

Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2021 30 ECTS
Faculty of Landscape and Society

Female Perceptions of Women in Politics in Kenya

Purity Wangechi Lund
International Relations

“The default is men”

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, is the international gateway for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Established in 1986, Noragric's contribution to international development lies in the interface between research, education (Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes) and assignments.

The Noragric Master's thesis are the final theses submitted by students in order to fulfil the requirements under the Noragric Master's programmes 'International Environmental Studies', 'International Development Studies' and 'International Relations'.

The findings in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of Noragric. Extracts from this publication may only be reproduced after prior consultation with the author and on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation contact Noragric.

© Purity Wangechi Lund, November 2021

Puritywangechi080gmail.com

Noragric

Department of International Environment and Development Studies

The Faculty of Landscape and Society

P.O. Box 5003 N-1432 Ås Norway

Tel.: +47 67 23 00 00

<https://www.nmbu.no/fakultet/landsam/institutt/noragric>

Declaration

I, Purity Wangechi Lund, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Ruth Haug for her unwavering support, patience and insightful comments throughout the process of writing this paper.

This research would be nothing without the Kenyan Women who shared their time, thoughts and experiences with me.

I do wish to also thank my family and friends for showing understanding and compassion while I was working to finish my master's degree.

However, the person that really kept me afloat for the past year is my husband. Svein Are Lund remained steadfast in his faith in me, even when mostly I felt lost. He pushed me to the finish line with his steadfast support. It meant the world to me, and I am eternally thankful.

Abstract

In Kenya, women are significantly underrepresented in elected political leadership, with the women representation in elected bodies of government still below the 30 per cent threshold.

This qualitative study evaluates females' perceptions of women in Kenyan politics. The study concerns issues on voting, perception of female leadership and challenges to women's political participation. It highlights the challenges women face as politicians and voters. It explores how women are bound by patriarchal structures and power imbalances within political parties and society. It also explores how some of the Kenyan cultures have perpetuated violence towards women and continue to impede the realization of gender equality.

Although politics has been male dominated, what emerges from the findings of this study is that women wish to vote for women, but many female voters do not vote due to the challenges of exercise their democratic right. Women understand that women need empowerment both within the political field and within the family and society at large. They see a need for politics to include women to fight for women's issues and an equal society. Women see women as capable and strong candidates in their own rights.

The study employs the viewpoints of feminist and African feminist theory, and more narrowly empowerment theory. This theoretical framework gives the opportunity for marginalized voices to tell their own stories in their own words. The target group of this study was women, and through their voices analyse and conceptualize female experiences of political participation in Kenya.

List of Abbreviation

UN United Nation

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

IDEA International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

NDI National Democratic Institute

MYWO Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation

USAID United States Agency for International Development

CREAW Centre for Rights Education and Awareness

FGM Female Genital Mutilation

IPU Inter Parliamentary Union

GBV Gender Based Violence

NSD Norwegian Centre for Research Data

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	3
1.1 Problem statement - The case of Kenya.....	4
1.2 Research questions.....	4
2.0 Literature on women and Kenyan politics	5
2.1 Historical background.....	5
2.2 On Kenyan politics	6
2.3 Patriarchy as a barrier for women political participation in Kenya	7
2.4 Violence as a barrier to women political participation in Kenya.....	8
3.0 Theoretical Framework.....	10
3.2 African Feminism Theory.....	12
3.3 Women’s empowerment theory.....	13
4.0 Methodological Approach	14
4.1 Employing feminist research methods.....	15
4.2 Study area and the sampling process	15
4.7 Data analysis	18
4.8 Safety and Ethical Considerations	19
4.9 Positionality	20
4.10 Challenges/Limitations	20
5.0 Findings and discussion.....	21
5.1 What women have to be.....	22
5.1.1 Women have to be strong and courageous.....	22
5.1.2 Women have to work hard and give themselves to leadership	23
5.1.3 Women have to play the political game as men.....	24
5.2 Women’s perceptions of female politicians.....	24
5.2.1 Female politicians as protectors and mothers	25
5.2.2 Female politicians as a disappointment.....	26
5.3 The default is men.....	27
5.4 Obstacles faced by female politicians and voters	28
5.4.1 Violence against women	29
5.4.2 Shaming of female politicians.....	30
5.4.3 Family interference and violence while voting.....	31
5.5 How to support female politicians	32

5.5.1 Empowering the society.....	32
5.5.2 Empowering women	33
5.5.3 Supporting women financially	34
5.5.4 Political party support	34
5.6 Gender matters when voting	35
6.0 Conclusion	38
7.0 References.....	40
Appendix A.....	49
Interview Guide for Female Perceptions of Women in Politics in Kenya	49
Appendix B	51
Mind map of coded themes.....	51

List of Tables

Table 1- Summary of demographics	17
--	----

1.0 Introduction

The United Nations “Beijing declaration, and platform for action” recognizes the benefits of equal participation and women empowerment. (United Nations, 1995, p. 123) Times and again the United Nations has highlighted the importance of equal participation of both men and women in democratic decision-making processes, to better reflect the composition of the whole society. (UN Millennium Project, 2013, p. 104-109) On Women’s Day 8. March 2021 the UN Women chief again reminded the world that the “exclusion of women in decisions that affect their lives is “bad governance (and) should not be allowed.” (United Nations, 2021)

Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 (SDG5, SDG16) of the United Nations focuses on the promotion of a peaceful and inclusive society, by empowering women to participate actively in decision-making and policymaking. The SDGs also recognize political participation as a fundamental right of women, and advocates for the establishment of effective and equitable institutions, and access to justice for all people. (UN, 2021)

While SDG 5 aims to change years of discrimination, poverty, inequality, and all forms of violence against women and girls, SDG 16 seeks to change underlying social norms by securing inclusive societies where women and men are equal, through equitable participatory access to decision-making and the establishment of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at every level.

Gender equality work, women's empowerment, and equal political representation are deeply entrenched in democracy and human rights. “A truly democratic society is one in which all human rights are respected and protected.” (Gallagher 2008, p. 2) Paxton, Kunovich & Hughes (2007, p. 268) emphasize how democracies should be transparent in guiding women to work within the system to attain power.

