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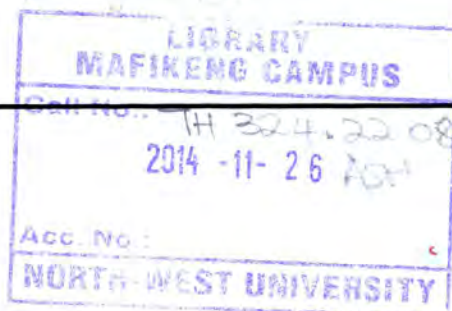
**AFRICAN WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CAMEROON (1992-2011) AND
SOUTH AFRICA (1994-2011)**

GM ASHU

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace Studies
and International Relations at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West
University**

Promoter: Prof. B. K. Mbenga

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study was to compare the state of women's political representation in the leadership structures of South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party politics in these two African states. The objectives were: to examine the structures and mechanisms that have been put in place in both countries to promote and advance gender equality and women's empowerment; to find out the obstacles which inhibit women's political representation or their advancement; and to explore whether improved women's representation could change Africa's political culture. The study has been conceptualized within the theories of leadership, liberal feminism, patriarchy and social dominance.

The unit of analysis was women in leadership structures of parliament, political parties and government. The study used a qualitative research approach, and designs used were comparative case-study, phenomenology and historical designs. A stratified purposive sampling approach was used in the selection of 120 participants from political parties, NGOs and academia. There were 75 participants in South Africa and 45 in Cameroon, inclusive of males and females. A collective case or triangulation method of data collection was also utilized which consisted of interviews, a focus group discussion, an open-ended questionnaire, observation and secondary data.

The study found that comparatively, there were many more women represented in political leadership in South Africa than in Cameroon. In addition, many structures and mechanisms have been put in place in South Africa to cater for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, even with a high number of women at the helm of government, this has not made the South African society less patriarchal. Indeed, women in both countries still face many obstacles in their quest for advancement in the political arena.

Ultimately, the study found that, evidence from South Africa, Rwanda and Liberia showed that increased women's representation in political leadership positions could obviously change Africa's political culture. Indicators raised were that, women in politics would be involved in development and peace issues, gender-sensitive policies, women's empowerment and there would be participatory democracy.

The study recommends among other things that, though gender equity is commendable, women's voices and grassroots opinions of both women and men should guide processes of putting women in leadership positions. Moreover, gender equality and women's empowerment at the community level is still a struggle. Hence the need for educational and consciousness-raising programmes aimed at communities which still regard women as incompetent and unable to contribute positively to their societies.

Keywords: leadership, women, political parties, parliament, government, non-governmental organizations, Cameroon and South Africa

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I cannot conclude this acknowledgment without thanking North West University and Walter Sisulu University for their financial support in undertaking this study. Ultimately, I thank God Almighty for preserving my life and providing me with the stamina to complete this thesis!

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a product of my own work and effort. It has not been submitted anywhere else for any purpose whatsoever. In instances where written sources of information have been used, they have been duly acknowledged.

Student's signature.....

Date: 12/2/2013.....

Promoter's signature.....

Date: 8/4/2013.....

DEDICATION

To

my daughter, Phoebe; son, McCauley and the families of Obenembot and

Ashuarrambor

to

mama Angelina Eneke Besongndip

and to

all the peace loving people in the world!

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC:	African National Congress
ANCWL:	African National Congress Women's League
BIRC:	Integral Reconstruction of Cameroon
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERAC:	Circle of Friends of Cameroon
CGE:	Commission for Gender Equality
CPDM:	Cameroon People Democratic Movement
CPP:	Cameroon Peoples Party
DA:	Democratic Alliance
ECCAS:	Economic Community of Central African States
EISA:	Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa
FRELIMO:	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front).
FPTP:	First-Past-the-Post
GAP:	Gender Advocacy Programme
HSRC:	Human Science Research Council
IDEA:	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEC:	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP:	Inkatha Freedom Party
iKNOW:	International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics
IPU:	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRIC:	International Relations Institute Cameroon
JMC:	Joint Monitoring Committee
KISS:	Keep it Straight and Simple
MDGS:	Millennium Development Goals
MEC:	Member of Executive Committee
MINADER:	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINPROFF:	Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family

NMWP:	Network of More Women in Politics
MP:	Member of Parliament
NCHRF:	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
NEC:	National Executive Committee
NFP:	National Freedom Party
OAEWCA:	Organisation of Associations for Women's Empowerment in Cameroon
OSW:	Office for the Status of Women
ONG :	La Coalition des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (Coalition of Non-governmental Organisations)
PAC:	Pan African Congress
PAP:	Pan-African Parliament
PBV:	Party Block Vote
PR:	Proportional Representation
SDF:	Social Democratic Front
SACP:	South African Communist Party
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
UCDP:	United Christian Democratic Party
UDM:	United Democratic Movement
UDEFEC:	Democratic Union of Cameroonian Women
UDF:	United Democratic Front
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UPC:	Union of the Peoples of Cameroon
WCPDM:	Women of Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
WEDO:	Women in Environment and Development Organisation
WF:	Women Forward
WIRA:	Women in Research and Action, Cameroon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DECLARATION	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF ACRONYMS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	12
1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	13
1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	14
1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	15
1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	16
1.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	17
1.8 SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS.....	17
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 INTRODUCTION	18
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	18
2.2.1 Leadership.....	19
2.2.2 Liberal feminism	21
2.2.3 Patriarchy.....	23
2.2.4 Social Dominance Theory	26
2.3 A REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	28
2.4 AFRICAN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE COLONIAL AND ANTI-COLONIAL ERA: AN OVERVIEW.....	34
2.5 THE STATE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: THE 1990s	44

2.5.1 South Africa and Cameroon.....	54
2.6 STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS WHICH PROMOTE WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA	56
2.6.1 Women's Movements and NGOs	56
2.6.2 Gender Quotas.....	61
2.6.3 A Commitment of the Party in Power.....	65
2.6.4 Electoral Systems - Proportional Representative (PR) Systems.....	67
2.6.5 Political Leadership Training and Support Services	69
2.7 OBSTACLES FACED BY WOMEN IN POLITICS IN AFRICA.....	70
2.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	81
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	83
3.1 INTRODUCTION	83
3.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	83
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	84
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN	85
3.4.1 Phenomenological research design	86
3.4.2 Comparative research design	86
3.4.3 Historical research design	88
3.4.4 Content analysis	89
3.4 SAMPLING	90
3.4.1 Purposive and stratified sampling	90
3.4.1.1 Profile of respondents.....	91
3.4.1.2 Gender distribution of respondents	92
3.5 INSTRUMENTS USED TO COLLECT DATA.....	94
3.5.1 In-depth interviews.....	94
3.5.2 Questionnaire.....	95
3.5.3 Focus group discussion	95
3.5.4 Observation	96
3.5.5 Documentation	97
3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE	97

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES.....	100
3.7.1 Permission to Conduct Research.....	101
3.7.2 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation.....	101
3.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity.....	102
3.7.4 Issues of Deception.....	102
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS.....	102
3.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	103
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	104
4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	104
4.2 RESPONSES OF PARTICIPANTS.....	105
4.2.1 What is the state of women's representation in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party democracy?.....	105
4.2.1.1 Parliament.....	107
4.2.1.1.1 Women's Parliament and Multi-Party Women's Caucus.....	112
4.2.1.2 Cabinet.....	114
4.2.1.3 Female heads of political parties.....	118
4.2.2 What structures and mechanisms are in place to promote women's political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon?.....	121
4.2.2.1 The Constitution.....	123
4.2.2.1.1 Electoral System.....	125
4.2.2.1.2 The National Gender Machinery.....	130
4.2.2.1.2.1 The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE).....	131
4.2.2.1.2.2 The Office on the Status of Women (OSW).....	131
4.2.2.1.2.3 Gender Focal Points (GFPs).....	132
4.2.2.1.2.4 The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) gender Working Group.....	133
4.2.2.1.3 Political parties.....	134
4.2.2.1.3.1 Quota system.....	140
4.2.2.1.3.2 Women's league of political party.....	143

4.2.2.1.4 Government's will and women's ministry	147
4.2.2.1.5 Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs).....	153
4.2. 2.1.6 The Media milieu	157
4.2.3 What are the obstacles which South African and Cameroonian women encounter in their quest for advancement in political leadership?	161
4.2.3.1 Cultural barriers	162
4.2.3.2 Lack of political leadership skills	165
4.2.3.3 Lack of support from party and women	169
4.2.3.4 Lack of ambition	173
4.2.3.5 Fear of the unknown.....	176
4.2.4 Can increased women's political representation in decision- making processes change Africa's political culture? If yes, what are the indicators, it not, what are the reasons?	179
(a) Participants' responses	181
(b) Indicators	182
4.2.4.1 Development and peace.....	183
4.2.4.2 Gender-sensitive policies	188
4.2.4.3 Women's empowerment.....	193
4.2.4. 4 Participatory democracy	199
4.2.4.5 No difference between male and female leadership.....	200
4.3 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	201
CHAPTER FIVE : SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	202
5.1 INTRODUCTION	202
5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS	202
5.2.1 Summary of findings for Research Question 1	202
5.2.2 Summary of findings for Research Question 2	204
5.2.3 Summary of findings for Research Question 3	208
5.2.4 Summary of findings for Research Question 4	210

5.3 CONCLUSION	210
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	212
BIBLIOGRAPHY	216

LIST OF TABLES

Table No	Name	Page No
Table 4.1	Seats held by women in the South African National Assembly from 1994 to 2010	109
Table 4.2	Number of female parliamentarians in Cameroon from 1973 to 2007	110
Table 4.3	Ministerial positions for women in South Africa	114
Table 4.4	Ministerial positions for women in Cameroon	115
Table 4.5	Female leaders of political parties in the 2009 and 2011 elections in South Africa and Cameroon respectively	118
Table 4.6	Women and men PR List of Councillors by province in South Africa in 2000	128
Table 4.7	Women elected by province as Councillors in Cameroon in 2007	128
Table 4.6.1	Gender and local government in South Africa	129
Table 4.8 (a)	Percentages of women MPs according to parties after the 1994 elections in South Africa	135
Table 4.9 (a)	Percentages of women MPs according to parties after the 1992 elections in Cameroon	135
Table 4.8 (b)	List of political parties by gender in the 2009 national legislature in South Africa	136
Table 4.9 (b)	Percentages of women parliamentarians in the 2007 elections for the Cameroonian National Assembly	136
Table 4.10	Top six NEC positions of ANC since 2007	138
Table 4.11	Top 22 NEC positions of CPDM since 2011	139
Table 4.12	Number of women in provincial leadership in South Africa and Cameroon from 2009	152

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No	Name	Page No
Figure 1.1	Map of Africa	4
Figure 3.1	Profile of respondents in South Africa	91
Figure 3.2	Profile of respondents in Cameroon	91
Figure 3.3	Gender distribution in South Africa	92
Figure 3.4	Gender distribution in Cameroon	93
Figure 4.1	The state of women's political representation in South Africa	105

Figure 4.2	The state of women's political representation in Cameroon	105
Figure 4.3	South Africa's structures and mechanisms to promote women	106
Figure 4.4	Cameroon's structures and mechanisms to promote women	122
Figure 4.5	Obstacles faced by women in South Africa	161
Figure 4.6	Obstacles faced by women in Cameroon	162
Figure 4.7	Participants' responses in South Africa whether improved women's political representation can change Africa's political culture	181
Figure 4.8	Participants' responses in Cameroon whether improved women's political representation can change Africa's political culture	181
Figure 4.7.1	Indicators provided in South Africa	182
Figure 4.8.1	Indictors provided in Cameroon	182

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Name	Page No
A	Informed Consent Form	259
B	Authorization to do research from Ladies Circle	261
C	Authorization to do research from Institute of Security Studies	262
D	Letter of language editing	263

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study emanates from the fact that women's political leadership within the framework of multi-party politics is still very low despite the existence of democracy in Africa for over two decades beginning from the early 1990s. Women make up more than half of the world's population (Inter-parliamentary Union¹, 2009) and their contribution to the socio-economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men. This is because of the dual roles women play in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet, their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant (Randal, 1994).

An important benchmark for any democratic framework is the principle of human rights, including the granting and exercise of political rights for both men and women. "The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political parties and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population" (IPU, 1994).²

In advancing women's participation in politics as a human rights cause, the number of African countries using the quota mechanism rose from six in the early 1990s to 28 in 2009 (Global Database of Quotas for Women, 2010). Cameroon and South Africa are among those countries that have made impressive adherence to advocate women in politics. Thus, this study is set to examine

¹ The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a Geneva-based organization comprising 139 parliaments.

² This is a vision of democracy as defined by the IPU, at its 154th session in Paris, 26 March 1994.

women's participation in politics in South Africa and Cameroon during a critical phase in the struggle for human rights (Quota Project, 2009, quoted in iKNOW Politics, 2009:1).

Although the target of 30%³ representation in key decision-making positions was agreed on at the 1995 United Nations Women Conference at Beijing and women's parliamentary representation has steadily increased over the past decade, gender parity in politics at all levels is still a long way off. By April 2011, women accounted for 19.2% of parliamentarians worldwide, with 30 countries having 30% or more of women's representation in parliaments worldwide and seven⁴ countries with no female parliamentarian (IPU, 2011).

Generally, the under-representation of women at the ministerial levels and in local governments is lower than in national legislatures. As of 2011, women accounted for 16.1% of government ministers worldwide. There were 14⁵ governments with no women ministers (IPU, 2011). However, no African country is found to be among. For the governments that had women, most had one to three women ministers. By March 2006, only three countries – Chile, Spain and Sweden – had achieved gender parity in ministerial portfolios. At local government levels, women accounted for less than 1 in 10 of the world's mayors (UNICEF, 2006). Women do not always occupy strategic portfolios like finance and defence ministries but are mostly given the ministries related to social, family, health and environmental affairs, which have lower funding and less political clout (UNICEF, 2006).

Several studies have shown that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role. When women are fully involved, the

³ The Beijing Conference set a target of 30% of women in parliaments by 2005. The target has strategic value in that it constitutes a minimum measurable standard by which government commitments to gender equality can be assessed.

⁴ These are Belize, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Solomon Islands,

⁵ The countries are Bahamas, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Guatemala, Lebanon, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Ukraine and Vanuatu

benefits are immediate because families are healthier and better fed and their income, savings and investments go up. "And what is true of families is also true of communities and, in the long run, of all countries".⁶

A growing body of evidence also suggests that women in politics have been especially effective advocates when represented in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. About this, two scholars concur:

Women as much as any other social group welcome peace and democracy and expect that new democratic institutions at national and local levels will be open to their participation. Yet around the world, women have found that the resumption of political competition in post-conflict democracies has left them on the sidelines. Political parties organised as 'old boys clubs' have been hostile to their inclusion ... (Goetz and Hassim, 2003: 11).

Research and reports, however, have established that only fewer African women have attained political office in their countries (IPU, 2011; Jalalzai and Krook, 2010; United Nations Economic Council for Africa, 2009). As of 2011, Rwanda had the highest number of female parliamentarians in the world, accounting for a 56.35%. South Africa was the third in the world and second in Africa with a 45% women's representation in parliament. Meanwhile Cameroon had only a 12% women's representation in parliament and occupied 89th position on a scale of 143 in the world and 25th in Africa (IPU, 2011). Other countries in Africa were Seychelles (43.8%), Mozambique (39.2%), Angola (38.6%), Tanzania (36%), Uganda (34.9%) and Burundi (32.1%). This, therefore, means that in the whole of Africa, only eight countries reached the 30% quota of women in parliament set by the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995.

Mozambique had a female prime minister, Luisa Diogo, from 2004 to 2010 and also made history for itself when Veronica Macamo became the first woman speaker of parliament in 2010. South Africa had a female speaker of parliament as early as 1994, in addition to the percentage of female members of parliament (MPs) as mentioned earlier. The latter has also fared well in women's

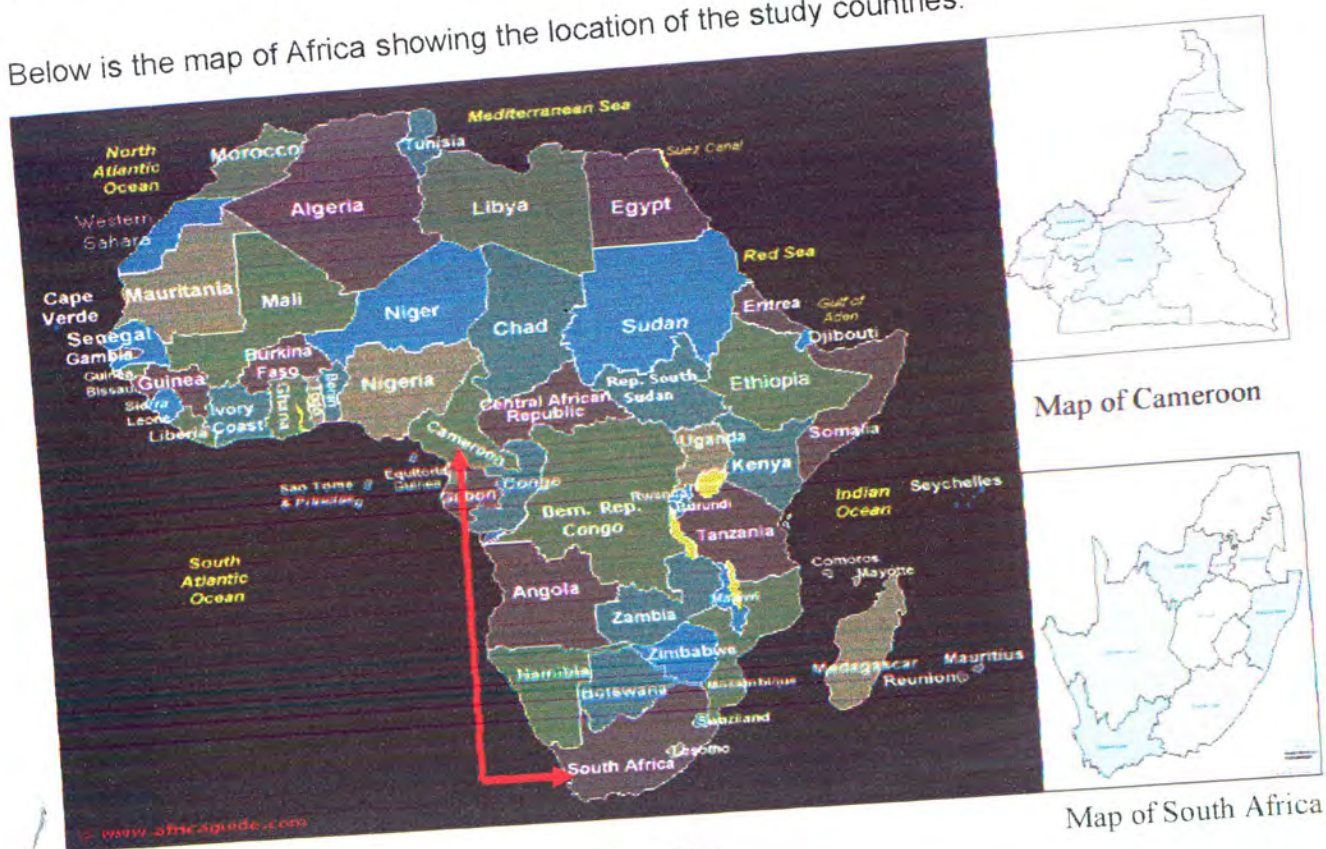
⁶ Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in a speech at the in New York at the launch of the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

representation in cabinet and local government levels. In fact, since 1994, women's representation in political processes has continued to rise.

Thus, one part of this study is to examine South Africa which has more women's representation in leadership positions and Cameroon with less women's representation after almost two decades of democracy. Another part is to explore whether improved women's political representation in leadership positions could transform the political culture of Africa.

WHY SOUTH AFRICA AND CAMEROON?

Below is the map of Africa showing the location of the study countries.



Source: <http://www.africaguide.com/afmap.htm>

Figure 1.1: Map of Africa

Both South Africa and Cameroon have multi-party systems of government and are members of the African Union, United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations. They also have constitutions which guarantee the protection and promotion of women's rights. They have ratified, among others, major human rights instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and (CEDAW)⁷ and the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, the African Protocol on Human and People's Rights. These steps legally bound the governments of both countries to work actively towards the abolition of gender discrimination in the governing of their respective countries. Interest in women's rights is further evident through national legislation and declarations on women's issues in both countries.

In 2006, women formed 52%⁸ of the total population in both countries. The disparity in terms of women's political representation in leadership positions in the two countries would help the researcher to determine what it is that South Africa has which is lacking in the political environment of Cameroon and how this has affected democracy in Cameroon. Furthermore, the researcher's familiarity with the political landscapes of both countries contributed to her choice of these two countries.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Republic of South Africa, as indicated in the Continental map, is a country at the southern tip of Africa . It is bordered on the west by the Atlantic Ocean and

⁷ Cameroon signed the CEDAW in 1983 and ratified it in 1994, while South Africa signed in 1993 and ratified in 1995.

⁸ For South Africa: Speech by the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Lulu Xingwana, at the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) National Conference and Annual General Meeting, Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg (24 Aug 2006); Mott Mosaic, Women in South Africa still seek equality (Aug 2006).

For Cameroon: G. Ngwane, "Gender-based Violence in Africa" (Mar 2007). Available online at: www.gngwane.com/2007/03/genderbased_vio.html; World Bank, "Cameroon Summary Gender Profile" (2007). Available Online at: siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTAFRREGTOPGENDER/Resources/cameroon.pdf

on the south and east by the Indian Ocean. Along its northern border, from west to east, are Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. To the northeast are Mozambique and Swaziland. Completely surrounded by South Africa is the independent kingdom of Lesotho which lies in the eastern central plain of South Africa. South Africa has 11 official languages and had a population of approximately 49.3 million people in 2009 (World Bank, 2009).

The first Europeans to colonise a part of South Africa, the Cape, were the Dutch through the Dutch East India Company in 1652. Great Britain annexed the Cape in 1795 and extended its rule further by colonizing the Eastern Cape in the early 1800s and Natal in the 1840s. The country later gained independence from Britain but then came under the control of the white minority (Worden, 2000). Racial strife between the white minority and the black majority has played a large part in South Africa's history and politics, culminating in *apartheid*, which was instituted in 1948 when the National Party came to power.

The laws that defined apartheid began to be repealed in 1990, after a long and sometimes violent struggle by the black majority as well as many white, coloured and Indian South Africans. The isolation of South Africa by the Southern African countries, the rest of the continent (through the Organisation of African Unity or OAU) and the economic sanctions from the international community were some of the factors which pushed the National Party to take this approach (Louw, 2004). In 1990, the National Party government took the first step towards negotiating itself out of power. It lifted the ban on the African National Congress (ANC) and other anti-apartheid political organizations. It released Nelson Mandela from prison after twenty-seven years' incarceration for sabotage.

Since 1994 South Africa has had a vibrant multi-party political system, with more than 10 political parties always represented in parliament after every election. South Africa's politics is dominated by the ANC which is the majority party in the National Assembly and controls eight of the country's nine provinces. The current

President of South Africa is Jacob Zuma who became the leader of the country in 2009. The Democratic Alliance (DA) is the official opposition party led by a white female, Hellen Zille, and whose parliamentary caucus leader is Lindiwe Mazibuko a black female (<http://www.da.org.za>; www.sabc.co.za; www.citypress.co.za)

In their public affairs, South African women have been subjected to institutionalised oppression for almost half a century (Walker, 1990). However, these women fought back and the attainment of an inclusive democracy in 1994 brought significant advances to them. Their presence has been felt in all spheres of public life and they are afforded politically relevant portfolios in government (Kethusile, *et al.* 2001; Boezak, 1999). Most importantly, is the fact that a special day, August 9 has been set aside as South African's "Women's Day" to commemorate women's struggle and courage in their fight for freedom in the country.

In the August 9 celebrations (National Women's Day) for 2004, President Thabo Mbeki pointed out that, "there are not enough women managers and not enough women board members. Even with black empowerment, the majority of benefits are felt by men, yet the majority of our people are women" (anc.org.za; the-presidency.gov.za). This statement therefore is an indication that the need for women's representation in all spheres of the South African society is acknowledged at the highest level.

South Africa's engagement with gender issues at sub-regional, continental and international levels is informed by its constitutional commitment to gender equality. Its Constitution is the key national instrument which determines South Africa's compliance with issues of gender equality at a national governance level. Of particular importance was the participation by the South African government and NGOs in the Fourth World Conference on Women held by the United Nations in Beijing, September 1995. While this was the first official participation by the South African government at an international women's conference, South

African liberation movements had consistently participated in international women's conferences since 1975 (Office for the Status of Women, 2000).

The new South African government has undertaken various measures to advance the position of women and to promote gender equality in all spheres. The increasing number of women appointed to executive positions has further strengthened this commitment. This commitment was confirmed by the election of women as Speakers of the National Assembly, Frene Ginwala and later Baleka Mbete, and women as Deputy Speakers, Baleka Mbete and Gwendoline Lindiwe Mahlangu-Nkabinde and the appointment of a female Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. After the 2009 elections, 45% of South Africa's parliamentarians were women (IPU, 2010).

Further, after 1994 the National Gender Machinery was established, followed by the Office for the Status of Women and the Commission for Gender Equality. A committee that monitors the implementation of legislation meant to improve the lives of women, called "The Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women", was also set up in Parliament. This Committee has provided space for women members of parliament to communicate with other women organizations in South Africa and also the platform to place gender issues on the national agenda (Gender Links, 2006:6).

The year 2000 saw more commitment to gender equality with the creation of South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, known for short as the Gender Policy Framework. The main purpose of this Framework is to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the workplace, the community and the family (The Gender Policy Framework, 2000). The Framework is premised on the view that gender equality cannot be attained without women's participation in all

spheres of life and without the empowerment, in particular, of the most deprived women (Office for the Status of Women, 2000).

The foregoing information on South Africa provides an overview of the state of women's representation in political leadership and some of the mechanisms and structures which promote gender equality and women's empowerment in South Africa.

CAMEROON

Located in West Central Africa, the Republic of Cameroon borders the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo to the South, Nigeria to the west, Chad to the northeast, and the Central African Republic to the east. The country is commonly called "Africa in miniature" due to its geographical and cultural diversity.⁹

Cameroon was colonised by the Germans in 1884 but they were defeated during the First World War by a combined force of British, French and Belgian troops. This was followed by a period of British rule in two small portions and of French rule in the remainder of the territory. Cameroon became a League of Nations mandate (later United Nations trusts) referred to as French Cameroun and British Cameroons. After World War II, developments in Cameroon and Europe brought about independence. French Cameroon was granted independence in 1960 and British Cameroons in 1961.¹⁰ The 1960 independence came with the first wave of multipartism but in 1966, the Cameroon Federation opted for a one-party state, thus this period saw the end of multiparty politics in Cameroon (Ngolle, 1996:1).

⁹ "Cameroon, Africa in miniature", Available online at <http://factoidz.com/cameroon-africa-in-miniature>.

¹⁰ For more information on German Cameroon and Britain and France administration, see M. Njeuma, *Introduction to the History of Cameroon: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1990); V.J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800* (Indiana, 1996); J.T.Tajoche, *Cameroon History in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Michigan, 2003).

Ahmadou Ahidjo of the Cameroon National Union (UNC) party became the first president and ruled until 1982 when he resigned suddenly on grounds of ill-health and handed over power to Paul Biya, the then Prime Minister and his chosen successor. In 1984 Biya renamed the UNC as the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) or Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounaise - RDPC) its French acronym (Ngolle 1996; Ngoh, 2004).

Since independence, the country has had a highly centralised, autocratic political system with a strong executive which controls the judiciary. However, the late 1980s saw an environment of increasing tension as political pressure for reform intensified. As put by Ngolle (1996:6) "multipartism as an element of the democratic process has generally tended to be associated with tensions, conflicts, blockages and sometimes violence on the part of some actors and political parties". He added that, problems associated with multipartism are more frequent in those societies in which democratic tradition has not taken root in terms of tolerance, civility, courtesy, rationalization of choices of candidates and issues (Ngolle, 1996). This is exactly what happened in Cameroon. In December 1990 President Biya began a process of cautious political reform, authorising a constitutional amendment which provided for the establishment of a multiparty system and by July 1991 more than a dozen parties had been legalized (Ngolle, 1996:6). The ruling CPDM party has also won all the elections from 1992 to 2011 and President Biya, has been consistently accused of fraud and vote rigging.

Women represent 52 percent of the population, and also account for 40 percent of the national economic activity in Cameroon (Beijing Plus 15 Report, 2010, 2009). The constitution affirms the rights of women, and the government has ratified international conventions that protect these rights. A Ministry for Women's Affairs was created in 1984 to promote women's rights, achieve gender equality and curb discrimination and violence against women. In 1998, a department for the promotion of women's rights was created as well as a department for the social and economic advancement of women and for studying, planning and

cooperating in the field of women's rights (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000).

Annual awareness-raising campaigns on different topics have been conducted on a regular basis beginning from 1996, in which the campaign stresses the fundamental rights of women. In 1997, the campaign centred on the enforcement and enforceability of legislation dealing with women's rights, and in 1998 focused on practices and customs that constituted discrimination against women. The theme for 1999 was "women and leadership as a challenge in development". Cameroon does not have a special women's day celebration unlike South Africa. It uses the International Women's Day of March 8 every year to provide an opportunity to increase awareness of women's issues and to promote their rights. This day was commemorated for the first time in 1986 in Cameroon. The 2006 event was celebrated under the theme 'Women in Decision-making: Meeting the Challenges, Creating Change' (United Nations, 2006).

Another important element in the Cameroonian government policy towards women has been education and training in the field of women's rights. The Centre for the Promotion of Women's Rights set up by the former Ministry for Women's Affairs offered young girls who are not attending school the opportunity to receive vocational training (Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, 2004).

The above mentioned ministry is so far the only structure that legally recognizes and promotes the empowerment of Cameroonian women. In all the activities that take place during the Women's Day celebrations in Cameroon, there is no theme that touches on gender equality issues, though the Ministry was established in 1984. The creation of the new Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family in 2004 to replace the Women's Affairs ministry has done little to change the political situation of women in the country. It is therefore not surprising that, in 2010, out of 180 members of the National Assembly, only 25 were women and

there were only six women ministers and a female State's Secretary in the 62-member cabinet (IPU, 2010).

1.2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

With the resurgence of democracy in the 1990s, Africa witnessed a visible trend toward the feminisation of politics. As already mentioned above, in the 1990s, South Africa had a female Speaker of Parliament. Sylvie Kinigi became the prime minister of Burundi from 1993 to 1994 and Agathe Uwilingiyimana occupied the same portfolio in Rwanda until her assassination in the 1994 genocide. In 1994, Wandera Specioza Kazibwe of Uganda became the first female vice-president in Africa. Ruth Perry was on a six-member collective presidency of Liberia in September 1996. Wangari Maathai and Charity Ngilu ran for the 1998 Kenyan presidential election (Tripp, 2001). Even though Wangari and Ngilu did not accomplish their objectives, they set precedents which other Africa women were to follow.

Thus after two decades of democratic dispensation in Africa, the inclusion of women in political leadership structures has fared well in some countries while it has not done so in others. Cameroon is one of those countries where women's political representation has been very low despite having ratified the United Nations Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1994 and having had the first female minister from 1970 to 1984¹¹ and a Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1984 (Atanga, 2006). In fact, Cameroon has never had a female governor in charge of any of the 10 provinces making up the country. Cameroonian women are still discursively constructed as being domestic and seen by men as not being capable of exercising positions of responsibility. The reasons for this situation will be examined later in the course of this study.

¹¹ Delphine Zanga Tsogo was Deputy Minister of Health and Public Welfare from 1970-75 and Minister of Social Affairs from 1975-84. In addition, from 1964-85, she was President of the National Council of Women. Source: www.guide2womenleaders.com/First-female-ministers.htm.

On the other hand, South Africa, which ratified CEDAW in 1996, has achieved comparatively so much more on issues of women's empowerment and gender equality as already alluded to earlier. In addition, currently five of the nine premiers in the 9 provinces comprising South Africa are run by women. While South Africa which is a much younger democracy is considered a continental and even a global leader with regard to the numbers of women in political representation and the prioritization of gender equality, the same is not true in Cameroon. Since the 1994 elections, South Africa has been the first country inside Africa to have a "critical mass" of female members in Parliament (Reynold, 1998), though it was surpassed by Rwanda after its 2008 elections.

It is in the light of the foregoing scenario that the study seeks to pose and investigate the following questions:

1. What is the state of women's representation in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party democracy?
2. What structures and mechanisms are in place to promote women's political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon?
3. What are the obstacles which South African and Cameroonian women encounter in their quest for advancement in political leadership?
4. Can increased women's political representation in decision-making processes change Africa's political culture? If yes, what are the indicators, and if not, what are the reasons?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study was to compare women's political representation in leadership positions in South Africa and Cameroon and to explore to what extent this has changed South Africa's political culture and why Cameroon's political culture has not changed. The objectives are as follows:

- To examine the state of women's political representation in leadership positions in South Africa and Cameroon over the past two decades.
- To find out in a comparative study, what structures in the context of South Africa enable women to rise to the highest levels of public life and what factors inhibit such development in the context of Cameroon.
- To investigate the obstacles which inhibit women's greater role into political leadership two decades after multi-party politics in South Africa and Cameroon.
- To test whether increased women's involvement in political leadership could change Africa's political culture.

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

More than 15 years after the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action aimed to update and revitalise the global community's commitment to gender equality (UN, 1995), women in Cameroon remain comparatively disadvantaged in many walks of life. This is especially seen within the political sphere of Cameroon with its much older democracy when compared with the fairly new democracy of South Africa. Thus, the research has unravelled the different obstacles, structures and mechanisms for and against women in these countries with regard to their representation in political leadership.

Moreover, there is relative neglect of the specific research problem by previous researchers on Cameroon as discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, the few studies written about Cameroonian women in the politics of Cameroon have been done mostly by women in the West. Some of the authors are Tripp (2009), Terretta (2007) and Adams (2005, 2006). Thus, the researcher thinks it is time African women began writing their own histories, researched on issues that affect them, and generate solutions to these issues.

Moreover, the researcher has witnessed a lot of political apathy on the part of many Cameroonian women. Such apathy may negatively impact on the future of the Cameroonian women in public decision-making. The researcher therefore believes that this work will make a positive contribution to change the political apathy and the political status of women in Cameroon by inspiring, motivating and encouraging them through the lenses of their predecessors and those of other African female icons.

Further, as an African woman with a long-standing interest on gender issues, politics and social justice, the researcher believes this study will serve as an entry point for her to specialize in the above-mentioned issues in order to realise her ambition of contributing to advancement of women.

The study thus seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-political situation of women in South Africa and Cameroon, and of the relevant structures and mechanisms which enhance or inhibit women's involvement in politics. It will also help correct public perceptions about women in political leadership in Africa as a whole and suggest solutions about what has to be done. Hence, the study intends generating new knowledge and approaches for policy makers and different individuals and organisations involved in gender and governance issues locally, nationally and continentally. Furthermore, the study will in turn help students interested in women's studies and politics, gender studies, and other related disciplines. Lastly, a study of this nature will serve as a stimulus for further insights and research by other scholars in the future.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Some scholars point out that during the research process, the researcher cannot avoid having data contaminated by a bias of one sort or another. It is, however, unethical and unprofessional to fail to acknowledge the possibility of such limitations (Lee and Norman, 1990; Leedy, 1997:220). The limitations of this study are varied and may be viewed from different perspectives. Some of the

limitations relate to the fact that some participants may not have provided accurate information while others entirely declined to respond. The researcher also noticed that most participants especially those in government wanted to remain anonymous. This may probably be due to the fact that the gender equality issue has today become a burning matter within government departments and also among NGOs.

Furthermore, gender distribution was not the same in the two countries. More women than men took part in the study in South Africa whereas in Cameroon more men participated in the study. However, the researcher believes that the use of a wider range of literature does make up for these limitations. Lastly, the study cannot be generalized as it was basically a qualitative research. A study with a much broader sample involving a quantitative research approach is recommended before generalization could take place.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is on women in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon. The boundaries of political leadership are in parliament, government and the political parties of both countries. The study covers the period from the early 1990s to 2011 which saw the introduction of multi-party politics in Cameroon and the induction of inclusive democracy in South Africa. For South Africa, the study targets women in the post-apartheid era since women were the most disadvantaged group in the political sphere during the apartheid epoch. Meanwhile, all women in Cameroon, both anglophone and francophone, are included.

1.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This was an introduction to the study. The chapter has presented the background to the study which highlights briefly, the state of women's representation in political leadership in Africa. It further provided the rationale for choosing South Africa and Cameroon as case studies. Other items in this chapter include the research problem, the research questions, the aims and objectives of the research, the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.8 SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study, consisting of the statement of the problem, research questions, rationale, limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 consists of the theoretical framework and a review of related literature in South Africa, Cameroon and other African countries. It also looks at some of the national and international conventions and agreements dealing with gender equality and women's political representation and the extent to which the two countries have implemented the agreements. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, research sample and ethical issues of the study. The research project is based on an interpretative paradigm and designs used are phenomenological, comparative, historical and content analysis. The chapter also provides the gender and profile of participants. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research using tables and charts to compare the findings of South Africa to those of Cameroon. The interpretation, analysis and discussion of the findings are also presented. The final chapter, Chapter 5, offers the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical and empirical literature on women in political leadership positions. The theoretical framework conceptualizes women's representation in the political processes within the theories of leadership, liberal feminism, patriarchy, social dominance and hegemonic masculinity, while the empirical one focuses on a review of relevant material that helps contextualize and inform this study.

A lot of books, journal articles and other secondary information examine the marginalization of women in South Africa and Cameroon, but only a Master's dissertation by Diwouta (2004) looks at women in the political sphere of South Africa and Cameroon within the provisions of various international agreements and government's compliance with these agreements. Though Diwouta's study may contribute to this study, her analysis is based only on secondary data to verify the government of South Africa and Cameroon's compliance with continental and international agreements and no form of primary sources of information are used.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study operated within the theories formulated below with much emphasis on leadership, gender equality and feminism. Feminists have always believed that, amongst other several factors, political change is needed to achieve full rights for women, and feminist movements have often combined demands for specific and immediate reforms with more activist aspirations (Humm, 1990). Likewise, there cannot be a real democracy if half of the world's population does not participate

in it. The study draws on and employs appropriate aspects of the theories discussed below.

2.2.1 Leadership

The Collins English Dictionary (1979) defines a leader as a person who rules, guides or inspires others. Heifetz (1951:13) sees a leader as someone who is invested with formal or informal authority by others, regardless of the values they represent. Abdela (2000) on the other hand, sees a leader as a person who has the ability to mobilize others. However, the above notions of leadership are regarded as the exclusive preserve of males only. This is because, throughout history, leadership across all sectors of society has been seen as a male prerogative and even elitist women are sidelined (Eagly & Karau, 2002:575).

This has been the view of some great political thinkers like Aristotle, Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke, who believe that women were non-rational beings and thus should be barred from politics (Hegel, 1821:167 cited by Jacobs, 2009:33). Hegel also argues that if women were to control government, the state would be in danger because they do not act according to the dictates of universality but are influenced by accidental inclination and opinions (ibid).

Indeed, Francis Fukuyama (1998) in his article titled "Women and the Evolution of World Politics," supports the above assertion, when he states that women can't run the world. He upholds his claims by arguing that women were more peaceful than men and that, women were not able to deal with today's threats that come from violent leaders such as Mobutu Sese Seko, Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic.

Though Fukuyama acknowledges that, a "feminization" of world politics has taken place as women have the right to vote with a relative increased role in

decision-making, he envisages that men will continue to play a critical role predominantly in international politics where aggression and sturdiness are still necessary. Fukuyama further asserts that, the inability of women to run the world has nothing to do with the patriarchal nature of society but rather biology. Hence, women's powerlessness in decision-making is natural because it is a biological determinism.

Fukuyama (1998:29) saw successful female leaders in the likes of Margaret Thatcher as exceptional women who have beaten men at their own game. The reality of the matter is that, many women are taking up leadership positions and some have done extremely well more than their male counterparts. Thus, the claims of the correlation between male leadership and biology do not seem to hold anymore.

Richter (1991:526), on the other hand, does not support the views of Fukuyama, as he argues that leadership is often shaped by the social system of patriarchy, which is very detrimental to women in most cultures and seems to strengthen dictatorial values over democratic norms; while McDonagh (2002:552) believes that democratic institutions provide women with more rights and more channels for making their voices heard. This idea of human equality clashes with the oppressive, unequal treatment of women just like the case of South Africa and Cameroon reflects.

Eagly and Karau (2002: 1) are of the view that, women's absence in leadership roles is usually influenced by the notion that they lack the necessary qualifications. Consequently, it would be difficult for women to succeed in leadership positions. However, this notion is now changing as more women are becoming educated just like their male counterparts. Cavarero (1988) also states that since men have been privileged over women in leadership, a woman who wants to become a political leader is compelled to compare with a man and the boundaries of her political action have to be masculinity. An aspect of such

portrayal could be seen during the time of Margaret Thatcher as highlighted above by Fukuyama, however, things have really changed especially since the beginning of the 21st century.

