming Their Space in Parliament' *Gender and Development* 8, (3), [Leadership] pp. 8-15 Available: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030457 (Accessed 7 August, 2011).

The Nation Media Group: Daily Nation News, March, 7 2011

Thomas, S. (1994), *How women legislate*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Tremblay, M. (1998), 'Do female MPs substantively represent women? A study of legislative behaviour in Canada's 35th parliament', *Canadian Journal of Political Science* **31**, 435–466.

Tremblay, M & Pelletier, R. (2000), 'More Feminists or More Women? Descriptive and Substantive Representations of Women in the 1997 Canadian Federal Elections', *International Political Review*, 21 (4) 381-405

Tripp, A. (2005), 'Legislative Quotas for Women: Implications for Governance in Africa.' In **M. M. Salih., ed. (2005)**, *African Parliaments: Between Governance and Government*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 48-60.

---------- **(2006),** 'Uganda: Agents of Change for Women's Advancement.' In **G. Bauer, & H. E. Britton., eds. (2006)**, *Women in African Parliaments*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.111-132.

UNDP (2010). http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics. Html (accessed on 23/09/2010)

UNDP Report on Millennium Development Goals (2010).

UN MDG 2010 Report
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf (accessed on 23/09/2010)

United Nations (1992), *Women in politics and decision-making in the late twentieth century: a United Nations study*, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

United Nations Development Program: UNDP.org (2000), accessed on June 19th 2011 @http://www. undp.org/mdg/goal3

United Nations Women (UN WOMEN) accessed on July 30th 2011 @ http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/democratic_governance/

US Department of State: Bureau of African Affairs (2011) http://www.state.gov/p/af/ci/ke/ (Accessed on 10 August 2011)

Walsh, M. (2001), *Research made real: A guide for students*. Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

Wanyeki, M. (2009), *Can women deliver? Interrogating the Kenyan parliament,* Nairobi: Pangolin.

Women Shadow Parliament-Kenya) (2008), 'An Audit of Political [arties in Kenya', Nairobi: Women Shadow Parliament-Kenya

Wood, J. (2010), *Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture,* Wadsworth Pub Co.