According to the Democracy Index (The Economist, 2021), democracy has deteriorated worldwide due to the measures taken by governments to address the Covid-19 pandemic. However, already before the pandemic, the world was facing threats to democracy in what is called a "third wave of autocratization." Especially Europe, the Americas, and India are facing the threats of autocratization, and specifically at values such as freedom of expression and the rule of law. (Lührmann, et al., 2019, p. 5).

Africa has a long history of leaders who are trying to stay in power and expand their scope and control of the state. (Kamau, 2010, p. 64) Between 1975 and 2018, Africa experienced a rising

trend in democracy, and many nations abandoned autocracy to become democratic. (IDEA 2019, p. 77) The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) describes the present situation of democracy in Africa as fragile. Just as in other parts of the world, Africa is suffering from autocratization and more authoritarian regimes. (IDEA, 2021, p. 5)

1.1 Problem statement - The case of Kenya

Gender inequality is a major challenge in Africa, and Kenya is not an exception. Kenya has a patriarchal history of male domination. (Kamau, 2010, p. 11) A patriarchal culture where violence towards women's political candidates is common includes threats, violence, sexual violence, and assigned gender roles. These are issues that continue to mar the realization of gender equality in Kenya. (NDI, 2018, p. 38-41)

According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2020), Kenya's political empowerment between men and women ranked number 85 out of 153 nations, while on all issues regarding the gender gap Kenya was ranked 109 out of 153 countries. This shows there is a significant gap in gender equality that has yet to be addressed. (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 13 & 207)

Politically, women in Kenya are still underrepresented, while the last general election saw a slight increase in the number of women in elected and decision-making positions, the number of women in politics is still below 30 percent. (NDI, 2018, pg. 36) As has been the case since the Kenyan independence in 1963 women's participation in electoral politics has been limited to supporting male politicians. (Kasomo, 2012, p. 57)

1.2 Research questions

My research is an exploration of different women's views and perceptions on women who take the bold step into Kenyan politics.

In this study, I address the following three research questions:

- a. What are the female perceptions of women in politics, concerning voting and challenges of political participation in Kenya?
- b. How does society norms and culture shape the image of a female politicians in Kenya?
- c. To what extent and how do women support female politician in Kenya?

2.0 Literature on women and Kenyan politics

The following chapter will review literature related to my research questions, by exploring academic texts on women in Kenya as they relate to politics, power structures, and women's positions in Kenya society. By exploring how women's position in society either encourages or demoralizes their participation in politics. Forces that keep "women in their place" within the Kenyan society seems often to be patriarchal in nature that shapes every aspect of "cultural, social, political, economic decision making, leadership models, religious beliefs and educational practices." (Bahlienda, 2015, p. 16)

2.1 Historical background

Women in Kenya have historically worked together collectively, steadily bargaining for their space in society through groups called "chamas." (Kitetu, 2010, p. 1) Chamas refers to groups where women meet to gain social support and mobilize resources that mainly empower women. Through these avenues issues that directly affect women in politics, social life, and finances are often discussed. (Kitetu, 2010, p. 3) Despite chamas-groups existing for a long time, they cannot claim to have achieved that much over the years in the field of politics. These groups mainly concentrate on liberating women financially and have slowly become the main source of short and small loans for women in Kenya, but little is known of how they advance the political participation of women in Kenya. (Mwobobia, 2016, p. 4)

Women working together dates to the colonial days when women were part of the organizations that fought the colonial British in Kenya. An example of women in Kenya fighting political battles comes from the fight for independence. In the rebellion of Harry Thuku in 1920, the bloody battle ended the life of Mary Nyanjiru who led the women and directly confronted the colonial government demanding for his release. (Wipper, 1989, p. 17) Even though women fought alongside men to abolish the colonial rule, after independence, the first Kenyan Parliament (1963-69) had no women elected or nominated. (Bosire, 2017, p. 9)

Another example is the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO), a national grassroots women's organization that was formed in the early 1950s, initially started as a welfare organization during the colonial period. (Wipper, 1975) The organization became a turning stone for many women of all levels, not just the elite but even the rural women for providing a safe space for women to come and discuss current affairs, learn skills such as child welfare, income generation, basket work, pottery, and many other skills that were considered important to learn. Through this organization, women had women leaders to represent them in

higher political spheres that they could not reach without organizing themselves. (Lutomia, Sanya & Rombo, 2016, p. 321-324)

2.2 On Kenyan politics

Right after Kenya gained independence in 1964 Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta spoke to the East African Women's Seminar, promising a partnership between men and women. Promising to listen to the women's voices. (Wipper, 1975, p. 111) Then how far has Kenya come in the last 58 years since Kenyatta's promise, when it comes to listening to Kenya's women?

According to a report conducted by USAID in Kenya, women represent only 22 percent of elected members and 18 percent of nominated positions in the National Assembly, yet they are only able to chair three out of 27 committees. (USAID, 2020) The National Assembly as the elected body is responsible for making laws, policies, distribution of state resources among others. (Parliament of Kenya, 2021)

Anyango, Alupo & Opuku (2018, p. 1508) notes that "the promulgation of 2010 Constitution of Kenya was a major milestone in the fight towards gender equality." The 2010 Constitution aimed at giving women fundamental rights and freedoms such as the right to participate in democratic processes. One affirmative action in the constitution was the aim of reducing the gender imbalance in leadership by deciding that no more than two-thirds of the members in elected or appointed bodies should be of the same gender. (Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) 2017) (NDI, 2020)

However, the implementation of this constitutional rule is far from fulfilled. During Kenya's 2013 general election the national assembly that holds 349 seats attracted 1908 aspirants of which only 197 were women, and only 69 women were elected. While at the senate chamber only 16 out of 67 women were elected to represent the counties. (Anyango et al., 2018, p. 1508).