Furthermore, Jacobs (2007: 35) is of the view that scholars tend to view a party's ideology as a very significant factor for women's involvement in political leadership. She notes that leftist parties are more likely to recruit women and to adopt strategies to ensure that more women candidates are selected. The question is, how many leftist parties do we have in Africa, since the fall of communism? However, the South African Communist Party (SACP), the ANC's alliance partner, may be influencing the decisions of ANC with regard to putting more women in top political office, though the ruling parties of Rwanda, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia and Lesotho, with more than 30% women's representation for example are not leftist.

2.2.2 Liberal feminism

This is the body of ideas feminists might naturally turn to when developing a theory to justify women's rights. Liberal values are inherently compatible with feminist claims to equal rights with men, since liberalism stresses the rights of all individuals to freedom, autonomy and a voice in how they are governed (Freedman, 1978). Today's women have as much right as men to be educated, to vote and to stand for political office. In addition, women are entitled to work outside the home whether or not they are married. Thus, men and women doing the same work should receive the same pay and men are not entitled to use violence against their wives. The researcher and many others also believe that women should be better represented in legislative assemblies than they are now. Although some people still dispute these beliefs, the majority of people have accepted them as common sense assumptions. Nonetheless, these beliefs are what feminists have been demanding for a long time.

Liberal theorists believe that political and legal systems can be used to promote a liberal agenda for all people. Applied to feminism, early liberal feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft (1967), John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill (Rossi, 1970) stressed the importance of educating women, enfranchising women and providing women with equal access to both opportunities and resources in society. Education has always been advocated by liberals as a means of replacing ignorance and prejudice in women by knowledge and enlightenment, and liberal feminists have looked to education to widen the narrow mental horizons imposed on women by domesticity (Wollstonecraft, 1967).

Eisenstein (1981) states that, liberal feminist theory points to sexism which consists of prejudices and discriminatory practices against women. She further notes that sexism and beliefs about the natural differences between women and men that justify their different social destinies are often taken for granted. She continues that, the division between the public and private realms of social activity is the starting point for analysis, a division that understands the realm of the family as the woman's sphere and the realm of the public as the man's (Eisenstein, 1981:5).

Liberal feminists tend to work within the existing political system to allow women equal access to opportunities and resources so they can achieve a state of equality. They target laws that distinguish between men and women based on sex. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) would be an example of contemporary legal reforms in liberal feminism. Equal rights for women are necessary not only to remedy the injustice done to them in the past, but also to promote the moral and intellectual progress of humanity. Liberalism therefore provides a strong framework for reformulating a feminist manifesto for women's political rights and some of the numerous writings by women and men on the injustices still suffered by women have been primarily inspired by the liberal tradition.

However, liberalism seems inadequate today as a framework for developing women's rights, especially with the case of Cameroon because liberal prescriptions such as extending education and the right of women to vote are seen to have brought about improvements in the lives of Cameroonian women, but have failed to emancipate women. The legislative measures adopted by Cameroon and even South Africa have underlined the message that legal equality is necessary, but not sufficient, to create real equality.

2.2.3 Patriarchy

Patriarchy assumes that all women, by nature are incapable of equality (Bennet, 2006). This therefore limits women's claims to the natural and political rights flowing from individualism described by liberal theorists. The term patriarchy has been used extensively in women's liberation movement. The term was taken up by the sociologist Max Weber to describe a particular form of household organisation in which the father dominated other members of the household (cited in Collins, 1986). This definition by implication means that only the father or male child has authority within the household. However, authority does not remain within the realm of the house; it diffuses to public affairs.

In her book, *Women and Politics*, Ford Lynne makes an interesting point on what a patriarchal society is. She notes, "in the patriarchy society men were empowered, regardless of their individual ability to exercise their power and privilege wisely. Likewise, all women were disempowered regardless of their innate ability for leadership and for the wise exercise of power" (Lynne, 2006:11). The concept of patriarchy therefore espouses that, a woman has no power or authority, and the reverse is true for a man. But this cannot be true given the fact that some African countries have had women in positions of authority such as

Queen Mothers and rulers even in pre-colonial times.¹² Even in contemporary Africa, women have been occupying leadership positions as would be seen in the empirical literature.

Adrienne (1976: 40-41) also notes that patriarchy leaves room for women to exercise considerable discretion and choice but only within a patriarchal framework in which men control power, resources and access to both. In other words, even when women believe they are making independent choices and aspiring to and achieving great professional success, they do so within the realm of choices made possible to them by men.

This is what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:830) termed "hegemonic masculinity," where men position themselves to the detriment of other men and the exclusion of women. This view falls in line with those of Code (2000), who attest that, the theory of patriarchy is not all about the belief that all men always benefit from the oppression of women, but that, the primary feature of patriarchy is dominance, where one party is dominant and exploits the other party for their own benefit (Code, 2000).

The study portrays that the issue of dominance is mostly at the detriment of women where power and political leadership, public and private violence contributes to the gender order of society. Hearn and Morgan (1990) further posit that the power of hegemonic conceptions of masculinity is that they allow for change and evolution while still maintaining the dominance of men over women.

¹² Queen Mother Yaa Asantewa took up arms and led an Ashanti army in the Gold Coast (Ghana) to fight the British troops in the last and most bloody battle of the 10 Anglo-Ashanti wars. Her war was the last of the major war in Africa led by a woman. (*African Warrior Queens*, by John Henrik Clarke); Queen Sekhmet, Dread Lioness of Khem (Egypt). She protected the nation and the Pharaoh in peace and in war. Available Online at www.africaresource.com/.../queen-sekhmet-dread-lioness-of-africa-by-jide-uwechia; Nehanda, remembered as a 'Great Mother of Zimbabwe'; Candace, Empress of Ancient Ethiopia, who stop the ever conquering and victorious young Alexander the Great from invading Ethiopia at the borders of her territory in the 4th century B.C.

This study seeks to portray that, while key political structures have been numerically dominated by men, they serve to promote and validate the ideologies underpinning hegemonic masculinity. History tells us that politics from inception has been dominated by men and men set the rules of the game. Though things have changed a little and men do allow women to have space in politics, men still do this only within the same rules set by themselves. Due to the fact that women's roles are embedded in the gender division of labour in the home, this flow on to the political world. In situations where women manage to excel at "other" roles, they get labeled as "women's work or domain" (Hearn & Morgan, 1990).

The scenario described above could only be located within a patriarchal system. Thus, the abolition of patriarchy would be the starting point in addressing women's under-representation in political leadership. The researcher's views seem to be supported by the radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson, when she says that women's role of occupying the family sphere is not spawned by childbirth but by patriarchal relations permeating society. She further adds that, due to sexism, females are conditioned from childhood to adulthood to understand that their roles are limited. These roles simply degenerate into mechanical and predictable behavioural patterns created by the constraints and requirements of their gender-specific roles (Echols, 2003).

Though radical feminists have claimed that men use social systems and other methods of control to suppress women, even non-dominant men suffered the same fate; and the total elimination of patriarchy will liberate everyone from an unjust society (Mackinnon, 1989; Millet, 1985). It is obvious that women suffered more from such an unjust society than men. For instance, history tells us that male authority has prevailed and that the privileges that men have had in the form of social capital like chiefs and herdsman always provide them with an edge over women. Thus, men are more likely to be elected and supported in leadership positions than is the case with women.

Such was the situation which took place in Cameroon during the 2007 parliamentary elections. As remarked by one parliamentarian, "politics is for women who have the means to influence the electorate. Women who think they can use words of persuasion only fail woefully because fellow women, after listening to them finally go back to men who give them money" (Manyong, 2007).¹³ Thus, getting in a political leadership position or legislative bodies in Cameroon is all about economic dominance and power to pull the electorates. The situation in South Africa is somehow different, because there is a lot of party's support to women in the Party List selection. Even political parties that do not use the quota system still reserve a good number of seats to women.

2.2.4 Social Dominance Theory

The social dominance theory is a social psychological theory of group conflict which describes human society as consisting of oppressive group-based hierarchical structures. The key principles of the theory are that societies are stratified by age, sex and group. These group divisions are based on ethnicity, religion, nationality, and so on. Human social hierarchies consist of a hegemonic group at the top and negative reference groups at the bottom. More powerful social roles are increasingly likely to be occupied by hegemonic group members (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). This study takes cognizance of the fact that women are seen as the negative reference group identified by Sidanius and Pratto (2001) due to their sex. Men are more dominant as they possess more political power as seen through their occupation of most high-status political positions in African governments and societies.

Sidanius and Pratto (2001) explain further that, the origin of social hierarchies has an evolutionary basis, where pre-historic human societies organized in

¹³ Statement by Rose Abunaw, the 3rd Vice-President of the Cameroon National Assembly during a conference on "Empowering Women Politically".

hierarchies were more efficient at combating others than non-hierarchical groups, thus giving competitive advantage to groups disposed towards social hierarchies. This being the case, women as well as men was part of that hierarchy prone to a stiff competition and was able to overcome all odds during the liberation of their countries from colonialists. It is obvious that the social hierarchy which existed in the fight against apartheid in South Africa and colonialism in Cameroon was not made of men only. In fact, studies show that women contributed as much as their male counterparts to the struggle for liberation.¹⁴ For instance, Cameroonian women were noted to have staged the first protest march that called for the independence of Cameroon from its colonial rulers (Kah 2011).

The question thus is: what then happened to these women with the attainment of independence in Cameroon, as women are no longer found in this social hierarchy despite their being in the majority as compared to men? The statistics on the number of women's representation in politics in Cameroon (as shown in Chapter 4) indicate a breakdown of the social hierarchy as most men now tell women that their place is in the home – cooking, child bearing, caring – and that of men is hustling outside the home. This does not however mean that these roles played by women are not important. As a matter of fact, this is reproduction in family and society. It only becomes problematic if women are forced to confine themselves within these roles only.

¹⁴ For more information on women's contribution during the Africa's liberation, see Hassim, Shireen. 2002. "Negotiating Spaces: Women in South Africa's Transition to Democracy," Wits Interdisciplinary Research Seminar, 25 March; Meintjes, Sheila. 1995. *Gender, Citizenship, and Democracy in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Manicom, L. 1996. "Claiming Our Rights as Women," in *Democracy, Globalisation and Transformation in Southern Africa*.

;Amadiume, Ifi. 2000. *Daughters of the Goddess, Daughters of Imperialism: African Women Struggle for Culture, Power and Democracy*. New York: Zed Books; Allman, Jean; Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds). 2002. *Women in African Colonial Histories*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Callaway, Hellen. 1987. *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press; Konde, Emmanuel. 1991 "Cameroonian Women in National Politics since the Second World War, 1945-1985: An Historical Study of Women and Politics in Male-Dominated Society" PHD Thesis, Boston University; Mama, Amina. 1996. "Women's Studies and Studies of Women in Africa During the 1990s." Working Paper Series 5/96, Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 28; and Walker, Cheryl (ed). 1990. Walker, Cheryl. ed. *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*. London : James Currey, 1990.

2.3 A REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The question of women in politics got a special boost from the international conferences that the United Nations (UN) organised in Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi in 1975, 1980 and 1985, respectively. The UN dedicated this period called the "UN Decade for Women" to women. As Hydren (2006:162) puts it, this was probably due to the fact that women carried a heavy burden of work on the land and in the home and yet their status was generally of secondary importance.

The majority of African countries have ratified global and regional protocols that aim to increase gender equality in all spheres public life to ensure that women, men, girls and boys participate in and benefit equitably from development processes. However, despite these ratifications and existing efforts to achieve gender equality, the effective participation of women in political structures and gender equality are still limited in most of these countries. Women's activism in the global arena has also resulted in various strategic documents and instruments that ensure and promote women's political participation.

Cameroon and South Africa have both acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)¹⁵ which governs women's legal status at the international level. Article 1 of the Convention defines discrimination against women as,

any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other fields (CEDAW, 1979).

¹⁵ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.

CEDAW further sets the basis for the realisation of gender equality through ensuring women's equal access to political and public life (Article 7 of CEDAW, 1979). The states that are parties to the Convention are bound to take all necessary legislative, judicial, administrative, or other appropriate measures to guarantee that women exercise and enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men. It also makes provision for legislation and temporary special measures to ensure that women can enjoy equal opportunities in political and public life. By ratifying CEDAW, states commit themselves to undertaking a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms.

The CEDAW Articles seem to be fair towards women; their provisions support the involvement of women in all political and public domains of their respective countries. However, the preamble to the Convention concludes by emphasizing that "change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed". The question one may be tempted to ask here is, who defines those changed roles? After all, not everyone or not every country would think that change is needed.

Moreover, the various points under Article 2 strongly advocate that legislative measures (including sanctions when deemed appropriate) and other measures be applied to ensure a complete elimination of any discrimination against women. A country such as Cameroon still has a lot of discriminatory clauses in its constitution, especially with regard to the customary law. For instance, a married woman may be considered part of her husband's estate, grouped together with other property. In addition, most customary practices require that a woman marry a man from the family of her deceased husband (UN Human Rights Committee, 2009:19). This by implication limits a woman's right to inherit her deceased husband's property.

The Cameroonian government created a National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms. But according to NGOs and human rights organisations, the commission is doing very little to change the lives of women. Thus, violence against women in Cameroon continues to take place on a daily basis and nothing has been done to redeem the situation (Orock, 2007).

The Cameroon's National Population Policy Declaration of Cameroon, updated in 2004 to include measures to eliminate violence against women, and the establishment of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family in the same year (Beijing Plus 15 Report, 2010:38), has done little to change the state of affairs of women. There is still a persistence of cultural practices and deep-rooted stereotypes relating to the roles of women and men in all areas of life which disadvantages women's enjoyment of all human rights (CEDAW's Cameroon Report, 2007; Gender Empowerment and Development Report, 2010; CEDAW, 2011). So far, the above mentioned ministry is the only visible structure that the Cameroonian government has put in place to cater for issues concerning women in Cameroon.

Unlike Cameroon, a lot has been implemented by the South African government and many offices and agencies have been established to cater for women's concerns or issues (Mfeketo, 2009). Some of these are a women's caucus in parliament, an office on the Status of Women, and an independent Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), among others. The primary aim of these institutions is to promote and protect gender equality (Meintjes, 2009:3). It should however be noted that there still exist high levels of violence against women, including high incidence of rape, particularly young girls in South Africa (CEDAW, 2011).

Nonetheless, in order to combat such crimes the Government of South Africa passed a Sexual Offences Act and a Domestic Violence Act in 1998, championed by Pregs Govender, an ANC MP and former manager of the WNC (Meintjes, 2009:5). However, the physical abuse of women and rape are still

common especially in the rural areas and some of these cases are not reported due to threats from the perpetrators who are often times family members. This may therefore raise eye brows regarding the extent of the role South African women in political leadership are playing to help the rural women.

As mentioned earlier, the drive to promote women in decision-making positions worldwide gained momentum during the 1980s through a series of international conferences. The 1985 Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action are strategic instruments that laid down the groundwork for women's political empowerment. While the Nairobi Strategies guided African governments in ensuring women's equal participation in all national and local legislative bodies, it also called for equity in the appointment, election and promotion of women to high-level posts in the executive, legislative and judicial arms of governments (United Nations, 1985).

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called for at least 30% representation of women in national governments (United Nations, 1995). It further called on governments, national bodies, private sector organizations, political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, research and academic institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies and non-governmental and international organisations to implement,

measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making" and "increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership". Measures recommended for governments included: the establishment of "the goal of gender balance" in all government bodies and committees; taking measures to encourage political parties to also pursue the same; protecting and promoting "equal rights of women and men to engage in political activities and to freedom of association" monitoring progress on the representation of women; and, supporting non-government and research institutes' studies on women political participation (United Nations, 1995).

Part of the advocacy for balanced representation was the recognition and promotion of shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men

(Ibid). Thus, the impetus for gender quota came from this conference in the 1990s.

The Beijing Conference was regarded as revolutionary and one that would bring permanent change to women's inequality in the world. However, more than 15 years later, not much has changed. There is a tremendously low percentage of women candidates for elections and those appointed to public offices and decision-making bodies in Cameroon (Beijing + 15 Report, 2010) when compared to the situation in South Africa. In 2008, there were six women ministers out of a total of 60, representing 10%, and 25 women MPs out of 180, representing 13.8% (Niyindi, 2008:5; African Women's Report, 2009:3). The CEDAW Committee in its concluding comment on the report of CEDAW Cameroon, urges the Government of Cameroon to take effective measures to increase the number of women elected and appointed to public service positions and to decision-making positions.

On the other hand in South Africa a study done by the Public Service Commission of South Africa in 2007 shows that the proportion of women in senior management positions (director levels and above) in the public service has increased significantly since 1994 and has exceeded the target of 30% that was set for the management echelons in 2005. It also surpasses the target set by the Beijing Platform of Action (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010:25). In the same light, there was a 43% women representation in cabinet by 2008 and 33% representation in parliament by 2009 (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010:26; African Women's Report, 2009:3).

The new millennium did not fail to come up with its own declarations. The beginning of the new millennium saw the United Nations Millennium Summit which took place in September 2000 in New York. During the summit, world leaders pledged to "promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as

effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable".¹⁶

The continent also has not been left out on gender issues. The principles of the AU, among others, include the promotion of gender equality, respect for democratic principles, human rights, rule of law and good governance"¹⁷ as well as respect for the sanctity of life".¹⁸ In 2003 there was the Maputo Declaration which adopted the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*.¹⁹ The Protocol was not only adopted in an effort to comply with international human rights standards, but in recognition of the fact that African women continue to suffer from human rights violations because of their vulnerability as women. The Protocol guarantees a wide range of women's civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Through peoples' rights women are supposed to ascertain their entitlement to democratic governance, representation and participation both in the political and economic spheres.

Despite the numerous protocols and mechanisms that deal with women's representation in political structures, not only are women still relegated to the bottom of the political ladder but gender equality is still a far cry in Africa. Villaluz and Reyes (2001:1) on their part note that so many barriers remain to women's full, equal participation in political leadership. They state that many of these barriers are deeply rooted in patriarchal structures and attitudes, and that they manifest themselves in the structures and agendas of political parties, high costs of elections, unfair electoral systems and lack of access to education and training.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. "Millennium Development Goals" (UNDP, 2000).

¹⁷ Article 4

¹⁸ Article 4

¹⁹ The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (also known as the African Women's Protocol) adopted by the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, 11 July-13 August 2003.

However, the good news is that many countries in Africa are now able to break through these barriers to claim the highest record of women's representation in parliaments and even governments. Some of these countries include Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Mozambique as the review of literature below indicates.

2.4 AFRICAN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE COLONIAL AND ANTI-COLONIAL ERA: AN OVERVIEW

It is not the intention of this study to provide a history of African women's involvement in resistance movements and liberation battles but a few examples are worth looking at so as to understand the historical contributions women have made to the liberation struggles and independence of their respective African countries. This may help to understand that women's under-representation in contemporary Africa is not due to a lack of capable women but due to other factors which this study seeks to find out.

Nationalism and liberation wars were the fertile soil in which notions of African women's role grew and in which early women's organisations took root. During the colonial period, governments and political movements were confronted with issues familiar to western women's organisations, notably, autonomy and separatism. For example, in the Kingdom of Angola, Nzingha (1582-1663), tried to prevent the Portuguese from overrunning it. Though she died without achieving her objective, she played an important role which cannot be ignored (Jayawardena, 1987:100). Still in Angola, a later politically charismatic woman, Teodolinda Rodriguez, founded the Angolan Women's Organisation (OMA), a women's anti-colonial resistance movement. The goal of this movement was to put up a common fight against colonialism as well as to emancipate women (Cutrufelli, 1985).

In Ghana, Yaa Asantewaa, queen of the Asante (1849-1892), who was outstanding among Asante queen mothers, led an insurrection against the British. Although her armies were defeated, she created part of the theoretical basis for the political emergence of modern Africa (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995). Mbuya Nehanda (Nyakasikana) of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was accused of stirring up insurgency against the British. She was later captured and hanged. There was also an all-female battalion of Dahomey (now Benin) in the early 19th century, which fought to protect the Dahomey empire against invaders and internal treachery (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995).

Similarly, Queen Ranavalone III of Madagascar, who ruled from 1883-1910, successfully faced foreign threats and domestic tensions. Empress Taitu (1883-1910) of Ethiopia, often described as the most powerful woman during her time, made crucial contributions to both domestic and foreign policies. In addition, there were female leaders such as Chief Matha Yoto of Kpa Mende of Sierra Leone, the famous Queen Amina of Zazau in Nigeria and female pharaohs of Egypt, in particular, Hatsheput Hoda Sherawi who launched a Feminist Union in 1922. Her union fought for girls' rights against non-consented marriages before they reached a nubile age and against wearing veils (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995).

In her study titled, *"Women in Politics"*, Newland (1975) reports that during the African struggle for independence generally, many women were in the forefront. Some, like Field Marshall Muthoni Kirima (of the Mau Mau Movement) in Kenya, became guerrilla leaders whom the enemy feared even more than the male insurgents, according to Newland (1975). Probably, she was a hard nut to crack. Women also joined Mozambique's FRELIMO and Algeria's National Liberation Front (FLN) (Newland, 1975).

A Nigerian study by Duley and Edwards (1976) showed that women often wielded considerable political and economic influence before independence. For example, among the Yorubas, an ethnic group in south-western Nigeria, women

as a group had official public representation through a variety of institutions including the office of the Iyalode (an influential woman appointed to the council of chiefs) who functioned as the leader and spokesperson for the women of the city). The Iyalode had her own court and council of subordinate female chiefs to make decisions and adjudicate disputes related to women's dominant role in trade and markets as well as their domestic concerns. These roles were complementary to those of the male chiefs. The Iyalode participated in all the judicial and political affairs of the royal council, and some Iyalode held major political powers in their states (Duley & Edwards, 1976:324).

Furthermore, women among the Igbo, another ethnic group in Eastern Nigeria, organised themselves in 1929 and successfully harassed the British, forcing the colonial administration to move its headquarters from Calabar to Lagos. These women demonstrated all this in what became known as the "Aba Riots". They protested because of rumours that the taxation which was levied on men, was to be extended to women. Women in their thousands marched on the main trade centres, cutting telegraph wires, attacking banks, European shops and the prisons, and freeing the inmates in the process. It is said that, this action greatly impressed public opinion in Britain and the army was called in and they fired at the women, killing and wounding scores of them (Cutrufelli, 1985; Fallon, 2008:5; Jayawardena, 1987:100).

In South Africa, during the struggle for African majority rule, women played a fundamental role. The nationalist agitations in the 1960s were a great blow to the traditional male stance towards women, whose combative spirit came as a surprise to everybody. These women were fighting not just for the political independence of their country but also for clearly defined objectives based on their specific needs as women. The South African Congress League organised demonstrations in South Africa at the October 1958 demonstration in Johannesburg where over 2,000 women were arrested (Cutrufelli, 1985; Walker, 1982).

Walker (1990) also examines women and gender in Southern Africa from the early nineteenth century to the Second World War and noted that, black women in South Africa suffered a triple oppression of gender, race and class. She further stated that white women too were generally discriminated against but their membership of a privileged racial group softens the impact of gender discrimination and works against their identification with black women, with shared problems.

However, the works of other writers show that South African women did not allow the triple oppression mentioned by Walker to put them down. Kgasi (2004), for example, states that by the 1950s, South African women were already in the liberation struggle. From the early 1950s the Women's League of the African National Congress (ANC) took part in political campaigns such as transport and education boycotts; and the 1960s and 1970s saw increasing massive organised resistance to apartheid by women. On August 9, 1956, 20,000 women staged a march on the Union Building (the Presidency of South Africa) in Pretoria to protest against the pass laws of 1950. These laws required African persons to present special identification documents (derogatorily dubbed the 'dompasses') which curtailed or limited Africans' freedom of movement during the apartheid era (Walker, 1990, Kgasi, 2004).

The march was led by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu and Sophia William-Brayn. These women left bundles of petitions consisting of more than 100,000 signatures at the then prime minister JG Strijdom's office doors. Outside the Union Building, the women stood silently for 30 minutes, many with their children on their backs and those who worked as nannies for Whites also had white children with them. A protest song sang at the time, "you strike a woman, you strike a rock" ('wathinta abafazi, wathint'imbokodo') has come to represent women's source of courage and strength in South Africa today. In addition, since

1994, August 9 has come to be known as a “Women’s Day” and is commemorated in South Africa annually (Light & Baloyi, 2006; World Press, 2011).

During the 1980s, South African women came together to form organisations such as the Cape-based United Women’s Organization and the Natal Organisation of Women. These organisations worked alongside the male-dominated unions and community organizations. Women filled important leadership roles within the mixed-sex organisations and were often targeted for banning or assassination (Kgasi, 2004).

On the part of Cameroon, Terretta (2007:62) gives an account of Cameroonian women’s role in the radical, anti-colonialist movement led by the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC). She affirms that in 1949, Cameroonian women throughout the United Nations Trusteeship territories under the French and British administration began to petition the UN Trusteeship Council, demanding an end to racial discrimination, increased economic opportunities and better social services for women and children. From 1949 to 1960, over a thousand petitions written by women nationalists, members of the Union Démocratique des femmes Camerounaises – Democratic Union of Cameroonian Women (UDEFEC), the autonomous women’s wing of UPC, were handed out to the Trusteeship Council (Terretta, 2007).

Terretta’s research reveals that women’s involvement in the anti-colonial movement reshaped gender roles within the space of nationalism. She attests that the UDEFEC was not merely a women’s wing of a male revolution, controlled by male party leaders. Instead, women remained active agents of change, collaborating with men within the struggle, and challenging male domination when necessary.

Adams (2003:7) also asserts that under the British and French colonial administrations in Cameroon, policies were enacted to enhance women's status in society, though Britain did more in this regard than France. For instance, both colonial powers encouraged the education of women, the incorporation of women into the colonial administration – though France did less in this regard – and the formation of women's associations. There was also legislation initiated which was aimed at eliminating cultural practices deemed harmful to women such as polygamy and bride-price. However, the formation of women's associations was only encouraged so long as they did not challenge the colonial authority (non-political groups). This was the same pattern of exclusion of women from the political sphere which continues into the post-colonial period.

The formal associations were the *L'Union Feminine Civique et Sociale* (UFCS), *L'Union Democratique des Femmes Camerounaises* (UDEFEC), *L'Union des Femmes Camerounaises* (UFC), and *La Jeunesse Feminine Camerounaise* (JFC) which existed in the French Cameroun. The UFCS was established in France in 1925 with headquarters in Paris and a chapter in Douala. The Douala branch advocated educational programmes and changes in the legislature. The UDEFEC, the women's wing of UPC, as already highlighted by Terreta, wrote and directed a petition campaign at the United Nations. The UFC, formed in 1952, was pro-French and tended to counteract the presence of the anti-nationalist UDEFEC in French Cameroon. Lastly, the JFC was an autonomous, indigenous organisation (Adams, 2003: 10).

While in the British West Cameroon, the Women's Corana Society (WCS) was formed in 1937 as a counterpart to the male-only Corona Club, it was an association of women who were connected in some way with Britain's overseas service. Its main aim was to assist women travelling to and living in Great Britain's colonial territories as well as women visiting England. Branches were opened in present day Victoria²⁰ (today's Limbe) and Buea²¹ and its activities

²⁰ Victoria (now Limbe) is a town along the coast in the former British Southern Cameroons.

included cake making, embroidery, flower arranging and dress making. It is also said that, as independence approached, Cameroonian women chose to leave the Women's Corona Society to form their own associations (Adams, 2003: 12). One of such organisations was the Buea Women Social organisation founded in 1960 but, later changed its name to Women Cameroon Society in 1961 to reflect a wider membership which grew steadily.

As a matter of fact, the women's organisations which existed during the colonial period in Cameroon were purely on the basis of social and cultural issues, apart from the UDEFEC. Even the organisations which existed prior to and immediately after independence were either social or developmental in nature. Konde (1991) and Adams (2003) state that many local and regional associations developed immediately after independence. But these soon consolidated under umbrella organisations in the West (Anglophone) Cameroon and the East (Francophone) Cameroon. These were the *West Cameroon Council of Women's Institutes* and the *East Cameroon Conseil National des Femmes Camerounaise* – National Council for Cameroonian women. Notable women in these organisations were the wife of John Ngu Foncha, the then Prime Minister of Cameroon, Anna Foncha and Minerva Martins, Delphine Tsanga, Gwendoline Burnley and Sarah Kala Lobé. Foncha and Tsanga were both presidents of the West and East Cameroon Women's Council, respectively (Konde, 1991; Adams, 2003).

Six months into the unification of Cameroon, these two regional organisations attempted to form a national union that would bring together women's groups in East and West Cameroon in a March 1962 Conference held in Victoria and Buea but did not succeed due to poor attendance of delegates from East Cameroon. There was another attempt in a meeting held in February 1965 in Yaoundé which finally led to the creation of a unified national women's organisation in 1966 (Adams, 2003: 17). Adams also affirms that soon after the formation of this

²¹ Buea used to be a key administrative town during the German colonial rule and British rule.

national organisation, the semi-autonomous groups were incorporated into the women's wing of the single party, the Women's Cameroon National Union (WCNU) and the leaders were appointed to political positions (ibid).

Konde (1991: 256) is of the view that women gained a visible presence in the Cameroonian politics, while Ahidjo also benefited from the support of the women. However, the relationship was not reciprocal as the state stood to benefit more than the women did. Though some women leaders genuinely thought that joining the ruling party would eliminate some of the obstacles hindering women's participation in national politics, some women leaders tended to benefit personally from this alliance. Moreover, the WCNU was not autonomous and its primary functions were social rather than political (Adams, 2003: 17-18).

From the foregoing characterisation of women's organisation during the colonial and post-colonial Cameroon, one can see the under-representation of women in the politics of Cameroon since independence and even with the introduction of multi-party politics in the 1990s, a period which saw a new breed of women in political leadership in Africa more than any other time in the history of the continent. The non-political nature of these women's organisations and their non-autonomous status have greatly contributed to relegating women to the rank and file positions in the politics of the country. Unlike the women's league of the ANC in South Africa (the ANCWL) which claimed to benefit all women in the party and the country, the WCNU benefited the few elite women at the time and this similar trend has extended to the WCPDM which has replaced it since then.

This further implies that the patriarchal nature of the Cameroon society has not also changed as seen through the speech made by JN Foncha, the then Prime Minister of West Cameroon in 1962 during the conference that took place to merge the two regional women's bodies of West and East Cameroon. He said:

I am a lover of organised groups ... Organised and loyal groups of citizens are wanted everywhere because through them development of the social and economic aspect of our independent

country can be fostered. It should be possible for Cameroonians to organise themselves into clubs like dancing, debating, handicrafts of all sort, farming etc. These are the things which bring balanced development in the country. In the field of development women the world over have shown themselves strong competitors of men (National Archives, Buea, Safe 1962/1 cited in Adams, 2003:16).

Still on Foncha's speech as captured by a popular newspaper at the time, *La Presse du Cameroun* on April 4 1962 (cited in Adams, 2003: 16), he said, "the enthusiasm that you show indicates that under appropriate direction you will be an important factor in the development of our young Federation".

The above statements show that women's role in development is recognised and deemed important. However, women need to be guided probably by men or by government, because of the belief that they cannot do it on their own. Also, it shows that women's roles in dancing during political functions, and in handicraft and farming for the nation is very important. Nonetheless, the factor about balanced development, in the speech, is not understandable if women are left out of the political debate. Development is not only about economic issues, but also about empowering women in political activities.

Nonetheless, Foncha's views were only that of an individual and could not be taken to represent the views of all the Cameroonian men at the time. Women themselves may be partly blamed for the situation of women in Cameroonian politics since then. In an interview with author Belinda Adams (2003) Gwendoline Burnley, one of the first women who benefited from political positions in Cameroon when the East Cameroon's National Women's Union (*Conseil National des Femmes Camerounaises*) joined the WCNU, had this to say: "...reluctantly entered politics; that, members of the party hierarchy consulted her and she refused, but they continued to push until she agreed to run for a term in parliament" (Adams, 2003: 17). The lack of enthusiasm by implication has contributed to Burnley's reluctance to fight for other women to progress in political leadership.

From the foregoing overview, one can see that African women were not only pre-occupied with domestic chores but had played an integral role in the local politics of sub-Saharan Africa for generations' though, as stated by *iKNOW Politics*²² (2007), much of women's political participation is hidden from history. Today, women researchers and writers are recovering this history to create awareness of women's contribution to society and change around the world. Studies show that in many societies, women exercised political power through veto rights, participated in women-only councils or held positions of authority – both inherited and elected.²³

The brief historical review reveals the potential of African women and rejects the assertion that women are not capable of handling authority in the public arena such as Fukuyama arguments (Fukuyama, 1998). Despite participating in Africa's colonial-era political struggle movements for freedom for their own countries and for themselves, African women were marginalized after independence. Many went into the non-profit organizations or the civil society sector, or ended up just singing and dancing at airports as part of arrival ceremonies for male politicians (Orhin, 2006). However, the trend has changed now and women are no longer spreading out their cloths on the floor for their male counterparts to walk on. Instead some of them are rubbing shoulders with men on political platforms as the next section shows.

²² International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) is an interactive network of women in politics from around the world who share experiences, access resources and advisory services, and network and collaborate on issues of interest. [Online]. Available: <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/>

²³ iKNOW Politics 2007. Sub-Saharan. [Online]. Available: <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/http://www.ikonwpolitics.org/en/node/300>

2.5 THE STATE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: THE 1990s

In Africa, the 1990s was seen as the period when multi-partyism was instituted as a political reform. In fact multi-party elections became popular. The year 1991, in particular, ushered in a new wave of multi-party democracy in Africa. Many African countries like Cameroon, Benin, Ivory Coast, Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Conakry moved from a one-party system to multi-party democracy (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1998). For example, Cameroon had its first multi-party elections in 1992. The introduction of multi-party politics saw the formation of more than a dozen political parties, which was a great leap forward from the one-party system that has existed since independence. In Benin, the introduction of a multi-party system in the 1990s saw the defeat of the incumbent President Mathieu Kerekou by Nicephore Soglo in 1991 (Bartley & Kaplan, 1999:93; Mwaria *et.al.*, 2000).

Kanduzi (2005:96) regards the 1990s as a period when Africa expressed itself through home-grown solutions to African problems. He characterizes this period as the first decade of Africa's second independence, when multi-party politics replaced one-party dictatorships and African initiatives brought a renaissance to Africa. Thus, according to this scholar, this was the period in which Africa consolidated its role in defining the continent's identity and solving African problems.

This was also the period when the first inclusive multi-party elections took place in South Africa in 1994. The unbanning of many political formations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and other parties and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison after 27 years, brought in the liberation of almost all states held under apartheid and colonialism in Africa (*ibid*).

Kah (n.d:2) also posits that from the 1990s onwards, there was a developing force in the political landscape of Cameroon which was not known before. He argues that, in the past, decisions were mainly taken top-down, and the implementations of those decisions were done by men while women looked on. Adams also attests that the 1990s in Cameroon was a watershed year for change because, this was the year, president Paul Biya initiated a number of liberalising measures commonly referred to as "liberty laws" (Adams, 2003: 6). The re-introduction of multi-partism in Cameroon was brought about by these laws.

As stated by Tripp (2001), until the 1990s, one never heard of an African woman running for the post of the presidency in her country. But the early 1990s brought democracy and multi-partism to many African countries. She explained that before the 1990s, African women held positions as government ministers or parliamentarians, but they were few and attracted little attention. She notes that:

in the 1990s, greater number of African women began to aspire to political leadership at the national and local levels. Although their (women) impact was still minimal and the obstacles daunting, new female faces and voices began to be seen and heard. The 1990s was a decade of beginnings for women in politics in Africa and all indications are that we will see even greater pressures for female political representation and participation in the decade ahead (Tripp, 2001:1).

From the foregoing points, one can note that, there was not only the opening up of the political environment in Africa in the 1990s, but women also seized this opportunity and put issues of gender to the forefront as women became more visible both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, according to Lumumba-Kasongo, the 1990s is also regarded as a period when there was a quest for a new basis for development and social progress (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1998). Probably there was also the realisation on the part of African governments or women themselves that, they needed to be included in the development and social progress of their countries.

Having stated the rationale for choosing the 1990s, the ensuing review looks at women's representation in political leadership positions in Africa. It was important that both big and small countries like Nigeria and Lesotho be included in the review. Nonetheless, the availability of literature was also very important in the selection of countries. Furthermore, countries which have made tremendous improvements in the achievement of gender equality could not be left out. Such countries include Rwanda and Liberia. The researcher particularly made sure that at least one country from the different sub-regions in the continent was included in the study.

Despite being the world's poorest region, women's representation in sub-Saharan countries' legislatures is higher than that of many wealthier countries as global statistics from Inter-Parliamentary Union - IPU (2010) indicates. The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics, 2010) reports that the overall percentage of women legislators in sub-Saharan Africa by 2010 was 19.2 percent and this number was expected to rise steadily over the next decade, while in the United Kingdom and United States, women's representation in 2009 was 20 and 17 percent respectively (IPU, 2009).

The visibility of African women in political leadership has grown steadily as they seek nominations for presidents in no less than a dozen countries. However, they were able to secure nominations as candidates only in two (Tripp, 2001). As already mentioned in the problem statement of this study, the 1990s was a great leap forward for Africa. For example, Ruth Perry of Liberia became Africa's first female head of state and she had served as chairperson of the country's collective presidency in the mid-1990s. Ethiopia, Lesotho and South Africa had parliaments with women speakers, and both Uganda and Zimbabwe had women in the positions of deputy speakers (Tripp, 2001:1). The number of women in parliaments also reached 30% in Burundi, Namibia and Mozambique in 1999 (Fallon, 2008:3).

Some of the reasons cited for the increased number of women in African politics from the 1990s were; the move towards multi-partyism in most African countries; the increase in educational opportunities for women and girls; women's experiences in creating and sustaining associations such as church related activities, self-help groups and savings clubs; the availability of donors' funds to support women's political activities; a commitment on the part of governments to increase women's political representation; and international women's movement such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (Tripp, 2001:6-9).

In the period from the new millennium, women have made significant electoral gains at all levels of decision-making. Five members of South Sudan's new post-war cabinet were women - a significant increase from the previous one. Prominent women included the Deputy President of South Africa, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the Prime Minister of Mozambique, Ms. Luisa Diogo. Still in Mozambique, 87 women were elected to the 250-member parliament in 2004, constituting 35% of the legislature (Fallon, 2008:3). In Mauritius, women political representation made a giant leap from a trivial five to 17% in 2005 (The Guardian, 2006).

While women have served as acting presidents in both Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, the 2006 election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President of Liberia is, perhaps, the most significant milestone for women at the highest levels of politics in Africa (Lee, 2006; Afrol News, 2006; AllAfrica.com News, 2005; News24.com, 2006). Liberia ranks 90th position in the world in female representation in parliament. In a 2009 Beijing Plus 15 Report, provided by the Government of Liberia, 14 out of 94 members of the legislature were women and four out of 17 cabinet ministers were women, constituting 21 percent of the total cabinet positions at the time. The cabinet positions occupied by women were the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Commerce, Gender and Foreign Affairs (Liberia's Beijing+15 Country Report, 2009:6, 23).

The report also notes that, although there have been some efforts to increase women's participation in public and political life, there remains a low level of participation of women at the highest levels of decision-making due in part to prevailing social and cultural attitudes. The above statistics seemly prove that, the election of a female president does not necessarily translate into a high women's representation in national legislature or public office (Liberia's Beijing Plus 15 Country Report, 2009).

Other reasons for poor representation of women in the Liberian political affairs have been mentioned by Cole (2011:4), who asserts that there were over 30 registered political parties which contested the 2005 presidential elections in Liberia but very few, if any, heeded petitions from women's groups and civil society organisations' pleas for political parties to allocate at least 30 percent of contested seats to female candidates (Cole, 2011).

The author further posits that Liberia does not also have a law which ensures women's equitable political participation. There are no electoral quotas and the electoral system is majoritarian (as stated by Article 83 (b) of the Liberian Constitution (Cole, 2011:5). As noted by numerous research studies, the majoritarian system does not favour women or minorities; quotas remain the most important mechanism by which the number of women in politics can be increased and guaranteed (IPU, 2010).

It is also very fascinating to examine a country with the highest number of women in parliament, i.e., Rwanda. In a study undertaken by Devlin and Elgie (2008:6-7) on Rwanda, the authors indicate that its first parliament in 1994 (after the Rwandan genocide) contained 70 seats, with women occupying eight of them and representing 11.4%. In 1999 women's representation rose to 17.1% and in 2000, it rose again to 25.7%. A new constitution was drawn in 2003 and a quota policy was included assuring women at least 30% of posts in decision-making. After the 2003 election, the number of seats represented by women in parliament

jumped to 39 out of 80 (48.75%) leading to Rwanda having the highest number of women in parliament worldwide. According to the recent statistics provided by the IPU (2011), Rwanda now has a 56.25% of women's representation in Parliament.

The numeric increment of Rwandan women in parliament has been attributed to the death of many men during the 1994 genocide. The female population after the genocide was said to be 70% and by 2008, over 56% of the adult population was female (Devlin and Elgie, 2008:6-7). According to a United Nations Development Programme, the female population of Rwanda in 2009 was 53% of the total population (UNDP, 2009). Devlin and Elgie (2008:6) further add that during violent conflicts, it is always the case that many women took on new traditionally "male" roles in the economy and politics.

However, a different view has been put forth by Marrisa (2010:3) who states that women's out-numbering of men in parliament in Rwanda could partly be attributed to the fact that women in government are perceived by Rwandans as more approachable and trustworthy politicians than their male counterparts. The populace perceived them to be better at reconciliation, forgiveness and post-conflict peace-building. However, the fact that many men lost their lives during the 1994 genocide could still be attributed to women's numerical superiority in political leadership in Rwanda. Nevertheless, Rwanda is not the first country in Africa to have passed through such a phase. There are other countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC and Sudan which have passed through conflict situations but do not have huge number of women in political leadership.

Writing on the "democracy and the rise of women's movement in Sub-Saharan Africa," Fallon (2008) states that in 1992 in Ghana, 9% of members of parliament were women and in 2004, the number increased to 11%. In 2003, there was a 13% women's representation in the Ghanaian cabinet (Dake, 2008). Fallon notes that this minimal increment could be attributed in part to the inability of women's

organizations in Ghana to successfully encourage and support women to run for political positions. It could also be attributed to the plural majority system used in Ghana, since as has been earlier noted, countries with the best female legislative representation in the world use a proportional representation or quotas (Fallon, 2008).

However, the 2008 elections brought in some hopes for Ghanaian women as Joyce Bamford-Addo took office as the first-ever female speaker of parliament (Dake, 2009:1). Dake further states that the visibility of three females as vice-presidential candidates in the 2008 elections in Ghana was a positive step for future female candidates aspiring for the post of presidency. These were Petra Maria Amegashie for Ghana People's National Convention (PNC), Rosemond Abraham for Reformed Patriotic Democrat (RPD) and Patience Amesimeku for the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP). The 2008 elections also saw women increase their numbers in ministerial positions, from 13% in 2003 to 24% in 2009. Moreover, women now occupy portfolios such as justice and the Attorney-General, information, trade and industry, environmental science and technology which were previously male-dominated. Dake (2009), however, notes that there has been an adverse reduction of female parliamentarians from 11% in 2004 to 8.7% in 2009.

With regard to Nigeria, the most populated country on the continent, women representation by 2003 was only 16.7% in the House of Assembly (i.e., 7 out of 42 members) and 3.7% at Senate (i.e., 4 out of 109 members) (Afolabi, n.d:10). In the House of Representatives, there were only 20 out of 360 members, representing 5.6%. Thus, the introduction of civilian rule in 1999 did very little to change the political culture and gender equality in Nigeria. This is because in 1999, gender representation in the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly were 12.4% and 3%, respectively (Ibid).

Taiye (2008:1537) further states that, among the 50 political parties that participated in the April 2007 election in Nigeria, women formed only 6% representation of the total number of the candidates who contested for offices and these were mostly in the House of Assembly and House of Representatives.

Lesotho, one of Africa's smallest states, is no exception in having fewer women in top government positions and in parliament. Olaleye (2003:14) posits that in 1993, Lesotho had only three women in parliament out of 65 members of parliament. In 1998, the number of parliamentary seats rose to 80 but still only three women were represented in parliament and after the 2002 election, 14 seats were occupied by women. Tanga (2008) further contends that even with a woman speaker in 2007, it was a challenge for women to come up with policies and laws that will push up women's representation in all tiers of government.

Tanga also notes that women in Lesotho had long been disadvantaged and marginalized politically, economically and socially. However, this challenge of women's representation seems to be common at the national than local level.

Tanga (2008), Mankimane (n.d) and Sekatle (2010) further notes that the amendment of the Local Government Act 1997 in 2004 provided for the election of at least 30% women into councils; meanwhile, the amendment of Local Government Elections Acts 1998 operationalised the inclusion of women in local government elections.

Hence the adoption of a legislated was not supported by many Lesotho men during the 2005 local elections and caused some of them to boycott the elections (Mankimane (n.d). This same election saw 58% women elected in the local government (Mankimane, n.d; Government of Lesotho, 2006; Sekatle, 2010). This percentage was far above the specified 30% contained in the amended Local Government Act of 1997 and Local Government Elections Act of 1998. With this percentage, according to Mankimane (n.d), Lesotho became the first country in the SADC region with the highest number of women in local

government, followed by Namibia and then South Africa. With the impressive women's representation at the local government level, the challenge now is the sustainability of that number and to improve on the 25% women's representation in Parliament and other structures at the national level.

Fallon also avers that in 2003, women in the Central African Republic demanded inclusion in the transitional government institutions and were ultimately given more seats on the National Transitional Council. Women in Namibia created a women's manifesto during the 1999 election which encourages more women to participate in the elections and politics and also urged political parties to incorporate women and the president to appoint more women as ministers. This action saw the representation of women in the National Assembly rising from 19% to 27%. In addition, female prime ministers were appointed in Sao Tome and Senegal (Fallon, 2008).

The women in North Africa are significantly under-represented in senior positions in politics. It is reported that both male and female citizens in North African countries lack the power to change their governments democratically. Politics is viewed as the domain for men and female leaders are satisfied with cultural attitudes which deprive women of political representation. In Egypt in 2005, a *fatwa* (religious opinion) was issued which prohibited women from assuming the position of president (Kelly, 2010).

A study conducted by Abu-Zayd in Egypt, indicates that, women's political participation only started increasing in 1976, which was the period when multi-party system was put in place (Abu-Zayd, 2002:2). This was despite that Egypt had the first woman, Rawya 'Atiya, in parliament in 1957 (McGrath, 2009). In addition to the passing of Law No 88 in 1977, which introduced reserved seat quotas, the activities of political parties were regulated and the number of women in politics in Egypt specifically in legislative bodies, increased swiftly between 1979 and 1986 (Abou-Zeid, 2003).

The law set aside 30 out of 360 seats for Egyptian women in parliament. However, the repeal of this law in 1986 greatly affected the percentage of women in the Egyptian legislature (Majed, *et al.* 2005). Thus women's participation in parliament declined from 9 percent in 1979 to 8.5% in 1984. In 1987 and 2005, it declined to 3.9% and 1.9%, respectively. In fact, in the 2005 elections, women secured only nine out of 454 parliamentary seats (Greiss, 2009; McGrath, 2009). Out of this number, only four were elected, the rest were appointed by President Hosni Mubarak. This decline has been attributed to the social and cultural barriers imposed by a patriarchal society, reinforced by a wave of Islamic fundamentalism which swept across the Arab world in the 1980s. That is, conservative fundamentalist groups sought to impose many limitations on women and they argued that women should stay at home and manage the family (McGrath, 2009).

According to a survey of 58 countries conducted by the World Economic Forum in 2005, Egypt ranked number 55 on the political empowerment of women (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, 2005). McGrath (2009) further states that political parties in Egypt do not give women the training needed during campaigning. Neither do they put them on their party list, except in a few cases where women would be put on women's committee. For this reason, the few women face many challenges in raising campaign funds and they are also vulnerable to violence and thuggery which generally come with elections in Egypt. Female candidates are said to have reported physical intimidation by their opponents, and sometimes, they are subject to smear campaigns directed at their character or reputation.

However, in 2007, The Egyptian government made some amendments to the constitution which affected women's participation in politics positively. The amended Article 63 calls for the allocation of a minimum quota of seats for women within the two parliamentary chambers and local councils in order to encourage women's political participation (Bernard-Maugiron, 2008).

The above positive developments set the stage for a dramatic increase in the number of women in political leadership and public service in Africa. Though their presence alone does not guarantee change for women, it nonetheless allows them to demonstrate sound political leadership, an awareness of women's needs and the importance of gender equality, all of which may open doors for the next generation of women leaders. However, while political space for women is gradually opening up, a number of factors still affect their full participation and representation in the political processes and in the access to decision-making bodies as discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

2.5.1 South Africa and Cameroon

The previous review has dealt with the fact that women in African countries also participated in anti-colonial struggles. There is also evidence from the available literature to prove that African women's representation in political leadership has changed a lot since the beginning of multi-party rule in Africa in the 1990s. This section compares the state of women's political activities in South Africa with that of their counterparts in Cameroon from the early 1990s.

A lot has been written on women's representation in the politics of South Africa (Albertyn, 1994; IDEA, 1998, 2004; Boezak, 1999; Kethusile *et al.*, 2001; Hassim, 2002, 2004, 2006; Goetz & Hassim, 2003; Gasa, 2003; Ballington, 2001, 2004; Angevine, 2006; Tripp *et al.*, 2009) and Cameroon (Konde, 2005; Atanga, 2006, 2010; Kassea, 2006; Ekoue, 2008; Ngum, 2008; Arrey, 2009), but only one comparative study on women in politics has been done of South Africa and Cameroon. As mentioned earlier, this is an academic work by Diwouta (2004). Diwouta's study basically looked at international and regional women's rights protocols and conventions and its implementation in Cameroon and South Africa.

The study endeavours to show how "Cameroon which has been independent for 40 years is still far behind in the implementation of gender equality policies, while South Africa, just emerging from years of institutionalised oppression due to the apartheid system, is a step ahead" (Diwouta, 2004:2). Her findings indicate that the government of Cameroon lacks the political will to implement these human and women's rights instruments despite having a much older democracy than South Africa. She also states that Cameroonian women still face many challenges in their participation in politics more than their South African counterparts.

The current study seeks to build on Diwouta's. For instance, Diwouta's study presents some past statistics of women's political representation in Cameroon and South Africa before 2004. She reports that information gathered from the "*Cameroon Tribune*", a local newspaper, on government reshuffling showed only 10 women out of 180 members of the National Assembly and only two women ministers and one female State Secretary were in the 52-member Cabinet at the time. Women also had only 5.3% of sub-ministerial level positions.

She also raises a serious concern about the lack of will on the part of the Cameroonian government to implement its National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms which seeks to address issues of inequality between men and women (Diwouta, 2004:4). This Commission was a Presidential Decree passed in November 1990²⁴ which brought up a process of political liberalisation and multi-partism. The author further states that, despite criticisms from many human rights groups and NGOs to the government's inaction to implement its own decree, the Cameroonian government has been unshaken.

On the part of South Africa, Diwouta states that, women have always been at the forefront of politics and that their presence is felt in all spheres of public life and

²⁴ The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms: Presidential Decree No 90/1459 of 8th November 1990.

they are given politically relevant portfolios in the government. This was evidenced by the election of a woman as Speaker of the National Assembly in 1994, and later the appointment of a woman Deputy Speaker²⁵ in addition to having a 43% female's representation in the South Africa's cabinet (Diwouta, 2004:4). This was proof that unlike Cameroon, there was a real commitment on the part of the South African government to undertake measures to advance the position of women and to promote gender equality in all spheres of life.

However, Goetz and Hassim (2003), in examining women's political representation in South Africa which is ahead of most Western democracies, argue that participation does not necessarily translate into effective policy influence. The authors agree that success is dependent upon the nature of civil society, the political system and the state. In addition, women in decision-making positions will only be effective if there is a strong women's movement in civil society acting as an accountability mechanism.

2.6 STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS WHICH PROMOTE WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

This section deals with the structures and mechanisms which promote women in political leadership positions in Africa. Structures and mechanisms found are women's movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), gender quotas, national and regional bodies, a commitment of the ruling party, a proportional representation system and political party support.

2.6.1 Women's Movements and NGOs

Tripp *et al.* (2009) in a study conducted in Cameroon, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda found out that women's autonomous movements are one of the most important determinants of the new gender-based policies adopted

²⁵ Referring to Dr. Frene Ginwale and Ms Baleka Mbete at the time.

after 1990 in much of Africa. These movements according to the authors have been very influential in lobbying for constitutional reforms and new pieces of legislation in order to expand women's rights. These movements are especially important if they are no longer tied to participation in the patronage of networks of the ruling party but are able to select their own leaders and set their own agendas. In an earlier research, Tripp mentions that women's movements in Uganda in the early 1990s publicly raised many different issues ranging from women's representation in political leadership to domestic violence, rape, reproductive rights, sex education in the school curriculum, female genital mutilation, and corruption (Tripp, 2001:10-12).

After so many struggles, women's movements were rewarded in that a final draft of the Ugandan Constitution included a provision that gender equity must be written into all laws passed by parliament. The draft also included the prohibition of laws, customs and traditions that undermine the position of women; a provision to establish an Equal Opportunities Commission to ensure that Constitutional principles are enforced; and an expansion of the numbers of women representatives (Tripp, 2001:19). Tripp further notes that in Zambia, the National Women's Lobby Group (NWLG) along with six other NGOs succeeded in getting the Constitutional Commission to incorporate into the draft Constitution a section on women's rights, focusing on discrimination, affirmative action, violence against women and the implementation of the UN CEDAW (Tripp, 2001:24).

Writing on women's rights movements as a measure of African democracy, Van Allen (2001) uses the case of Botswana to examine the conditions that make it possible for women's groups to organize and succeed as a useful measure of a substantive democratic process. She states that what motivates women's groups to have a political influence is an alliance between the working class and *petit bourgeois* (cattle and diamond) women. This alliance has been as a result of the

dynamics of capitalism in Southern Africa. Thus, the successes of women's rights campaigns are guided by gender and class formation (Van Allen, 2001:41).

A major success of one such women's rights group, the Women's Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Botswana, was their ability to overturn the 1982 Citizenship Act. The Citizenship Law for example, allowed for the citizenship of the father only, not the mother, in determining the citizenship of the child. Other successes were the mobilization of women to oppose other discriminatory laws and practices, the discussion of the issues not often allowed in open public debate, the ability to push a process of change in men's attitudes, and the pressure on government to move significantly against women's subordination (Van Allen, 2001:43).

With regards to Nigeria, Van Allen (2001) states that leading women's NGOs such as the Gender and Development Action, Women Empowerment Movement, the Women Opinion Leaders Forum and other NGOs were particularly worried about the low levels of female political representation and political appointments. They therefore managed to get reserved seats for women in parliament and also demanded larger numbers of female appointees to public bodies. She further states that in Malawi, women's groups petitioned the government in 1999 to ensure that women make up at least one-third of all decision-makers in political positions and key national institutions. Though the women's groups did not achieve their objectives, women's representation in the national Assembly has however improved from 9.38% in 1999, 14.44% in 2004 and 20.83% in 2009 (EISA, 2009). Moreover, there were some prospects for higher women's representation when in 2004, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) set in its manifesto at least 30% seats for women in decision making positions, and the United Democratic Front (UDF) committed itself to 25% quota for women. EISA

further notes that these political parties did not translate into gains for women in the 2009 elections because the parties performed poorly²⁶.

Women's movements in Rwanda are also responsible for the parliamentary increase of women. They mobilized actively in drafting the 2003 constitution which ensures equality as a cornerstone of the new document (Powley, 2005:2-4). Powley states that, after the genocide, civil society and government were in disorder. As a result, women's NGOs stepped in to fill the void, and in the process, helped provide the much-needed services to a population that was traumatized.

About 40 NGOs, coordinated by *Pro-Femmes* (an activist umbrella organization for women) were especially effective in promoting reconciliation, organizing the activities of women and advising the government on issues of women's political participation. The movements coordinated efforts with women parliamentarians and the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development. All this resulted into a new constitution which enshrines a commitment to gender equality. The author concludes that the constitution's "effectiveness is a result of a highly cooperative and collaborative relationship forged with women in government". Title 1 of the constitution establishes the fundamental principles of equality of Rwandans, and grants women at least 30 percent of posts in all decision-making organs (Powley, 2005:5).

Writing on women's participation in development through NGOs in Cameroon, Fonjong (2001) states that the "grassroots" approach of NGOs has been effective in reaching women at all levels, though she also argues that the activities of NGOs have had far reaching but mixed effects in meeting both practical and strategic gender needs. In addition, Orock concurs with Fonjong when he attests that only the activities of groups such as the NGOs could be utilized to advocate

²⁶ The MCP saw its representation fall from 57 seats in 2004 to 27 in 2009 and only 3 seats (11.11%) were won by women and UDF dropped from 49 to 17 seats and only 1 (5.88%) was won by a woman.

for political equality of less privileged women. He further states that NGOs are better placed to hold the Cameroonian government accountable to its decisions and policies regarding women's rights and political participation (Orock, 2007).

In South Africa, women's activism ensured that gender equality was protected in the constitution. According to Manzini (2002), South African women played a remarkable role in the drafting of the new South African Constitution to ensure that clauses affecting their rights and lives were included in the Constitution. The author adds that, it was not an easy task for these women as they needed to convince not only their parties but also the entire constitutional assembly. Hence, the constitutional clauses containing the right to equality, the right to freedom and reproduction and the right to security and the control over one's own body, are the results of the rights articulated in the Women's Charter by women, and adopted by the Women's National Coalition.

In addition, Hassim posits that during the constitutional negotiations in South Africa, women in various groups such as the (WNC), and a Management Committee of the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), played a lobbying role in the multiparty negotiations. The WNC identified three key areas of intervention: women's inclusion in negotiating teams, the inclusion of non-sexism in the Constitutional Principles, and the inclusion of an equality clause in the constitution that would supersede the right to custom and tradition. When women were not accorded participation in the negotiation teams, they later proposed that they should be included as part of the delegations of political parties (Hassim, 2002).

Furthermore, Waylen (2007) explores the conditions under which women's mobilizations during transitions to democracy can achieve some of women's aims. She says that, unusually women organized as women, had some input into the negotiations during the South African transition. She argues that the WNC, a

favourable political opportunity structure and the strategic actions and alliances of certain key women actors made a crucial contribution to influence this transition, as women's mobilization on its own is no guarantee of success.

2.6.2 Gender Quotas

Quotas are an affirmative action tool aimed at ensuring that women constitute a critical mass in decision and policy-making bodies (Villaluz & Reyes, 2001:5). Article 4 of CEDAW Protocol clearly stipulates that quotas as "temporarily special measures are aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between women and men and shall not be considered discriminatory as defined in the present Convention" (CEDAW, 1979).

Quotas set a minimum percentage of representation, i.e., 30%, 40% or even 50%, for both sexes to ensure that there is a balanced representation in decision-making bodies. Quotas may be established through constitutional or legislative mandates and through political parties. The Nordic countries have had the highest number of women representation in national legislatures due to some kind of quotas. Before Rwanda took the lead in 2008 in global women's representation in parliament, Sweden and Norway were the leading countries with 40% and 38% women's representation, respectively (IPU, 2007).

In a systematic and critical study, Tripp and Kang (2008: 339-340) argued that the introduction of quotas helped offset possible hindrances to women's representation posed by cultural influence, electoral systems and economic under-development. The authors state that since the mid-1990s, so many African countries have introduced gender quotas and these quotas serve as the most illuminating catalyst for women's political representation today. They also state that in the decade prior to 1985, four countries introduced quotas in the world. By 1994, 21 countries had adopted the quota system. Between 1995 and 2005, more than 55 countries were using quotas, and as of 2006, more than 84

countries had some form of quotas to improve the selection of female candidates running for political positions.

It is further postulated that the most common type of quota is the voluntary party quota which is adopted by parties of their own free will regardless of whether there is a compulsory quota or not (iKNOW Politics, 2009:1; Tripp & Kang, 2008:3). About 61 countries in the world were using this quota system by 2006. Another form of quota mentioned is the compulsory party quota which is mandated by the constitution or by the legislature and requires that political parties institute quotas for women. Tripp and Kang (2008) also indicate that 28 countries were using this form of quota. Furthermore, there are reserved seats or women's lists, used in 12 countries, which involve constitutional or legal provisions that are intended to determine from the beginning the number of seats that will be competed for by women and finally held by them.

A consolidated response on gender quotas in African countries, compiled by iKNOW Politics (2009:1), states that the implementation of gender quotas has been part of the political agenda in Africa since the 1990s. Many African countries successfully implemented both voluntary and mandatory quotas in their legal systems and party platforms. By 2009 in Africa, six countries had constitutional quotas for elections to the National parliament, 19 countries had voluntary party quotas and three countries had reserved seat quotas (Quota Project 2009, quoted in iKNOW Politics, 2009:1).

The researcher is of the view that, theoretically adopting a quota system is not the same with what actually takes place practically. The case of Cameroon is a good example where the ruling CPDM adopted a voluntary quota since 1992 but the number of women represented in the National Assembly of Cameroon has never matched the quota. Indeed, the statistics indicated in Chapter 4 show that, women's representation has instead dwindled since the quota adoption.

There is a general consensus on the issue of quotas, and the increment in the number of countries adopting quotas shows the positive effects that are derived from its implementation. Some feminists and women's rights advocates have argued that the male-dominated legislatures represent a form of preferential treatment for men which will not change on its own. Therefore, some strategies have to be espoused; otherwise societies will wait forever for change to take place. Meanwhile, others argue that competent women who could win positions are held back from political representation due to cultural beliefs, societal practices, and a lack of institutional and party support (Tripp & Kang, 2008: 4). However, others argue that women are likely to bring to politics their own experiences, perspectives, expertise and are also more likely than men to put forward legislation which has to do with violence against women, health, education and child care. Therefore, the interests of women will not necessarily be represented if they are not present in decision-making bodies. Lastly, some put forward the argument that quotas make people aware of the gender unevenness in the society (ibid). Gender quotas are also seen to be discriminatory and a violation of the principles of fairness and competence and of the idea of individualism (Dahlerup, 2002).

EISA (2008) posits that the improvement of women's representation in proportional electoral systems has been the adoption of gender quotas by political parties. An example is provided of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), which adopted an internal party quota of at least 30% of women in its central committee and committees in all other levels. This internal policy of the LCD saw 21% women being elected as members in the 2007 election.

Lesotho also made history when a legislated 30% quota for increasing women's participation in politics was passed in 2011 (Morna, 2011). It is however noted that, despite so much debate around quotas, studies in Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa show that rapid and substantial changes to ensure gender equality

are due to a combination of the commitment of political party and electoral systems (Morna, 2011).

The author further argued that discussions from international, regional, and country levels show that no matter what electoral systems or local politics prevail, the only way to “fast-track” women’s entry into politics is through quotas. Rwanda, just like Lesotho, is also one of the countries with a legislated quota system for women. The constitution of Rwanda provides for at least 30% quota for women in parliament or 24 parliamentary seats (UNIFEM News, 2008).

An additional point to the above is made by Boezak (1999), when she states that two key factors contributed to the representation of women in parliament in South Africa's 1994 elections. These were the electoral and quota systems. In South Africa, the proportional representation system and gender quota are used, which are believed to favour women. Boezak concludes by praising South Africa for having made an impressive beginning. However, Hassim is of the view that the increased representation of South African women as a group has no concurrent representation in the policy interests of disadvantaged women (Hassim, 2004:335).

There is no denying that the quota system is a unique way used to rapidly address the problem of insufficient numbers of women in representative political institutions. Hassim notes that quotas are seen as a fast-track mechanism to cut through more intractable institutional blockages, to at least get “a foot in the door” of the political system. However, she is of the view that quotas are politically cheap in political systems where there is a single dominant party. In such a situation, extending a quota to women does mean that some men will not get onto party lists, but with sufficient power a dominant party can in any case deploy men to other important positions in the state and in parastatal organisations. She concludes that the form of quotas adopted in South Africa is, in fact, its weakest

and simplest version as voluntary party quotas are a long way away from the legislated quotas that operate in countries such as Argentina (Hassim, 2004).

Hassim further asserts that quota demands tend to emphasize the creation of collective identity; they rest on the successful articulation of women's group-based interests in entering arenas of power. This strategy derives from the marginal status most women occupy in society, and entails a collective demand for recognition that can win support across class, racial and ideological lines. She sum up by saying that while increasing women's representation is important at a broader political system level, it is also important to examine critically the processes of representation, as well as the ways in which women's interests are conceptualized.

However, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) in their study on general trends in quota adoption note two discourses on gender exist. One is the incremental track and the other is the fast-track to women's parliamentary representation. The authors argue that the incremental track which is used by the Scandinavian countries may no longer be a valid model for ways to improve women's representation. In their analyses of the implementation of quotas, the authors conclude that, without specifications of quota provisions that match the electoral system, the rules about the rank order of candidates as well as sanctions for non-compliance, quota provisions may only be symbolic.

2.6.3 A Commitment of the Party in Power

Available literature reveals that ruling parties' commitment to issues of gender equality has also contributed to giving women an edge in political participation. In Rwanda, the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) made women's inclusion a

trademark of its post-genocide recovery and reconstruction plans. During the parliamentary elections in April 2003, President Paul Kagame said,

we shall continue to appeal to women to offer themselves as candidates and also to vote for gender sensitive men who will defend and protect their interests. Women's underrepresentation distances elected representative from a part of their constituency and as such, affects the legitimacy of political decisions... Increased participation of women in politics is therefore necessary for improved social, economic and political conditions of their families and the entire country (Powley, 2005:6).

Furthermore, John Mutamba, an official at the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development in Rwanda in a personal interview with the above-mentioned author, explains that,

Men who grew up in exile know the experience of discrimination... Gender is now part of our political thinking. We appreciate all components of our population across all the social divides, because our country... has seen what it means to exclude a group (Powley, 2005:6).

Due to the RPF's commitment to gender equality, during the transitional period that took place even before quotas were established in Rwanda, the party constantly appointed women to nearly 50% of the seats it controlled in parliament. However, because other political parties did not have such commitments and thus lagged behind in appointing women, women were never more than 25% in parliament (Powley, 2005:7). Powley also argues that because the Rwandan women owe their participation in the democratic institutions to a political party which is seen as "not free" by Freedom House that puts women and their movement in an uncertain position.

In Cameroon, Mungwa (1999) mentions that the commitment to the political advancement of women lies within key political structures. Therefore, the absence of this meaningful commitment within political structures is the cause of women's political disempowerment in Cameroon. However, Mungwa does not mention these key political structures which is one of the loopholes in this thesis

intends to unravel. Meanwhile, Boezak (1999), Kethusile, *et al.* (2001), Hassim (2002), Gasia (2003) and Goetz and Hassim (2003) are of the view that, the commitment of South Africa on gender issues has been justified not only through the signing of the many gender-related conventions but the implementation in terms of appointing women to top leadership positions. Thus, South Africa put into practice or domesticated all international conventions the country accepted.

2.6.4 Electoral Systems - Proportional Representative (PR) Systems

Electoral systems are believed to play a key role in determining the nature of the relationship between political parties, elected representatives and political constituencies (Hassim, 2006). The type of electoral system a country uses greatly affects the extent to which women are represented in political leadership (Villaluz & Reyes, 2001:7). The two major categories of electoral systems are the majoritarian or pluralistic and proportional representation (PR). Studies have shown that the PR system enables a higher number of women to gain seats in parliament (International IDEA, 2007, 2010).

In the PR systems, electorates vote for a political party and the seats in parliament are allocated in proportion to the number of national votes obtained by a party. The most visible results are seen where parties use the “zebra rule” on the party list, according to which a woman is allocated every second seat. With regards to the majoritarian or pluralistic system, there is usually only one seat per district and the candidate that wins the majority votes is elected. This system is also known as the winner-takes-all electoral system (Villaluz & Reyes). Therefore, women have less chance of being elected. The United States of America is an example of a country which uses this system and, thus, it is not surprising that the country has the lowest numbers of women in political leadership positions (Villaluz & Reyes, 2001:7).

According to Matland (1995), changing a country's electoral system often represents a far more realistic goal to strive for rather than dramatically changing the cultural view of women. Data collected for 24 established democracies after the Second World War era reveals that women have always had a slight advantage in PR systems over the majoritarian or single-member district systems. The author further adds because of a feminist demand for equality which came during the 1960s under the banner of "second generation feminism", a dramatic increase in women's representation in countries using the PR system was realized, especially in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Meanwhile, there was only a modest gain in countries using the majoritarian systems.

The Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA) (2008) states that women in Lesotho gained some ground as their numbers in the National Assembly rose from 3.8% in 1998 with a purely plurality system to 7.6% in 2002 after a mixed member system was introduced and the number increased dramatically to 25% after the 2007. Thus, the type of electoral system used in a country counts a lot in determining gender equality and women's representation.

The PR approach has proven to be the best electoral system in the representation of women as the case of South Africa at the national and provincial levels has demonstrated, while there is a minimal representation at the local government level.

A study by the South African Commission on Gender Equality with four other organisations²⁷ examined the situation of South African women in politics between 1994 and 1999 (Boezak, 1999) and states that the increased proportion of women in politics from being practically non-existent before the 1994 elections to one quarter of the total number of political representatives in 1999 was as a result of the proportional representation (PR) system. Before South Africa's first

²⁷ Commission for Gender Equality, Parliamentary Women's Group, Gender Equity Unit (University of the Western Cape), Gender Advocacy Programme and Women's Net.

democratic elections in 1994, women constituted a mere 2.7% of members of parliament (MPs).

The 1997 CEDAW's report on South Africa confirms the above assertion by indicating that under the terms of the South African interim Constitution, the 1994 elections were held on the basis of a PR system in which seats were allocated to parties according to their percentage of the vote (South African CEDAW Report, 1997). The PR systems are assumed to be the most favourable for women and a list-based PR is especially effective in increasing women's representation (Ballington, 2003: 1; Hassim, 2006).

2.6.5 Political Leadership Training and Support Services

In a paper presented at a conference in Strasbourg, Ballington (2003:1), a gender officer of International IDEA, argues that there is a need to examine the role of political parties as a means of increasing young women's access to decision-making structures. Political parties are gate-keepers to elective office, and play a key role in promoting women in political processes (Ballington, 2003; iKNOW Politics, 2009). Candidate recruitment processes of political parties offer an important way to increase young women's access to decision-making at the sub-national and national levels.

Ballington (2003) further highlights that political parties determine the composition of lists for elections and the rank ordering of candidates. If a party wishes to ensure diverse and representative lists of candidates, which include women and young people, it can do that though in practice the party lists do not often represent them. In conclusion, she mentions that political parties need to recognize the important contribution that young women can make to politics and recognize that young women are often excluded from party structures. Parties also need to be aware of that young women face both financial and institutional

barriers in accessing the party. She identifies possession of money and economic security as crucial if young women are to be actively involved in politics.

Consolidated responses on best practices used by political parties to promote women in politics compiled by iKNOW Politics (2009:1) further state that, it is very important that parties promote women in their candidate lists and provide candidates with appropriate training and support and allocate campaign funds equally. The responses highlight, amongst others, strategies which political parties may use to increase the numbers of women in politics. These include the establishment of women's wings in political parties, the provision of women candidates with training and financial assistance to hold effective campaigns, the creation of forums for women to lobby and discuss policy, and the offering of political parties' incentives for promoting women in politics (iKNOW Politics, 2009:2).

So far, the literature presented above identifies that structures and mechanisms which provide and promote women's political representation are the women's movements and NGOs, quotas systems, national and regional bodies, a commitment of the party in power, the PR electoral system, and party support and training.

2.7 OBSTACLES FACED BY WOMEN IN POLITICS IN AFRICA

This section looks at the barriers which hinder women's entry into and their advancement in political leadership in Africa. The obstacles discussed include cultural barriers, lack of leadership skills, lack of support from political parties and women, lack of ambition and the fear of the unknown.

Some of the constraints raised by Afolabi (n.d.) for the poor political representation of women in Nigeria include traditional beliefs and values, culture, marriage and reproductive roles, socially imposed limitations, lack of confidence and insecurity on the part of men. Some of these barriers are also raised by Taiye (2008), in a study on "gender disparity and the challenges of governance in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007". However, Taiye (2008: 1538 & 1540) adds the impact of the mass media on women and the limited educational opportunities for women as other inhibiting factors.

With reference to the mass media, Taiye indicates that, it has contributed to the cultivation of gender biases and stereotypes about "a woman's place" and also the notion of a "weaker sex". The author continues that, the reason for such notions is the widespread tendency to depict women as "sex objects" by portraying certain views of beauty and attractiveness relating to women's physical capacities rather than their mental faculties. On the part of education, he alludes that educational opportunities for women in Nigeria have been affected by factors such as early marriage, male child preference and domestic activities and labour. These are some of the obstacles that are generally mentioned to explain women's under-representation in politics in Africa.

However, the most important obstacles highlighted by Afolabi (n.d: 11-12) are those of "money politics" and fear of violence. Money is noted to be the main ticket for participation in Nigerian politics and with the introduction of N5 million for nomination forms for elections, political participation is associated only with the few who can afford such amount of money. She also maintains that Nigerian politics is not based on morals, competence, ability, patriotic commitment, but on money power, embezzlement, personal benefits, oppression and the future acquisition of wealth for generations to come.

In relation to political violence, the author states that this reduces women's participation in Nigerian politics as there is a lot of political thuggery before,

during and after elections. Due to the insecurity that is involved, politics is unashamedly characterized by cultism, midnight vigilantism and a destruction of lives and properties which make it difficult for decent members of the Nigerian community, especially women to associate themselves with (Afolabi, n.d:13).

However, the researcher adds that the political environment of successive Nigerian governments may have also played a very important role in the “money politics” and violence spectra raised by Afolabi. The political culture of Nigeria has been associated with many coup d'états and counter-coup d'états since independence. For instance, the military governments of General Sani Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida were notorious for using violence and intimidation against the general populace. Even with the introduction of democracy, one does not expect such a culture to be easily wiped out. Thus, as long as the political environment is not seen as stable, it becomes difficult for women to want to participate in politics in the country. For the few women who may try to take the challenge, they are seen or categorized as “powerful or iron ladies.”

Another very important point raised by Afolabi is the practice of religious seclusion in Islamic culture. The case in point is the “Purdah” or the “kulle” in Hausa - one of the major tribes of Nigeria - which allows for early marriages and the seclusion of women from the sight of men. Such a practice obviously has implications for women to venture into political formations and ultimately leadership positions.

A study conducted by Shvedova (2002) on the “obstacles to women's participation in parliament,” the author states that women around the world find themselves under-represented in parliaments and decision-making bodies at every socio-political level. While acknowledging the fact that the political playing field in each country has its own particular characteristics, she notes that one common feature of it remains forever unresolved: its unevenness and hostility to women's participation. Some of the obstacles she outlines as hindering women's

participation in parliament are: the masculine model of politics; a lack of party support; the type of prevailing electoral system; limited contact and cooperation between women politicians and women's organisations; poverty and unemployment and a lack of adequate financial resources. Others are: illiteracy and limited access to education; the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations; gender ideology and cultural patterns; women's lack of confidence; the perception of politics as a "dirty" game; and the way in which women are portrayed in the mass media (Shvedova, 2002: 1-11).

In discussing the masculine model of politics as an obstacle to women's participation in parliament, Shvedova mentions that men largely dominate the political arena, largely formulate the rules of the political game, and often define the standards of evaluation. She further adds that political life is organized according to male norms and values and in some cases, even male lifestyles. The existence of such a male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics (Shvedova, 2002: 3).

In addition to the obstacles faced by women in political leadership positions mentioned by Shvedova above, an online discussion on women's political participation and decision-making in Africa conducted by the United Nations (2007) indicates overwhelmingly that patriarchy is pervasive and dominates all aspects of the African society. A vigorous discussion about the barriers to women's entry into politics includes illiteracy, economic dependency, time factor, culture and religion (United Nations, 2007).

Concerning barriers, online participants also propose ways in which the public could be sensitised. These are the use of media in shaping cultural attitudes, education through literacy programmes, and girls' education and civic education as part of a long-term strategy to increase women's participation in politics. Furthermore, the issue of support for elected women was highlighted as a concern participants have for women in elected and appointed for political

positions as they face enormous social pressure and high expectations for their performance by both women and men (United Nations, 2007: 17-18).

Another study by UNESCO (1994) on women and the democratization process in Africa identifies some social, cultural and economic factors limiting women's participation in political representation as informed and active citizens in nation-building as:

the necessities and tasks of daily survival which takes up all women's time and thus limit their motivation. They are thus left with little time to engage in political activities. There are also social limits to women's activities maintained by traditional leaders, politicians and even by other women; women are considered as second class citizens and in certain countries legislation does not encourage changes in this regard (UNESCO, 1994:31-32). Other barriers include the high level of illiteracy among women, as well as the persistence of age-old images and stereotypes which influence the attitudes and behaviours of women and men and intends contribute to maintaining an unequal gender balance within societies (UNESCO, 1994: 9).

The study also cites institutional obstacles which are indicated as the lack of structures accessible and available to women due mainly to the centralization of government services. The mechanisms and programmes put into place by governments and other institutions to assist women are also too bureaucratic and, thus, most of the funds made available are taken away by intermediary bodies before reaching them (UNESCO, 1994: 32).

Another study was undertaken by the West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI) in 2009 on the status of women's leadership in West Africa in which women across the academic, government, civil society and the private sectors were interviewed. The study shows that in Ivory Coast, for instance, there was a general perception of the emergence of qualified and competent women leaders in all sectors, though the percentage in government continues to be low. It also points out that women are motivated by their urgency to improve the plight of women in post-conflict Ivory Coast. However, the study also notes a tendency

among some women leaders, to be individualistic in their leadership, focusing mainly on personal ambitions and advancement instead of representing the needs of the broader community (Ekiyor & Lo, 2009: 86).

Likewise, in Nigeria, the same study indicates that despite positive accounts of women's contributions within leadership positions, the poor track record of some women in political leadership poses a challenge to aspiring women leaders who tend to be judged by the performance of previous women. The respondents also assert that given the tendencies of society to generalize women's successes and failures, women in leadership should be conscious of the legacies and examples they leave behind.

However, not all women are deterred or disadvantaged by the failures of previous women leaders, because in 2003, two Nigerian women sought to be elected as Governors of their states (Ekiyor & Lo, 2009:86). One of the women was Gesiere Brisibe-Dorgu Kemsese, who contested for governorship of Bayelsa State. Though she did not succeed in winning the election, the attempt she made had been a motivation and inspiration to other women out there.

Regarding the obstacles faced by women in political leadership positions, Ekiyor and Lo (2009) state that women's negative perceptions of politics serve as a deterrent to their participation in political processes. In the four countries under study, Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, women regard politics as "dirty". In addition the negative images attached to women in politics and the unfriendly public perception of ambitious women referred to as "cultural deviants," act as a disincentive for women's engagement in politics (Ekiyor & Lo, 2009: 91-92). The study further mentions institutional barriers and the lack of political will by African governments as obstacles for women's engagement in politics, "the absence of affirmative action policies" hinders women's participation in governance processes. Furthermore, the lack of enforcement of gender equality instruments such as the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, the MDGs of

2000, the 2003 Protocol on Rights of Women in Africa, and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of 2004 raised recurrent questions of political will and structural barriers to change (Ekiyor & Lo, 2009: 93).

Ekiyor and Lo's study, however, concludes that clearly there is a rise in women's political leadership and this is positively transforming the societal perceptions of women aspiring for political positions in West Africa. There is caution, though, "against a cult of personality, self-interest, self-aggrandisement, venality and fierce competition to stay in the limelight that alienates and subverts women's capacity to change the status quo and their commitment to serve a broader constituency and cause" (Ekiyor & Lo, 2009: 92).

In a research conducted by five women's activist groups, Commission on Gender Equality, Parliamentary Women's Group, Gender Equality Unit, Gender Advocacy programme and Women's Net, edited by Sonja Boezak, on "Redefining Politics: South African Women and Democracy", some of the constraints experienced by South African women legislators are: patriarchy, conflict between work and domestic responsibilities, parliamentary processes, lack of skills and confidence, and lack of resources.

On the issue of patriarchy, the women legislators believed that men's support to women was not genuine and proactive, and sometimes, some men make discriminatory comments or jokes. For instance, when a woman raises her hand during a parliamentary session, some men would say "she is going to raise women's issues". This by implication signifies that, in the eyes of these men, women represent only issues of triviality in parliament. With regard to the issue of conflict between work and domestic responsibilities, the women complained that marriages were breaking up, friends were abandoned and children were feeling neglected. On the factor regarding parliamentary processes, the research states that though the environment of Parliament has become more gender-

friendly (as compared to the apartheid period), the processes remain basically unchanged as indicated in this quote:

most of the women who will be leaving Parliament have indicated that the institution does not have a place for their voice, that they have been and can be more effective on the ground, and that the disproportionate burden they carry in Parliament and in their personal lives has led to a sense of alienation and a feeling of burnout ... (Boezak, 1999).

Such a statement has the tendency of pushing away other women with the inspiration of entering into parliament, however, it can not deter all women who aspire to be politically active. With regard to the lack of skills and confidence, the constraints mentioned were, the inability to communicate in English and public speaking. The later constraint has to do with the language and format of Parliament which are legal and most women did not have legal training. In addition, the official language of parliament was seen to be intimidating and even ridiculous to most women and some men. Other obstacles were the lack of requisite skills for dealing with management, financial and parliamentary procedures. On the last constraint, the lack of resources, the research states that, many women complained about the limited research, administrative and secretarial support leading to poor background, briefing and information on pending issues (Boezak, 1999).