According to Kabira & Kamari-Mbote (2013, p. 183) "male political privilege" is a fitting term to describe the political scene in Kenya. At the general election in 2013, female political aspirants experienced structural violence by being locked out of the nomination process while being pushed to the background, while men were given preference to leadership. On the grassroots level, many women lived in fear of violence and did not exercise their voting rights for fear of experiencing violence such as wife battery and threats of disownment for not voting the candidate chosen by the husband. (Kabira & Kamari-Mbote, 2013, p. 198-201)

NDI notes that "although international law and the Constitution have set a firm foundation for inclusion in government, Kenya's national legislature has persistently failed to translate the principle of equality into a body of binding laws, regulations, and policies." (NDI, 2018, p. 42) The report notes that the "the performance of women candidates in the 2017 general elections was an improvement from 2013," but that the participation of women candidates is an uphill battle as only 6.9 percent of candidates were women. (NDI, 2018, p. 42)

Kenyan politics are competitive in nature. As Mueller (2011, p. 105) asserts, the Kenyan political attitude is that the "winner takes it all." Political power and wealth are intertwined, and gender equality and representation are not high on the agenda. (Mueller, 2011, p. 105) Due to the competitive nature of politics in Kenya, the cost of running a political campaign is expensive as one must factor in the campaign expenditure. Kamau mentions that with the gendered dimension of Kenyan wealth distribution, women face challenges to raise enough funds to compete with the men. (Kamau, 2018, p. 78) Even greater then is the loss of an election that comes at a high economic cost, as political loss means losing control of the national state resources. (Mueller, 2011, p. 105)

2.3 Patriarchy as a barrier for women political participation in Kenya

Patriarchy is seen as a long-standing obstacle to women's development and advancement in Kenya. (Kamau, 2010, p. 11) Walby (1990, p. 20), a social feminist quoted by Sultana, (2011, p. 3) describes "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." Sultana (2011) continues to say that to society, patriarchy is an extension and exercise of male domination over women and children in the family, realized in institutions and systems. (Sultana, 2011, p. 3) Bahlienda (2015, p. 16) writes that "patriarchy is the male hierarchical ordering of society," while Ndeda also defines patriarchy as "*a social system in which the male is the primary authority figure central to social organization and the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property, and where fathers hold authority over women and children.*" (Ndeda, 2014, p. 224)

A study carried out in Kenyan primary schools by Mburu & Nyagah (2012, p. 107) highlights how children early in life are socialized into stereotypical gender roles. Men are in schoolbooks portrayed as being outside the home in paid occupation and leadership roles, while women are portrayed in a home and family context.

In Kenya, men possess power, especially in the household, and make decisions on the distribution of resources. This impacts women's ability to make decisions on matters relating to their own lives. Women are expected to follow, must often rely on the decisions of men, and consult men before undertaking any major life decisions. (Musali, 2017, pg. 183)

Maseno & Kilonzo (2011, p. 52) quotes Kahindi (2002:39) on the fact that 90 percent of the food in Kenya is produced by women, while men control 90 percent of the output.

Patriarchy is responsible for tensions in the institutions of society, with unequal power, discriminatory cultural norms, and economic inequities that deny women human rights and perpetuate violence. (United Nations, 2006, p. 28).

Besides power imbalance between men and women, patriarchy also impacts social perceptions. Although Kenyans approved of women's participation in politics, the nature of how the public discusses female politicians relegates them to the domestic realms while the men are seen as public leaders. (Bouka, Berry & Kamuru, 2019, p. 324) The socio-cultural structure of gender roles that portray women as inferior to men, patriarchal parties, economic costs of political campaigns, violence towards women, are some of the main factors that hinder women's participation in politics and public life. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 328; Kamau, 2010, p.11)

Men's dominant cultures compel women to behave in a way that does not upset the man and rob women of an opportunity to fully participate in society. They are expected to stay quiet while the men speak and are not supposed to challenge the man's decision. (Ebila, 2017, p.146)

The voting culture among women in Kenya is also influenced by the mindset of patriarchy, as it implies the institutions of male rule and privilege and entails female subordination. (Ndeda 2014, p. 224) Moreover, voters are more lenient towards male politicians than women. Women must continually prove that they are good wives and housewives before they are elected. As the capacity of a good housewife is a precondition for being a trusted political leader. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 324)

2.4 Violence as a barrier to women political participation in Kenya

Culture in Kenya is responsible for several violations towards women, such as domestic violence, unequal access to property, forced marriages, and FGM. (Ambani, 2016, p. 132)

Despite the adoption of the declaration on the elimination of violence against women. ([A/RES/48/104](#)) Women still faces all kind of violence in private life or public life. (United Nations, 2006) UN chief Mr. Guterres (UN, 2021) pointed out, societies need to put in

place laws and policies to support women in leadership and high-level positions, as well as tackle violence against women. As Mr. Guterres states “in our male-dominated world, equal power will not happen by itself.” (UN, 2021)

In a study conducted on sexism, harassment, and violence against women parliamentarians, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) notes that virtually all women parliamentarians worldwide have experienced some form of violence during their work. Approximately one-third have suffered economic violence, one-quarter some type of physical violence, and one-fifth some form of sexual violence, and one-eighth have suffered psychological violence. (IPU, 2016, p. 3)

In Kenya, violence towards women is common during and after elections. The form of violence experienced by women in Kenya does not discriminate whether you are a politician or a civilian. As reported by Reuters, a Kenyan female politician, Esther Passari was a target of violence during the 2017 general election, when she was locked in a room by a group of men demanding payment for her to continue with a rally that she had already planned for. (Wesangula, 2017)

According to the United Nations Secretary of State's report (2020), male violence against women and girls reflects deep-rooted norms and stereotypes that excuse male behaviour by controlling women's agency. Violence has far-reaching consequences to women's health and lives, their families, their communities, and society as a whole. (United Nations, 2006, p. 4-5)

Women in politics in Kenya experience several forms of violence, for example, gender-based violence (GBV), political violence, and psychological violence through harassment, intimidation, physical harm, coercion, financial pressure. This takes place in homes, political and public spaces. This has far-reaching consequences on their confidence, and their ability to choose to participate in public life. (Bosire, 2017, p. 28-29)