In her study of the perceptions of women parliamentarians in the South African Parliament, Angevine also adds to what has been highlight in the above-mentioned research. She mentions that some of her respondents indicated the difficulty women in political positions faced in keeping their family intact (Angevine, 2006: 51). By this statement, they referred to issues such as women running the household or single mothers. During the author's conversational analyses, she indicates that women parliamentarians were positive about their ability to impact the political agenda across party lines. They mentioned how women are in a much better place than they were ten years ago in terms of

getting issues on the agenda of parliament, legislation, and the organizations of structures in the South African parliament. In addition, the women said they had put in place the Office for the Status of Women (Angevine, 2006: 46).

Writing about women's participation in local government in South Africa, Ballington (2001) indicates that obstacles which hinder women effective participation when elected to local structures are patriarchy norms, unfamiliarity with rules and language, and lack of training and support. She is of the opinion that the government, political parties, NGOs and activists should work in partnership in addressing these obstacles. Mncayi (2006), further expresses that due to the patriarchal nature of the South African society, women had been historically disadvantaged as they had fewer opportunities and exposure to leadership positions, hence they feel intimidated by procedures and becomes hesitant to participate confidentially in levels of decision-making. She further adds that, because local government is male-dominated, it was not conducive to women's participation or providing adequate space for women to air out their voices.

Furthermore, the executive president of Gender Links²⁸, Colleen Lowe Morna, is of the view that, it is not fashionable but normal for females to be in leadership in South Africa. However, she believes that the country still has a lot of work to do before there is genuine gender equality. She argues that "gender equality is about providing a voice to the poor and marginalised, who often are women" and calls for the need of leaders who are responsive and accountable to the needs of women. Morna also views the obstacles to women's representation in politics through patriarchal forces which are deeply entrenched in South Africa and are disguised as culture and custom. She however, adds that, there ought not to be any contradiction between custom and the law in South Africa because the Bill of rights guarantees rights for women in the constitution (Potter, 2009).

²⁸ Gender Links is a South African NGO created in 2001 and promotes gender equality through media, public education, research, training and advocacy.

So far in South Africa, amongst all the obstacles that women in politics faced, patriarchy is pervasive, whether at the national or municipal government. Meanwhile, in a speech by a former Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Cameroon, Ekoue, also mentions that experiences from many African countries including Benin, Cameroon, Mauritania and Uganda reveal a diversity of factors that are still hampering women's leadership in political affairs and local governments. Among some of those factors are societal barriers and norms about gender and women's leadership, inadequacies in electoral systems, limited political skills and assets among women candidates, and in some cases, limited education, lack of support for or interest in political parties led women, and weak national systems which do not promote gender equality and women's representation (Ekoue, 2008).²⁹

According to Kassea, the gender imbalance resulting in the under-representation of women in political structures in Cameroon is a result of male domination privileged by education, church, law, employment, economy and politics in the public sphere. He compares the Nordic countries³⁰ which have institutionalised gender equality in their legislation, policies and practices; France which has also improved women's political inclusion with parity laws; and Rwanda, because of its post-conflict gender-inclusive constitution. He concludes that Cameroonian institutions, men and more so women, may learn and borrow from these models in order to design and implement a sustainable and gender-balanced democracy (Kassea, 2006).

Adams' (2006) and Konde's (2005) studies, however, contradict what Kassea raises about women's lack of education and empowerment as a hindrance to their representation in political structures. In her study on women in British

²⁹ Speech by the Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Cameroon, May 26 2008.

³⁰ A region in Northern Europe consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and their associated territories (in particular the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Island).

Southern Cameroons, Adams states that though much of the literature on colonial policies towards women has highlighted the ways that these policies spread Western notions of domesticity and narrowed the space available for African women to participate in public life, British colonial and missionary policies did not seek solely to domesticate African women. She acknowledges that, while certain policies did seek to propagate European notions of domesticity and to confine African women to the private space of the home, others opened new opportunities for education, salaried employment, and participation in women's organizations (Adams, 2006: 1).

She also notes that significant disparities continued to exist in the kind and length of education for girls as opposed to that of boys. Additionally, women were recruited for a narrow range of positions within the colonial administration, and women's associations were constructed as inherently non-political bodies (Adams, 2006: 9). Similarly, Konde (2005) is of the view that women's admittance to political power in Cameroon has been brought about by their access to western education and active involvement in modern women's associations. Using some of these organizations and their leadership as case studies, Konde explores the processes by which Cameroonian women were incorporated into national politics (Konde, 2005).

It is further stated by Britton (2002) that, though South Africa's negotiated transition brought significant gains for gender equality, such as "women acquiring one-third of the seats in the national parliament, secured constitutional protection, and began a process of legislative and institutional reform," life for the majority of South African women continues to be marked by socio-economic hardships, patriarchal domination and gender violence. According to the author, the reason for this is that the initiated programmes of racial and gender empowerment that came about with the dismantling of apartheid did not proceed at the same rates. The author asserts that the roots of women's continued

inequality in South Africa are found within the western reform models which were used by South African liberation movements. It is this model that has reproduced male/female and public/private dichotomies in state institutions, therefore establishing hegemonic male discourse and power. The author further suggests that in order to disrupt the power of patriarchy, women need to challenge male domination and gender discrimination within the domestic and public spheres respectively.

The researcher however, differs with Britton, in that, with or without apartheid, patriarchal systems have existed for centuries and this is especially entrenched in Africa. In addition, the issue of gender violence is not regarded as gender discrimination by some African women. More so, a lot has changed in the country since Britton published her work in 2002. Many South African women are really challenging the patriarchal system as proposed by Britton. This is evident from many women now reporting marital rape and physical abuse committed to them by their spouses.

2.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The literature review covered the theoretical and empirical work relevant to the study. The review was done as a baseline to inform and ground the study accordingly. The theories used are those of leadership, liberal feminism, patriarchy and social dominance. The theories were used to conceptualize the study. The empirical work began by looking at international and regional agreements and conventions on women's representation in politics. A brief analysis was then provided to determine whether South Africa and Cameroon have complied with these agreements and to compare how the two countries have fared relative to each other. In particular, use of quota system became entrenched from the 1990s in an effort to increase women's participation in public offices.

A brief historical examination of African women's political participation during the colonial and independence struggle is also looked into in order to evaluate and assess the capability of African women then. The rest of the review scrutinizes secondary information on African women in political leadership in the post-colonial Africa especially in the era from the 1990s. The reason for the choice of the 1990s, as already indicated was that, it was the period during which multi-partism was introduced in many African countries and that it served to open up political spaces for women.

African countries included in the review were selected based on regionality and availability of data. Apart from the thematic themes mentioned above, other sections included the different structures and mechanisms established to facilitate women's representation in politics, and the obstacles women faced in advancing in political leadership positions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 52), methodology is the technique and principles used for undertaking scientific or academic research. The study uses a comparative case-study of women in political leadership positions of South Africa and Cameroon. It further utilizes a qualitative approach for collecting data from both primary and secondary sources, comprising in-depth face-to-face interviews, electronic instant messages, telephonic interviews, open-ended questionnaires, a focus group discussion, observations and extensive review of literature such as found in books, documents, archival information, government reports, articles, and written political speeches.

This approach is also known as triangulation, using multiple sources of evidence with the same unit of analysis to collect data. This enables cross-checking one result against another, thus increasing the reliability of the result (Jaeger, 1997). Using triangulation can make findings more robust. Finally ethical issues such as voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality were observed through out the collection of data in the study.

3.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in South Africa and Cameroon from December 2008 to January 2012. Respondents were both men and women from parliament, government, political parties, NGOs, and the academia. Most of the respondents in South Africa were from Gauteng, the Western Cape and Eastern Cape provinces. The reason is because parliamentarians and cabinet ministers' offices

are located in Gauteng and Western Cape provinces. Most importantly, members of political parties involved in the study were from the national and local government levels in the above-mentioned provinces. These provinces contained the majority of the political parties represented in the National Assembly. In Cameroon respondents were from the Central, Littoral, South West and North West provinces. The researcher managed to access documents from the Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Family in Cameroon.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study uses a qualitative research approach which focuses on gaining detailed information from a smaller sample size, and in this case, to get views about women's representation in political leadership positions. The reason for choosing this approach is because qualitative research can generate data on perceptions, attitudes and real-life events (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Moreover, information gathered from qualitative method is richer and more detailed than that gained from quantitative research and has the added benefit of allowing the researcher to place people's perceptions and attitudes within their contexts (Martens, 2000).

Key (1997) also states that qualitative research views variables in their natural settings because interviews are a vital part of the investigation and also produces more in-depth, comprehensive information. Furthermore, it generates description of how and why people engage in certain things (Weinberg, 2002). The researcher decided not to follow the quantitative approach because it often constructs unobserved suppositions regarding gender and culture (DeVault, 1999). Such suppositions can possibly ignore aspects of the research connected to the study. Thus, results may be twisted to fit certain expectations especially gender and cultural issues. Moreover, some scholars have argued that quantitative research can be simple and superficial (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991).

A qualitative research methodology was therefore appropriate for this study because it provides space for women and men in political and non-political positions to articulate their views on their own terms. It is only through a qualitative analysis that women's and men's views and opinions can best be explored. Qualitative research places participants' interpretations and explanations in the forefront rather than erasing their individualism through a quantitative numerical cluster (Angevine, 2006). Thus, the researcher believes that more information could be shared on perception regarding women's political representation through a qualitative research method.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

With reference to the research design, there have been varying views by different researchers on what a research design is. Neuman (2000) defines it simply as the planning of any research from the first step to the last step. Johnson and Reynolds (2008: 122) state that it is "a plan that shows how a researcher intends to study an empirical question." This definition is similar to that provided by Mouton (2001: 55) who says a research design is a plan of how one intends to conduct research. The above-mentioned definitions simply illustrate that research design is the overall plan or blue print for conducting the whole research. However, a different view is given by Rubin and Babbie (2001: 107), quoted by De Vos *et al.*, (2005: 132) who contend that a research design has two connotations. The first refers to alternative logical arrangements from which one or more can be selected, such as correlation or experimental research designs. The second connotation has to do with the act of designing the study in its broadest sense as would be seen below.

This study uses the research design which applies to the second connotation, which is applicable to those small, worked-out formulas suitable for specific research goals which prospective researchers can choose from (Ibid, 133).

Furthermore, a research design can be quantitative or qualitative depending on the purpose of the study, the nature of the research questions and the skills and resources available to the researcher (Ibid, 268-269). The study uses the phenomenological, comparative and historical research designs. They are as follows:

3.4.1 Phenomenological research design

Phenomenology, according to Creswell (1998), is a study which describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, concept or topic for various individuals. De Vos *et al.* state that this approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives (de Vos, *et al.*, 2005:270). To fully implement this approach means the researcher has to enter the subjects' life worlds" or "in the shoes of the subjects" and present results as a description of the core experiences being studied (Ibid). Moreover, this approach uses participant observation and interviews in order to collect data from subjects.

The phenomenological design was relevant to this research as it allows the researcher to naturally enter the world of women political leaders through participant observation and the interview process so as to focus on their experiences and conversations. The researcher does not therefore stand as an outsider, and more intensive data is collected on subjects' perceptions and views concerning women's political leadership. The design also helps the researcher to maneuver her own behaviour as an observer towards women in such positions. The researcher also witnessed real life situations of women in such positions. So, it becomes much easier for her to fit into their "shoes".

3.4.2 Comparative research design

Another research design strategy used by the researcher is comparative case-study. A case study can be considered as the observation of a process, activity,

event, programme or individual bound within a specific time and setting (de Vos *et al.*, 2005: 273). Creswell defines it as an exploration or an in-depth analysis of a “bounded system” or a single or multiple cases over a period of time (Creswell, 1998:61). The “bounded system” as referred to above could be bounded by time and /or place according to de Vos *et al.* (2005: 272). When the cases are multiple, they are known as a collective case study. Secondly, the study was bounded by time and setting regarding specific individuals who are African women in political leadership positions from the 1990s to 2012.

Other researchers refer to the collective case study method as “triangulation” (Denzin, 1989) which means “getting a fix from two or more places.” In this instance, it is intended to neutralise bias in any one approach. Denzin points out that it was possible to triangulate in terms of multiple and different data sources - informants, methods, investigators and theories.

This method uses interviews, observations, documents, or archival records in the collection of data and its findings are guided by an in-depth description of a case or cases (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2003; de Vos *et al.*, 2005; Babbie, 2006). The researcher, therefore, utilized a collective case study or triangulation research design with a view to combining multiple data collection instruments as stated above. The triangulation method was utilized during the fieldwork where the same question on different sources of evidence was asked. Hence, inadequacies of individual methods were minimized, consequently, addressing threats to internal validity. According to Yin (2003), if all sources point to the same answer, it means, you have successfully triangulated your data.

If research findings can be examined in this way, then, not only will the results themselves be seen to have enhanced credibility but also the research methods employed will be seen to be valid and reliable and, therefore, more readily accepted as an agreed social science strategy.

According to some researchers, a comparative research design is the examination of particular issues of phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different socio-cultural settings (e.g. institutions, customs or traditions), using the same research instruments either to carry out secondary analysis of national data or to conduct new empirical work. The intention may be to seek explanations for similarities, to generalize from them or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009; Hantrais & Mangen, 1996).

The design has been used in this study to highlight commonalities and differences in the political environments of South Africa and Cameroon and how they influence negatively or positively women's representation in leadership positions in both countries. Though a comparative design enables common and different issues to be identified, the focus was mostly on the differences because the goal is to find out why the cases are different or why they reveal underlying factors which generate these variations.

3.4.3 Historical research design

Historical methodology is the discovery from past accounts or records of a description or explanation for events in the past. It is about a systematic collection and evaluation of data related to the past in order to be able to understand and explain the past events or actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Busha & Harter, 1980). Better still, historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use historical sources and other evidence to research and then to write history (Freshwater & Drury, 2006: 295-303).

Women's political representation in contemporary South Africa and Cameroon is to a large extent influenced by past political developments in the two countries, in particular, and in Africa as a whole. The role of historical methodology was to

provide a historical base or context for the current research. The historical research enables the researcher to be aware of what has happened in the past and to find out how some past practices could be applied in solving or understanding the present problems.

Historians divide data into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include eyewitness or participant accounts and contemporary records - personal notes, memos, instruction manuals, and diaries. Secondary sources are textbooks, magazine articles, summaries and reports of events by other historians or researchers (Marwick, 2001).

Marwick (2001) further stipulates that, primary sources are absolutely fundamental to history. He warns that, historians should consider the accuracy and objectivity of the primary sources they are using. However, such objectivity and accuracy may be difficult to achieve especially when secondary data is also used. However, the researcher studied recent events and primary documents mainly in the form of published government reports and official documents of some organizations. For instance, summaries and reports of events were collected from the Ministry for Women's Protection and Family in Cameroon and the IPU, EISA, UN, Women Data Project, and other NGO's websites. The summaries and reports from the web provided some statistical data on women's historical and current representation in political decision-making structures.

3.4.4 Content analysis

Content analysis according to Babbie (2006) is the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws. It is most commonly used by researchers in the social sciences to analyze recorded transcripts of interviews with participants. The researcher chose content analysis as a means of analyzing the data collected from primary and secondary findings. Hence, content analysis assisted the researcher in effectively outlining the state

of women's political representation in South African and Cameroon, and the structures and mechanisms used in the empowerment of women in politics and the obstacles they face.

3.4 SAMPLING

Sample is a subset of a whole population which is investigated by a researcher and the characteristics will be generalized for the entire population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:55). The study utilized non-probability sampling. In a sampling method, the probability of including all elements in a sample is not guaranteed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005:28). This is due to the vastness of the population area. For example, South Africa has nine provinces with a population of approximately 49 million people and Cameroon has ten provinces with 19 million people. Both countries have more than 150 political parties spread across the different provinces. Again, there are 400 parliamentarians in South Africa and 180 in Cameroon with government and NGOs officials who have very busy schedules. This made it very difficult for the researcher to get hold of each and every person in the study population.

3.4.1 Purposive and stratified sampling

The researcher particularly used purposive or judgmental sampling. According to Bless, *et al.* (2006), purposive sampling is based on the judgment of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. A sample is chosen on the basis of what the researcher considers to be typical units. The strategy is to select units that are judged to be the most common in the population under investigation (Bless *et al.*, 2006: 106). This method of sampling was chosen on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which subjects would be the most useful or representative without abandoning the purpose of the study. In addition,

a stratified random sampling was used to enhance the purposive sampling. This was to make sure that the sample size was drawn from many strata or groups.

3.4.1.1 Profile of respondents

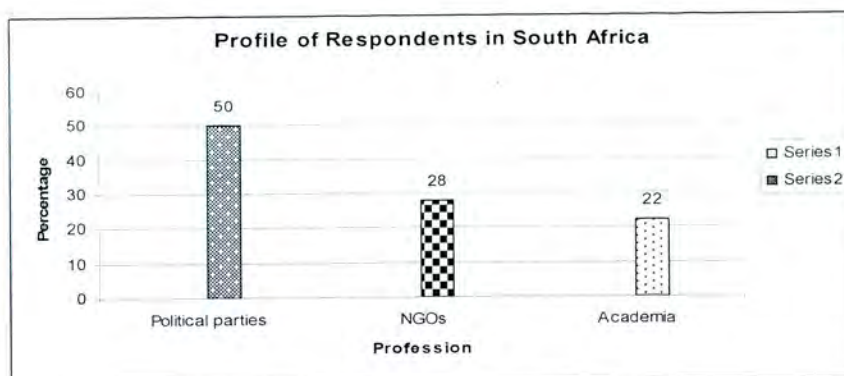


Figure 3.1: Profile of respondents in South Africa

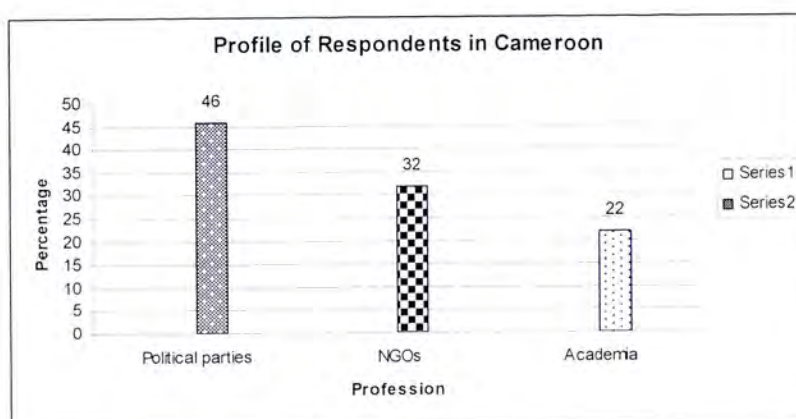


Figure 3.2: Profile of respondents in Cameroon

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present the profile of respondents in South Africa and Cameroon respectively. The profession or status of the respondents is an indication of the purposive sampling method used by the researcher. The highest percentages of respondents in the two countries were members of political parties who held some sort of leadership positions and who were members of parliament. The sample from NGOs consisted of those in support of or promoting gender equality and women's political empowerment. In South Africa these were

the Commission on Gender Equality, Women's Net, Gender Link, POWA and the Office for the Status of Women. In Cameroon, these included Lady's Cycle, Network for More Women in Politics (NMWP), Organisation of Associations for Women's Empowerment in Cameroon (OAEWCA) and the Coalition of Non-governmental Organizations.

In order to get a balanced view concerning women's representation in political leadership in both countries, members of the academic world were also included in the study. In South Africa, the academia were lecturers and post-graduate students in Politics Science, Gender Studies, Women's Studies, Law from the Universities of Johannesburg, Western Cape, Walter Sisulu, Fort Hare and Unisa. In addition, members of some research institutes were included; these were the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the African Institute for South Africa (AISA). Similarly, in Cameroon, the academia was made up of lecturers and post-graduate students in Political Science, Women's Studies and Law from the Universities of Buea and Yaounde II, including the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC). Information on how respondents were reached is provided in the sub-heading titled "data collection procedure" (3.6) in this chapter.

3.4.1.2 Gender distribution of respondents



Figure 3.3: Gender distribution in South Africa

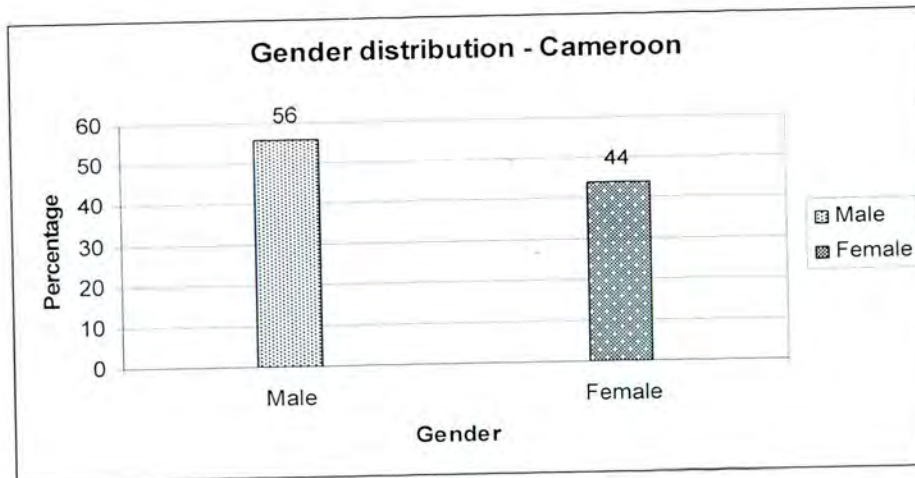


Figure 3.4: Gender distribution in Cameroon

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 present the gender distribution of respondents from South Africa and Cameroon. South African respondents comprised 53% females and 47% males. Thus, more women were represented than men. In contrast, Cameroonian respondents consisted of 44% females and 56% males. In fact, more women were targeted in the study than men but women in Cameroon were reluctant to speak out especially as the political atmosphere at the time of field work was very tense due to the government's ratification of the Maputo Protocol, a document created by the African Union that guarantees certain rights to women. Thus, this is one of the limitations of the study as mentioned below.

The total number of participants that took part in the research in both countries was 120, with 75 of them from South Africa and 45 from Cameroon. Initially, the researcher targeted a sample population of 200, 120 from South Africa and 80 from Cameroon. However, when the data was collected, the initial sample size was reduced due to a number of reasons: the non-filling in of the open-ended questionnaires by some participants and the cancellation of interviews and focus group discussions by some participants.

In South Africa, more women were willing to participate and contribute to the study whereas some men felt that the research dealt specifically with women

issues even though clarity was provided that the study was purely academic. Responses were collected from 40 women and 35 men in South Africa. In the case of Cameroon, responses were collected from 20 women and 25 men.

3.5 INSTRUMENTS USED TO COLLECT DATA

The method of data collection involved multiple sources and techniques. The multiple sources of evidence have helped to strengthen the case study. When the findings, interpretations and conclusions are based on such multiple sources, the case study is less prone to the shortcomings typical of a single source, such as an inaccurate interview or a biased document (Yin, 1994:38). The sources of evidence used were in-depth face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questions, focus group discussions, an open-ended questionnaire, observation and documentation.

3.5.1 In-depth interviews

Interviewing is regarded as a primary data collection strategy aimed at obtaining relevant information and focused on answering research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005:50). This research used semi-structured interviews which facilitate a strong bond and understanding between those involved, allow for greater flexibility, and enable the interview to enter new areas of discussion (Yin, 1994:90). The interview helped the respondents to talk widely about their views and perceptions concerning women's representation in political leadership positions.

Smith (1995:9-27) further suggests that semi-structured interviews allow people to answer on their own terms better than the fully structured interviews, thus providing rich information. In this regard, the participants were able to raise their own ideas without the limitations of detailed questions. As a result, the interviews

with some participants tended to be by discussion rather than just a question and answer process.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a document containing questions designed to solicit appropriate information. Questionnaires are used primarily in survey research, field research and other modes of observation (Babbie, 2009:646). The questionnaire administered to participants was made up of closed and open ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to obtain information on the views, attitudes and perceptions of respondents towards women's representation in political leadership. Closed-ended questions, on the other hand, provided information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

A questionnaire was used especially during the pilot phase of the study to help determine the relevance of the research questions. It was distributed to a sample of 60 participants in Cameroon and South Africa. In the actual data collection phase, the questionnaire was sent to participants whom the researcher could not get hold of either through face-to-face or telephonic interviews. The respondents took, on average, one week to send back the responses while some never did even after a follow-up to remind them to do so.

3.5.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group consists of a small number of individuals who meet in a single location and discuss with a leader a topic or research stimulus (Johnson et al., 2008:155). According to Krueger (1994), focus groups are useful in obtaining preliminary information concerning attitudes, views, and beliefs in the community.

The researcher used a focus group of 10 post-graduate students consisting of different disciplines, i.e. gender studies, political studies, law, sociology, peace

studies and public administration in South Africa on 20 June 2010. Another focus group discussion of seven participants was held in Cameroon with representatives from NGOs, political parties and post-graduate students on 4th January 2010. The researcher also used a pre-determined list of open-ended questions arranged in a logical sequence. A focus group discussion allows the researcher to identify where participants' points of view converge and diverge. This further allows the researcher to explore certain phenomena. The benefit of using focus groups over individual interviews is that the comments of one participant can generate comments from other participants. A large amount of information can be collected in a short space of time. Ideas and opinions can be developed and explored more than in individual interviews (Krueger, 1994).

3.5.4 Observation

To further complement the data collection methods mentioned above, observation was used as a tool to ensure that the data collected from interviews, as well as the information obtained from the questionnaires was reliable. This was necessary to ensure the basic reality of what was said by participants. According to Babbie (2009:110) observation is the process of watching someone or something carefully in order to find out or establish something.

The observation approach seeks to provide a written description of the implicit rules, traditions and behavioural patterns of a group. The intention is to provide a 'rich' or 'thick' description of the group observed (Robson, 1993). It obviously differs from the interview approach as the researcher can take various observational stances. In this study, the non-participant observational approach was used, where the researcher drew on personal experiences and observations of the political developments in both countries since the 1990s. In addition, the researcher's familiarity with the cultural, social and economic settings of South Africa and Cameroon was an added advantage to the observation method.

3.5.5 Documentation

Ultimately, a documentation review was conducted using books, journals, periodicals, magazines, declarations, government reports and online information. Documents are available materials or data, which are in existence prior to the research at hand (Merriam, 2001:113). Document analysis is described as the act of reviewing the existing documentation of comparable business processes or systems in order to extract pieces of information that are relevant to the current study (Kumar, 1996:104).

Relevant documents concerning African women in political leadership were obtained from the North-West University Mafikeng Campus library and Walter Sisulu University Sasal library in South Africa. Books that were not available in the library at the time but were found in other libraries around the country were accessible through the inter-library services. In Cameroon, the researcher managed to get some books from the University of Yaoundé 1 library. In addition, the researcher also purchased some books which were regarded to be relevant to the study but were not available from the libraries in question. These were bought via Kalahari Online. A lot of statistical data and other information relating to the study were collected from the IPU documents, international IDEA, iKNOW politics, EISA and reports from CEDAW, Beijing and United Nations. Research shows that document analysis is an important aspect of qualitative data, as it is able to yield information that respondents might fear or shy to voice during an interview (Holliday, 2007).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

A pilot study was conducted at the beginning of the research to determine the relevance of the research questions. The preliminary findings helped shape the

final research questions. When this process was finalized the researcher started to identify the participants who were going to be part of the study.

In South Africa, after identifying key individuals and organizations to be involved in the research, the researcher managed to get hold of their contact details through the internet. In the case of Cameroon, contact details of government institutions were also available on the internet but those of political parties and NGOs could not be obtained. In this regard, the researcher employed the services of a local Cameroonian journalist to collect information such as physical addresses and contact details of prominent members of political parties and members of NGOs.

In South Africa, after the researcher had got hold of these contact details, telephone calls were made for appointments with the target population. In most cases emails were sent as some targeted persons or NGOs could not be reached telephonically. However, very few responded to the emails. Some acknowledged receipt and indicated that they would get back to me and never did. A follow-up email was sent as a reminder, but still very few of the participants were able to live up to their promises.

In the case of Cameroon, it was easy to make such appointments as the researcher had about a two-month period to meet with the participants. In the case of South Africa, many telephone calls were kept on hold until the researcher had to give-up on some calls. These especially applied to members of parliament. However, in some cases, it was difficult to give up considering the importance of contributions from such individuals. After several unsuccessful attempts, the researcher was able to make appointments with some prominent individuals for the interviews.

In the South African case, the researcher scheduled such appointments to take place within a month's period. For individuals whose schedule could not

accommodate this period, telephone interviews were conducted. In other cases, the researcher was able to get instant interviews with some participants without having to go through the formality of appointments. Still in other cases, the researcher used online services. The research questions in the form of open-ended questionnaires were sent to some participants following arrangements between them and the researcher. Most of the responses were received within a two-week period. Occasionally, the researcher had to gather vital information from informal discussions with some important personalities during conference and workshop attendance.

In most of the face-to-face interviews and focused group discussions, a tape recorder was used on agreement between the participants and the researcher. The researcher's mobile phone was also available as a back-up system for tape recording. During the telephonic interviews, the researcher took down notes. The average time used during face-to-face interviews was 20 minutes while the focus group discussions took about 30 minutes. During informal conversations, the researcher took down notes immediately she had the chance to do so in order not to forget the issues raised by participants.

It should be noted also that the South African participants were very relaxed during interviews except for the fact that most of them were very time conscious due to other appointments. This was understandable and the researcher made sure the agreed upon time was never exceeded, and in some cases, the time was actually shortened.

It is also worth mentioning that some female participants in both countries were reluctant to participate in the research. The researcher believes that they felt obliged to do so simply because they did not want to be seen as being untrustworthy. To some female participants in Cameroon the research questions were very sensitive and they felt uneasy responding to them. The reason for this

uneasiness probably was due to the make-up of the political environment at the time.

The Cameroon Parliament was in the process of passing a homosexuality and abortion law and some high-ranking individuals in the government and religious organizations were against these. The situation was tense and politicians became suspicious of any type of research that was political. Due to these circumstances, some participants even provided wrong profiles to hide their identity. Some completely cancelled the interview appointments and refused to reschedule them. This must be one of the reasons why the majority of Cameroonian participants were male.

After face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, the tape recordings were listened to twice before the information was transcribed. On examining the transcripts from the tape recordings and the handwritten information, the researcher used a qualitative thematic analysis as espoused by Jayaratne and Stewart (1991). The transcripts were read and reread, and recurring themes and subjects were noted. Similar themes and subjects were grouped into broad categories. The relationships among the various categories were made in order to identify areas of similarity and differences.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

Given the particular nature of the data collected and its heavy dependence on primary sources, the study endeavoured to adhere and conform to all the ethical requirements. These included informed consent, voluntary participation, and injury to respondents, anonymity and deception. With regard to secondary sources, particular consideration was given to proper referencing in line with the North-West University (NWU) Code of Ethics in Research. In other words, the

researcher took into consideration the ethics of social science research, such as plagiarism throughout the research process.

3.7.1 Permission to Conduct Research

Permission to conduct research was sought from the organizations to which the researcher distributed open-ended questionnaires and conducted interviews. Letters of acceptance (see **Appendix B and C**) were requested and issued by the authorities in charge of the said organizations. These were the *Ladies Circle* in Cameroon and the *Institute for Security Studies* in South Africa.

However, in most cases, the researcher dealt with the participants directly and not through their organizations or institutions. In the process, the interviewees' permission was required and they were provided with adequate information about the nature of the research. According to De Vos *et al.* (2009), it is important that the researcher highlight the objective of the study, its potential risks and its benefits. In the current study, this was done so as to get the participants' understanding and cooperation before the researcher began conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires.

3.7.2 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Informed consent is the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar inducement or manipulation (Babbie, 2004). The researcher never attempted to manipulate the participants into participating in the study. They did so out of their own choice. The researcher specifically informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they would not be given any special reward for their contribution. The participants were also told that they were free to

withdraw from taking part in the study. This informed consent form was given in writing to the participants to read and sign. A copy of the informed consent form is attached as **Appendix A**.

3.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All the participants in the study were guaranteed absolute confidentiality in their identities and personal details. A research project ensures confidentiality when the researcher can identify a given person's responses and guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of those responses. (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2006). However, some participants did not have problems with the researcher revealing their names in the research. For those participants who did not feel comfortable having their names mentioned in the research, anonymity was ensured. Issues of anonymity are ensured when both the researcher and the people who read the research cannot identify the respondents (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

3.7.4 Issues of Deception

The study has also avoided deception. The researcher did not conceal her identity and the purpose of the study. As a matter of fact, when questionnaires were sent to Cameroon during the pilot study to be distributed and collected by a research assistant employed by the researcher, participants requested the identity of the researcher, and that information was made readily available to them. In fact, using deception would have compromised the integrity of the informed consent process.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The study is mainly a qualitative one and therefore the data has been qualitatively analyzed. Data analysis is the process of transforming raw data into valuable information that can be analyzed to produce results (Benony &

Nathaniel, 2000:4). Since the researcher used the qualitative research approach, content analysis was used. The latter entails a subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:25). Open coding was used, which involves the naming and categorizing of phenomena through a close examination of data. Data is then broken down into separate parts. These parts were closely examined for evidence of similarities and differences in the study. The researcher made use of descriptive statistics to organize, tabulate, depict, describe, summarize and reduce the mass of primary data. The overall data collected was presented in tables and pie charts. The presentation of data was followed by the discussion of the findings. All problems encountered during the study (from data collection to analysis) were identified and discussed accordingly. Measures put into place to overcome such challenges were equally looked into.

3.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter presented the qualitative methodology of the study that was used to collect data and to analyse it. An integrated research design comprising comparative case study, phenomenology and historical research design has been used. The main data collection methods used are interviews, open-ended questionnaires, focus group discussions, observation, and documentation. Data was gathered in various areas since research participants were residing in different regions. In South Africa, the regions included Mthatha, East London, Baziya, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Bisho. In Cameroon the sites of research were Yaoundé, Douala, Kumba, Buea, and Mamfe. Furthermore, the ethical considerations of the study include a letter of introduction, a letter of consent to conduct research, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and deception.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the methodology and the ethical issues considered in collecting the data for this study. The primary research objective was to compare women's political representation in leadership positions in South Africa and Cameroon and to examine the different structures and mechanisms used in both countries to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. As mentioned in the delimitation of the study in Chapter 1, women's participation in political leadership is limited to representation in parliament, political parties and government (cabinet, national, provincial and local government levels).

The findings of the primary data have been presented with the aid of charts and tables. The findings, together with the information gathered from existing documents (in Chapter 2), observation and theories have been used as a reference point in the discussion of the findings of the present study. The analysis and discussion below were based on the four research questions outlined in Chapter 1:

1. What is the state of women's representation in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party democracy?
2. What structures and mechanisms are in place to promote women's political involvement in South Africa and Cameroon?
3. What are the obstacles faced by South African and Cameroonian women in their quest for advancement in political leadership?

4. Can increased women's political representation in decision-making processes change Africa's political culture? If yes, what are the indicators, if not, what are the reasons?

4.2 RESPONSES OF PARTICIPANTS

The respondents were asked four research questions and the majority of them had similar answers to a number of questions. The responses are presented below, followed by some detailed analysis.

4.2.1 What is the state of women's representation in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party democracy?

There were a significant number of responses which this topic generated from both countries. Participants from Cameroon especially focused not only on political but also private leadership. The overall trend in South Africa was that, political participation of women in leadership positions was good. However, this was not the same with Cameroon as the data on the next page indicates.

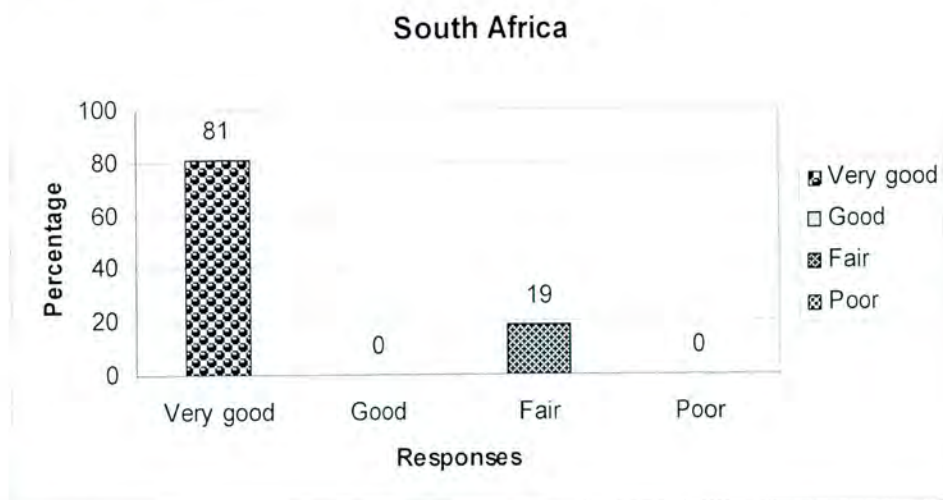


Figure 4.1: The state of women's political representation in South Africa

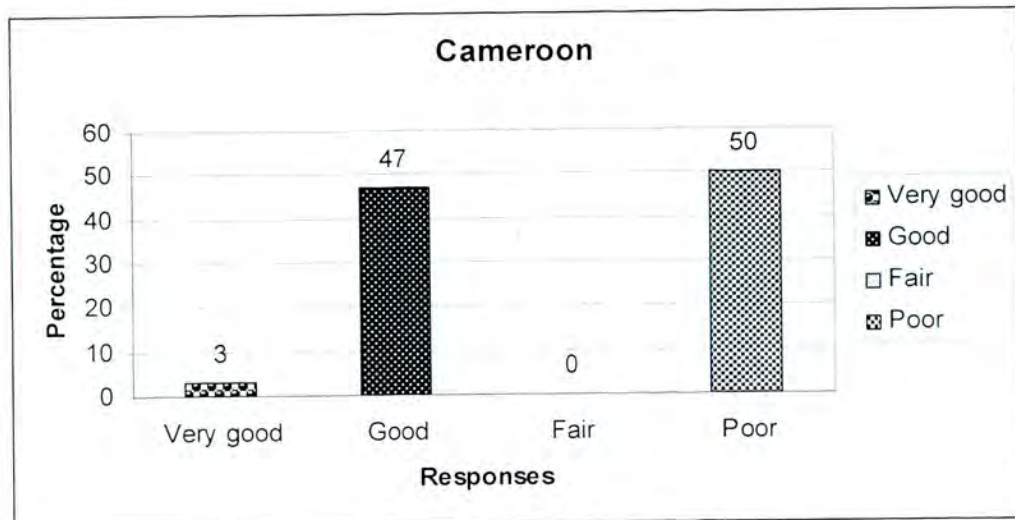


Figure 4.2: The state of women's political representation in Cameroon

Figure 4.1 shows the responses from South African respondents. There were 81% respondents who stated that the state of women's participation in political activities after almost two decades of democracy was very good. Meanwhile 19% of respondents said it was fair. Some of the indicators respondents used in measuring South African progress were parliament, cabinet, and the provincial and local government. In this case they indicated that there was a high number of women's representation. They however admitted that the country has not yet reached the expected 50:50 representation for males and females in decision-making structures, a declaration that SADC member countries have to achieve by 2015. This was the same view shared by 19% of the respondents.

Meanwhile Figure 4.2 shows 3% and 47% of the respondents from Cameroon indicated that the state of women's representation in political activities was very good and good respectively. The indicators cited were the inclusion of women in parliament, ministries, divisional officers and secretary generals. Some of these respondents also mentioned that the make-up of the ruling party included a women's wing, which is inclusive of women. Others further mentioned that many

women do not participate actively in politics, and the few who do so are rewarded with political positions.

Meanwhile, 50% of the respondents who stated that the representation of women in Cameroon's democracy is poor, referred to issues such as the non-existence of women in influential positions like female governors (equivalent to premier in South Africa) in any of the ten provinces, very few women in Cameroon's Parliament, cabinet and local government. However, the ensuing discussion would look at women's representation in parliament, cabinet and political parties only.

4.2.1.1 Parliament

Most South African participants stated that they were very pleased with the state of women's representation in the parliament of South Africa. As one participant put it, "South Africa has quite a large representation of women in parliament. We occupy [a] second position in Africa, i.e., after Rwanda and third in the world, isn't that wonderful, considering our young democracy?"³¹ Another participant said, "South Africa has made good progress in women's representation in parliament, however, we [South Africa] have not yet reach[ed] the aspired 50:50 representation for both males and females."³²

This same view was echoed by 19% of the participants who said women's political representation in South Africa was fair. One participant notes that, "representation is low especially at the local government level. There is actually a regression which I think is dangerous for the country because it is at this level that many women's lives are affected."³³

³¹ Telephone interview with Anonymous, South African female MP (Mthatha, 27 April 2009).

³² Personal communication with Cllr. S.N. Ntshahla, Speaker of Ntabankulu Local Municipality (Mthatha, 27 April 2009).

³³ Telephone interview with Anonymous. Gender Links (Johannesburg, 12 January 2012).

It should be noted that, though the 1995 Beijing Conference demanded 30% female representation in decision-making structures, the 50/50 representation is the outcome of a 2008 Declaration on gender and development protocol of SADC member states which is to be achieved by 2015 (SADC, 2008) and ANC voluntary party quota system which was adopted in 2009.

In Cameroon, 47% of the participants mentioned that the state of women's representation in political leadership was good and another 3% said it was very good. "Women's representation in Cameroon is very good and is reasonable when compare[d] to other countries in Africa. There are women parliamentarians, women in government, ministers, secretary generals, administrators, and divisional officers, directors and bishops."³⁴ Another participant added "Cameroon democracy is still young, so women's representation is reasonable."³⁵ He continued, "even though Cameroon has claimed to be a democratic country since achieving independence in 1960, the existence of a one-party system makes it difficult for it to be called a true democracy. Thus Cameroon only had some sort of democracy in the 1990s when the political space was open for opposition parties and some freedom of speech and expression was seen."

On the contrary, 50% of the participants were of the view that women's representation in political leadership in Cameroon was low. One member of parliament put it as follows: "[V]ery few women hold influential positions in Cameroon because political parties do not support women to grow. The women that we have in parliament are mostly from the ruling CPDM." She continued,

with very few women, it becomes difficult for us to put our agenda through." When asked, what "agenda?" she said, "its an exciting feeling to get into Parliament, there is so much that you want to do or change but while there, you realized that there is nothing you can do because men are still the

³⁴ Interview with Anonymous. CPDM male MP (Yaoundé, 22 December, 2009).

³⁵ Interview with Mr. Besongngem, E.E. Director at the Department of External Relations, Cameroon (Yaoundé, 27 December 2009).

majority and would only accept policies that are beneficial to them. Your hands are then tied.³⁶

Another participant remarked, “the representation of women in political leadership ... is still very low, [their] representation in parliament has fluctuated over the years and in government there are few women compared to the total number of ministerial positions. In local councils many of them hold but subordinate positions”.³⁷

The early 1990s in South Africa, like in Cameroon, saw the opening up of the South African political environment to women especially in 1994 when the first inclusive democratic elections took place. In fact, before 1994, there was only a 2.7% women's representation in parliament (South African CEDAW report, 1997). But from the 1994 elections, the number increased drastically to 27.74% and it has continued to rise since then. Below is a table showing women's representation in the South African parliament since 1994.

Year	Total seats	Women's seats	% of women
2010	400	178	45
2009	400	172	43
2004	400	131	32.75
1999	400	120	30
1994	400	111	27.74

Source: United Nations (2010) and Hendricks (2005)

Table 4.1: Seats held by women in the South African National Assembly from 1994 to 2010

³⁶ Interview with Anonymous. SDF female alternate PM (Yaoundé, 22 December, 2009).

³⁷ Online correspondence with Dr. Kah Henry. Lecturer of history and gender studies, University of Buea (4 January 2012).

The above table shows that in South Africa, women's representation in parliament increased from 27.74% in 1994 to 45% in 2010. The increment may be due to the materialisation of gender equality policies stipulated in the constitution. Globally, South Africa moved from the 141st spot before the 1994 elections to the 8th position in 2008 and the 3rd in 2009, with its 45% women's representation surpassed only by that of Rwanda (56%) and Sweden (47%) (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2010).

Legislative Year	No. of parliamentarians	No of Women	% female parliamentarians
1973-1978	120	7	5.85%
1978-1983	120	12	10%
1983-1988	120	17	14.25%
1988-1992	180	26	14.25%
1992-1997	180	23	12.8%
1997-2002	180	10	5.65%
2002-2007	180	19	10.6%
2007-2012	180	22	12.2%

Source: *MINPROFF reports 2007*³⁸

Table 4.2: Number of female parliamentarians in Cameroon from 1973 to 2007

Numerically, the highest legislature was during the period 1983-1992 with a 14.25% female representation, while the lowest was during the period 1997-2002 with a 5.6%. The coming in of multi-party politics in 1992 has not made any difference to women's representation in Cameroon's Parliament; instead the number of women has been alarmingly decreasing. Though women's representation started in 1973, almost 40 decades ago, there has been a minimal change even in the new millennium.

³⁸ Statistics taken from the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, Yaoundé: Cameroon.

Furthermore, in the South African National Assembly, many women have held the position of Speaker and Deputy Speaker. From 1994 to 2004 Dr. Frene Noshir Ginwala was a Speaker. A Deputy Speaker from 1996 to 2004 was Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile, who became Speaker from 2004 to 2008. In the period 2008 to 2009 Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge was a Deputy Speaker and Nomaindia Mfeketo has held the position since 2009 (Worldwide Guide to women in Leadership, 2010).

In Cameroon, women have also headed parliament. The first female head of the National Assembly was Rosalie Motaze, who held the position from 1970 to 1973. It was not until 2002 that another female, Rose Abunaw Makia, held the position of 3rd vice-president of the National Assembly (Worldwide Guide to women in Leadership, 2010). One wonders why there should be a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and even 4th vice-positions in the National Assembly instead of just a president and a vice or deputy. Such a proliferation of posts serves as a deliberate tokenism or a way for rewarding clients. Furthermore, from 2002 to 2007, women had held only positions of Secretary of the National Assembly. As from 2007, there have been three female secretaries, namely, Patricia Ndam Njoya, Celine Mendoua and Hadidja Alim (Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership, 2010).

Comparatively, the statistics on Cameroon is a clear indication that Cameroonian women are grossly under-represented in parliament when compared to their South African counterparts. However, it should also be noted that most of the women MPs are from the ruling party (ANC in South Africa and CPDM in Cameroon) which has a majority in parliament. So even with this kind of women's representation, serious political issues may be avoided by the women MPs as they may want to maintain loyalty to their party.

In South Africa, women's representation in parliament is reaching a "critical mass" and this has helped in many ways. The issue of "ukuthwala"³⁹ (adduction of young girls for forced marriages) was stopped by women MPs as they promulgated a law which criminalized the practice. Similarly other Acts of parliament have been passed to the benefit of women. These are the "Sexual Offences Act" and "Domestic Violence Act" as mentioned in Chapter 2 (CGE, 2010:22). Thus, the active participation of women MPs in the South African political culture reflects the meaning attached to a true democracy as defined by the IPU.⁴⁰

4.2.1.1.1 Women's Parliament and Multi-Party Women's Caucus

The Women's Parliament in South Africa was formed in 2004. In a Women's Parliamentary session in 2008, the deputy chairperson of the National Council of Provinces in South Africa, Peggy Hollander, explained that the reason for the formation of the Women's Parliament was that women were the ones who bore most burdens caused by poverty and underdevelopment. She added that, while efforts have been made in empowering women, a significant number still suffers from extreme poverty. Thus, "it was this understanding that informs Women's Parliament so that women would be able to share their experiences, devise solutions and make their voices heard and assist in overseeing government" (Women's Parliament News, 2008).

³⁹ "Ukuthwala" used to be an African customary practice common in many rural South African villages where young girls, sometimes as young as 12 years old, were abducted by older men so they could be coerced into marrying men or boys with whom they had never had any love relationships. The men would then notify the girl's family of the abduction, and sometimes a messenger relaying the abduction news to the girl's family would be given a bottle of brandy to offer to the family. The family would then meet for an agreement to be reached that the girl be married.

⁴⁰ In Yaounde, Cameroon in 1992, the IPU stated that "the concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population".

In addition to the women's caucus in South Africa, there exists a Multi-Party Women's Caucus which was launched on 18 March 2008. The caucus consists of all female members of the National Assembly as well as permanent female members of the National Council of Provinces. The caucus is aimed at highlighting women's views and opinions in order to influence the discussion of women's issues within parliament. The caucus also acts as an advisory and consultative body.⁴¹ The South African *Women's Parliament News* (2008) reports that the Parliamentary Women's Caucus has been articulating and advocating concerns such as women's political representation and the fight against illiteracy and poverty.

There exists no women's caucus or women's parliament in Cameroon. An inter-party group of women or women's caucus was active throughout the 1992 to 1997 legislature. However, it fell apart after the 1997 parliamentary elections (Adams, 2004). The reason for its demise was that from 1997 to 2002, there were 10 women out of 180 MPs in the National Assembly. What is more, nine out of the 10 MPs were from the ruling CPDM and only one from the main opposition, Victoria Tomedi Ndando of SDF.

Adams further states that, the fact that the majority of the female MPs were from the same political party, partially contributed to the demise of the Women's Caucus. The other factor was a declining number of female representatives in parliament. The 1992-1997 legislature had 23 female MPs, whereas only 10 MPs were in the 1997 -2002 legislature. Adams also reports that male MPs were not receptive to the caucus and wanted to know what the women were talking about.

The non-existence of a women's caucus makes it difficult for women's issues to be articulated in parliament. Research shows that the women's caucus in Rwanda had brought solidarity amongst women across party lines when it comes to issues affecting women, children, and the disabled.

⁴¹ South Africa Parliamentary News available online at <http://www.parliament.gov.za>.

4.2.1.2 Cabinet

The cabinet was also one of the indicators participants highlighted during the collection of the data for the state of women's representation in political leadership in the two countries. A South African participant had this to say, "South Africa is more advanced in the provision of rights in government. Today the ANC government has pushed for 50-50 representation in government and this has also seen more women occupying high roles like MEC[s] (member[s] of executive council), ministers and councillors".⁴² This response is in line with the statistics provided below on South Africa's women in ministerial positions since 1994.

Year	% representation of women
1994	15
1999	30
2004	39
2009	43

Source: African Women's Report, 2009.

Table 4.3: Ministerial positions for women in South Africa

With regard to the South African cabinet, Table 4.3 shows that women had a 15% representation in 1994, 30% in 1999 (Bua News, 2004), and in 2009, almost half of the cabinet consisted of women. 14 ministers and 12 deputy ministers were women, bringing the overall representation of women in the new cabinet at 43% (SABC News, 2009). The results show that South Africa is firmly on the route to achieving the SADC target of 50:50 men's and women's representation in political decision-making structures by 2015.

⁴² Interview with Mijere, Nsolo. Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies. WSU (Mthatha, 17 May 2010).

Year	Total no of Ministers	No of women	% representation of women
1995	27	2	7.41
1998	49	3	6.12
2004	65	6	9.23
2010	62	6	9.68

Source: Ndichia, T. K. 2010. Beijing + 15: The Reality of Cameroon and the Unfinished Business, Gender Empowerment and Development.

Table 4.4: Ministerial positions for women in Cameroon

Meanwhile statistics in Cameroon shows a regression in the number of women in ministerial positions. The Coordinator of a newly formed party, People Action Party (PPP) of Ayah Paul Abine formed in 2010, which participated for the first time in the 2011 elections stated:

It is sad to acknowledge that Cameroon has until now not given the full opportunity to women to participate in the running of state affairs. Very few women are involved in decision making policies in Cameroon. Less than 5 women have Ministerial positions in the over 40 Ministries. Same situation applies to the parliament where only about 5.5% of women are represented. The gender gap is alarming considering that women are only giving positions that are considered to be women related like the Ministry of Women's Affairs or the Ministry of Social Affairs. Cameroon has dynamic and strong women capable of even becoming a Prime Minister to run the government. Fortunately we find these dynamic women in the private sectors either running NGOs or businesses to help in the development of the country in one way or the other.⁴³

The above response echoes the views of the 50% of the participants in Cameroon who believe that Cameroon is not doing enough to put women in positions of responsibility despite their unquestionable capabilities.

⁴³ Online correspondence with Esther Takang, Coordinator of People's Action Party (PAP) (19 January 2012).

Cabinet positions excluding deputy ministerial and sub-ministerial portfolios occupied by women in South Africa since 1994 include: Health; International Relations and Cooperation; Home Affairs; Public Works; Agriculture and Land Affairs; Housing, Welfare and Population Development; Public Service and Administration; Justice and Constitutional Development; and Defence and Veteran Affairs. Others are Higher Education and Training; Basic Education; Communications; Public Enterprises; Intelligence; Mining, Minerals and Energy; Water Affairs and Forestry; Correctional Services; Science and Technology; Arts and Culture; Social Development; Women, Youth Children and People with Disabilities, and Minister in the Presidency.

Women have also held the positions of Acting and Deputy President of the country. In 2001, Sankie Mtembi-Mahanyele, during her tenure as Minister of Housing, became the Acting President of the Republic on 20 April. Also in 2003, the then Minister of Health, the late Dr. Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang who was the then Minister of Health, held the Acting President post on 15 September. Meanwhile, the late Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, the then Minister of Communications from 1999-2009, held the Acting President post thrice. Twice in 2003 and once in 2008, and from 2005 to 2009 she was a member of the Pool of Possible Acting Presidents.

During her term as Minister of Minerals and Energy (1999-2005), Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka served as the Acting President of the country on 28 and 30 July 2004. On 23 January 2005, she held the same position. She also became South Africa's first deputy president from 2005 to 2008 and resigned due to the ANC's recalling of President Thabo Mbeki in 2009. Baleka Mbete, the then Speaker of the National Assembly, was appointed Deputy President from 2008-2009.

Having a woman at the helm of office, whether acting or deputing may help a woman to know if she is ready for the responsibility and it may also help a country to start considering what it is like to have a woman at the top. In addition,

it may dispel the phobia which some women about being in position of responsibilities. Furthermore, being at top positions may allow women to demonstrate their skills and prove themselves as officials of executive power, especially in situations where they are mostly place in the background.

In Cameroon, the country had the first female Vice-Minister of Health and Public Welfare, Delphine Zanga Tsogo, from 1970 to 1975. She later became the country's first female minister in 1975 when she held the Ministry of Social Affairs position until 1984. According to Niyindi (2008:4), this appointment was a manifestation of the proclamation of 1975 as the "year of women's empowerment" by the United Nations. The second female, Dr. Dorothy Limunga Njeuma, became the Vice-Minister of Education from 1975 to 1982 and was appointed Minister Delegate for Education, from 1982 to 1984. It is very interesting to note that Cameroon had a Ministry of Women's Promotion under Yao Aissatou, from 1984 to 2000. Even during her term of office, she was also the Minister of Social Affairs from 1988 to 1997.

Just like South Africa, the cabinet positions which women in Cameroon have held include, Social Affairs, Education, Planning and Territorial Development, Women's Promotion, Health, Women and Family Protection, Culture, and Scientific Research and Innovation.

A glance at the above-mentioned positions indicate that women in Cameroon are still placed mainly in social, family, health and women's portfolios when compared to South African women who have been appointed in the more sensitive or substantive ministries such as Defence and Foreign Affairs or International Relations and Cooperation. The only powerful Cameroonian ministry ever held by women as mentioned above is the Scientific Research and Innovation. The situation in Cameroon seems to confirm what many researchers have stated, that women tend to hold low status ministerial positions confined within welfare issues such as culture, social affairs, education and health

(Callaway & Creevey, 1994; Studlar & Moncrief, 1997). The practice of putting women in low status ministries tends to convey the message (intended or unintended) to the populace that women are actually incapable of handling substantive portfolios.

Moreover, unlike in South Africa where the political transformation has tended to benefit women and improve their status and gender equality, in Cameroon the introduction of multi-party politics has not advantaged women and even the gender imbalance is still visibly high in the country.

4.2.1.2 Female heads of political parties

As stated in Chapter 2, political parties are the gateways for women to enter into politics and to their gaining access to leadership positions (Ballington, 2003; iKNOW Politics, 2009). The existence of women as head of political parties is not only important for many and varied decisions but it also acts as an inspiration to young women to change their mindsets that politics is for men only. Table 4.5 shows female leaders of political parties that registered and participated in the 2009 and 2011 elections in South Africa and Cameroon respectively.

South Africa		Cameroon	
Males	Females	Male	Females
22	4	21	2

Table 4.5: Female leaders of political parties in the 2009 and 2011 elections in South Africa and Cameroon

The 2009 elections in South Africa were legislative while those of Cameroon in 2011 were presidential. Of the 26 political parties that registered for the 2009 national elections in South Africa, four had women leaders. These were the

Democratic Alliance (DA) led by Helen Zille, Women Forward (WF) led by Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo, Keep it Straight and Simple (KISS) headed by Claire Carol Gaisford and the National Freedom Party (NFP) formed in January 2011 by Victoria Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi, a break-away party from the IFP. In Cameroon, of the registered 23 political parties, for the first time two had women leaders. These were Walla Edith Kahbang of the Cameroon People's Party (CPP) and Dang Esther of the Branch for the Integral Reconstruction of Cameroon (BIRC).

In fact by 2009, there existed 156 registered political parties in South Africa, 117 of them were registered as national parties and the rest registered wholly as local parties (EISA, 2009; My Cape Town, 2009). However, only 4 of them were headed by women, and they all managed to meet the necessary requirements for the 2009 legislative elections. The defunct ID, led by Patricia de Lille, now merged with the DA was also one of them.

As it is customary that political parties with male leaders do not give women chances to move to the top, especially as executive members, it remains to be seen whether the two parties in Cameroon would follow in the footsteps of male counterparts or they would provide spaces for women's representation at the top.

In South Africa, so many criticisms were levied against the DA leader with regard to her decision in appointing an all-male cabinet in Cape Town (Western Cape Province) after the 2009 elections. As one South African participant notes,

I think women are sufficiently represented in South Africa's political leadership ... although it is only now that some major political parties like DA are trying to give impetus to the representation of women.⁴⁴

In defending her decision, in an interview with the *eTV News*, she said that women were not interested in the provincial cabinet and she preferred to work

⁴⁴ Online correspondence with Mr. Nganje Fritz. Researcher. Institute for Global Dialogue.

with people - no matter what their gender was - who could deliver services to the people. She also said, many women in her party preferred to be represented in the national parliament, thus she could not do otherwise (eTV News, 2009). Her statement that she prefers working with people "who can deliver services" is an indication that women do not have the same mental capability like men. Her decision was not only a blow to women's empowerment in the country, but her action tends to also support the view that women do not support other women to climb up the political ladder. Nonetheless, Zille's party made news headlines in South Africa and in the DA history when Lindiwe Mazibuko, a 31-year old charismatic MP of DA became the first black woman to hold a parliamentary leadership position in October 2011.

It is not also a secret that Zille has achieved a lot since taking over from her male predecessor, Tony Leon in May 2007. The South African official opposition has improved its performance and her re-election as the Party's leader was not a mistake. As Premier of the Western Cape Province after the 2009 elections, she has become affectionately known as *Ma Zille* and some regard her as South Africa's Margaret Thatcher.

Zille's stronghold province (Western Cape) has not only achieved an outstanding record concerning service delivery in the country, but in 2010 her administration in the Western Cape also received a clean sweep of unqualified audit reports for all provincial government departments and public entities. In addition, in the same year, the City of Cape Town won a global award as a well-run city, thereby outshining cities such as New York, London, Paris, Hong Kong and Tokyo. As a cherry on top, Cape Town is due to receive the Global City Design in 2014. This is a significant point of departure from the status-quo of government under the ANC with a male leader. Just a year after the DA took control of the Western Cape province, the latter became the first province to have reached the target set for Operation Clean Audit 2014 by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Shiceka (Zille, 2010).

Still in January 2011, the DA-run Midvaal Municipality in another province (Gauteng Province) was awarded its eighth unqualified audit report in a row by the Auditor-General's Office for the 2009/2010 financial year (Zille, 2011). Thus a clean audit – a difficult and elusive feat for many municipalities in South Africa – tends to confirm that the female-headed party is governing well and has the capacity to be an outstanding party. Moreover, the Western Cape breakthroughs by the DA party are an indication that women can also be great leaders when given a chance to do so.

As mentioned above, Edith Walla of the CPP was one of the presidential hopefuls who contested for the 2011 elections in Cameroon. She was 45 years old at the time and ran her campaign under the slogan “the time is now” (Kaluba, 2011). She believed that change was inevitable in Cameroon. In 2008, she was named by the World Bank as one of the seven leading female entrepreneurs in Africa. The other female leader, Dang, 67 at the time, is a French-trained economist and former director general of Cameroon National Investment Corporation (Fominyen, 2011). Cameroonians especially the youths, see these two women as good technocrats with sound policies that are better grounded than those of some of their male counterparts. The courage and determination of these women during their campaign trail has broken the psychological barrier among women in Cameroon about aspiring for high political positions. This may just be the beginning of a new era for women in Cameroon.

4.2.2 What structures and mechanisms are in place to promote women's political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon?

This section presents the findings to question 2, discusses and analyses them, while incorporating the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. There were many structures and mechanisms raised by participants, however, these were grouped together under major themes in order to produce a clear and digestible data.

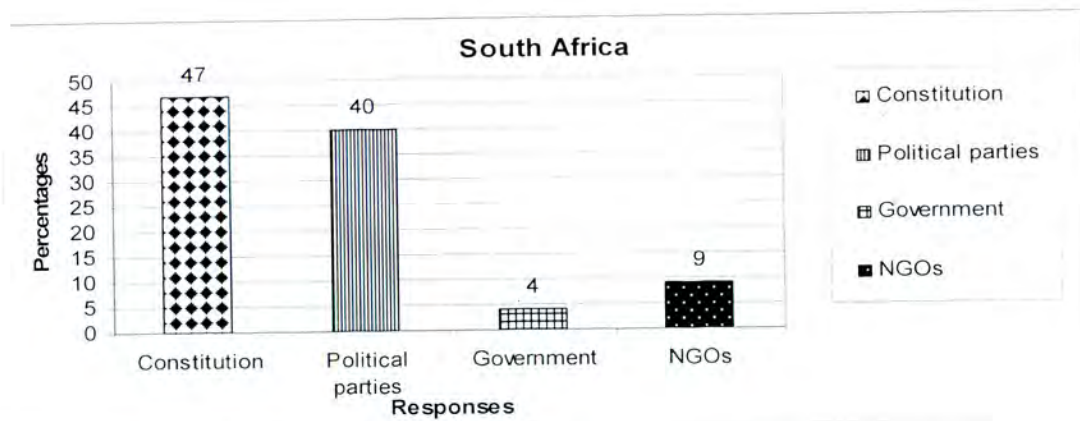


Chart 4.3: South Africa's structures and mechanisms to promote women

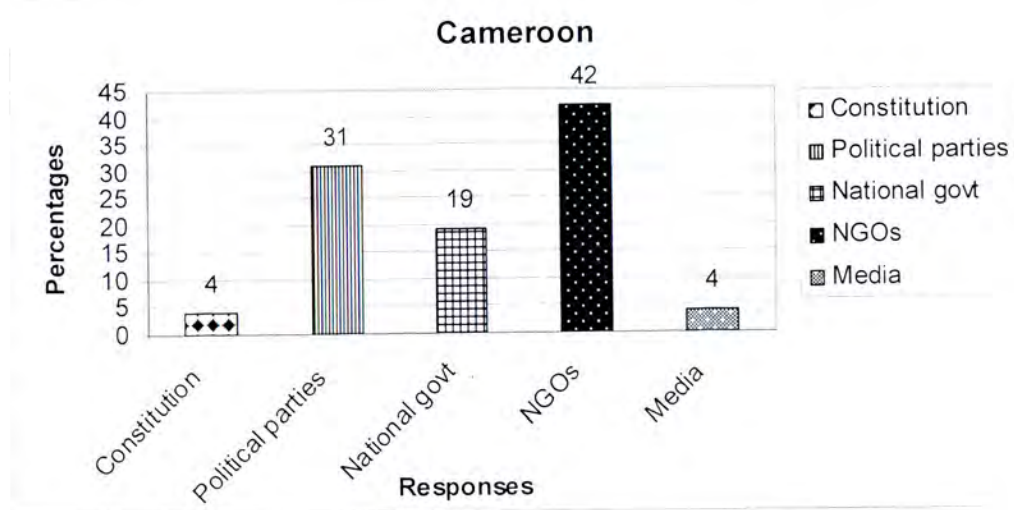


Figure 4.4: Cameroon's structures and mechanisms to promote women

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 present the structures and mechanisms in South Africa and Cameroon, respectively, which participants indicated promote women's representation in the public sphere. The only item found in Cameroon and not mentioned in South Africa was the media.

The majority of South African respondents (47%) cited the supremacy of the constitution as the highest political structure which empowers women in South Africa. In contrast, the same structure has only 4% of the respondents agreeing that it is a mechanism for promoting women's political leadership in Cameroon.

Other items cited by participants in South Africa are the provision of affirmative action, the legislation, the gender commission and the PR system. These items have been grouped under the constitution as the main theme.

Meanwhile, in Cameroon only 4% of participants stated that women are protected by the constitution because the constitution states that there should be no discrimination. Consequently, the four main themes that emerged from both countries were the constitution, political parties, government and NGOs, including the media in Cameroon.

4.2.2.1 The Constitution

The constitution was mentioned as one of the mechanisms that promotes women's political representation. In South Africa, 47% of the participants alluded to this. One participant said, "the South African Constitution is the most progressive in the world, with a Bill of Rights second to none and a range of progressive laws have been enacted to promote women's right since 1994."⁴⁵ Another participant adds, "I think reference should be made to South Africa's Constitution, ANC policies and SADC gender protocols which all demand some kind of gender parity for representation in top government positions".⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, the South African Constitution is supreme and one of the remarkable achievements acquired after the apartheid era. Section 9 of the Constitution provides women with specific protection and sub-section 3 states:

The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Interview with Anonymous. ANC official (Johannesburg, 21 June 2009).

⁴⁶ Nganje Fritz, 5 January 2012.

⁴⁷ Act 108 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status is clearly intended to protect women. In a marked departure from other African countries, South Africa protects the rights of lesbians and gays in both the Constitution and national legislation. By implication, no unfair discrimination based on any feature of sexual orientation would be tolerated in South Africa.

On the part of Cameroon, only 4% of the participants stated that the constitution promotes women's representation. Instead, the majority sees NGOs as the route to women's political representation and empowerment in Cameroon. According to Jean-Pierre Makanga, the deputy director at the Ministry for the Defence of Women and Family, "women have weak political culture and texts that establish gender equality, such as the constitution, are not very well known or understood" (Houmfa, 2010). This statement can better explain why only a minimal number of participants in Cameroon cited the constitution. Another reason could be that the government does not follow the rule set by this mechanism, thus its visibility is not felt.

The Preamble to the Constitution of Cameroon states that, "human beings, without distinction of race, religion, belief, possess inalienable and sacred rights," and Article 1(2) ensures equality of all citizens before the law. Thus, the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and declares that "everyone has equal rights and obligations."⁴⁸ However, observations from the researcher and studies from Cameroon show that the Government does not enforce these constitutional provisions effectively (Women International Network, 2001; Orock, 2007).

For instance, a study by the Women's International Network (2001) shows that, there are constitutional provisions recognizing women's rights in Cameroon, but practically, women do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. Some

⁴⁸ The 1972 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon.

elements of civil law are prejudicial to women. For example, the 1981 Civil Code allows a husband to oppose his wife's right to work in a separate profession if the protest is made in the interest of the household and the family.

When the percentages of participants in South Africa and Cameroon who cited the constitution as a mechanism for the promotion of women's right is compared, one is therefore not surprised to find a huge gap between the two countries because it seems very little is known about the constitution of Cameroon as an instrument for the protection of women's rights and empowerment. One of the reasons may be the many discriminatory and women's rights violations that still take place in Cameroon and also the overlooking of the constitution when it comes to customary laws and traditions.

4.2.2.1.1 Electoral System

Some participants in South Africa mentioned the proportional representation (PR) electoral system as a mechanism which has helped promote women in political leadership, especially within the ANC structures. This conforms to what is stated by Boezak (1999), Hassim, (2002) Goetz & Hassim (2003) and International IDEA (2005) that the type of electoral system a country uses has a significant bearing on gender representation in decision-making structures.

An electoral system can be understood as the rules determining how votes are assigned to seats (Farrell, 2001; Colomer, 2004). As remarked by one participant, "the PR is obviously very important in promoting women in political leadership because a gender quota may be allocated by the political party just like the ANC is doing."⁴⁹

The two most common systems of electoral systems used in the world are the proportional representation (PR) and the pluralistic/majoritarian voting systems,

⁴⁹ Online correspondence with Dr. Zounmenou David. Senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies (22 June 2009).

such as the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. The PR system aims to achieve a close match between the percentage of votes that groups of candidates obtain in elections and the percentage of seats they receive in legislative assemblies; whereas, the FPTP system has disproportional seat, representation results from the division of voters into electoral districts (Farrell, 2004). Dahlerup and many other researchers indicate that the PR system is the most likely electoral system to increase the representation of women in national and local governance structures all over the world (Dahlerup, 2007; Temblay, 2006; Boezak, 1999; International IDEA, 1998, 2005). It is, however, possible for countries to have a mixture of PR and FPTP systems as will be seen below.

In South Africa, the PR system is used for the national and provincial legislatures whereas at the local government level, the PR and FPTP systems are used. With the PR system, each party presents a list of endorsed candidates in multi-member districts. Voters choose a party, usually placing a single tick on the ballot paper. The PR system is aimed at reducing inequalities between shares of the vote secured by political parties and their resulting shares of seats, and at lessening the problem of 'wasted votes' (International IDEA, 2005).

Under the FPTP systems, if for example, party A gets 45% of the votes reasonably evenly spread across the country, and party B gets the other 55% of the votes, party B wins all the seats and party A gets no representation - the votes are 'wasted'. On the contrary, the PR system aims to give party A something close to 45 percent of seats. Here, there is a principle that parties share the votes and the seats (International IDEA, 2005).

If one compares African countries using the PR to the ones using the FPTP systems, the former have more women's representation. Examples of these countries are Rwanda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Burundi, and South Africa as mentioned in Chapter 2 (Tripp, 2008; IPU, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the local government electoral system in South Africa differs from the national

and provincial electoral system of pure PR. At the local level, a mixed electoral system is used, combining PR and the FPTP system. This means that individual candidates run for election in a ward. The candidate who receives the most votes from the residents of that ward occupies its seat in the council. Exactly half the seats in a municipal council are elected by PR. The percentages are calculated on the total number of votes cast in a particular municipality and seats are allocated accordingly. The other half of the seats in the council is filled by representatives from wards. Each municipality is divided into several wards. Here the FPTP electoral system is used (The White paper on Local Government, 1998).

In Cameroon, the electoral system is determined by the different levels of elections organized. Thus, the presidential, national legislative and municipal elections use different electoral systems. In the presidential elections, the FPTP electoral system is applied. The winning candidate gains more vote than any other candidate even if the votes do not represent an absolute majority (Farrell, 2001). This system is practised in most francophone African countries and tends to favour the incumbent (Ngum, 2008). Meanwhile, in the national legislature and municipal elections, Cameroon uses the Party Block Vote (PBV) system. The PBV is also a plurality system using multi-member districts in which voters vote for a party of their choice. They do not choose between candidates, and the party with an absolute majority vote will win every seat in the electoral district (Ngum, 2008) and its entire list of candidates is duly elected (Reynolds et al., 2008:47).

The tables below indicate the representation of women by PR List allocation in the 2000 local government elections in South Africa and the female councilors elected in Cameroon by provinces through the PBV system.

Province	Women (% of total PR)	Men	Total
Eastern Cape	266 (37.9%)	436	702
Free State	127 (38.3 %)	205	332
Gauteng	206 (43%)	273	479

KwaZulu-Natal	294 (34.3 %)	564	858
Mpumalanga	188 (40.3 %)	276	464
North West	156 (40.6 %)	227	384
Northern Cape	84 (41.2 %)	117	201
Northern Province	195 (39.1 %)	304	499
Western Cape	123 (32.2 %)	259	382
Total	1 639 (38.1 %)	2 661	4 300

Source: Centre for Policy Studies (2005), Booysen and Masterson (2009)

Table 4.6: Women and men PR List Councillors by province in South Africa in 2000

Province	Total no. of Councillors	No. of women	% of Women Councillors
Adamaoua	503	46	9.1%
Centre	1834	344	18.8%
East	848	102	12%
Extreme North	1475	76	5.2%
Littoral	917	142	15.5%
North	647	48	7.4%
North West	1034	108	10.4%
West	1225	184	15%
South	665	105	15.8%
South- West	815	147	18%
Grand Total	9963	1302	13.1%

Source: MINPROFF statistics of 2007

Table 4.7: Women elected by province as Councillors in Cameroon in 2007

Table 4.6 shows 38.1% of the total allocation of women as councilors, whereas Table 4.7 shows a dismal women's representation of 13.1% at the council level in Cameroon. If a 38% statistic was achieved in South Africa in 2000, ten years down the line, the number would obviously be higher, as show on Table 4.6.1 below. In 2011, the percentage of women's representation on the PR system went up to 43%.

Year	% women ward	% women PR	% women overall
1995	11	28	19
2000	17	38	29
2006	37	42	40
2011	33	43	38

Source: Morna, C. L. and Mbadlanyana, N. 2011. Gender in the 2011 South African Local Government Elections

Table 4.6.1: Gender and local government in South Africa

According to the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (1998), the decision to use both electoral systems was informed by the realization that women were under-represented at the local government level, and that they often find it difficult to be elected in ward contests. The Act 1998, 11(3) specifies that, "every party must seek to ensure that 50% of the candidates on the party list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed through the list".⁵⁰

The success in passing the above Act in itself shows the intention South African men in politics have for striving for gender parity, although they are still in the majority in most municipal councils.⁵¹ It is therefore not surprising that the majority of the South African participants have positive perceptions when it comes to women's leadership. This further concurs with what scholars and researchers have alluded to, that, though the PR system favours women's occupation of political offices, this can only be achieved in combination with efforts by political parties to support women candidates and also by the state that promotes an equal political culture such as the implementation of a quota system

⁵⁰ Local Government Act, Schedule 1, Section 11 [3]; Schedule 2, Sections 5 [3] & 17 [5]).

⁵¹ Researcher's observations

(Boezak, 1999; International IDEA, 2005; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005; Dahlerup, 2007).

The PBV system which is utilized in Cameroon at the municipal level could still promote women's representation if there is will power to do so. To begin with, the advantages of PBV are that it allows for parties to put up a mixed slate of candidates in order to facilitate minority representation. Secondly, it can be used to help ensure a balanced ethnic representation (Reynolds et al., 2008). Thus, if this system may enable parties to present ethnically diverse lists of candidates for election, it may as well be designed to present list of candidates by gender.

From the preceding findings and discussion, the PR and the PBV are similar in the sense that political parties choose who represents them at the district level. While in South Africa the ruling party strictly adheres to its quota allocation, that is not the case with Cameroon even though the ruling CPDM has always had control of the majority of the electoral districts.

4.2.2.1.2 The National Gender Machinery

This was also an aspect that was mentioned by participants in South Africa but not those from Cameroon. The participants affirm that it was the legislative and affirmative action measures that led to the creation of the gender machinery. According to Angevine (2006:54), the "gender machinery" refers to the politically institutionalized presence of three political arms that work towards gender equality and women's rights. She indicates that the three arms are the Office for the Status of Women (OSW), the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), and the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). The CGE, however, maintains that the gender machinery includes structures in government, the legislature, the parliament, statutory bodies and civil society collectively known as the "National Gender Machinery" (NGM). Each of these structures has a different mandate and

the overriding aim is for them to complement each other in achieving gender equality (CGE, 2010:14).

According to the CGE's concept paper on its strategic plan for 2008-2013, the structures of the NGM include:

4.2.2.1.2.1 The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)

In keeping with the constitutional prescriptions (Chapter 9, Section 187 of the South African Constitution), the independent Commission for Gender Equality was established in 1997. Its major role is to protect and promote respect for gender equality in the state and in society, monitor, educate, lobby, advise, investigate complaints, undertake research and ensure that the country fulfills its international commitments.

4.2.2.1.2.2 The Office on the Status of Women (OSW)

This office was established in 1997 and is located in the Office of the Presidency (Union Building). The domicile of this unit in itself shows the importance to which the country aspires to achieve gender equality at the highest level. Its functions include, amongst other, developing a national gender policy, promoting affirmative action in government, supporting government bodies to integrate a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, organizing gender training for government departments, and assisting different government departments to work together on issues, particularly those pertaining to gender.

According to Meintjies (2009:5) the role of the Office was established to lead the process of gender mainstreaming. In 2000, the Office formulated a gender policy framework known as the *South African National Policy Framework for Gender*

Equality and Women's Empowerment, shortened as the Gender Policy Framework. Its main objectives are to:

create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into a reality; establish policies, programmes, structures and mechanisms to empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work, at all levels of government as well as within the broader society; ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated into all aspects of government policies, activities and programmes; establish an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women as well as the achievement of gender equality; and advocate for the promotion of new attitudes, values and behaviour, and a culture of respect for all human beings in line with the new policy (Gender Policy Framework, 2000).

A close examination of the above objectives indicates the vision which the ruling party has for gender equality and how it intends realizing this goal. This represents a significant step in the fight for gender equality and justice in the country. One would not be wrong to say that a culture of gender equality has been developed and this will affect all areas of public and private lives, be it in politics or socio-economic affairs. It should however be noted that this office was replaced in 2009 by the Ministry for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. A structure in Cameroon with similar responsibilities is the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, better known as the Women's Ministry. Details of these ministries are found under the section dealing with the will power of the ruling party.

4.2.2.1.2.3 Gender Focal Points (GFPs)

The duty of the GFPs is to ensure the effective implementation of the National Gender Policy and to assist in the formulation and implementation of effective action plans to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in government departments. The existence of gender units in all government departments as well as at provincial and local government levels seeks to ensure

that each department takes a responsibility for addressing gender issues in their policies and programmes.

There exist also a Gender Focal Points and a Gender Group in Cameroon (Economic Commission for Africa, 2011:11-12). The focal points have been created at the ministerial level to monitor the inclusion of women and the mainstreaming of gender approach in their actions (Beijing Plus 15 Report, 2010). However, with the relatively low representation of women at the senior positions in the ministries, one really wonders if the focal points mechanism is really working. The only ministry which one observes changes is education where the number of female learners and educators in school have increased.

4.2.2.1.2.4 The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) gender Working Group

This group concentrates on supporting women councilors in local government to perform their duties effectively. One may rightly say that the establishment of a statutory body such as the CGE was not only meant to promote democracy in South Africa as stipulated by the constitution, but was also meant to eradicate gender inequality in all its forms so as to make the South Africa fulfill and implement international protocols and conventions. There is no structure similar in the same portfolio in Cameroon.

With regard to Cameroon, the National Machinery for Gender Equality is located in the newly established Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family. The ministry was created in 1983 as a Women's Affairs Ministry. According to Adams (2007), non democracies such as Cameroon adopted a "state feminist" policies such as the national machinery simply because, it provides low-cost international legitimacy; it attracts international assistance; this assistance fuels

domestic patronage networks and the national machinery channels women's activism toward state-delineated projects and goals.

4.2.2.1.3 Political parties

There have been many reports from the two countries to show that the nomination of candidates for elected public office is the preserve of political parties (INKOW Politics, 2009; Ballington, 2003). However, it has also been the norm that gender equality in election processes is not taken into account. The outcome of this tendency is that men continue to be dominant in decision-making positions in political parties. The near absence of women in decision-making in this important sphere indicates that they are also excluded from determining policies adopted by their political parties.

Forty percent of the participants and thirty percent of the participants in both South Africa and Cameroon, respectively, alluded to political parties as structures that promote women's representation in political leadership. A majority of South African participants cited the ANC as a classic example, with a lesser number citing COPE and the IFP. Some participants also indicated that women like Helen Zille of the DA and Patricia de Lille (the former leader of the now dissolved ID and the current DA mayor in Cape Town) as heads of political parties serve a motivation for other women because they are seen as role models. Others quoted other mechanisms like the party quota and the women's league of political parties.

In Cameroon, a majority of the 31% of the respondents cited the women's wing of the CPDM party (known as WCPDM) and the fact that women are also heads of some political parties as instances of women's involvement in political leadership. Examples of such women are Walla Edith Kahbang of CPP and Dang Esther of BIRC as mentioned earlier. All the indicators mentioned by the

participants in South Africa and Cameroon were grouped and discussed under political parties as the main theme.

The number of women parliamentarians from political parties represented in the National Assembly after the 1994 elections and that of Cameroon after the 1992 elections are shown below:

Party	No of seats	No of women	% of women
Africa National Congress (ANC)	252	90	35.7%
National Party (NP)	82	9	10%
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	43	10	23%
Pan African Congress (PAC)	5	1	14%
Democratic Party (DP)	7	1	14.7%
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	2	0	0
Total	400	111	27.7%

Source: *South African CEDAW report, 1997*

Table 4.8 (a): Percentages of women MPs according to parties after the 1994 elections in South Africa

Only the ACDP with two seats did not have a woman in parliament. The majority of women came with 10 seats for women out of 43 seats.

Political Party	No of Seats	No of women	% of women
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)	88	23	26.1
National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	68	3	4.4
Movement for the Defense of the Republic (MDR)	18	0	0
Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC)	6	0	0
Total	180	26	14.4

Source: African Elections Database (2011), MINPROFF reports (2007)⁵²

Table 4.9 (a): Percentages of women MPs according to parties after the 1992 elections in Cameroon.

⁵² Statistics taken from the Ministry for the promotion of Women and the Family, Yaoundé: Cameroon.

The 1992 and 1994 elections in Cameroon and South Africa, respectively, were very important because they marked the start of an inclusive multi-party politics in both countries.