Women also experience family interference during voting since women are pressured by their partners through violence or psychological abuse in how to vote. A notable example is during the 2013 general elections when violence erupted in several parts of the country and accounts of Gender-based violence (GBV) were reported on election day. (Kabira & Kamari-Mbote, 2013, p. 19 & 27)

Mueller (2011, p. 102) mentions that political violence during and after an election is common in Kenya as it is used as a tool to gain or retain power. Kamau who writes about women in politics in Kenya, mentions the female politician "Christine Mango", who needed a security team to protect her from possible physical attacks and even more audacious violations such as kidnapping on the eve of party nomination." (Kamau, 2008, p.71)

As I have outlined, women in Kenya face challenges both as politicians and voters. Structural issues such as male dominance in the community and within the political field make political participation risky for women. Although the Kenyan Constitution intends to work towards gender equality, the implementation of for example the two-third gender rule is not fulfilled. It is against this background that this qualitative research seeks to explore Kenyan women's perception of women in politics and political participation

3.0 Theoretical Framework

This chapter uses theoretical frameworks and concepts to build a foundation for analysis and interpretation of the main ideas presented during the research. It will justify, analyse and define feminist theory, African feminism theory, and empowerment theory connection to the empowerment of women quest to participate in politics.

3.1 Feminist theory

Feminist and empowerment theory can be an important approach in issues of human rights and social issues. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p. 151) Gender equality and women's empowerment are key concepts in this thesis. This chapter will therefore start with a discussion on feminist theory and African feminist theory specifically, followed by a discussion on the theory of empowerment. Feminist- and empowerment theories focus on the problems of domination, subordination, and discrimination. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p.151-162)

Feminism can be defined as "movement of awareness that emerged from the assumption that women are suffering from discrimination." (Pertiwi et al., 2019, p. 114) This assumption that women are discriminated against gives a reason to fight back. (Pertiwi et al., 2019, p. 114) Wolski (1991, p. 70) defines feminism as "both a set of coordinated ideas and a practical plan of action rooted in a critical awareness by women of how a culture controlled in meaning and action by men, for their own advantage; oppresses women and dehumanize men."

The earliest feminist movement focused on reducing patriarchal stigma about a woman's position in society and began between 1550-1700 in England. (Pertiwi et al., 2019, pg. 8) Concerns of women's educational, occupational, political, economic, and reproductive rights were issues of the early woman's movement. (Schirmacher, 2010, pg. xiv)

Feminist theory emerged among feminists active in the New Left and the civil rights movements in the 1960s and 70s. (Grant, 1993, p. 17) Grant, in her book on the core concepts

of feminism, comments that it was radical feminist organizations that were mostly concerned about theory building. Feminist theory was invented in a conversation between feminism and the political Left, among people already rooted in academia. (Grant, 1993, p. 18) Radical feminism was also coloured by the cultural radicalism of the sixties, both on issues of music, culture, and lifestyle, and also from hardcore left-wing groups such as the Black Panthers. (Grant, 1993, p. 18)

Liberal feminists had no feminist theories of their own, as they were already rooted in the ideas and theories of liberalism. They simply wanted society to acknowledge and treat women as rational, and by classical liberal theory, as human beings. (Grant, 1993, p. 19) The liberal belief is that everyone with a rational mind has the capacity to understand the principles of morality, and therefore the ability to choose for themselves; hence the same rights should be extended to women. (Wendell, 1987, p. 69; Tong & Botts, 2017, p. 24) While not being focused on political transformation, liberal feminists "sought ways that women could gain more individual power to be more equal to men." (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p.153)

Grant argues that radical and liberal feminism converged on themes that became central to the theory of feminism, ideas on women, women's experiences, and personal politics. (Grant, 1993, p. 19) According to Bates & Hoeffler (2012, p. 323-338), feminist theorists problematize the constructions of gender by society by focusing on the hierarchical relations of power that inform society norms and values and also by focussing on women's experiences.

Women as a category became both foundational and contested within feminist theory. The category of women derived from a radical notion that women were oppressed not because of class or race but because of their womanhood. (Grant, 1993, p. 20)

Feminist theories have taken many shapes, but this study will use some of the radical feminist concepts as a framework for discussion. Radical feminism compares patriarchy with a male-dominated social system. In this system, men have power over women because women are devalued. Patriarchy is described by "paternal dominance, hierarchy, competition and power." (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2010, p. 46) Radical feminism sees patriarchy as the underlying foundation of inequalities between men and women. This gives men social, political, and economic privileges over women. Radical feminism is a political struggle that seeks to make this male dominance a past thing. (Daly, 1978)

Also important to the discussions of the findings in this study are ideas from liberal feminism on individual empowerment of women and women's positions as thinking actors with a right to choose for themselves.

Okin (1989) argues that the gender structure within families unjustly distributes benefits and burdens among the man and women. She conceptualizes power as a "critical social good." Social goods are things like work, power, economic security, and opportunities for self-development. There are socially constructed inequalities in the distribution of these goods. (Okin, 1989, p. 136) A feminist goal would then be to redistribute also social goods in a more equal way.

As feminism has evolved, so it has been acknowledged that women are individuals within different social settings and with different personal stories. "All inequality is not created equal," said Crenshaw. (UN Women, 2020) Coining the concept of intersectionality, she showed how people's social identities overlap, which can create compounded experiences of discrimination. Inequalities are often thought of separately, like racial inequality or inequalities based on gender, class, or sexuality. (UN Women, 2020)

3.2 African Feminism Theory

Despite the diversity of feminism, it has been criticized for reflecting white middle-class women's concerns. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p.154) Therefore bringing in the perspective of African feminism might shed light on the issues discussed by the women in this study.

African feminists have sometimes thought of feminism as problematic and have mentioned several issues, but the prominent ones seem to stem from the notion that feminism does not comprehend the context of the African culture. Consequently, African feminism offers an alternative to questioning the cultural, historical, political and economic context influencing the study of African women hence resisting the universal notions of western ideas. (Blay, 2008, p.67) According to Blay (2008, p. 67-68), African feminism rests in the notion that women liberation is an aspect of human liberation.