Political parties in the two countries had their party lists which reflected the following gender representation for the 2009 and 2007 elections, respectively:

Political Party	% women
Independent Democrat (ID)	52
Africa National Congress (ANC)	50
African Peoples' Convention (APC)	48
United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)	48
Congress of the People (COPE)	42
Democratic Alliance (DA)	36
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	36
Pan African Congress (PAC)	36
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	29
Freedom Front Plus (FF+)	21

Source: Booysen & Masterson, 2009

Table 4.8 (b): Party List of political parties by gender in South Africa in 2009 national legislature

Political Party	No of Seats	No of women	% of women
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)	153	21	13.7
Social Democratic Front (SDF)	16	1	6.26
National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP)	6	0	0
Democratic Union of Cameroon (UDC)	4	0	0
Progressive Movement (MP)	1	0	0
Total	180	22	12.2

Source: African Elections Database, 2011; MINPROFF reports 2007

Table 4.9 (b): Percentages of women parliamentarians in the 2007 elections for the Cameroonian National Assembly

When Tables 4.8 (a) and (b) are compared, one observes a marked increase in gender representation by party list. For example, the ANC moved from a 33.7% gender representation in 1994 to 50% in 2009, and the IFP from a 23% gender representation in 1994 to 29% in 2009. The above statistics are an indication that within political parties in South Africa, gender balancing within the national legislature is visible. Many reasons may be provided for the numerical increase and visibility of women in political positions. This may partly be due to the party quota initiatives and also the demand for 50/50 gender representations by the women's league of certain political parties. The discussion on party quota and women's league follows below.

Conversely, Tables 4.9 (a) and (b) show a decrease in women's representation in the Cameroonian National Assembly between 1992 and 2007. This may prove that opportunities for women in Cameroon's political parties are severely limited, more especially within the ruling party even though it has majority seats in parliament. The main opposition party, SDF, which is second concerning the number of seats it had, had only one woman represented in the National Assembly. It could be argued that the single representation came only after the party was severely criticized by the Socialist International Women's president, Pia Locatelli, when she scolded the SDF in 2005 for gender imbalance during a meeting in the capital city of Cameroon, Yaoundé, on 16 April 2005. The meeting brought representatives from many African countries together (Atatah, 2005).

Cameroon's statistics on women after the 1992 election is understandable because this was the beginning stages of multi-partism. But what one finds wanting is the fact that, 15 years on, the number of seats for women has been decreasing drastically. This is so despite that the total seats the CPDM occupied in parliament has increased from 88 to 153.

The above statistics indicate that women do not occupy meaningful positions in political structures in Cameroon. An interview with the general secretary of the SDF, Elizabeth Tamajong, revealed that there are many women in the Cameroonian parliament, but they only occupy the reserved seats.⁵³ Thus, the non-occupation of the mainstream seats means that Cameroonian women cannot contribute meaningfully to policy formation and remain largely on the margins of Cameroonian politics. The researcher wants to believe that the largely male-headed political parties in Cameroon simply want to satisfy the psyche of their female counterparts that they are needed in parliament.

Below is a table representing the gender composition of the national executive committee (NEC) of the ANC elected in 2007 at the Polokwane Conference and that of Cameroon in 2011 before the presidential elections in October of the same year.

Post	Name	Gender	Previous gender
President	Jacob Zuma	Male	Male
Deputy president	Kgalema Motlanthe	Male	Female
Chairperson	Baleka Mbete	Female	Male
Secretary-General	Gwede Mantashe	Male	Male
Deputy Secretary-General	Thandi Modise	Female	Female
Treasurer-General	Mathews Phosa	Male	Female

Table 4.10: Top six NEC positions of ANC since 2007

⁵³ Telephone interview with Dr. Tamajong Esther, SDF Secretary General (Yaoundé, 22 December 2009).

Post	Name	Gender	Previous gender
National President	Paul Biya	Male	male
Secretary-General	Rene Sadi	Male	male
Deputy Secretary-General 1	Gregoir Owona	Male	male
Deputy Secretary-General 2	Hamadjoda Adoudji	Male	male
Head of the Organisation	Ibrahim Talba Malla	Male	male
Head of Communications	Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo	Male	male
Head of Economic, Social Affairs and Employment	Jean Nkuete	Male	male
Head of Culture, Education and the Environment	Mme Madeleine Tchunte	Female	female
Head of specialised structures	Bidoung Mkpatt	Male	male
Head of International Relations and Human Rights	Jean Pierre Fogui	Male	male
Treasurer-General	Gilbert Tsimi Evouna	Male	male
Commissioner for Conflict of Interest	Francis Nkwain	Male	-
Statutory Auditor	Mme Haman Adama	Female	-
Deputy Head of Communications	Pr. Pierre Moukoko	Male	-
Deputy Head of Economic, Social Affairs and Employment	Joseph Dion Ngute	Male	-
Deputy Head of Culture, Education and the Environment	Badel Ndanga Ndinga	Male	-
Deputy Head of specialised structures	Njiemoun Mama	Male	-
Deputy Head of the Organisation	Mme Rose Zang Nguele	Female	-
Adviser to the Head of Central Committee	Monkam Nitcheu Jean Fabien	Male	-
Adviser to the Head of Central Committee	Dieudonné Oyono	Male	-
Adviser to the Head of Central Committee	Prof. Ndembiyembe Paul Célestin	Male	-
Adviser to the Head of Central Committee	Ndong Souhmet Benoit	Male	-

Source: <http://www.rdpdpdm.cm/presentation/secrétariat> (translation was done by the researcher).

Table 4.11: Top 22 NEC positions of CPDM since 2011

The two preceding tables present a vast disparity in gender equality within political party structures in South Africa and Cameroon. In the top six NEC positions for the ANC, two are occupied by women, while in Cameroon, of the top 22 political positions, only 3 are occupied by women. The statistics on Cameroon already portrays the composition of women that are found at every government structure. There is no woman at the first top five political positions. Only one woman features in the first top eight positions. The ANC's adoption of the principle of parity in their 2009 election manifesto and the "zebra rule" mean that three women would be represented in the top six positions come the next party elective conference due to held at the end of 2012 in Bloemfontein, Mangaung.

The majority of prominent and ordinary women politicians in Cameroon belongs to the CPDM which has been a dominant party since 1966 (or from 1985 when the name was changed from UNC to CPDM). However, the prospects for women to improve their membership within the CPDM seem very limited. A combined feature that can be noted here is that patronage politics and a firmly entrenched patriarchal political leadership persist to operate successfully in Cameroon.

4.2.2.1.3.1 Quota system

Participants attest to the fact that quota systems adopted by political parties have a remarkable strategy in achieving gender equality in political representation in party political positions and, subsequently, in parliament. However, this factor was not raised by any of the participants in Cameroon. One South African participant notes that, "most of the higher figures for female representation in Africa and even the world have been as a result of either voluntary or legislative quota."⁵⁴ Countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, and

⁵⁴ Researcher's observation

Mozambique would attest to this. The above view tends to correspond with what is mentioned in Chapter 2 by several authors that, the quota system can be used to increase women's political participation and representation (Villaluz & Reyes, 2001; Tripp, 2008; INKOW Politics, 2009).

Tripp (2008) alludes to quotas as a formal mechanism that can enhance women's public participation and representation. Quotas ensure that women constitute a specific number or percentage of the members of a given political structure, be it a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee or the government. Another benefit is that quotas help reduce the gap between the numbers of women and men represented in the political arena.

According to the INKOW Politics (2009) and as mentioned in Chapter 2, there are different types of quotas, with the main distinction being between legislative and constitutional quotas on the one hand, and voluntary political party quotas on the other. Legislative and constitutional quotas are based on legal provisions, officially mandating that all political entities participating in elections apply them equally such as is the case with France (Lovenduski & Norris, 1996). Voluntary political party quotas are set by the political parties themselves in order to guarantee the nomination of a certain number or proportion of women.

Without doubt, the statistics mentioned in Tables 4.8 and 4.9 above on women's representation in political parties in South Africa has been duly influenced by the quota system. The ANC party implemented a voluntary party quota which has accounted for its higher female representation. During the 1994 elections, the ANC constitution had a 30% quota, and women candidates were placed in winnable positions on the party's list. According to Kethusegile-Juru (2002), when drawing up the party's lists of candidates for the National Assembly and provincial legislatures, the ANC's tendency has been to ensure that at least every third person on the list is a woman. This has been the culture since then.

Women's representation has increased substantively and during its Conference at Polokwane in December 2007, the ANC adopted the principle of parity in gender representation (SABC News, December 2007) and in its manifesto for the 2009 election, it committed itself to increasing women's representation in parliament and government to 50% by 2009 (www.anc.org).

Even before "Polokwane 2007", in the run-up to the 2006 local government elections, ANC had committed itself towards attaining gender parity. This goal was regarded as too ambitious and it provoked practical difficulties as well as resistance within the party as the male counterparts in particular, were suspicious that the quota policy would result in the loss of their positions (Williams, 2006; Mottiar, 2006). At the end of the elections, some provinces even exceeded the quota (North West, Gauteng and Northern Cape) while others fell short (KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape), but an overall figure of 46.1% was achieved (Mbeki, 2006).

The formation of a new political party, Congress of the People (COPE) in 2008 in South Africa, advocated a gender quota of 50/50. Thus, the ANC and COPE are the only political parties which have implemented a quota system in the country out of 13 parties presently represented in the National Assembly. While the ANC decision is voluntary, COPE stated that its decision was a commitment to the African Union's (AU) 50/50 gender parity resolution in all public structures (COPE, 2007:27). With the ANC majority seats in parliament, many ANC women therefore have the opportunity to be represented in a huge number. Hence, this is the reason why many women MPs are from the ANC party.

Even with no quota, all other political parties represented in the National Assembly have pledged their commitment to gender equality. This initiative may have been motivated by the example of the ANC. For instance, the following opposition parties had witnessed an increase in women's representation at the national and provincial levels since 1994. They are the DA, which increased it

women's representation from 14% to 30% from 1994 to 2009, the UACP from 0% to 50% in the period 2004 to 2009 and the IFP from 18.5% to 22.2% in the same period (Morna *et al.* 2009). However, some smaller parties instead dwindled and others returned no women in their female presentation due to the decrease of votes received during the 2009 elections (Morna *et al.* 2009).

In Cameroon, at the time of writing, five political parties were represented in the National Assembly but only two uses the quota system - the ruling party, CPDM and the main opposition, SDF. CPDM adopted a 25-30% gender quota in 1996 (IPU, 2005), however, its implementation has not been strictly adhered to as the statistics on women's representation demonstrate in the sections presented above.

The main opposition party, SDF also adopted a 25% quota for women (IPU, 2005). But since the 2007 election, only a single woman candidate occupying the position of secretary general, has won a parliamentary seat alongside 13 men. One other woman is an alternate. An alternate is a first runner-up to those who win seats in parliament. The alternate does not participate in parliamentary sessions unless the substantive member is absent and provides a written note. The alternative position holds no real value as the person holding such a position may never get any chance of actually participating in the legislature (Noftsinger, 2010).

4.2.2.1.3.2 Women's league of political party

In both South Africa and Cameroon, participants mentioned that the women's league of political parties have played a great role in empowering women and initiating political leadership in them. To begin with, all political parties represented in the parliament of South Africa have women's league. Participants believe that such leagues help make gender issues to be considered in the party. The ANC women's league (ANCWL) formed in 1948 was disbanded together

with the ANC in 1960 but re-launched in 1990 as an autonomous organization (Boezak, 1999; Tripp, 2001; Hassim, 2004).

The re-commencement of the ANCWL saw it coming up with a discussion of gender equality within the mother's body and this eventually led to the initial 30% quota for women in the NEC of the party. Before the 2009 elections, the party further adopted a 50/50 representation for men and women.

Waylen (2004) states that, during the South African transition to democracy, the ANCWL coordinated research, made submissions, and pressured the ANC to adopt a proposal that a multi-party Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) should be established as a working group to monitor progress of the negotiations and make recommendations.

However, the ANCWL has not been the only brain behind the issue of gender equality in South Africa. Hassim (2004) and Tripp (2001) alluded that, other parties like the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), South African Communist Party (SACP), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Pan African Congress (PAN), and the United Democratic Front (UDF) all had a small number of women who were pressing for gender equality during the South African transition to democracy. These parties contested the 1994 elections with gender platforms. This therefore shows that there was a strong women's movement which cut across party divides, advocating gender equality.

As Albertyn (1994), Boezak (1999), and Gasa (2003) highlighted in Chapter 2, the key roles that South Africa's women such as Lillian Ngoyi, Rahima Moosa, Helen Joseph, etc., played throughout the decades preceding the 1994 elections by participating in the struggle against apartheid rewarded them with political leadership positions. Therefore, the transition to democracy in South Africa after nationalist struggles did not lead to the marginalisation of women but rather placed gender equality concerns at the centre of democratic debates (Waylen, 2004). Today South Africa women can pride themselves on the progressive

policies of their country. It is obvious; a platform has been created for women's voices to be heard in the political sphere.

In Cameroon, however, things have not turned out in the same as have in South Africa. As alluded to by Adams (2006), the type of women's mobilization and movement that took place in South Africa did not happen in Cameroon after independence. She points out that the autonomous women's wing of UNC (the party which took over power after independence), the Democratic Union of Cameroonian Women (UDEFEC), disappeared. This has, as a result, allowed the mother body to conduct its political business the way it thinks would benefit the men and women of Cameroon (Adams, 2006). The UNC has become the only party in the country as it chases all opposition parties into hiding even those who supported its self-rule. The lack of women's league from the onset of independence in Cameroon has therefore been a drawback to their political participation and representation of women in the polity of the country. It could be stated as well that women's participation in the liberation movements alone cannot automatically guarantee them space in the political system. The political will of the ruling party is also very important.

Furthermore, in South Africa, membership to the women's league is open to all women who are 18 years old and above. (ANCWL, RULE 4). The objectives of the ANCWL are:

to fight for women's emancipation and gender equality, place the WL at the centre of the struggle for women's emancipation, build a strong network with organizations, NGOs, CBOs, strengthen relations with the gender structures of the ANC Alliance, fight for women's rights and ensure that they are treated as human rights and build a strong women's movement in the country (ANCWL, RULE 2; <http://www.anc.org.za/wl/show.php?id=213>)

The league also functions as an autonomous body within the overall structure of the ANC. In other words, the league could make decisions independently without interference from the mother body. For example, though the ANCWL failed to

achieve its objective at the Polokwane Conference in 2007, the women's league launched a serious campaign within its structure to elect a female deputy president for the ANC before the election (EISA, 2007; SABC News, 2007; ETV, 2007).

Moreover, unlike South Africa, where all the major political parties represented in parliament have women's political formations (e.g., ANC Women's League, IFP Women's Brigade, DA Women's wing), in Cameroon only the ruling CPDM does. It was only in March 2010 that the official opposition party, SDF women were strategizing about establishing a women's league in a meeting that took place in Bamenda, Northwest province of Cameroon (Loh, 2010). One is therefore not surprised to find that there has only been a single substantive representation from women in the SDF in the National Assembly since 2007. The party was formed in 1990 (Ngoh, 2004) and one wonders why a women's league has not been established until now after almost two decades of the party's existence. This may be one of the reasons why there has been political apathy on the part of women in Cameroon. One can only hope that the establishment of the league would offer Cameroonian women alternatives from what the WCPDM is currently proffering.

Meanwhile, the WCPDM has branches in all the ten provinces in the country and even abroad to foster women's affairs. During election times, it mobilizes and calls for women to register and vote for the ruling party. According to Section 47 and 48 of the CPDM constitution, this unit is charged with promoting the social and cultural affairs of the party.⁵⁵ The said role by implication suggests that women are simply there for window dressing and do not play any meaningful role in the democracy of the country. According to one writer, female participation in the WCPDM in practice is open only to elite women (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands, 1998). This also suggests that not all women members of the mother body are eligible for membership in the league. Thus, such a small numerical make-up

⁵⁵ The Constitution of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, 1996.

may affect the structure from taking independent decisions unlike its South African counterpart, the ANCWL.

Though the role of women's leagues has been a subject of much debate in the past, drawing on the experience of South Africa, more especially that of the ANCWL, Ahikire, (2009:7) argues that these structures are potentially significant particularly if they have the necessary legitimacy and authority. In comparison, the WCPDM in Cameroon is seen as lacking the necessary political influence and is largely invisible as a policy actor as the leaders lack the political clout. Its presence therefore is only symbolic. Its lack of influence or even a gender equality initiative in its agenda is an indication of how women are viewed in the political environment of Cameroon. They are only seen as the custodian of culture.

4.2.2.1.4 Government's will and women's ministry

Nineteen percent of the participants from Cameroon cited the national government as the structure which promotes women's representation in leadership. Almost all the participants quoted the ministries for the advancement of Women and the Family headed by a woman. To these respondents, the creation of this ministry is an indication of the seriousness of the party in government to tackle women's issues.

In South Africa 4% of the participants indicated that the huge number of women found in government structures at all levels is an indication that there is a commitment on the part of the ruling ANC to gender equality issues and the SADC gender protocol. All indicators cited in South Africa and Cameroon were grouped and discussed under the government structure as the main theme.

Beginning from 1975 the Cameroonian ruling party created women's ministries which were headed by women. They were the Ministry of Social Affairs which

seeks to advance women's education in the country, the Ministry of Women's Affairs which is responsible for the promotion of women's rights, and the recently created Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family. In addition, a participant in Cameroon noted, "visibly one can see only the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family from the perspective of government..."⁵⁶

According to the information gathered from the website of this Ministry, the latter is charged with the development, the implementation and the evaluation of measurements relating to the respect of women's rights and the protection of the family. For this reason,

it deals with issues of discrimination with regard to the women, women's equality issues in the policy fields, economic, social and cultural, studies and subjects to the government the conditions facilitating the employment of women in the administration, agriculture, trade and industry, ensures the connection with the national and international political organizations for the promotion of women and ensures supervision for the formation of women's organizations (Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, 2011).

The responsibility that deals with gender equality in policy areas as mentioned above is of particular importance here. The most visible structure which this equality needs to be seen is Parliament but this is not the case. Though the new Ministry has been in existence since 2004, not much has been achieved on issues of gender equality in the country. One cannot, however, deny the fact that the Women's Ministry has been involved in training and vocational programmes that have empowered young girls and women who do not attend school.⁵⁷ However, only women in the urban areas have had the opportunity to benefit from this training.

Moreover, resources are not directly allocated to these areas and there are also no time-bound targets or benchmarks (WEDO, 1998). The CEDAW's (2007)

⁵⁶ Kah Henry, 4 January 2012.

⁵⁷ Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family, 2004. Available Online at: <http://www.minproff.gove.cm/historical/index.htm>.

report on Cameroon also notes with concern that the inadequate allocation of resources for the advancement of women, with the resultant incomplete execution of programmes and projects, seriously jeopardizes the improvement of women's living conditions.

Similar in portfolio is the South Africa's Department of Women, Youth and Disability created in 2009 and charged with consolidating programmes that empower women and also ensure that women's issues are not marginalized but are mainstreamed within the general framework of the government (Robinson, 2009). As indicated above, the Department replaced the Office on the Status for Women that was located at the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa.

Apart from the above-mentioned department, South Africa also has multiple gender mechanisms as already indicated above under the sub-section "The Constitution". The existence and use of these multiple mechanisms is a good strategy because it helps spread gender equality promotion and women's empowerment across several institutions. At the same time, the different mechanisms play different roles. They advocate, influence, implement, monitor and evaluate policy.

Research has shown that, despite the ratification of national and international declarations by governments, the implementation cannot take place if the party does not have the will power to do so (Mungwa, 1999; Hassim, 2003; Kassea, 2006). A participant from Cameroon intimated that, " ... most efforts in the empowerment of women's political leadership come from NGOs and other organizations...but these cannot be achieved without help from the government."⁵⁸ Another participant in South Africa remarked that "the ANC's

⁵⁸ Takang, 19 January 2012.

commitment to international conventions and declarations has been vital for the advancement of women in the country.”⁵⁹

Members of political parties in South Africa, especially, mentioned that there is a strong correlation between the party in power and gender equality, and one participant indicated that even with the most progressive constitution in the world, the ruling party may still decide not to implement its clauses. Scholars such as Mungwa (1999), Hassim (2003), Diwouta (2004) and Kassea (2006) also support this assertion. Without being repetitive, the above-mentioned statistics on women in cabinet shows an outright commitment to gender equality and equity issues on the part of the ruling party in South Africa.

During the opening of South Africa's first democratic and representative parliament on 24 May 1994, the former President Nelson Mandela made a commitment to gender equality and women's emancipation when he made the following speech:

Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us take this on board that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will not have been realized unless we see in visible practical terms that the conditions of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.⁶⁰

In addition to the above, writing in his newsletter in May 2007, President Thabo Mbeki mooted the possibility of amending the South African and ANC constitutions in order to provide for better gender equality. He added that,

the struggle to achieve the emancipation of women is, in good part, a struggle to defeat deeply entrenched social and individual prejudices that present themselves to the people holding these prejudices as accepted and standard social norms"...The ANC has to continue to act as an informed and critical agency to combat the

⁵⁹ Online correspondence with Mr. Ferim Valery. Lecturer, Political Science Department, University of Fort Hare (11 December 2011).

⁶⁰ President Nelson Mandela, 24 May 1994.

persisting gender inequality in South Africa (Mail and Guardian, 2007).

The two preceding quotations from the two former presidents of South Africa show the extent to which political leadership at the highest level is eager and willing to put issues of gender equality at the forefront so that women would have their fair share in the country. It is therefore not surprising that the former president, Thabo Mbeki received the 2005 *African Gender Award* for the promotion of gender issues in South Africa (Daily Observer, 2005). In addition, in a media briefing during the ANC Polokwane Conference in 2007, Thenjiwe Mtintso, an ANC NEC member remarked,

President Thabo Mbeki has broken from the patriarchy tradition of confining women to the periphery and has propelled them into the centre by appointing women ministers, deputy ministers, directors general, heads of diplomatic missions and so on. The president even shook the social psyche and set a new tone by appointing a woman deputy president of the Republic when he had the opportunity to do so (Mtintso, 2007).

The ANC's commitment to gender equality from the onset saw the election of Dr. Frene Ginwala as the first woman Speaker of the National Assembly. The country later saw so many female speakers and deputy speakers presiding over the National Assembly. Thus the increasing large number of women in parliament and executive positions has been proof of the ruling party's commitment.

At the provincial level of government, out of the nine provinces in the country there are five provincial women premiers, four in the provinces controlled by the ruling party and one in the province controlled by the opposition party, DA. At the municipal levels, there are also ward councilors, majority of them from the ruling party (SABC News, 2009).

	South Africa	Cameroon
Total no of province	9	10
No of women	5	0
Percentage of women	55.5	0

Table 4.12: Number of women in provincial leadership in South Africa and Cameroon from 2009

However, on a debate on the National Women's Day in a Joint Sitting of members of the South African National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces assembled in the Chamber of the national Assembly on 27 August 2009, the then Shadow Minister of Basic Education, Denise Robinson stated that,

it is worth noting that women were left out by even the most progressive structure, the ANC. It was through their own struggles that, again, women stood together and fought for their space within this most progressive structure, the ANC. It took the ANC generations and decades to recognize the rights of women; and we shouldn't take it for granted that it will continue if we don't organize ourselves and stand united as women (Robinson, 2009).

The Minister must be referring to the fact that women's movements were sidelined during the negotiations to end apartheid and introduce an inclusive democracy in South Africa. According to Gasa (2003:277), during the transitional period, the ANCWL was forced to take one of its most autonomous and public stances in challenging the ANC and other political parties. They threatened to boycott elections if women's representation was not taken seriously. The Women's League organized protests outside the negotiations and demanded 50% women's participation in the negotiations.

Consequently, it was resolved that every political party had to bring one man and one woman as representatives at the negotiations. The women's demands therefore led to the ANC's adoption of a quota system (Sadie, 2006:214). This,

therefore, means that gender equality in South Africa was not offered to women on a platter, but women had to fight for to the bitter end.

In Cameroon, the provincial headship is called governor (premier in South Africa), but there has never been any female governor out of the ten provinces since 1992 when the governorship was established in the country. The only positions where few women are found are in areas of sub-divisional officers, mayors and assistant mayors (CEDAW, 2007, Beijing Plus 15 Report, 2010).

Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Cameroon, like South Africa has ratified and signed conventions and declarations like CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action, the Millennium Development Declaration (2000), Declaration of the African Union Heads of State on Equality between men and women and the Platform of ECCAS on gender integration in policies and in action plans of the community. However, the ratification of the above conventions and the creation of the many ministries for women has done very little to change women's political status in Cameroon. As a matter of observation, the involvement of women in decision-making organs in Cameroon is not guided by any political commitment but rather it is a means of getting their support during elections.

4.2.2.1.5 Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Numerous reports and research as indicated in Chapter 2 show that NGOs have played an important role in putting pressure on government institutions and politicians to enhance women's entry into decision-making bodies (Fonjong, 2001; Van Allen, 2001; Powley, 2005; Orock 2007; Tripp *et al.*, 2009). NGOs have also contributed to the development of a cultural environment that is favourable to gender equality (Fonjong, 2001; Orock 2007).

NGOs are the structure which 42% of the participants in Cameroon believe empowers women and motivates them to participate in politics, whereas only 9% of the participants cited the same structure in South Africa. For the participants in Cameroon, some of them indicated that these organs provide women the opportunity to get political education and the ambition to venture not only in politics but also in leadership positions across all party or government structures. In addition, others say that women at the grassroots are provided with the skills necessary to grow economy and may intend proceeding to the political sphere, especially at the local level.

Some of the NGOs cited in Cameroon were the Circle of Friends of Cameroon (CERAC), an NGO owned by the first lady, Chantal Biya, the Coalition of Non-governmental organization (ONG), the Association for the Defence of Women, Network for More Women in Politics (NMWP) and Ladies Cycle (LC). In Cameroon, a participant notes that,

it should be admitted that most efforts in the empowerment of women's political leadership come from NGOs and other organizations. Their policies aim at empowering women through training and gender mainstreaming so that women can be involved at all levels of decision making in the state...⁶¹

The above statement is a reflection of the extent to which NGOs' influence on women's empowerment is felt in many cities and rural communities. In this way, their visibility in communities cannot be overemphasized, especially during election times. They do undertake wide-ranging sensitization campaigns, educating women on the significance of using their civic rights and participating in politics. A case in point was in 2007 when NMWP organized a Strategic Action Day (SAD) debate under the theme, *"The Woman's Place in Cameroon's Constitution: Stakes and Perspectives."*⁶² Its main aim was to institutionalize parity in governmental structures as guarantee for gender equality.

⁶¹ Takang, 19 January 2012.

⁶² About 600 women from various public and private services, political parties and the civil society participated during this Day. Women's Rights: www.ifcdev.org.

Still in 2007 in Cameroon, before the twin election (i.e. legislative and municipal) of April 2007, a pressure group known as Northwest Civil Society Coalition for 2007 Twin Elections issued a press release to all political parties to include more female candidates on their lists. The release was in keeping with the 30% representation political parties had promised women (Mbunwe, 2007). The press release, signed by the president of the Ecumenical Service for Peace, (SEP), the Network for Peace and Democracy (NEPED), the Community Initiative for Sustainable Development (COMINSUD), the Cameroon Teachers Trade Union (CATTU), the Association of Northwest Female Mayors, and the Cameroon Association of English-speaking Journalists (CAMASEJ), regrets that "most political parties and the government are yet to recognize the role of women in politics by adequately supporting them for decision-making positions at higher levels" (Mbunwe, 2007).

After realizing the low levels of participation by women during the twin elections in 2007 as indicated above, NMWP again took advantage of the International Women's Day celebrations on 8 March 2010 to address the issue of electoral apathy and discuss some of its own strategies in a conference that took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon (Houmfa, 2010). During the conference, Justine Dikko, the leader of the movement and a lecturer of law at the University of Yaoundé II, stated,

women alone account for 52% of the Cameroonian population, so they carry a potentially determining demographic weight that should be mobilized for a massive registration and greater political participatory electoral process (Houmfa, 2010).

The above evidence highlights just a few of the many influential roles that NGOs are playing in Cameroon to encourage women in politics. These NGOs, nonetheless, face many challenges from the government. As stated by one Cameroonian political commentator that, if opposition parties criticize

government, it is seen as constructive, but when NGOs or other political activists do, it is seen as subversive.

On the part of South Africa, only 9% of the participants acknowledged the structures of NGOs, and these were mostly representatives from NGOs themselves. They indicated that, NGOs in the country have fought and are still fighting for women's rights, their emancipation and their entry into positions of political leadership. Some of the NGOs quoted were Gender Links, Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), POWA, Women's Net and the progressive women's movement.

It could be argued that the small percentage of the participants who mentioned these structures did so partly because there are so many structures in the country which deal with women's empowerment. Thus, the role of NGOs is not too visible or people are ignorant of their role. The other reason could be that participants, especially those in government, were biased and did not want to give credit to NGOs. Or still, it could be that South Africa is almost approaching a milestone in gender equality, so most of these NGOs are now involved in the monitory process only.

The researcher also thinks that the visibility of NGOs in empowering women in South Africa was especially felt during the early period of the new dispensation. A case in point was when the South African Parliament established a Public Education Office (PEO) in 1995. Women activist groups and NGOs decided to use this opportunity for their benefit. GAP, GenderLinks, the Commission on Gender Equality, Women's Net and the Institute for Democracy South Africa mobilized communities by using posters, round table discussions, media, and moving billboards at taxi ranks, bus stations and beaches to inform them to take part in the PEO. GAP further took the lead in organizing rural conferences and bringing together civil society, government structures, politicians and rural media (Mncayi, 2006).

However, despite the visibility of NGOs in Cameroon as cited by many participants, there has not been enough results to show the great role they play as indicated by participants. According to Orock (2007), these organizations usually lack the essential training and knowledge about women's issues and international human rights instruments outside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The author further states that the advocacy role of the NGOs is limited and they mistrust one another and usually refuse to share information.

Probably this could be the reason behind their inability to produce substantive results in getting more women's representation despite their visibility when compared to those in South Africa. But this is understandable given the type of political environment in which they find themselves and also the amount of resources available to them. They cannot be too vocal otherwise they would be banned or expelled from the country by the ruling party.

4.2.2.1.6 The Media milieu

Four percent of the participants in Cameroon mentioned media as a medium which helps sensitize women about political issues in Cameroon. This is a medium that was not mentioned by any participant in South Africa. The participants particularly cited the national TV (CRTV) and local or community radios in Cameroon. Participants mentioned that there exist programmes like "Just for Women Only" and "Calling the Women" on the national TV and "Women, Families and Society" and "Planet Women" on the national radio. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family also publishes "Women and Families" magazine. In addition, some participants stated that many women's sensitization programmes take place during election times to encourage women to register and vote.

From the researcher's observation, the media definitely played a vital role in educating and empowering women in Cameroon especially in the mid-1990s. This happened soon after the 1995 Beijing Conference. The Cameroonian delegation that went to Beijing was led by a senior Cameroonian journalist called Anne Nsang.⁶³ On her return from Beijing, she organized a women's empowerment programme and invited women's and men's organizations to take part in the programme. She used to report that men's organizations always turned down her invitation.⁶⁴

The programme was aired on one Cameroonian television station every Saturday afternoon. It certainly had an impact on public opinion and public consciousness in the Cameroonian society at the time because some men used to criticize the programme and even accused the journalist of instigating divorces in marriages with such programmes. It was even rumoured that the journalist separated from her husband when she returned from Beijing because she gave him certain ultimatum which he refused to abide by (Cameroon Tribune, 1998; The Herald, 1998).

Television during this time serves as a reporter of current events and as an informer of public opinions, as women had the chance for the first time to publicly discuss and debate issues that affect their lives both at home and in the work place. The discussions that took place during such programmes ranged from women's domestic role as mothers and wives, divorce and inheritance rights, custody rights, and the role of women in their families' decision-making processes.

It could be argued here that these women's programmes actually impacted on the government of Cameroon because as the statistics mentioned above show, that was the period which saw the highest number of women represented in

⁶³ Anne Nsang used to work with the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) service

⁶⁴ Anne Nsang on CRTV, 1995/96.

parliament because after 1997, the numerical representation of women in the National Assembly of Cameroon dwindled. Probably the vitality and passion after Beijing has already died out. However, it should be noted that such programmes benefited only few women's organizations especially those in cities such as Yaoundé and Douala while leaving out the rural women who are not only the majority but still bear the brunt of customary laws and traditions.

In South Africa, although participants did not specifically mention the impact of media as a mechanism which influences women's political representation, the researcher's observation is that South African media has played a positive role in this regard. A South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) soapie called "*Isidingo*" has portrayed women like Agnes Matabane, popularly known as Ma-Agnes as ward councillor in Horizon Deep (the locality where the soap is shot). The soapie actually portrays Ma-Agnes - who started as a business woman (owning a restaurant) - as a ward councilor. A similar soap called "*90 Plein Street*" depicts a woman called Dineo as a parliamentarian. These roles are important because viewers may be able to get the understanding that women too can be decision makers alongside their male counterparts. Especially as some of these soapies are widely watched in the rural communities, it may even begin to break the cultural barriers that impede women to participate in politics. Live parliamentary sessions have also empowered ordinary women and men on TV to speak without fear or without mincing their words about political issues and processes.⁶⁵

Still from observations, during elections, politicians use both TV stations and community radios to campaign and encourage people to vote not only for the political parties but also for women candidates, especially in the local government elections. These politicians would speak in the local languages which easily disseminate information to every South African who knows and

⁶⁵ SABC3 and SABC 1 aired "*Isidingo*" and "*90 Plein Street*" at 19h:30 and 21h00 respectively during weekdays.

understands any of those local languages. Furthermore, many women such as Winnie Mandela (a veteran ANC steward), Helen Zille and Patricia de Lille prominent leaders within the DA, have been shown on TV campaigning during elections. This serves an inspiration to young women who want to follow in their footsteps.

The South African media has also helped expose the misconceptions held by some South African men that women are inferior. These men still believe that when a young girl or woman is dressed in mini-skirt, she is by implication asking for sex. Thus, she can be verbally and sexually abused because according to these men, she is 'offering herself to them'. The SABC and a free-to-air private TV station (eTV) have tried to expose such negative and naïve ways of thinking about women through some of their investigative journalism programmes like Special Assignment (aired on SABC 3) and 3rd Degree (aired on eTV). There are also advertisements that are shown on public and private TV stations such as 'real men do not rape women' which are meant to highlight and curb the sexual violence that many South African women go through in their daily lives.

Globally, the print media and satellite channels have enabled the public not only to read but also to see women elected as presidents in other countries of the world and even in our own continent. Such media exposure educates and empowers women while at the same time giving them the confidence to say "if she can do it, why can't I".

In comparative terms, the South African media has been able to broadcast documentaries about women politicians and businesswomen and their successes more than the Cameroonian media. Nevertheless, in both countries, the use of TV in empowering women only reaches women in the urban areas or those having TV sets. The researcher has also observed that most women would rather prefer to watch local or western soaps through satellite TV than to watch or to listen to the news or to watch campaign trails by women politicians. A

female friend of the researcher said during visitations, “ah those boring programmes of yours again... please let me watch my soapie.” She refers to news as boring, and she is just one of many women out there who behave like that.

4.2.3 What are the obstacles which South African and Cameroonian women encounter in their quest for advancement in political leadership?

The main aim of this section was to explore the obstacles preventing women from advancing in political leadership positions in both South Africa and Cameroon. The charts below show the various obstacles raised by participants in South Africa and Cameroon. They are cultural barriers, lack of leadership skills, lack of party support and ambition and the fear of the unknown. The latter obstacle was raised by Cameroonian participants only. The discussion below will present the similarities and differences related to the issues raised by participants in both countries.

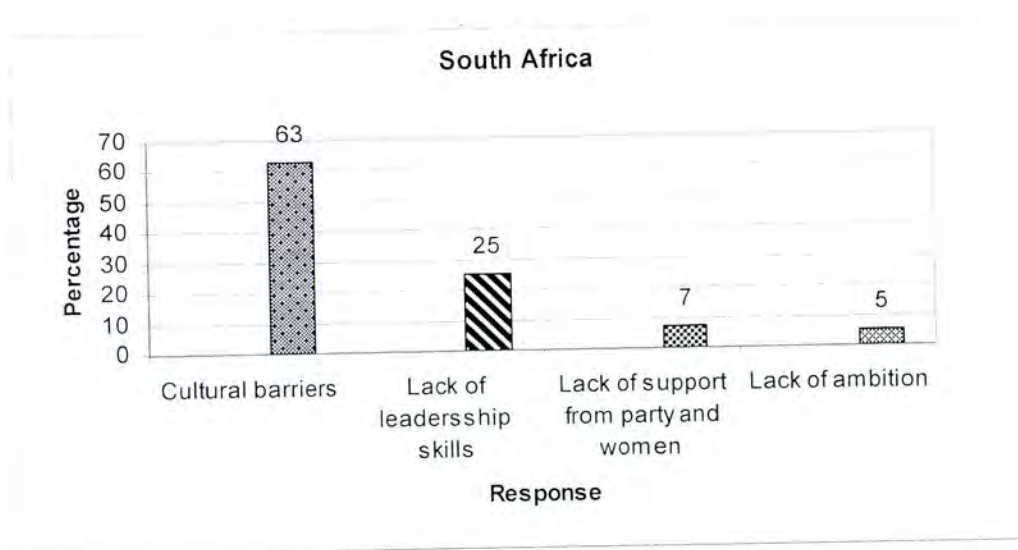


Figure 4.5: Obstacles faced by women in South Africa

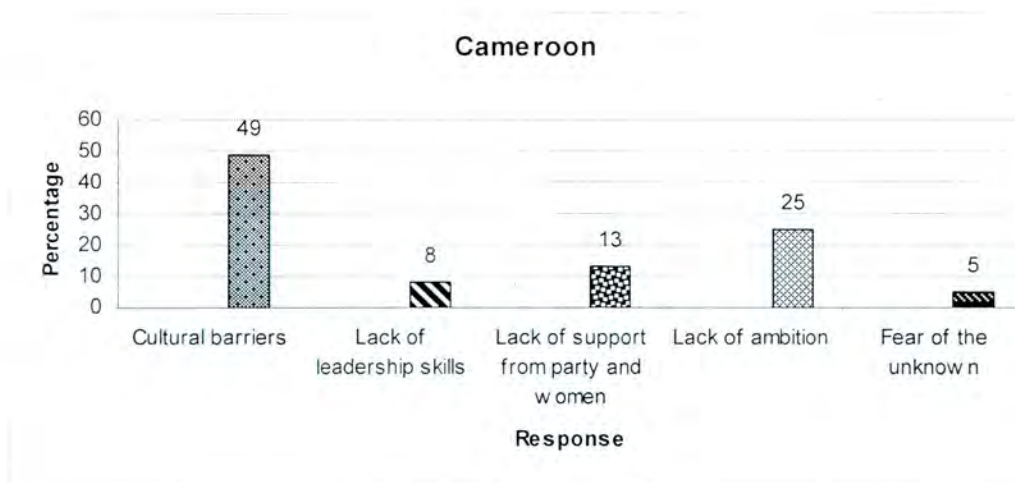


Figure 4.6: Obstacles faced by women in Cameroon

4.2.3.1 Cultural barriers

Africa has a strong culture where women have for centuries been considered as back benchers and whose position is thought to be confined to the kitchen or to home. This explains an inherent patriarchal culture where change is very difficult to take place. Women may be at the helm but they must listen to men because its men who command authority. To date, some people still think and believe that women who enter into politics are “free women”, in other words, prostitutes (International IDEA, 2004).

While 63% of the participants in South Africa mentioned this obstacle, only 49% of the Cameroonian participants concurred. The percentage difference could be explained against the backdrop of very different socio-cultural environments prevailing in both countries. What may be seen as an obstacle in South Africa may not necessary be seen as such in Cameroon. It is common knowledge that the African woman still faces cultural barriers in her participation in politics and public life. This is a point mentioned in Chapter 2 as attributed by Marike (1995), The Star (2000), Britton (2002), Shvedova (2002), Hassim (2003), Kethusile (2005), Angevine (2006), and, Ekiyor & Lo (2009).

Issues of patriarchy, culture, gender roles, among others, were cited by participants as obstacles preventing women from advancing in their political careers. The issue of patriarchy was a prominent cultural barrier raised by participants in South Africa and Cameroon. Patriarchy is a social system in which the male is considered as the primary authority or main figure within the community or social organization, and in which fathers hold authority over women, children, and property (Green, 2008).

A participant in Cameroon remarked that, "African culture is based on a patriarchal society and power is mostly in the hands of men. Women do all the domestic work, including childcare leaving them with little or no time to attend political meetings."⁶⁶ One participant indicated that, "although women can now employ domestic workers to help them in their dual roles, only [a] few of them can afford the finance and in some cases, the husband or partner make sexual advances to these domestics which may lead to divorce. In other cases, the male partners threatened their wives to choose between playing politics and taking care of the domestic affairs at home."⁶⁷ A respondent in South Africa further remarked that, "culture and traditionalism make males to expect the kind of respect from female leaders which he would not demand from other males."⁶⁸

I found one particular response by a South African participant too dehumanizing to women. He remarked,

women are supposed to be the properties of men and not playing politics on equal footing with them. Women are best in aprons serving men and taking care of the children. That is our culture and upbringing. The reason why you see many killings and divorces today is because women want to move away from that culture.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Interview with Pelagie Yotchou, Leader and founder of Ladies Cycle (an NGO in Yaoundé (Yaoundé, 27 December 2009).