Mekgwe (2010, p.189) maintains that over the years, literature by women in Africa and the African Diaspora has inspired vigorous debates that have led to the evolution of African feminist theories. The same writer notes that Africa is a complex and changing society and that African societies have endured through historical experiences and adopted new cultures. An important aspect is how colonialism affected the construction of the concept of gender.

Mekgwe (2010) asks for a theoretical framework to "accommodate contemporary African identities." (Mekgwe 2010, p. 193)

In a debate on the specific character of African feminism, Nnaemeka (2003) argues for feminism built on negotiation with and nearness to shifting global and local urgencies. For her, African feminism is "a performance, and an altruistic act. African women do feminism; feminism is what they do for themselves and for others." (Nnaemeka, 2003, p. 378)

African feminism seeks to avoid what Christine Oppong (in Blay, 2008) calls the "neo-sexist trap: the study of women, by women, for women." Instead, it attempts to examine experiences, stories and observations from both genders when analysing an issue to create a more holistic study of Africans by Africans. (Blay, 2008, p. 69) In a discussion on African feminism, Kolawole (2002, p. 92) argues that historical and cultural aspects are important in addressing gender in Africa. "Feminism is not undermined by the existence of diversity." (Kolawole, 2002, p. 96) Instead, she argues for an inclusive approach as many policymakers in the African setting are men. Both genders then are important in the elimination of various forms of oppression towards women.

3.3 Women's empowerment theory

Cornwall & Rivas (2016, p. 343) contend that women's empowerment became a beacon for confronting social changes within unequal power relations between women and men.

Turner & Maschi (2015, p. 152), in an overview of feminist and empowerment theory, note that empowerment "has become an essential part of feminist theory." Quoting Lee (2001), they argue that empowerment theory "seeks to increase the personal, interpersonal and political power of oppressed and marginalized populations and individuals." Turner & Maschi (2015, p. 152) notes that among writers on women's empowerment, there is some discussion whether it is a theory or a process.

Empowerment as a process is reshaping society, rewiring women both from within and outside by examining their position, confronting and challenging societal norms. As a process, it moves women to a place where they have "intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength, solidarity and sense of not being alone." (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 405; Cornwall, 2016, p. 345)

Consequently, Cornwall & Rivas (2015, p. 405) assert that empowerment is a process rather than a destination. Examples of empowerment are positive actions, policies, legal changes, and

microfinance initiatives targeted towards women. Such initiatives should be considered enabling factors and that clear obstacle for women to empower themselves. Kamruzzaman (2020, p. 44), who cites Malhotra et al. (2002), argues that empowerment is a process that involves many stages where the subject in question is actively involved in bringing about the change. This change will affect existing power relations.

Kabeer (1999), writing on the theme of feminism and development priorities, defines *women's empowerment* as the possibility of making "strategic life choices." (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). She argues that to be able to exercise choice, three dimensions need to be in place. Women need both economic, human, and social resources. They need an agency to act with meaning, motivation, and purpose. Altogether, the agency becomes fundamental to the concept of empowerment because it constitutes the processes through which choices are made. Coupled together, resources and agency give the possibilities of achievements. (Kabeer 1999, p. 437-438)

The United Nations identified the importance of empowering women and girls in SDG 5. (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Richardson (2018, pg. 541) highlights these fundamental human rights and notes that women's empowerment is different from that of other groups. Women have problems specific to women. Among these are issues concerning the inequality within the household, the family, and the power relations between men and women. Although measuring empowerment is important, the dimensions vary across cultures and the women within them. Some aspects of empowerment could be more significant for some women than others. For example, in some cultures, freedom of movement may be more (or less) relevant to women's overall empowerment than participation in family decisions. (Richardson, 2018, p. 549)

4.0 Methodological Approach

This qualitative study aimed to lift the perspectives and experiences of Kenyan women as it applies to the research questions. The study needed a methodological approach that guided the conversations onto the subject matter and kept the women free to voice their own opinions. For this purpose, the study used semi-structured interviews. The study was also influenced by the feminist perspectives on power balance and sought to minimise the power imbalance between interviewer and interviewee.

To analyse data, this study uses thematic analysis and a technique of word-counting. The interview subjects were selected using the snowballing sampling method, a purposive sampling technique.

4.1 Employing feminist research methods

The informants for this study are all women. True (2013) writes that the feminist perspective is "a normative position from which to consider alternative world orders." The perspective of feminism within IR focuses on the non-state actors, those who are marginalised, and fresh thinking into world politics. (True, 2013, p. 241) A feminist approach to women's empowerment serves as a lens to understand and discuss topics arising from the interviews. Feminism is an insider perspective, as Crasnow (2014, p. 146) notes, referring to Sandra Harding's feminist standpoint theory. The argument is that people in less privileged social and political locations could have access to information that people in more privileged positions do not. This research would imply that women are the best informants regarding imbalances of power in Kenyan politics.

Bryman lists some of the benefits of a feminist perspective to qualitative research. Employing a qualitative feminist approach through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis gives women an opportunity for their voices to be heard. It also focuses on not objectifying the women in the course of the interview work. Feminist methods also require the researcher to recognise that the power imbalance between the interviewer and the person being interviewed must be considered. (Bryman, 2016, p. 403-404) As a woman interviewing other women, the objective should be to smooth out the power structure within that relationship. However, during the conversations, the general feeling was that the interview flowed collaboratively.

4.2 Study area and the sampling process

The informants for this study are Kenyan women. One driving influence for undertaking this study is that Kenya is my native country, and I wish to engage with issues concerning gender equity for women in politics in Kenya. I wished to explore and understand female perspectives, and an immediate concern then was how to select informants among the 27.05 million women in Kenya. (O'Neill, 2021). Bryman (2016, p. 85-86) writes that the job of a social researcher is to create an effective sampling strategy that is appropriate to the context of the study, study population and research questions.

For this study, the sampling method needed to bring out the diverse opinions of women in Kenyan society, and at the same time, get information relevant to the study topic. Therefore,

purposive sampling seemed a good choice, as it would not be feasible to interview enough women to have a representative selection of women from all of Kenya's diverse societies. The scope of the study is further limited to women living and working in the Nairobi area.