⁶⁷ Focus group discussion (Yaoundé, 4 January 2010).

⁶⁸ Focus group discussion with post-graduate students (Mthatha, 20 June 2010).

⁶⁹ Interview with Anonymous. Ward Councillor, Eastern Cape (Mthatha, 22 June 2009)

To add to the above, “in South Africa women who become too committed and focused on their political careers are viewed as “unfeminine” and should be divorce[d]”⁷⁰ whereas in Cameroon, women who manage to climb to top positions be it government or private are regarded as “iron or powerful ladies.”⁷¹ The statement is in agreement with the researcher’s observation during Cameroonian secondary school days, when people watched Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of Britain, on TV and referred to her as an “Iron Lady”. This same perception was attached to USA’s Condoleezza Rice, former US Foreign Secretary but not to Hilary Clinton. The researcher is of the opinion that people have become used to the idea of seeing women on the big political stage, thus, it is no longer uncommon for women to be in those positions.

The responses of participants from both Cameroon and South Africa are some of the factors feeding into the psychology that woman are inferior and not good enough to move beyond the level at which they are. Men often use violence in an attempt to maintain their status in society and to prove that they are ‘real men’ by keeping women under their control.⁷² This statement is in conformity with the hegemonic masculinity theory discussed in Chapter 2.

Ballington (2004) asserts that in highly patriarchal and traditional societies, women seeking leadership positions are often discriminated against and view politics as hostile and aggressive. Rashmi (2009) also adds that, some people are naturally resistant to change and to adopting new ideas. The author posits that some women are satisfied with being treated as subordinates and they do respect their traditions to the fullest, notwithstanding their level of education and their leadership positions. The author makes an allusion to India, where President Patil’s greatest difficulty has been to convince potential female leaders to come out of their shells and make their voices heard in all aspects.

⁷⁰ Researcher’s observation.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Focus group discussion (Mthatha, 20 June 2010).

Even though the South African society has many women representatives in political leadership, this has not made it less patriarchal. Generally, the South African culture like that of Cameroon is male-dominated where women are accorded a lower status than is the case with men. It is therefore not surprising that media reporting of women in politics is contaminated by the same patriarchal discourses. For instance, the media amplification of the late former Minister of Health's (Manto Tshabalala) statement on HIV/AIDs treatment by "beetroot, African potatoes and garlic" was too biased when compared to that of her male counterparts such as the former KZN MEC for economic development, Mike Mabuyakhulu and his co-accused, charged with corruption and fraud. The Minister was called all sorts of names, such as "Dr. Beetroot" and "Dr. Garlic." This also supports the views in Chapter 2 by Ekiyor and Lo (2009) who state that women in politics are always expected to be extraordinary, as attention is focused on them more than their male counterparts.

4.2.3.2 Lack of political leadership skills

The lack of political leadership skills was expressed by 25% and 8% the participants in both South Africa and Cameroon, respectively. Issues that were raised were that women possessed inadequate skills, and that they lacked political education and even self-confidence. Since any influential political participation is associated with some sort of formal education, women in both countries were seen as less intelligent and having inadequate education to advance to political offices and to manage portfolios in the public arena.

Some researchers believe that education is essential not only for the development of successful men and women but also for the advancement a society in general. In fact, Verba and Schlozman (1995) contend that education is a powerful predictor of political participation. According to these authors, there are direct and indirect effects that formal education has on political participation. Regarding the direct effects, one is able to acquire knowledge and communication skills which are useful for public debate and to be trained for

analyzing topical issues. The indirect effects include engagement in school government, student society, clubs, institutional newspapers, etc.

Schlozman and Verba (1995) further maintain that these kinds of arenas provide young people with an early knowledge for politics where they can implement leadership, negotiation and organisational skills for political activity. In general, education provides young people with access to highly paid jobs and suitable contacts for political activity and even NGOs which can be a launching pad for political involvement.

In Cameroon, research done by Kassea (2006) as mentioned in Chapter 2 confirms that there is a correlation between education and representativeness. However, Konde (2005) and Adams (2006) tend to disagree that Cameroonian women are not educated enough to handle positions of responsibility in the national political processes. For these authors, it is rather a matter of career stereotype and gender discrimination against women than education. In addition, Cameroonian customary law often asserts that males are heads of households and are also better equipped to deal with decision-making (Orock, 2007).

One Cameroonian respondent indicated that, “women are weaker sex and incapable of making reasonable decisions within society.”⁷³ A perception like this, from a member of local government is an indication that a lot still has to be done for the change of mindset before gender equality can truly be achieved in Cameroon. It is also an indication of the rate at which patriarchy is still ingrained in the Cameroonian society. Thus, it is not surprising that women at the local government level are placed in very low status political positions in Cameroon.

In South Africa, some participants mentioned that women have been a disappointment and have failed dismally in delivering their duties. The name of the late Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala Msimang, was mentioned for her

⁷³ Interview with Anonymous, a CPDM Mayor in Mamfe, Cameroon (Mamfe, 20 December 2009).

controversial ideas on the treatment of HIV/AIDs. This view tends to support the views echoed by Ekiyor and Lo (2009), when warning that,

in spite of positive accounts of women's contributions within leadership spaces, the poor track record of some women in political leadership poses a challenge to aspiring women leaders who tend to be judged by the performance of previous women. Given the tendencies of society to generalize women's successes and failures, women in leadership should be conscious of the legacies and examples they leave behind (Ekiyor and Lo, 2009).

However, it should be noted that, the present Minister of Home Affairs, Nkosizana-Dlamini Zuma, is still a woman and she came out with a clean audit only after a year in office.

Another participant remarked that "... women are too fragile, emotional and cry when faced with crisis situations,"⁷⁴ and that such emotions were not helpful in the eyes of the public as it exposes weakness to the public. The later remark was also echoed by political science Master student during the focus group discussion, and even citing a deputy minister who burst into tears during a parliamentary questions and answers session in South Africa.⁷⁵

This response raised eye brows as the group soon turn into a debate between male and female students. However, one student tried to level the playing field when she said, "no one actually knew the reason why the minister became so emotional, but her critics have concluded that, she was unable to answer questions posed to her."⁷⁶ Another student also cited Hillary Clinton who expressed similar emotions during her campaign trail in the USA.

Kotlyar and Karakowsky (2007) and Addy (2010) also consider women's sentimental nature as a weakness. The authors state that female leaders at

⁷⁴ Interview with a UDM Councilor (Mthatha, 22 October 2011).

⁷⁵ The Session was repeated during "A View from the House," An SABC 2 programme broadcast from 8h00 – 8h30 am weekdays during Parliamentary Sessions.

⁷⁶ Focus group discussion, Mthatha, 20 June 2010.

times do attach a lot of emotions when taking decisions and, this is very detrimental to their jobs. For example, Addy mentions that, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's flexible and sentimental nature has made her to appoint unqualified women to posts of responsibility. According to Levine and Blickenstaff (2004:242), women are naturally selfless and emotional whereas their male counterparts are courageous and arrogant. The authors attribute these characteristic traits to biological determinism and argue that they cannot be used as weaknesses in fulfilling leadership positions. The cultural feminists on the other hand tend to view women as good leaders as a result of these qualities (Duley & Edwards, 1976; Code, 2000).

The differences between female and male leadership has also been highlighted by Reilly (2009) who observes that due to their motherly nature, female leaders are generally good, patient and less prone to violence as compared to their male counterparts. Another writer further asserts that when females are placed in leadership positions, they do bring changes in their societies because they do provide better policies on education, welfare and family (Gumisai, 2004).

McSmith (2008) makes allusion to the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and his predecessors (all males) as courageous, egoistic, violent and hard-hearted political leaders naturally having gross appetite for wealth. The author maintains that Taylor amassed wealth, abused children's and women's rights, and sold weapons in exchange for blood diamonds. Sarah (2003) and Radelet (2007) even state that the heartless and violent nature of Taylor and Doe during their political regimes made it a hell living in Liberia at the time. This is contrary to what is happening now in Liberia with the female president as some Liberians are even returning home.

From the researcher's point of view, observations around Africa and the world have not shown that female political leaders who have made substantive beneficial changes in their countries have the highest educational qualifications.

Furthermore, studies by Ekiyor and Lo (2009) on “the status of women’s leadership in West Africa” found that many women in leadership positions were inspired by their mothers as role models in their careers.

The correlation between women’s education and political representation is debatable. The researcher’s observations are that women’s political representation in leadership positions is not necessarily achieved through formal education. Countries such as South Africa with the 2nd highest women representation in parliament in Africa attests to this. Other countries such as United States and United Kingdom have among the most educated women in the world and yet have a minimum political representation by women.

This therefore calls for further research into this area especially in Africa. Nonetheless, there is no denying that formal education can equip women for their political career in the future, as it is not enough to be in a leadership position without the necessary educational qualifications. Liberal feminists have long held the assumption that women will be more successful in politics once gender inequalities in education and employment are reduced (Bryson, 1999).

4.2.3.3 Lack of support from party and women

While 13% of the participants in Cameroon cited the lack of support from party and women, only 7% of the participants did so in South Africa. Amongst the issues raised were the lack of party quota or its effective implementation, the lack of finance, the inability of males to accommodate women in the party lists and the lack of support from female electorates.

In South Africa, some participants stated that some political parties were opposed to a voluntary party quota system which the ruling ANC has implemented, and that it is difficult for women especially at the local government

level to reach top positions. One of the participants said “a better policy would be the legislative quota system which men would respect because it comes from the top”.⁷⁷

The above statement was supported by a participant from Gender Link, who stated that a voluntary party quota is not the way to go because not all parties are willing to adopt it. The legislature quota is the best option, similar to what Lesotho has in place. The former and later responses tally with Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) study that, in the absence of quota requirements that match the electoral system, the rules about the rank order of candidates as well as sanctions for non-compliance, quota provisions may only be symbolic.

Another factor mentioned by participants was the lack of support from females. Participants said that the action of the female leader of the DA and the Premier of Western Cape, Helen Zille, who appointed an all-male provincial cabinet in 2009 was a blow to the women in South Africa and also a reverse of the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment. The failure of the ANCWL to nominate a female candidate for the post of deputy president of the country in 2007 during the Polokwane Conference, was another case cited. This assertion tends to support the “PhD syndrome” (Pull her down) which states that women are the main contributors to the downfall of their fellow women (Eastern Cape Women's Magazine, 2011).

In Cameroon, mostly female participants indicated that political parties do not support women's candidature and that the majority of women are not in a position to raise funds for campaigns during elections. As such, they are preoccupied with fanfaring, dancing and singing activities for their male counterparts. A participant lamented that “men take advantage of the patriarchal society during election campaigns to make the electorates feel that women are

⁷⁷ Interview with Anonymous. ANC, Council Member (Mthatha, 27 June 2010).

not good enough to represent them in political offices.”⁷⁸ The social dominance theory of Sidanius and Pratto (2001) mentioned in Chapter 2 actually comes into play here. The sex discrimination that takes place in the family does not only end there but is brought into the public arena and political processes.

One of the former Vice-Speakers of the National Assembly in Cameroon, Rose Abunaw, once said during election campaigns the electorates are expected to be “bought in” - that is, to be provided with some sort of material support, be it groceries, clothing, farming tools - especially if the vicinity or the constituency is rural. However, as a woman seeking political office, you are not only expected to provide such material needs, you are also expected to solve women’s problems. In a situation where you are not financially resourced to offer such services, women electorates would not listen to your campaign and would rather support a male figure that is financially backed to provide those material needs.

The researcher believes that one of the reasons that may lead to such attitudes on the part of voters, especially in the rural communities, is that they believe that the campaign period is the only time they could gain something in return for their votes, as their experience is that little or nothing is given back to them by the elected representatives once they are in power. However, Kahbang Walla, one of the presidential hopefuls in the 2011 elections in Cameroon remarks that the lack of support from female electorates has been her biggest challenge more than anything else.

Female participants in Cameroon also indicated that some women secretly connive with and instigate other women not to support their fellow women probably due to envy or other grievances. This action therefore makes it difficult for women, even for the most educated ones to advance in politics if they are not well connected or from the elite class. This shows that women and men alike

⁷⁸ Interview with Anonymous. SDF Council Member of SDF (Buea, 27 December 2009).

suppress women and make them feel they cannot be good leaders, a behaviour which is in line with the PhD syndrome mentioned earlier.

Politics has always been regarded as the preserve for men but since the 1990s, so much has changed and the entering of women not only in politics but also in political leadership has grown. However, stereotyped assumptions especially in Cameroon are still behind the decisions not to include women. What is termed the “old boys club” has a powerful influence on the selection of candidates for both local and national leadership. Even some women who want to be elected are often blocked by their male counterparts or are put in lower positions where they cannot be voted.

As indicated by participants, it is also obvious that the high cost involved in election campaigns has become a deterrent to women's participation and representation in political structures. Research from other parts of the world (Burrell, 1998; Ballington, 2003; Barrow-Giles, 2005; Sefaker, 2005) show that politics has become heavily commercialized. Most women lack access to resources to finance their campaigns and wealthy individuals or companies would prefer to sponsor men who are generally leaders of political parties or who culturally and socially are believed to be the better leaders. Villaluz & Reyes (2001:3) note that unless the system and culture of “money politics” is changed, women will continue to be marginalized in public and political life.

A strategy that is used by France is worth emulating. Political parties in France which do not include 50% of the women in their party lists face sanctions such as reduction or withdrawal of campaign funding support from the government (Villaluz & Reyes, 2001:4). In some situations, political parties even pay fines. But sanctions do not always neutralize the power of political parties which do not support gender inequality in politics. The Conservative Union for Popular Movement (UMP) led by Nicolas Sarkozy (the former Interior Minister and now, President of France) was forced to pay a fine of €4.26 million (\$5.62 million) in

2002 for not having an equal number of men and women on its candidate list. Even the left-wing Socialists broke the law and were forced to pay €1.65 million in fines. The Greens were the only party to play by the gender rules (Ramsay, 2003). In the Nordic countries like Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland, which have high numbers of women in parliament, political parties receive state subsidy or some form of assistance such as equal broadcasting time on TV and radio for campaigns (Villaluz & Reyes 2001:4).

4.2.3.4 Lack of ambition

There were 5% and 25% of the participants who expressed the lack of ambition or will power by women to be in political leadership positions in South Africa and Cameroon, respectively. The disparity in the responses is not surprising given that many women are already at the helm of the South African political structures. This alone may act as a catalyst for other women to follow suit. It also eliminates the myths and fears for women aspiring to reach such positions.

In Cameroon, this factor was especially raised by men as they believe that the problem is not the unwillingness of parties to accommodate women but rather the lack of interest on the part of women themselves. One participant notes that, “women in Cameroon are not active in politics and the few who do so get to the top”.⁷⁹ This statement may as well be true because the responses that came from a few female participants contained some misconceptions about women's participation in politics. They said that when you go into politics, you change from a caring to a heartless person or a crook. Therefore, die-hard cultural and religious women do not want to be portrayed as such, especially as recent politicking has led to the arrest of some top ranking politicians charged with corruption.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Telephone interview with Anonymous. Former personal assistant to a former prime minister, (Yaoundé, 27 December 2009).

⁸⁰ AllAfrica.com “Corruption in Cameroon” September 2008

According to one participant, "women are not willing to climb the political ladder, because those who do, succeed, but evidence shows that the higher you climb the higher the probability of you being arrested for corruption," she added.⁸¹ She further remarks that she was comfortable where she was because the President of Cameroon was busy arresting members of his inner circle accused of corruption.

This respondent was referring to Jean Marie Atangana and Jerome Mendouga (former high ranking government officials of the ruling party in Cameroon) were arrested and detained for corruption and fraud in 2010 after the launch of "Operation Epervier," an anti-corruption programme in 2004. However, the majority of the women tended to show interest in leadership positions but they believe that the domination of men in the political sphere is what pushes women away. A member of an NGO said that, "many women have instead created NGOs to help women and youths, and they do have lot of respect than when in political parties."⁸²

Thus, contrary to conventional views, some women aspire to be leaders. This brings to mind the theory of hegemonic masculinity that argues that a group may use the strategy of retaining power over the other group as a natural order of things. Thus, men could make gender disparity seems natural in order to remain in power and remove blame on their part.

Still in Cameroon, the responses that came from the academia were that there was a tendency of political apathy on the part of women. This, to a large extent, was due to psychological and cultural reasons because women getting involved in politics cannot be good leaders and this is something which a girl child is brought up to be. She is taught only the values of doing household chores and

⁸¹ Personal communication with Kum Bridgette. SDF publicity officer (Bamenda, 21 December 2009).

⁸² Personal communication with Anonymous. NMWP Representative (Yaoundé, 5 January 2010)

not provided with enough opportunities to become a leader. However, participants tend to agree to the fact that this perception was now changing, especially because most women are now getting education and they are empowered by what is happening around them and by globalization.

In both countries, what also came up strongly was the issue of the lack of confidence in women themselves. This aspect is supported by literature cited in Chapter 2 (Shvedova, 2002; UN, 2007). A male participant in South Africa reacted, "women lack confidence when speaking in the public, how they would express themselves when making public speeches, speaking in parliament and even during election campaigns?"⁸³ He further narrated that some women become emotional when speaking about issues of national interest and that, such behaviour, was not good for politics and decision-making roles. He added that these type of people would end up making the wrong choices, and "politics knows no morality, but rationality and vigour."⁸⁴

In this regard, South African women believe that they have what it takes to be in leadership as long as they are empowered with the necessary skills. Participants from the academic world in South Africa tend to agree with this view and add that women face many challenges in politics and also play dual roles which may affect their aspiration to be represented in leadership positions. A representative from an NGO also tends to agree with the academia and point out that all what women need is support from the community, women themselves and overall, the government. The general overview regarding this factor is that there are no laws barring women from political leaderships, though there are challenges. The understanding here is that, this is a platform which they must use to their own benefit. They are the ones with the power to effect the change they want to see.

⁸³ Telephone interview with a South African MP (Cape Town, 28 June 2009).

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

4.2.3.5 Fear of the unknown

This factor was raised by 5% of the participants in Cameroon and none in South Africa. Many women than men mentioned it. Many of them indicated that there was too much competition for political positions, thus the tendency for one's adversary to want to eliminate one was very high. They also believed that there was too much competition between women and men than between men themselves. Therefore, when a woman who is competing with a man and wins, that is seen as favouritism but when a man wins, that is not regarded as favouritism.

In a report by the *Global Press Institute*, one of its reporters in Cameroon narrated that Kahbong Walla, the 2011 female presidential aspirant, was kidnapped on 20 May 2011 and had water cannons turned on her. Her political campaigns were also accompanied by some form of intimidation. According to Walla, this happened because Cameroon is a republic and not a democracy. She also added that,

the big challenge in Cameroon is that we don't have a democracy, so people that are politically active in the opposition get harassed and sometimes physically threatened. These aspects are a big distraction and challenge when one is running a campaign (Mussa, 2011).

However, Walla does not see the harassment and intimidation as a challenge. To her, the biggest challenge is that of changing people's perceptions about women in leadership roles. Walla is not the only female to have gone through a political foul play. In 2002, Diana Ambofei, the vice regional chairperson of the main opposition party, SDF in the North West Province, tried to run for parliamentary elections, but later withdrew from the campaign because of death threats from traditional leaders within her constituency. As she recounted,

I was summoned to a hut by the traditional heads in my constituency, and palm wine⁸⁵ was sprinkled at the entrance of the hut. They (traditional leaders) said if I wanted to live, I should cross the entrance of the hut⁸⁶ and stop my campaign, but if I do not want to see the dawn of the next day, I should cross the entrance of the hut and go on with the campaign. I left and declined my candidacy (Mussa, 2011).

The two incidents reported above are only a few of the many intimidatory tactics and threats that many politically active female face in Cameroon. Due to obstacles such as these, many women tend to abandon their political careers and, instead, concentrate their efforts on civil society organizations where their contributions can have an impact in the society.

A participant in Cameroon further notes that the political environment in Cameroon is too rough for women to handle. However, they seem to forget that Liberia has a female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who took over after a very long internecine civil war which left the country in shambles. Cameroon is a highly patriarchal society that defines women's roles as such. This is even witnessed by the researcher during the registration for elections. The majority of women, especially in the rural areas, would seek consent from their husbands on whether to vote or not. Moreover, the husband does not only give his consent but also dictates to the wife the party she must vote for.

In South African, participants did not specifically mention the fear of the unknown factor. However, many politicians have lost their lives in South Africa and their deaths are alleged to have been politically motivated (SABC, 2009; eTV News, 2010). In March 2010, the *Sunday Times* (2010) newspaper warned against "a culture of political assassination" which was becoming entrenched in the Mpumanlanga Province of South Africa. The paper published allegations of the existence of a hit list of officials blocking access to tenders linked to the 2010 World Cup.

⁸⁵ local brew

⁸⁶ homestead

The paper reported that, in June 2010, a South African Communist Party (SACP) member, Dumisani Ntshangase, was killed after speaking out about an unacceptable procurement that would have enriched certain government officials. In October of the same year, James Nkambule, a controversial Mpumalanga politician, who had alleged that senior ANC politicians were behind a series of politically motivated murders, ended up dead and his autopsy report suggested that he might have been poisoned. Again in September the same year, a businessman and ex-Umkhonto we Sizwe (ex-veteran), in the Eastern Cape Province, Mthunzi Nkonki, was gunned down after he exposed alleged corruption in the Great Kei municipality (Sunday Times, 2010).

The above-cited cases are just a few of the so many deaths that have taken place in South Africa in 2010 and 2011, alleged to have been politically motivated. However, when this issue was raised with some of the participants, especially women, it did not seem to deter their aspirations to political leadership or even to dissuade those already in. Some believe that some of these deaths were related to criminal activities such as armed robbery while others indicated that, as a politician, sometimes one must be careful of one's public pronouncements. This last point is not convincing to the researcher as it shows an indication of lack of transparency or the fear to point out wrong doings. However, the perception that came from NGOs was different as some participants indicated that such deaths and even intimidation may scare women politicians and dissuade them from pursuing political careers.

Ultimately, there is some outstanding progress women have made in many professions, even though, it seems that politics is not one of them. Though women have moved forward in terms of their political participation and representation, some of them still experience harassment and intimidation and are forced to abandon their positions, leaving men in the positions of power. This is not surprising when one finds only few women running for higher public

positions. People seeking high profile political positions tend to be on the spotlight, so their families and children are also exposed.

Nevertheless, the scrutiny is intensive on women politicians. The family exposure is a risk many politically-active women would not want to take. This therefore becomes a major factor in discouraging women from practising politics or pursuing a political career. Maybe it is time the government of Cameroon or governments of the world come up with a protocol or convention on anti-harassment in politics to stop this type of practice.

4.2.4 Can increased women's political representation in decision-making processes change Africa's political culture? If yes, what are the indicators, if not, what are the reasons?

The aim of this section is to explore whether improved women's political representation in decision-making processes could change Africa's political culture. Before viewing the findings and discussion in this section, I think it is important to explain what political culture is.

In their book, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Almond and Verba (1963) provide the definition of political culture as "the aggregate pattern of subjective political dispositions in the populace." The Mayville State University Web Site provides a more simple definition of political culture as "attitudes, values, beliefs, and orientations that individuals in a society hold regarding their political system." Political culture is determined by the awareness of government, expectations of government and political participation.

Based on a cross-national survey research on five democratic countries - United States, United Kingdom, Mexico, Italy and Germany - Almond and Verba propose three basic models of political culture. First, it is a *parochial model*, where citizens have low awareness of politics as a distinct sphere of life and is of

relatively little interest. The example of a country with this kind of political culture mentioned by the authors is Mexico. Second, it is a *subject model* in which individuals are highly aware of the political system and its outcomes but are relatively passive. Italy and Germany fall in this category. Third, it refers to a *participant model*, where citizens are highly aware of their role in politics, its outcomes and thus participate in it. United States and United Kingdom are provided as examples of this culture.

Although the political environments of the countries in which the study was carried out may no longer be applicable today, these models of political culture outlined by Almond and Verba are still relevant to the researcher's study countries. Based on observations and reports by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC)⁸⁷ (2005) and SABC⁸⁸ (2011), South Africa would fall into the *participant* model while Cameroon fits into the *parochial* model based on research by *The Sun*⁸⁹ (2007) news and Acha⁹⁰ (2011). In addition, the definition and models of political culture as explained above give one the knowledge that political culture does not end with political leaders alone but the kind of impact it has on its citizens. Thus, what impact has women's political leadership made or what improvement does it make in the lives of African people?

⁸⁷ HSRC, "Survey on South African voter participation in elections"(2005).

⁸⁸ SABC news, "South Africans not suffering from voter apathy" (10 May 2011)

⁸⁹ *The Sun*, "Friedrich Ebert worried about voter apathy in Cameroon" (9 April 2011). Available at http://the-news-from-cameroon.com/article.php?category_id=1&article_id=549

⁹⁰ Eric Acha, "The Cameroon voters register: electoral apathy or electoral gimmicks?"(CJDHR, June 2011).

(a) Participants' responses

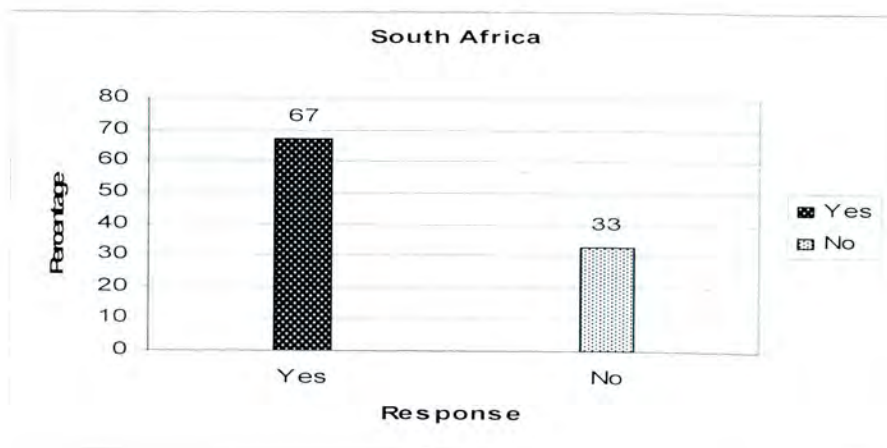


Figure 4.7: Participants' responses in South Africa regarding whether increased women's political representation can change Africa's political culture

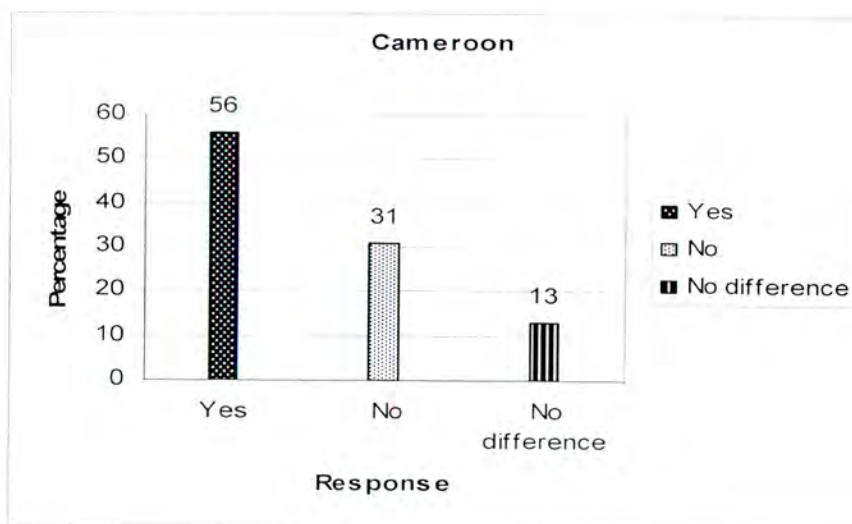


Figure 4.8: Participants' responses in Cameroon regarding whether increased women's political representation can change Africa's political culture

Figures 4.7 and 4.8 present the participants' responses concerning whether increased women's political representation in decision-making processes would

change Africa's political culture. Participants were very positive that increased women's representation in political leadership would change Africa's political culture. There were 67% and 56% of the participants in both South Africa and Cameroon, respectively, who agree while 33% and 31% of the participants in both countries, respectively, disagree. In addition, 13% of the Cameroonian participants stated that there was no difference between female and male leaders.

(b) Indicators

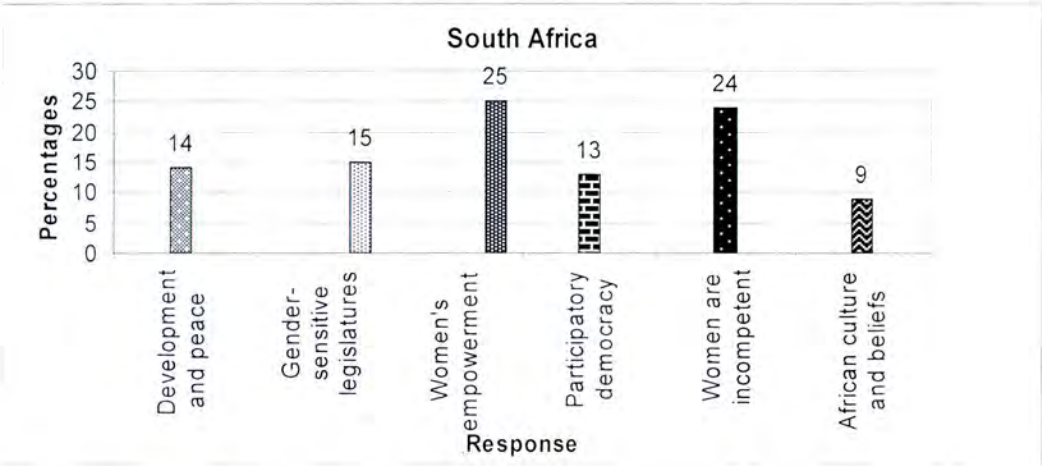


Figure 4.7.1: Indicators provided in South Africa

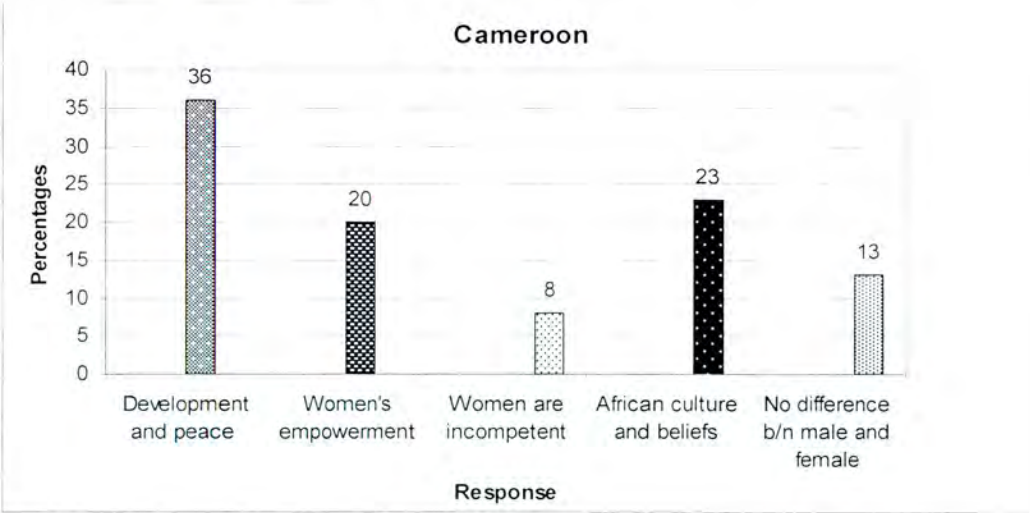


Figure 4.8.1: Indicators provided in Cameroon

It is worth mentioning before the ensuing discussion that two of the above mentioned indicators - women are incompetent and African culture and beliefs - were left out. This was because they were also mentioned as barriers to women's political representation, thus, they have been discussed above already and therefore cannot be repeated in the below discussion.

4.2.4.1 Development and peace

Development is a complex word which means different things to different people. Generally, development means economic growth. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2009) defines development as the ability "to live long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community." On the other hand, peace is understood to be the absence of conflict or violence. According to Skheksbaej and Smith (2001), the promotion of gender equality, economic equality and the universal enjoyment of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms lead to peace. Many peace and conflict studies have shown that where there is development, there is peace. Therefore, there is a correlation between development and peace (Galtung, 1996).

As shown in Figures 4.7.1 and 4.8.1 above, 14% and 36% of the participants in South Africa and in Cameroon, correspondingly, mentioned issues related to development and peace. Issues raised were that increment in women's political representation would lead to the improvement of social and economic issues in Africa. After all, a woman is first of all a mother, and mothers care for the social and economic needs of the needy; women would care for the family and nation alike. So, it is in women's nature to keep peace; women could be very good negotiators and would always take a compromise decision in situations of conflict because the brunt of conflict is often felt by them. In relation to Africa, especially, women are a pivot for change as they are more focused.

Others mentioned that women could change Africa's political culture in terms of the peaceful settlement of conflicts, development and growth. While others said women would bring about a shift in decision-making, from exclusionary, discriminatory and self-aggrandizement policies of men to one of inclusion, cooperation and unity. Furthermore, some mentioned that women would bring about diversity in the political atmosphere of Africa. All the above responses were similar in one way or the other. They were, thus, grouped under the major theme of "development and peace."

In a personal communication with an ANC council member in the Eastern Cape, this member stated that, "...women leaders bring different approaches and solutions to developmental projects." A study by Gumusai (2004) supports the assertion by highlighting that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role. The above statements tend to confirm what was said by the former UN Secretary General, Koffi Annan. Speaking during the launch of the MDGs in 2000, Annan asserts that,

study after study has shown that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role. Wherever women are fully involved, the benefits are immediate; families are healthier and better fed. Thus, what is true of families is also true of communities and in the long run, of countries as well. Furthermore, income in the hands of women will raise spending on education, health, nutrition and other expenditures benefiting women and children.⁹¹

To add to the above, the former South Africa's speaker of parliament, Frene Ginwala, asserts that in every society, it is those greatly affected who must bring about change. So, it is up to women to bring change in their societies. A representative from the NMWP in Cameroon stated that:

...women are more focused; they have the plight of the nation at heart and not like those men who only want power for personal enrichment. Take a look at what is happening now in Liberia...

⁹¹ Koffi Annan, speech made during the launch of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000.

President Sirleaf has done so much in Liberia even within a short space of time.⁹²

The name of the Liberian president was mentioned frequently during the focus group, thus instigating the researcher to examine briefly what it is that President Ellen Johnson has achieved which her predecessors had failed to achieve.

According to Global Security (2003), the period from President Adolphus Tolbert's, Samuel Doe's and Charles Taylor's reign saw nothing positive in Liberia but war and violence which ravaged the country for more than 14 years. During her campaign for the post of president of Liberia, Sirleaf assured the Liberian community that she was going to bring in a woman's touch to the civil reconciliation in Liberia, and a motherly sensitivity and emotion to the presidency as a way of healing the wounds of war (Morrison, 2007). She lived up to this commitment as upon taking over power, she took the initiative to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, similar to South Africa's, with the mandate to promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation. Most importantly, she undertook to investigate the more than 20 years of civil war in Liberia (Grego, 2006). She also appointed women to Liberia's key ministerial positions such as the Ministry of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Commerce, Youth and Sports (Sirleaf, 2010). These women, according to Sirleaf, will greatly contribute to the reconstruction and building of a just and non-violent Liberia.

To crown it all, in 2007, Sirleaf instituted a government policy of "Free and Compulsory Primary Education and a National Reproductive Health Policy" in order to provide services related to reproductive services and pre- and post-natal maternal health services (Addy, 2010). Hence, her hard work and achievements have been recognized within Liberia and globally. This acknowledgement came when *Times Magazine* (2010) published a list consisting of names of the top 10 "Most Powerful Female Political Leaders" and Sirleaf ranked in the 5th position.

⁹² Focus group discussion, (Yaoundé, 4 January 2010).

President Sirleaf was also chosen to receive the African Gender Award 2011 in June 2011. The award is given to outstanding African heads of state who have contributed immensely to promoting issues of gender equity in their respective countries. According to the *Daily Observer* (2011), Sirleaf was selected because of her firm desire to integrate women into politics, coupled with significant developments and achievements. Only a few months after the gender award, President Sirleaf received a Nobel Peace Prize in October 2011 in acknowledgment of her “non-violent struggle for the safety of women and women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work” (<http://www.nobelprize.org>). The above brief examination of the state of affairs in Liberia shows that Sirleaf has made some positive achievements which could, in the long run, benefit not of women but all the Liberian people.

Rwanda as the only African country with more than 50% of women in parliament is worth mentioning at this point. First, speaking about the Rwanda Parliamentary elections in 2003, President Paul Kagame said:

... women’s underrepresentation distances elected representative from a part of their constituency and as such, affects the legitimacy of political decisions... Increased participation of women in politics is, therefore, necessary for improved social, economic and political conditions of their families and the entire country (Xinhua News Agency, 23 April 2003).

The above assertion certainly indicates that women are a pivot for change in Rwanda especially as they do have the backing of their president. Thus, it is not surprising that President Kagame won the *African Gender Award Initiative* in 2007 for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment in his country (Daily Observer, 2007). On the one hand, it could also be argued that the Kagame’s statement was only a strategy to gain support from women because during this period, 60% of the Rwandan population was made up of women due to the death of many men in the 1994 genocide (Powley, 2009). On the other hand, it could also be debated that the impressive 8.4% annual economic growth

rate that the country realised in 2010 (Kinoti, 2010) may partly be attributed to the women's increase role in government and policies formulation.

Participants were also of the impression that Resolution 1325⁹³ was adopted due to the importance of women's presence in peace processes. A participant in Cameroon remarked as follows:

What do you think the "women's resolution" was passed for? Look at what is happening in Cote d'Ivoire, Darfur, DRC and the rest. Do you think what is happening in there would have been possible if women were leaders in those countries? Certainly not. The importance of women in development and peace was recognised by the UN since the 1975 Women's Conference in Mexico. More than 30 years down the line, women are still not given their rightly place!⁹⁴

The former Speaker spoke a mouthful and expressed disappointment concerning women's under-representation in decision-making processes. Her response was simply echoing what other participants have said with regard to women bringing development and peace to Africa if their numbers are improved. According to Anderlini (2010), Resolution 1325 is all about peace and security. It is rooted on the premise that when women are allowed to participate in a peace process, their perspectives and their contributions to the substance of talks will better improve the chances of attaining viable and sustainable peace. The logic of the premise could be because women and children are those mostly affected by wars or conflicts.

Speaking about South Africa, Mfeketo succinctly states that,

The representation and participation of women in the parliamentary arena plays an important role in developing and maintaining a political agenda that is illuminated by consideration of gender issues. Parliament supports the inclusion and equality of women as an important part of nation-building. It recognises that without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's

⁹³ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 and calls on all actors i.e. state, UN and non-state actors to support and increase women's participation in decision-making pertaining to the prevention and resolution of conflict and reconstruction.

⁹⁴ Personal communication with Rose Abunaw, former MP and Speaker of the Cameroon National Assembly, (27 December 2009).

perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equity, development and peace cannot be achieved (Mfeketo, 2009:6).

The above assertion is an indication that women and men are an important part of development and peace initiatives for building a nation in any country. Tripp (2001:24) also notes that certain African women politicians have been able to adopt anti-sectarian positions when it comes to ethnicity in their countries. This was demonstrated by Hawa Yakubu of Ghana who was overwhelmingly elected as an independent candidate in 1992 due to her stand on ethnic tolerance. Her motivation to stand as a parliamentarian came on the realization that no woman was standing for a parliamentary election in the whole of the Northern part of Ghana. Thus, her support from women in that constituency came because of issues relating to women's rights and not because of ethnicity. Another case in point was that of Agathe Uwilingiyimana, Rwanda's Prime Minister, 1992-1994, whose advocacy for women's rights and ethnic tolerance led to her death in the 1994 genocide.

4.2.4.2 Gender-sensitive policies

About 15% of the South African participants raised issues relating to the gender sensitive-policies while none of the Cameroonian participants did so. One of the South African participants, a member of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth, Children and People with Disabilities, remarked that,

women have come up with different perspectives in terms of making policies and even implementation. The gender-budget in South Africa was an initiative of women and was also the first in Africa.⁹⁵

Gender-sensitive is the state of knowledge of socially constructed differences between men and women, and between their respective needs. It is used to

⁹⁵ Interview with Anonymous. South African MP (Cape Town, 27 October 2011).

identify and understand the problems arising from these differences and to further act tangibly and in empathy with these problems and needs.⁹⁶

Bauer and Britton (2006:2) note that women parliamentarians have changed parliamentary hours and calendars, created institutions that drive feminist changes and introduced gender into debates and legislation. One of such changes is the gender-sensitive budget. A gender or gender-sensitive budget can serve as an instrument for assessing gender-specific implications of government budgets (Bartle & Rubin, 2002).