As a method for selecting the study informants, snowballing sampling technique was chosen. *Snowballing* is a purposive sampling technique that allows the researcher to initiate a small group of people relevant to the research questions who then proposes other participants who have experience relevant to the study. (Bryman, 2016, p. 415) As a researcher not living in Kenya, I needed a way to contact possible interviewees in Nairobi for this study. This opportunity presented itself through my internship at The Oslo Centre Norway, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that works with democracy assistance in Kenya. Through two contacts at The Oslo Center in Nairobi, I was in touch with a selection of women, who had a broad knowledge of the political participation gap in Kenya, political parties, human rights issues, women empowerment and democracy building. Their work seemed relevant to this study, as they work to empower women in politics. Therefore, women in contact with The Oslo Centre were candidates likely to have knowledge about the research topic, who then introduced other participants that were willing to participate in the study. The informants resulting from this snowball sampling spanned different age groups, social backgrounds, and economic statuses. Though the sample size was small, a particular variation in background, experiences, and views would be relevant for the study.

One selective criterion was that the women must have a smartphone and have internet access because the interview would take place online through the calling platform WhatsApp. A consequence of this and of gathering interviewees through an organisation like the Oslo Centre seems to have been that my sample of women probably had a higher educational level than the average Kenyan woman. Professionally there was one student, while the rest had a diploma, a bachelor and a master's degree.

Fifteen participants were contacted through text messages or email and invited to participate in the study. These were women aged between 24 and 50 years, from different educational and social backgrounds. The table below documents the participants interviewed with their alias names used in this study's text.

Table 1 - Summary of demographics

Participants	Age	level of education	Occupation
Grace	20-25	Diploma	Journalist
Vivian	20-25	Diploma	Student
Joy	25-30	Bachelor	Development worker
Sofie	25-30	Master	Accountant
Jackie	40-50	Master	Political Advisor
Rose	40-50	Bachelor	Nurse
Eunice	40-50	Master	County congress woman

4.6 Data collection techniques and procedures

The approach for data collection in this study is the semi-structured interview. According to Bryman (2016, p. 488), within feminist research, the unstructured or semi-structured interview method has become prominent. Advantages for this method is advocated to be, amongst others, a higher level of rapport between researcher and interviewee and a focus on a non-hierarchical research relationship. The sensitivity of the topic of discussion required that participants feel safe to answer according to their understanding in a fashion that was not structured. (Bryman, 2016, p. 197-198).

From the broad scope of IR theory, it is worth noting that "international political theory seeks to understand the grounds on which a range of ethical choices and normative preferences in international politics are made." (True, 2013, p. 19) The conversations with the Kenyan women focused on Kenya's politics and sought to explore how ethical and normative values in Kenya affect women's opportunities and full participation in society.

When designing an interview guide, (Appendix A) the questions were classified as introductory questions, with follow-ups questions to probe, specify and clarify. These were open-ended questions, brief and simple. with intentions to give the participants the flexibility to tell their stories.

The participant's procedures for the interview process were initially informed that the interview might take 30 to 45 minutes; however, due to the flexibility in semi-structured interviewing, as Bryman (2016, p. 10) implies, the researcher needs to keep an open mind about what might emerge in the interview situation. Hence the interview often went beyond the 30-45 minutes and sometimes lasted more than an hour. In the end, eight participants were interviewed through voice call.

In the process of the interviews, I aimed to use a conversational tone and the technique of active listening. As Kamau (2010, p. 13) contends, conversational interviews help to spark a dialogue with the interviewee. That helped facilitate the needed dialogue for the data collection. Interviews were held at the time of convenience for the participants.

The interview started with the participant being informed about their role in the study and an explanation about how their data will be protected in accordance with the Norwegian Data Processing Act. The interviews were digitally recorded and stored in a computer for the purpose of transcribing. During the recording and transcribing, only seven out of eight interviews were transcribed due to technical issues with recording one of the interviews.

4.7 Data analysis

The seven interviews that were transcribed contained a large body of information, and in the beginning, it was hard to decide what information was valuable to the research. Bryman (2016, p. 11) writes that data analysis is "fundamentally about data reduction." This process reduces the body of information to a manageable level so that the researcher can understand and interpret it.

The transcripts were coded to let themes and topics relevant to the research be easily identifiable in this research. A *code* is within qualitative research either a word or a short phrase that captures some of the essence or attributes of the data. (Saldana, 2016, p. 4) This research code consisted of single words and short sentences.

A technique of word count was applied to get an overview of the most frequently used words within the texts. (See appendix – word count) Furthermore, to discover patterns within the coded data to be able to categorise it better. As Saldana (2016, p. 6) notes, patterns are recognised among other similarities and differences, frequency, and correspondence. Especially useful when working with the material was the index of often used words and the mind map of themes created from these keywords. This was a back-and-forth process, where

data was continually examined, and the text revisited as new themes and patterns emerged. (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Fundamental to the working and analysis of the text was the concepts of thematic analysis as described amongst others by Braun and Clarke. (2006) *Thematic analysis* is, in their view, a foundational method of qualitative analysis. It is a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78-79). As Bryman says that "repetition is probably one of the most common criteria for establishing a pattern as a theme." (Bryman, 2016, p. 586) However, repetition in itself is not enough to establish a theme as it also should connect to the research questions. (Bryman, 2016, p. 586) Bryman notes that a common critique of coding is that it can result in too much data and the loss of context within the text. (Bryman, 2016, p. 583). This was kept in mind during the process, and the research attempts to anchor themes within the textual framework of the interviews. Some surprising concepts emerged from this process; for example, the sentence "have to be" was repeated by several interviewees and was used by the women to indicate what women have to be as an expectation of society. Initially coded themes were the "lack of support from political parties" and "society perception of women." However, after multiple readings of the transcript, more themes emerged, such as "the default is men," "what women have to be", "Gender matters when voting", and "empowering men".

Data triangulation is a method to be used in this kind of social research. Bryman (2016, p. 386) explains triangulation to involve the use of several sources of data in a study, resulting in greater confidence in findings. This study also employed other data sources, such as a literature review concerning themes of patriarchy, religion, violence, and culture as barriers to women's political participation in Kenya, which contextualises the data extracted from the participants.

4.8 Safety and Ethical Considerations

Women in Kenya face multiple risks regarding political participation, and the safety of the study participants was paramount. A study like this then naturally have to acknowledge the ethical considerations involved.

As a student of NMBU, before collecting any data, a researcher must apply for approval at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). When this application concerning how to protect the participant's privacy and confidentiality is approved, the researcher should inform the participant about this process. The participant also received a consent form with this information by email and text message. A consent to participate in the research was asked again

on the interview recording. It is vital that the participant feel involved in the research study process by giving their consent as it is an opportunity for them to take full responsibility for the information they choose to share. (Bryman 2016, p.131)

Due to the sensitivity of information shared by participants, for example, on the issues of voting, an ethical issue was anonymity. It was important to hide the real identities of the participants. Although Bryman (2016, p. 133) mentions that it is very difficult to guarantee anonymity in study research, it was crucial to assure and uphold confidentiality in this study. Alias names were therefore used to identify the participant data. The data stored is to be destroyed as soon as the study project is complete in accordance with the Norwegian centre for research and data.

4.9 Positionality

Holmes (2020, p. 2) refers to positionality as the stand social researcher chooses to adopt within the study. Research of this kind will therefore not be “objective.” I, the researcher, am a woman born and raised in Kenya, hence I am not an outside observer, but instead this positions me as an inside observer. That I, as a woman, might explore issues that concern other women in my society, that might appear to be invisible to other observers.

Although in my position as an inside observer it was important to stay conscious of my biasness and assumptions during the interviews, by asking open ended questions and not steering the participant to what I already expected. This was a challenge, but it needed to be kept in mind. During the processing and data analysis the motivation was to unravel the data as something new, remain neutral by keeping an open and curious mind, and by always asking the question “why?” By re-reading the text multiple times I committed to understand in depth the different perspectives these women brought to light.

4.10 Challenges/Limitations

Several challenges impacted the research process. The timing of this study was when the whole world went into lockdown, which made travelling almost impossible. The research study area was Kenya, and with travel suspended, it meant collecting data from my own home in Norway. Constraints on data in Kenya meant that video-call was not an option. This restraint is why the sample was limited to eight women, as the interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp calls, not face-to-face.

Another limitation concerning accessibility was that the snowball sampling technique limited the diversity of the interviewed women. The initial contacts were educated women with contacts of women in politics in Kenya and with wide knowledge on gender inequalities in Kenya. Hence the people recommended for the study were mostly women with higher education and some knowledge about the topic of discussion. Therefore, the method was not able to capture the opinions and contributions of women with low social status and lower educational backgrounds.

The online setting was problematic in several ways and became a limitation. A challenge was gaining access to the women who had already agreed to participate in the study. For the timing of the interviews, most of the participants were only available in the late hours of the night due to work and household duties. In the process of setting up the time for the interview, several women chose not to participate. In addition, during some of the interviews, it was difficult to understand what was being said due to poor internet connection and background noise, which demanded many repetitions and calling back and forth. One interview was of such poor quality that transcribing it became difficult; there seven interviews were transcribed among the eight interviewed women.

Bryman (2016, p. 270) argues that observing participants is one of the best-known social research methods because the observer can get the sense of attributes to their natural surroundings. Due to the constraints of this study, observations were not a possibility.

5.0 Findings and discussion

Going into the discussion of the findings, it might be helpful to outline a few hypotheses concerning women's perception of women in politics. A working hypothesis based on the reviewed literature on women in Kenya would be that women are heavily influenced by the norms and expectations of a patriarchal society. We could suspect that the informants' views are coloured and shaped by the expectations that men are better leaders than women. With this assumption, one could also expect that female politicians are held to the norms of the patriarchy, expecting them to be good wives or mothers foremost, and secondarily politicians. A third hypothesis would be that women, because of family pressures and the threats of violence, are less likely to vote for their fellow women and less likely to vote than men.

However, the emerging themes were quite concrete about gender inequalities in Kenya. Central to this study are people's perceptions and attitudes. Clifton and Carrasco (2017, p. 497) argue

that people's perceptions and attitudes are difficult to measure. The issues are subjective, and people experience the world; differently, there is a need to have self-consciousness about feelings and abilities to articulate them. The following selection of quotes and topics, though selected through methodology, are then also necessarily of a subjective nature.

The analysis presented several themes: what women have to be; perceptions of female politicians; the default is men; violence towards women; gender matters when it comes to voting; and lastly, how to support female politicians.

The participants in the interview's believed women were underrepresented in most public offices in Kenya. They described male dominance, lack of finances, lack of support from political parties, society norms and cultures as the main obstacles that women encountered, restricting their ability to participate in the political sector and other leadership positions. The participants understood education and capacity building as empowerment tools for women and society. The following chapter will present and discuss the most important themes that emerged during the interviews.

5.1 What women have to be

In the conversations, ideas on women figured prominently, echoing the feminist idea that women are oppressed simply because they are women. (Grant, 1993, p. 20) The phrase "have to" appeared in several of the interviews. It was almost always connected to what women have to be, have to do, or what is expected of them as individuals. This echoes the liberal feminist view that women should gain more personal power and be equal to men. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p. 153) The following are some of the things mentioned by the participants that women have to be to excel in a world designed for men. (Shvedova, 2005, p. 33) The issue of expectations towards women seems to be one of the most prominent themes emerging from the data.

5.1.1 Women have to be strong and courageous

The female politicians depicted by the participants are expected to be strong and courageous. They are placed with high expectations of strength by daring to participate in politics as aspirants and candidates. Grace: *"And also, you have to be, you just have to be strong and, I don't know, you need a lot of courage to be in Kenyan politics to be a woman."* Joy expanded on the theme of courage. Female politicians are viewed as courageous in character to be able to take up spaces that were originally built for men. Joy: *"I love the braves; we have a couple*

of very brave ones and selfless ones." "I would say they are strong, like having to manage a job that is mostly male-dominated."