A gender-responsive budget is now considered in all governmental policies and projects in South Africa especially in education and public works programmes. The Women's Budget Initiative of South Africa was launched in 1995. The initiative came from women who attended the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The theme of the Conference among others focused on the Commonwealth's endeavour to integrate gender issues into the macro-economic planning and policy making of its members. This instigated the concept to the 100 new women members of parliament of South Africa who were attendees, especially, Pregs Govender, a panellist at the Conference, who further advocated the concept (Bhatnager et al., 1995).

The idea behind the gender-budget was to analyse any form of public expenditure or methods of raising revenue to see that women and girls benefit in relation to men and boys. The first phase of the initiative was focused on welfare, education, housing and reconstruction and development programme while the second phase, launched in 1997, focused on health, justice, safety and security, correctional services, transport, home and foreign affairs, agriculture, land affairs and energy (Ibid).

⁹⁶ This definition is available one at <http://www.nrcm.org.mw/gender/concepts.html>

Furthermore, Nomaindia Mfeketo, deputy speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa in 2009 stated that since the first democratic elections in 1994, female parliamentarians have played an active role in mobilizing women's rights and through their lobbying, they have ensured the passage of several key pieces of legislation aimed at protecting women's rights. Some of these pieces of legislation are the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (Act No 92 of 1996), the Domestic Violence Act (Act No 116 of 1998), the Maintenance Act (Act No 99 of 1998), the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (Act No 120 of 1998) and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act) Amendment Act (Act No 32 of 2007) (Mfeketo, 2009).

Devlin and Elgie also mention in their study that South Africa has the most impressive feminist legislative record with significant changes to abortion laws, employment equity and domestic violence laws (Devlin & Elgie, 2008:4). Mfeketo (2009) further states that in addition to playing a role in considering the gendered implications of legislation, female Members of Parliament (MPs) are also likely to be sensitive to the gendered implications of government service delivery and are more likely than men to play a role in ensuring that this is built into oversight agendas. Female MPs have also been known to play a role in monitoring the appropriation of Government resources from a gender perspective.

A very important case worth examining before concluding this section is Rwanda, which has 56.6% women's representation in the Parliament of Rwanda, and the highest in Africa and the world. A gender-sensitive constitution was adopted in Rwanda during the post-genocide transitional government period from 1994-2003. Then women's representation in Parliament (by appointment) was only 25.7% (Powley, 2006:1). During the October 2003 parliamentary elections, women representation rose to 48.8% (Devlin & Elgie, 2008:3) and 56.6% in the 2008 elections (IPU, 2010).

A study conducted by Devlin and Elgie on “the effects of increased women’s representation in parliament in Rwanda” shows that the greatest achievement of the numerical power of these women has been the revoking of laws which prohibited women from inheriting land in 1999 (Devlin & Elgie, 2008:7). The other laws passed which are of importance to women have been a law which extends the rights of pregnant and breast-feeding mothers in the workplace, a law on the protection of children from violence, and the extraordinarily gender-sensitive Rwanda Constitution itself (Devlin & Elgie, 2008: 13). However, the authors argue that all these laws or changes in the laws took place before 2003 when women’s representation in parliament was 48.8 percent. Hence, the current increase of 56.6% in 2008 has not really made any difference with respect to gender issues.

Furthermore, one very important issue came out from the Rwanda female MPs interviewed in the study by Devlin and Elgie (2008) was that of female solidarity, which cut across all political party divide and united women for a common cause. The promotion of women was put ahead of party politics. It was further noted that despite women’s numerical presence in the Rwandan Parliament, the parliament’s culture regarding its functioning has not changed – the way meetings were arranged and conducted, and matters related to working hours, the calendar and formal decision-making processes. The female MPs interviewed testified that “parliament works in the way it always works” (Devlin and Elgie, 2008:10). There was also no mention of childcare facilities in parliament despite the fact that several interviewees referred to their domestic chores as the greatest responsibilities for women. Instead, the women saw the extra duty of caring for their children at home as a problem for women in general and not something deserving special attention in parliament as their workplace.

The Rwandan parliamentary situation is therefore different from that of South Africa, where female representation in parliament also brought a lot of changes in the parliamentary culture. Angevine (2006:50) attests that there was an

integration of women's bathrooms, as "many of the male toilets had to be converted to female toilets" to make the institution more gender-friendly. There was also the shifting of parliamentary hours because female parliamentarians raised the issue regarding the working hours of parliament and the difficulties that they encountered. Consequently, parliament was adjusted not to sit after 6 pm unless there was a real emergency. The time allocation was to allow women MPs to be with their children. Lastly, the provision of a crèche on the parliamentary grounds was also seen to be important.

Just like in South Africa, women parliamentarians in Rwanda also have a multi-party women caucus called the Forum of Women's Parliamentarian where women unite across party lines and discuss the challenges facing them (Powley, 2006:7). Powley, notes that though Rwanda's constitution was praiseworthy with respect to women's representation, gender equality and equal rights; it has limitations on issues around freedom of speech and ethnicity. The reason is that the women's ability to participate in Parliament has been due to the ruling party's (Rwanda Patriotic Front) will as it uses a Party List system and controls more than 70 seats.

In addition, case studies from other African countries indicate that women's roles in crafting and passing many new laws have not turned their national legislatures into more 'women- or parent-friendly' institutions. For example, in Namibia, while women have participated in the legislative process, the implementation of reforms has been difficult. Moreover, in Mozambique, the increase in the representation of women in parliament has not translated into significant women-centred or feminist policy initiatives. Furthermore, in Uganda, an increased women's representation in parliament has not met women's expectations especially as it proved difficult to insert a clause in the 1998 Land Bill to ensure that women had equal rights with men over joint property, including homesteads (Devlin & Elgie, 2008:4).

4.2.4.3 Women's empowerment

According to Bailey (2001), empowerment of women is a multi-dimensional social process that helps women gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in women so they can be a great value to their communities and society by acting on issues that are important to them. Marike (1995) states that empowering and focusing on the most neglected part of humanity, which are women, make the society more responsive to the needs of people and will bring more insights and contributions to all issues. Goal Three (03) of the MDGs also affirms that in order for development to be successful women must be empowered.

In the women's empowerment indicator, 25% the respondents in South Africa and 20% the respondents in Cameroon attested to this. To some of the South African participants, the increased number of women in traditionally male-dominated public positions was an inspiration to young women and girls. Examples of women incumbents from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Defence Ministry, the Department of International Relations and Corporations, Home Affairs and Science and Technology were cited. Concerning the IEC, a participant mentioned that you would bear with me that the (IEC) in South Africa is led mostly by women and they have done a credible job in terms of organising elections and announcing the results."⁹⁷

It should be noted that the chairperson of IEC, Dr. Brigalia Bam, and the chief electoral officer, Advocate Pansy Tlakula, and the deputy chairperson, Thoko Mpumlwana, are all females. These three formidable women have made the IEC in South Africa a success and a proof of this has been the awards received by the IEC. The IEC also received the United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA) for preventing and combating corruption in the public service in June

⁹⁷ Telephone interview with Anonymous. an NGO representative in Johannesburg (12 March 2010)

2011. Moreover, in November 2010, the IEC received an award from the Centre for Public Sector Innovation for its “innovative use of information communication technology for effective service delivery. Above all, in May 2010, it was the first runner-up at the All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards in Kenya in the category “Innovative Service Delivery Improvements” (News24, 2011; Mail & Guardian, 2011).

To other participants, women's occupying provincial premierships – five women premiers out of nine provinces comprising South Africa – is a proof positive that women are capable of making a difference in the country. Some also see women councilors, women chancellors of universities and even women vice chancellors as a way in which leadership is shifting and becoming diversified due to the representation of women. Participants in the academic spheres in South Africa even mentioned that the number of women now at tertiary institutions was surpassing that of men and this might be due to the aspiration they get from women in high profile positions. What one gathers from the above is that, a shift in gender responsibilities in the public affairs, is understood to be a shift of public culture.

Speaking about women's empowerment in Liberia, a participant narrated that,

when I see President Sirleaf on TV, I'm thrilled; it makes me want to say the sky is the limit for all the women out there. A female president in Africa... I remembered watching her during the Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture and she was so outspoken and critical about human rights violations by some African heads of state. The old boys club, how many of them would criticize one another? Imagine, if they [female presidents] were five in the continent?⁹⁸

The participant was so passionate when talking about President Sirleaf that one was left with no doubts that Sirleaf's position inspired many women out there. It can also be argued that her position has helped in dispelling some myths associated with the perception that African women cannot lead.

⁹⁸ Focus group (Mthatha, 20 January 2010).

President Sirleaf as a female president has not only empowered young women, she has helped in establishing many laws, policies and strategies to enhance the empowerment of women in Liberia. For example, several laws and policies that benefit women have been put in place. Classic examples are: the Gender and Sexually Based Violence Act of 2008 (which instituted a specialized court to try cases of sexual violence); Law on Rape of 2006 (which consists of spousal rape); the 2006 National Policy on Girls' Education; the creation of the 2006 National Gender-based Violence Plan of Action (CEDAW Report on Liberia, 2008).

However, according to the Beijing Plus 15 Report on Liberia (2009), the CEDAW's Report on Liberia (2009) and President Sirleaf's Report on Liberia, it has not been all smooth sailing for the Liberian president. The reports highlight that, despite achievements made by Sirleaf, there are still challenges and other practices which are dehumanizing to women. These are the practice of female genital mutilation; the custom of early marriages where young girls aged between 12 and 13 are forced into marrying against their will; child trafficking, polygamous marriages; and the widespread domestic violence. The reports note further that the representation of women in political life remains low.

Sirleaf herself admits, "we are only 12%, the highest it has ever been in Liberia, yet far below an acceptable percentage of women in our National Legislature or in other leadership areas" (Sirleaf, 2010:5). However, one may not be wrong to argue that it is still too early for any substantive change in terms of gender equality to take place in Liberia considering that Sirleaf took over as a president only in 2005. She also took charge of a state that was purely authoritarian and virtually disintegrated due to a war that lasted more than 14 years.

In Cameroon, some participants see women's empowerment through the work of NGOs and they believe that these women can do much better if they can be

provided with the opportunity in the public offices and resources. One participant made the following comment:

It should be admitted that most efforts in the empowerment of women's political leadership come from NGOs and other organizations. Their policies aim at empowering women through training and gender mainstreaming so that women can be involved at all levels of decision making in the state, but these cannot be achieved without help from the government.⁹⁹

The presidential aspirant, Kahbang Walla, during the 2011 elections campaign said that women's political participation in Cameroon had greatly changed for the better, thanks to her campaign. She also said that she was honoured to have inspired other Cameroonian women to see the possibility of women actively participating in politics. She remarked, "I am honoured to know that an 8-year old pupil wrote my name as her model in a class exercise when their teacher asked them to cite the name of someone who inspires them." I also have women who walk up to me and thank me for taking a bold step and making a statement that women can aspire and dream big dreams" (Mussa, 2011).

The foregoing statement is an indication that women are inspired by other women in the public arena. They want to follow in their icons' footsteps. But when there are no women in senior political positions, younger women tend to believe that the public arena and politics are the preserve of men only.

However, it has also been argued that African women in political leadership positions have minimal influence on their communities or countries. As remarked by one participant in South Africa,

...most of the women who come into these positions do not dedicate their service to championing the cause of women, but are simply swallowed ... by the prevailing male-dominated political system. Besides, evidence, especially in South Africa, suggests that the notion of women empowerment or gender equality is only being paid lip service to by the prevailing power structures and highly resisted at the societal level. In other words, there is still a great deal of aversion to the idea of given women and men equal status in decision-making. As such, political representations and

⁹⁹ Takang, 19 January 2012.

other mechanisms such as gender mainstreaming have and will continue to have very little effect on political and social institutions.¹⁰⁰

The above participant is of the view that gender equality in South Africa is highly resisted at community's level due to patriarchy and cultural systems. Therefore, even an increment in women's representation in political leadership positions would not change this particular political culture.

Speaking to an *IPS News* representative in 2008 in Cape Town, Clive Keegan, the director of the South African Local Government Research Centre said that the ANC's decision on a 50/50 gender representation at the end of 2007 in Polokwane, does address the issue of gender equity, but it can also disempower women (Nieuwoudt, 2008). Keegan's contention is that: "[I]f women are placed on a list to fulfill a quota, there is risk that the names of candidates without the necessary skills will be brought forward by men with their own agenda. This means that some of these women will be easily manipulated and susceptible to corruption..." (Nieuwoudt, 2008).

A survey done by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in 2006 shows that one in three municipal councillors cannot read or write and that, many councillors have no idea of how financial structures work. In addition, 32% of the councilors needed basic adult education and training (Nieuwoudt, 2008).

The above-mentioned information therefore gives one the understanding that it is not enough to increase women's representation in political leadership because little or nothing will be achieved if training is not provided to these women and only competent women are allowed to be represented.

As indicated in Chapter 2, Britton (2002) is also of the view that life for the majority of South African women continues to be marked by socio-economic hardships and patriarchal domination. This is further supported by Goetz and

¹⁰⁰ Nganje, 5 January 2012.

Hassim (2003) that female politicians in South Africa have not been very influential. They argue that women's participation does not necessarily translate into effective policy influence. As a result, Britton (2002) suggests that in order to disrupt patriarchy, women need to challenge male domination within the domestic sphere as well as challenging gender discrimination in public political spaces. Using observations in Cameroon, Oroock (2007) asserts that though the political project of gender equality in Africa has gained momentum and has yielded many positive results, these have been seen as largely confined to the 'big' women working in the public and private bureaucratic contexts in which there is a greater commitment to gender equality.

Some participants in both countries also believe that female leadership is not as corrupt and fraudulent as male leadership. In South Africa cases were cited of some politicians charged with fraud and corruption like the former ANC chief whip, Tony Yengeni in 2001 (www.polity.org.za/topic/tony-yengeni; http://www.news24.com/Tags/People/tony_yengeni); the former KwaZulu Natal MEC for economic development, Mike Mabuyakhulu; the former KZN provincial speaker, Peggy Nkonyeni; and the former head of the KZN Health Department, Ronald Green-Thompson (Harper, 2011; Mthembu, 2011).

A study conducted by Tripp (2001:24) in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Uganda concurs with the above assertion. Tripp argues that though some African women in political leadership positions are corrupt, some have fought very hard against corruption in their countries. She mentioned names such as Margaret Dongo in Zimbabwe, Charity Ngilu and Wangari Maathai in Kenya and Winnie Byanyima in Uganda. She adds that such a fierce opposition has led Maathai and Dongo to live in fear of their lives, while Byanyima lost a top position in the National Resistance Movement in Uganda in 1999 as a result of her criticism of corruption at the highest levels. As a result, Byanyima was charged with treason in 2001 for attacking the president's involvement in the Congo conflict.

The general view the participants of the current study with regard to the above indicator is that, despite the disproportionate number of women in political decision-making positions and the challenges confronting them, there is no denying that they have made a positive contribution within their political environments.

4.2.4.4 Participatory democracy

Participatory democracy was mentioned in South Africa only by 13% of the participants. They were of the view that the political culture of Africa started changing with the inclusion of women in African politics because women's political participation and representation is a key component of democracy. Therefore, the more women are represented, the stronger the democratic process becomes.

Bookie Monica Kethusegile-Juru - her lecture on SADC Gender Advisor - supports the views of the participants mentioned above when she argues that there cannot be democracy if decisions about changing the lives of people are taken without the participation of the people whose very lives are to be changed. It cannot be participatory democracy when decisions are taken by men, on behalf of women. She further notes that the participation of women in leadership positions has brought about "another perspective" and resulted in increased focus on and allocation of resources to quality life issues such as health, education, transformation of institutions, laws and policies (Kethusegile-Juru:1). These are the same views echoed by the IPU in 1994:

The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ A vision of democracy defined by the *Inter-Parliamentary Union*, a Geneva-based organization comprising of 139 parliaments, at its 154th session (Paris, 26 March 1994).

In line with the above assertion, Boezak (1999) whose study examined South African women and democracy concludes that there is true democracy which is the ultimate feature for achieving equal representation for men and women in the South African political system. Kassea (2006) confirms this by stating that democratization is supposed to open up political participation and representation for it to grant equal opportunities to all adults.

4.2.4.5 No difference between male and female leadership

While 13% of the participants in Cameroon think that there exists no difference between male and female leadership, no South African participants think so. Some participants in Cameroon argued that once women achieve leadership posts at the national level, they govern and act in the same way as men. A participant in Cameroon noted that:

Our government appoints women to those positions simply to gratify and draw the attention of western donors... The government itself must be committed to issues of gender equality, otherwise, there is really no difference, because women would be unable to change a thing... change would only be visible if the government says so.¹⁰²

Another participant in Cameroon comments that, "...experience has shown that a few women who have managed positions have excelled but some of them have been as dubious as the men. Let many more competent women be made to occupy positions and we shall be able to judge if they were able to deliver the goods or not."¹⁰³ Another participant remarks, "I do not completely agree that there has been no change in our country. You have to understand where we are coming from... Change is always resisted, so it has to be a gradual process. I get the feeling that now is the time for women..."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Interview with Anonymous. SDF MP, Cameroon (Yaoundé, 28 December 2009).

¹⁰³ Kah, 4 January 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Focus group discussion, 4 January 2010.

From the issues analysed and discussed above, a conclusion that can be made is that women's representation must be large enough to obtain a critical mass at the leadership level in order for it to have an impact in any institution in which women serve. It is only a critical mass that would make a meaningful difference in women's governance and, thus, in the political culture of the two countries studied here.

4.3 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter the findings are presented according to each research question. This is done through a comparative presentation of the data in South Africa and Cameroon using tables and charts. Each research question is presented in a comparative graph showing participants' responses from both South Africa and Cameroon. Lastly, the available data has been analyzed and the discussion of the findings – in the form of themes and sub-themes – was accordingly mounted. The main sections in research question 1 consisted of parliament, women caucus, cabinet and female heads of political parties. Those of question 2 are constitution, political parties, national government, NGOs and media. The sections in question 3 are cultural barriers, lack of political leadership skills, lack of support from party and women, lack of ambition and the fear of the unknown. Meanwhile themes which came out of the last research question are development and peace, gender-sensitive policies, women's empowerment, participatory democracy and no difference between male and female leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the key research findings, a conclusion of the study and recommendations. The findings revealed in each research question are a collection of primary and secondary data. Recommendations provided are based on the findings revealed and have been addressed to the Governments of South Africa and Cameroon, women in political leadership, women aspiring to be in political leadership, non-governmental organizations, researchers and the general public. The Chapter begins with presentation of summary of research findings based on the following research questions:

- What is the state of women in political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon after almost two decades of multi-party democracy?
- What structures and mechanisms are in place to promote women's political leadership in South Africa and Cameroon?
- What are the obstacles which women in South Africa and Cameroon face in their quest for advancement in political leadership?
- Can an increased women's political representation in decision-making processes change Africa's political culture? If yes, what are the indicators, if not, what are the reasons?

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.2.1 Summary of findings for Research Question 1

- Although multi-party politics in Cameroon came much earlier than that of South Africa, many women in South Africa are represented in political

leadership positions than in Cameroon. For instance, while there is a steady rise of women's political representation in the South African parliament from 1994 to 2009, ranging from 27% to 45%, that of Cameroon has fluctuated from 1992 to 2009, ranging from 5% to 14%. The highest percentage was achieved in 1988, the period before the introduction of multi-party politics.

- South Africa had a 43% female representation at the ministerial level after the 2009 elections while statistics from a 2010 Beijing Plus 15 report from Cameroon showed a dismal 9.68% of female representation in the same category. In addition, apart from the ministry of scientific research and innovation, women tended to occupy mainly low status ministries which deal with welfare issues such as culture, social affairs, education and health in Cameroon. Meanwhile in South Africa, in addition to some low status ministries such as health and welfare, women also occupy ministries such as defence, public service and administration, international relations, public enterprise, intelligence, justice and constitutional development, science and technology.
- Four political parties led by women currently operate in South Africa. They are the DA by Helen Zille, NFP by Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi, WF by Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo and KISS by Claire Gaisford. They all took part in the country's 2011 local government elections. While in Cameroon, two political parties are currently under the leadership of females. They are the CPP by Edith Walla Kahbang and BIRC by Dang Esther. They both took part in the 2011 presidential elections in Cameroon.
- In the top six NEC positions in the ANC in South Africa, two are occupied by women, while in the top 22 NEC positions of the CPDM, only three are made up of women.

- Women have also held the positions of Acting and Deputy President in South Africa. In the Acting category, were Sankie Mtembie-Mahanyele in 2001, Dr. Mantombazana Tshabalala Msimang, 2003, and Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri in 2008. In 2004 and 2005 was Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who eventually became the first deputy president of South Africa from 2005 to 2008, and Baleka Mbete held the same post from 2008 to 2009. Meanwhile women have never held a portfolio of similar nature in Cameroon.

5.2.2 Summary of findings for Research Question 2

- There are many political structures and mechanisms which promote women political leadership and support their empowerment in South Africa than Cameroon.
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is supreme and has a Bill of Rights second to none, with a range of progressive laws enacted to promote women's rights. In addition, majority of the South African population (elites and masses alike) is aware of the provisions for human rights and gender equality in the constitution. Meanwhile in Cameroon, the constitution is applied alongside customary laws which tend to discriminate against women. Moreover, even the more educated population is not knowledgeable about the constitution with regard to human rights and gender equality issues. The people who are more informed are those working with NGOs and human rights related-agencies.
- The PR electoral system used for national and provincial legislatures in South Africa is one of the mechanisms that have helped in promoting women in political leadership in South Africa. The PBV system utilised for national and municipal elections in Cameroon also has some advantages similar to the PR system: it allows for parties to put up a mixed slate of

candidates which could be minority, ethnic or gender representation (Reynolds *et al.* 2008). However, many political parties in Cameroon do not implement the PBV in a way that accord women the opportunity to be represented in decision-making bodies.

- Majority of political parties in South Africa also support and promote women's representation in leadership as evidenced from the statistics provided in the study. For instance, the voluntary party quotas used in South Africa has contributed positively to women's political representation to the top. The ruling ANC party implemented a 30% gender quota during the 1994 elections and in 2007 adopted a 50/50 position. The party's willingness to implement its decision has seen the number of women's representation in parliament increased with each election. With regard to Cameroon, the ruling CPDM adopted a 25-30% gender quota in 1996, however, its implementation has not been adhered to. Indeed, the number of women represented in parliament from the ruling party is even below the number the party had before quota adoption. For instance, after the 1992 elections in Cameroon, the CPDM had a 26.1% female MPs as compared to 13.7% after the 2007 elections. The situations in both countries show a willingness on the part of the ANC party to respect its commitment to gender issues and the lack of it from the CPDM in Cameroon. Though both countries have signed and ratified regional and international agreements such as CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, Beijing Platform of Action and the Maputo Protocol, the lack of will power in the implementation of these conventions by CPDM shows, it is simply paying lip service to gender issues in Cameroon.
- The Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family in Cameroon established in 2004 and the Ministry for Women, Youths and Disability in South Africa established in 2009 are very important structures used in consolidating gender focal points and gender mainstreaming programmes.

However, the structure of South Africa is equipped with more resources than that of Cameroon. In addition to South Africa, is the gender policy framework document which seems to be lacking in Cameroon.

- There exist also a multi-party women's caucus in South Africa. It consists of all female members of the South Africa's National Assembly and permanent female members of the National Council of Provinces. The caucus helps in highlighting women's perspective, advocating issues of women's political representation and also focus on influencing discussion of women issues within parliament. It also deals with the fight against literacy and poverty (Women's Parliament News, 2008). In Cameroon, there is none existence of a similar structure. According to Adams (2004), a women's caucus was active in Cameroon from 1992 and collapsed after the parliament elections of 1997 due to a limited representation from other political parties. For instance, out of the 10 female MPs, nine were from the CPDM and one from SDF. In addition men always wanted to know what the discussion of the women centred on.
- The women's leagues within political parties have also played a positive role in promoting women in political leadership positions in South Africa. The ANCWL initiated discussion of gender equality which eventually led to the adoption of the 30% and later 50% quota within the mother's body. The objectives of the ANCWL amongst others are to fight for women's emancipation, gender equality and women's rights. Meanwhile the ANCWL's counterpart in Cameroon, the WCPDM believed to lack the necessary political influence within its mother's body as it is charge with the promotion of the social and cultural affairs of the party. Unlike the WCPDM, the ANCWL is also an autonomous body. Its independency was especially displayed in 2007 as it aspired to vote for a female deputy president for the party and was so disappointed when it failed. Moreover, membership in the structure is opened to all ANC

members who are female and above 18 years. On the other hand, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998) and Konde (2005) assert that, membership within the WCPDM is open only to elite women.

- NGOs and women's organisations were seen to have played an important role in women and empowerment issues in both countries. However, the work of NGOs is seen to be more visible in Cameroon than South Africa. Some of these NGOs in South Africa are, Women's Net, GAP, Gender Links and the Progressive Women's Movement. In Cameroon, these are the Network for More Women in Politics and the Association for the Defence of Women.
- Although media is viewed as a biased mechanism when reporting about female politicians as compared to their male counterparts, media has played a role in promoting or instigating women's aspiration in political leadership. It has been used in dispersing information calling for women to register to vote during campaign time in both Cameroon and South Africa. There is also the availability of TV programmes such as "Just for Women," "Calling for Women," and national Radio programmes such as "Women, Families and Society" and "Planet Women" in Cameroon. While in South Africa, there were Soapie such as "Isidingo" and "90 Plein Street".
- There are also international, regional and subregional conventions and declarations which aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment to which South Africa and Cameroon belong. Internationally, these are the 1979 UN CEDAW, 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, Resolution 1325 of the United Nations on Women's Participation in peace Management and Conflict Resolution. Continentally, these are the Declaration of African Union Heads of States on equality between men and women, the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of African women

which South Africa and Cameroon have ratified. Regionally, there exist the 2007 SADC Protocol for gender and development for South Africa and the 2004 platform of ECASS on gender integration in policies and action plans of communities for Cameroon.

5.2.3 Summary of findings for Research Question 3

South Africa and Cameroon women still face barriers related to culture in their quest for advancement into political leadership. This has to do with aspects of patriarchal and gender roles, though the study shows that patriarchy is more ingrained in South Africa than Cameroon. The difference may be seen in relation to culture and traditions; hence what may be considered an obstacle in South Africa may not be placed in the same category in Cameroon. For example, in Cameroon, some tribes do not regard the aspect of a husband beating up his spouse as abuse; instead, they consider it to be "love". Therefore the reason learnt here is that having more women in political decision-making position does not necessarily makes the society less patriarchal.

- Limited leadership skills is also identify as a factor preventing women from climbing the political leader. Some women are said to lack political education and some do not have the self-confidence to speak in public places. Another factor which relate to the case of South Africa only was the inability for some women to express themselves in parliament using English language (Boezak, 1999).
- There is also a lack of support from political parties, family, community and lack of finance. Lack of support from political parties is seen especially with regard to the non-adoption of quota or its lack of implementation. Despite pursuing a career, women are sometimes mothers and wives and need to play all those roles at the same time. Thus a dual or even tripled role may

leave them with limited or no time to practice politics. The lack of support from fellow women is also noted bringing forth the “pull her down” syndrome.

Lack of finance to carry out political campaigns is another big hindrance to women especially when they are contesting at the local government level. In the case of Cameroon, not only do the members of the rural communities expect politicians to “buy” their votes, the rural women also want women politicians to solve communities’ problems immediately. Moreover, due to the patriarchal nature of the society, most women at the rural communities believe they need assurances from their husbands before they can register to vote. Furthermore, donors would prefer to sponsor a male head of political party than a female because they believe that men have greater chances of winning an election than their female counterparts.

- The lack of ambition in a political career further relegates women to low status position in political processes. Some women have the misconceptions that politics is “dirty” and women who venture into it tend to become corrupt, canny or even “loose” because of the system. Therefore a conservative or diehard traditional African woman would not want to be portrayed as such. Moreover, becoming a lead politician in Africa has been regarded as a way of making quick cash and moving away from poverty. However, if one does not play the game of money making very well, then you end up in jail, to the satisfaction of your competitors and enemies. In addition, religious and other belief systems made women to distant themselves from taking part in decision-making bodies which at the end has to do with changing their lives and those of their children.
- There is also the fear of the unknown factor which also contributes to putting women behind the political scene. There is a perception that, political competition led to envy, hatred and killing. More over, harassment,

intimidation and threat faced by many political active female scare them away from the political spectrum. Hence women who ignored these signs are known to be “tough skin”, “iron” lady, powerful women or even regarded as less feminine.

5.2.4 Summary of findings for Research Question 4

- More women at the helm of political power would provide opportunities to empower other women and would also serve as a model to younger women.
- Women were seen to be more concerned with issues of development and peace which would help a continent that has been ravaged by conflicts and civil wars.
- Women were seen to be concerned with gender-sensitive policies which tend to marginalize certain cultures and traditions which have relegated African women to the status of second-class citizens.
- Ultimately, more women's representation in political leadership was seen to be an enhancement into Africa's democratic dispensation and political culture. Though, there was also a lesser thought that male and female play the same game when in politics.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Multi-party politics that was established in many African countries in the 1990s did not only open up the political environment to the formation of hundreds of political parties, it also provided opportunities for women to establish themselves within the democratic processes. Such a development ought to take place within the structures and mechanisms of decision-making. However, historically, the majority of women in Africa have been sidelined from leadership roles, hence; this contributes to their ill-preparedness to take on such roles in contemporary

times. Despite all this, the situation of South African women in politics shows that the concept of leadership in practice is no longer viewed as a male-only domain. So, in comparison, Cameroonian women's political situation is not the same with that of their South African counterparts, though both countries had an inclusive multi-party politics almost at the same time. In fact, Cameroon's multi-partism even came much earlier but seems to have see-sawed between single-partism and multipartism at different times.

The vivid statistical presentation of the state of women's representation in parliament, in cabinet and in political parties in South Africa in this thesis attest to the fact that South African women are indeed moving towards a greater representation in political leadership. The lack of similar political and constitutional provisions as well as adequate structures and mechanisms towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Cameroon is seen as one of the major factors hindering women's access to the power corridors in Cameroonian politics. Moreover, the will power of the ruling CPDM is also very important in the implementation of gender equity issues. Though South Africa may not be seen as a model of gender equality in Africa, its example is worth emulating by Cameroon. However, it has not been all bliss to majority of South African women on equality issues especially those at the grassroots. Majority of these women still face violence, rape and murder on a daily basis especially from those closed to them. Hence, substantive equality should not end in the public sphere or political offices, but should be disseminated to the "private" regarded as home.

Lastly, suffice to say that, using the South African, Rwandan and Liberian cases, the study may safely conclude that an increased in women's political leadership would definitely change the political culture of Africa.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To the government of Cameroon:

Structures and mechanisms to promote women's representation in political leadership positions should be created especially beginning with a gender-sensitive constitution and a gender policy framework as the entry point. Thus, the will of the ruling party is foremost in the implementation of internationally agreed conventions and protocols dealing with gender issues. The representation of very few women within political leadership positions makes it difficult for gender issues to be tabled and serious discussion to take place. This is because the few women represented in parliament also have very little say on issues concerning gender.

The independence of the women's league of the ruling party (the WCPDM) is very important as this will provide it the autonomy to decide on issues affecting women without due interference from the mother body. It has been noted that the current responsibility of this league is basically to campaign and win the votes of ordinary women during elections. This is not good enough as year in, year out, women's situation in Cameroon continues to be the same and this is even creating voter's apathy on the part of the Cameroonian women.

Media freedom and freedom of expression are also very important as this would help NGOs and other political activists to help women not only on economic and social issues but also on political empowerment without the fear of being chased out of the county or being forced to disband.

Intimidation and threats made by male politicians and traditional leaders to active female political leaders is becoming too rampant, and this is scaring women away from politics. This is too bad for young women out there who do not only aspire to follow in the foot steps of prominent female leaders but believe, this is the millennium for women. Moreover, there has been a lot of political apathy on the part of women in Cameroon, and it has been observed that these female

leaders are revitalizing the political environment for women so that they can be involved in the voting process of the country. It is therefore very important that governments put punitive measures to stamp out political violence, threats and intimidation that accompany campaigns and elections in Cameroon.

To the government of South Africa:

The need to provide educational consciousness raising programmes to men and women about women's political representation especially at the local government levels is very important. Though there is a 50/50 quota representation for men and women, the patriarchal nature of the society stands as a stumbling block to women in political representation. Thus, educating the rural communities is very important for a change of mind-set. Also, women at the local government level should also be educated as some still feel that it is enough for women to be deputizing for men.

The voluntary quota system adopted by the ANC party and other parties has played a significant role for equitable political representation with regard to gender. Nonetheless, it is not a very good initiative with respect to a satisfactory representation by women. Some South Africans see this method as a kind of tokenism and misrepresentation of women. Others see it as a compensation for the role that women played during the liberation struggle. In this regard, providing education and skills to deserving women would be a step in the right direction. The inability of women in leadership positions to perform their duties may instead disempower them and serve to discourage aspiring young women. It may potentially reverse some of the achievements that other women have made thus far.

In addition, the Lesotho's style of gender quota where the quota is legislated may be the proper way to go. This is so because the failure of the ANC to win power in the next coming election or in future means that the number of women as found now in political leadership would dwindle severely.

To the Cameroonian woman already in a political leadership position:

The situation of women in Cameroon has not greatly evolved. They are still marginalized and the government has never prioritized women's political participation, though having the first female minister in 1975. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the women who are in the National Assembly do not advocate the accession of women to decision-making posts. There is a need to awaken women's political consciousness so as to enable them to get involved in politics both as voters and as candidates. There should be pressure for the reform of legal texts, and the exigency to enforce them is also required.

To the South African woman already in a political leadership position:

Meticulousness in carrying out political responsibilities is very important. The public's eye is more on female political figures than on their male counterparts. Media reporting is also biased and tends to be favourable to men than it is to women. In addition, young African women look up to outstanding female politicians as role models and for inspiration. Furthermore, the legacy left by a female politician is very important for the public's support of other women in future because the world has the tendency of using the past to judge the present.

It is also very crucial for a female in political leadership position to note that the battle for gender equality and women's empowerment has not been won yet because the majority of women in the rural areas still suffer from inequality and gender violence.

To the African woman detesting a political leadership position:

Gone are the days when political leadership was considered the realm of male-only. It is time women got up and took what rightfully belongs to them. Women have the tendency of complaining about social, cultural and even economic injustice. But, year in and out, they still sell their birthright by voting men into power. Though there are few men out there who genuinely take issues of women

at heart, it is a fact that women's issues and perspectives are better handled by women themselves. Furthermore, the problems faced by women would not be solved by their apathy in politics but by their standing up for themselves.

To the NGOs and other feminist groups in Cameroon and South Africa:

Advocacy and lobbying strategies aimed at political parties is very important because they are the gatekeepers to women's representation in government.

There is a need for the launch of an education campaign as a measure to increase the level of understanding, support and activism for gender justice.

The need to employ strategies aimed at communities where sexism towards female leadership is still very problematic.

To the academic world:

Due to insufficient funds in conducting this research, a broad spectrum of population could not be included in the study. More research needs to be done especially on a quantitative approach in order to generalize the findings. The researcher has observed that more research needs to be undertaken to ascertain whether an increased women's political representation at leadership positions influence voter's behaviour during election processes.

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- MIJERE, N. Professor of Sociology and Gender studies, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. Mthatha, 17 May 2010.
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ONLINE CORRESPONDENCE

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NGANJE, I. F. 2012. Researcher. Institute for Global Dialogue. 5 January 2012.

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Appendix A



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPH
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
MAFIKENG CAMPUS

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
School of Post Graduate and Research

Department of History, Politics, Peace Studies and International Relations

Cell: +27 82 7433 173

Email: glamaasco@yahoo.com

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PART A

Dear Sir/Madam,

Invitation to participate in a Research Project

I am undertaking a research on "African Women in Political Leadership: A Comparative Study of Cameroon (1992-2011) and South Africa (1994 -2011)" at North West University, Mahikeng Campus. The study's focus is on women in parliament, cabinet and leadership positions in political parties.

May I appeal to you to complete the informed consent form and questionnaire? It will not take more than 15 minutes. By means of these questionnaire, you are invited to supply your personal particulars; however, if you do not feel comfortable disclosing your identity, your anonymity is guaranteed.

It is very important that you fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate.

The questionnaire comprises of open-ended questions to which you are asked to give your objective as well as subjective responses on the dotted lines. Additional pages may be included if the need arises.

Your contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

Thanking you in advance for your precious time.

Yours sincerely

Gladys Manyi ASHU

PART B

The purpose of the study and the extent to which I will be involved has been explained in a language which I understood. I reservedly agree to take part in it voluntarily.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time at any stage at my own will.

Designation:..... Signature:

Signed at (Place) On (date)

Appendix B



Cercle des Filles et Femmes Actives pour l'amélioration des conditions socio-économiques des jeunes filles et des femmes
Créée en 2007 et enregistrée sous le numéro CE/GP/30/07/22116

DATE 30 of October 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Ref. N° cf98/DEL/SEC/09
Sub: Invitation letter

Dear Sir / Madam,

This is to certify that *Ms Gladys M. Ashu*, from Department of Political Studies, Walter Sisulu University

Is invited to stay in Cameroon from December 2009 to January 2010 to interview women and men parliamentarians, women in leadership position in political parties, women in government or cabinet and NGOs advocating for women to be represented in politics.

Ms Gladys M. Ashu is undertaking research on "African Women in Politics: A Comparative Study of South Africa (1994-2007) and Cameroon (1960-2007)" for a Doctorate at North West University.

Kindly note, that LADIES CIRCLE is satisfying to welcome and work with Ms Gladys M. Ashu in Cameroon.

If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to contact me at the numbers mentioned below.

Thanking you,

Sincerely yours

The Coordinator
Mrs Anne Pelagie YOTCHOU

Phone : (+237) 22 04 81 83
Mobile : (237) 75 48 42 25
Email : pelagie_y@yahoo.fr

CEFAP/LADIES CIRCLE : Un groupe de filles et des femmes engagées pour contribuer à l'encadrement de la jeune fille vulnérable et la promotion d'une collaboration inter générationnelle dans les mouvements de femmes pour un leadership féminin plus positif et durable dans une société qui prend en compte la dimension genre.

Leadership, Women's Human Rights, Gender, Sustainable Development, Health, Education, Environment

Rue Bivem Assi BP 33630 Yaoundé - Cameroun
Tél : (237) 22 04 81 83 (237) 75 48 42 25
Email : cefap97@yahoo.fr

Appendix C

10 SEP-2009(THU) 10:56

P 002/002

Tshwane (Pretoria) Office

Physical:

Block C, Brooklyn Court, Venie Street,
New Mucklenzuck, Tshwane (Pretoria)

Postal:

PO Box 1797, Brooklyn Square 0075
Tshwane (Pretoria) South Africa
Tel: +27 12 345 9500/02
Fax: +27 12 460 0898
E mail: iss@issafrika.org



www.issafrika.org

VAT No: 473 0129 782

Non-Profit Reg No: 005-981 NPO

A Non-Profit Trust, Reg No: T1922/91

Executive Director: Dr Jakkie Cilliers
Chairperson of the Council: Dr Salim Ahmed Sami
Trustees: Sethy Barwa, Lucy Maule, Jakkie Cilliers

10 September 2009

To: Gladys Ashu
Lecturer/ Acting HOD
Pol.Studies
WSU

RE: INTERVIEWS FOR PHD RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Miss Ashu,

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS-Pretoria Office) is pleased to invite you to conduct your interviews with researchers working on your field of interest. A substantial number of our senior staff is available to assist you in your research project. We are also delighted to advise you that our library will remain accessible to you during your time at the institute. Should you need further information or assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

David D. Zounmenou (Ph.D)
Senior Researcher/African Security Analysis Programme



Cape Town Office: E-mail: capetown@issafrika.org • Tel: +27 21 451 7211 • Fax: +27 21 461 7210
Addis Ababa Office: E-mail: addisababa@issafrika.org • Tel: +251 11 372 4720/1/2 • Fax: +251 11 373 4719
Nairobi Office: E-mail: nairobi@issafrika.org • Tel: +254 20 271 3160/1 • Fax: +254 20 271 1063

Appendix D

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
School of Initial Professional Education of Teachers
Department of Humanities Education
English Unit

Private Bag X1, WSU Mthatha 5117 Eastern Cape
South Africa. Tel: (047) 502 2416. Fax (086) 517 3166
E-mail: kgauwe@webmail.co.za or cchaka@wsu.ac.za

Reference No.

26 April 2012

To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that I've proofread, edited, corrected, and where necessary, revised Mrs Gladys Manyi Ashu's PhD thesis draft. Her thesis was entitled "African women in political leadership: A comparative study of Cameroon (1992-2011) and South Africa (1994-2011)."

Yours sincerely



CP Chaka (Dr) (English Unit Coordinator)