As shall be expanded on, the theme of violence in Kenyan politics is one of the main reasons female politicians are viewed as brave. As the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reports, a large portion of women MPs worldwide have experienced violence. (IPU, 2016, p. 3) Also, in a patriarchal society, assigned gender roles designate women to the private sphere while men get public roles. This view has been held by leading Kenyan politicians, describing women as children who need men to lead them. (Kamau, 2010, p. 11-12) These views on female leadership put the woman at a disadvantage from the start when vying for political positions. Courage could be understood as necessary for a woman to break from these norms.

5.1.2 Women have to work hard and give themselves to leadership

The participants indicated that it is expected that women, to venture into politics, must work much harder than men. *"All I know is that we have to work hard, work more and empower more women to get that."*

As Grace voiced during the interview, the participants also mentioned that women must compete for political seats and run for various leadership roles. *Grace: "So we need to work on empowering more women to vie for the seats that are currently available, so that when we have more women in leadership, then it will be easier to fight and promote more bills that support women in parliament."*

Jackie commented on the same theme. *Jackie: "I think that this is what we need because we have to have people who give themselves to leadership. We cannot want to have change and not have people present themselves to be part of it. For me, any woman who wants to run for office, whether you stand a chance or not, I will embrace you"*

Women's political rights have been at the centre of the feminist movement from the very beginning. (Schirmacher, 2010, p. xiv) In throwing themselves into political work, women engaged in politics in Kenya could be said to stand in the line of the radical feminists of the 1960s- and 70s in challenging systemic barriers rooted in tradition. (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2010, p. 48) Nnaemeka argues that in an African setting, feminism is action, what women do for themselves and others. (Nnaemeka, 2003, p. 378) The women in the interview show great interest in enabling and empowering women into political action. Women presenting

themselves and joining politics could be seen as an empowerment action of confronting the unequal power relationships within Kenyan society. (Cornwall, 2016, p. 342)

5.1.3 Women have to play the political game as men

One participant, an active member of politics, described politics as a game that needs to be played. She argues that women should be prepared to play on this court as well as men do by applying every tactic available to men.

Jackie "You have to play football. So, if men are stealing, so women should also learn how to steal. So, why should we be the ones who want to do different things whereas they are 13 and you are probably two women, and you don't want to steal? Do you understand?"

Interviewer: "I understand. It's not a fair game, basically."

Jackie: "Yes, it's not a fair game. If it's not a fair game, then you have to apply every tactic that you can to be able to succeed. "Jackie: "Systemic challenges include political parties, they are male-dominated, they are male-owned, so that makes it a challenge."

According to Shvedova (2005, p. 33), women are expected to conform to male-dominated work patterns because political life is organized around male norms and values. This holds true for what the participant voiced, that women should be prepared to play political games the same way as men.

5.2 Women's perceptions of female politicians

A significant theme in this study was the women's perceptions of female politicians, which revealed that women have diverse views. The sentiment shared by the participants were those full of hope, expectations, and disappointments.

Several participants highlighted that women are good leaders because if you educate a woman, you educate society. They contrasted the way women make changes in society to how men look out for themselves. *Rose: "My own perception is that I love women, and I love women being in position. Because once you change a woman, you change a society. You know, for men, it's only him and himself, but for a woman, it's for the society. I believe in voting, and I believe in women more than men."* Rose's view on women empowerment is supported by research from Kenya that shows that when empowering women, for example, issues of health and nutrition, impact the well-being of the whole household. (Voronca, Walker & Egde, 2018, p. 642)

5.2.1 Female politicians as protectors and mothers

Participants described female politicians as protectors. This perspective rests on the feminist understanding that women face similar challenges and oppressions. (Grant, 1993, p. 20) The informants revealed expectations that she could fight to protect her fellow women when a female politician is in power. *Vivian: "So, their role is to protect us, actually because they know how it feels to be a female and what we undergo, they know the issues like the Female Genital Mutilation, they are able to protect some of the girls, they take them to safe places because you see some of the females they just get married because the parents have allowed it but such political influence, they are able to push for such things to disappear in the community."*

In this view, the participant expresses the expectation for female politicians to champion the fight against the existing violence towards women, for example, FGM. A sexual and reproductive issue FGM falls into the feminist fight for addressing powerlessness and domination while demanding rights as human beings and vying for political change. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p. 153)

The participants commented that politically active women also carry a lot of other responsibilities, such as mothers and homemakers. *Joy: "I will say, take the fact that as women, we have many responsibilities for some time, but also get the time to serve the people."* Participants described motherhood in positive terms, and female politicians were identified as "mother figures." *Jackie: "Because when you are elected as a woman, people tend to see you as a mother. They expect you to have the motherly instinct. So, you need to be able to have a response to issues across the board, not just focusing on women alone."* *Rose: "Because once you elect a woman, you elect society. Because for a woman, she will head the family and the entire village. But for a man, it is him and himself."*

Bouka et al. (2019, p. 324) report findings from Kenya, consistently describing "women" as motherly, translating into their ability to take care of society. In this argument, women interviewees place women as the "mother of the nation," whose role is to protect the family and raise outstanding citizens. (Kioko, Kagumire & Matendela, 2020, p. 31) The respondents' notions on the connections between motherhood and leadership seem to be coloured by this cultural expectation of women.

5.2.2 Female politicians as a disappointment

While many participants expressed their admiration for women in politics, other participants were disappointed by women in positions of power who do not do anything to support other women. Eunice talked about bills supporting women: *"Show me how many have come there because you are a woman leader; you've made it. What kind of bills are you bringing on the floor are you sponsoring? Some of them even five whole years they will never sponsor even one bill."* Eunice, who is a politician, described her dissatisfaction with other female politicians. She mentioned that some are not willing to support more women in positions. As women get power, they protect their position instead of opening up more to accommodate more women.

As Eunice described, empowering and supporting other women through mentorship or creating spaces that women can thrive in can make a big difference for women who wish to join in politics. However, there is a notion of competitiveness also for women in positions.

Eunice: There's the issue around, what do I say, not necessarily jealousy but a guarded space that they don't want new people to come and venture. A new person will come with new ideas, and they'll edge me out, type of thinking. Because they don't also want to leave that space.

Many times, she reached out to women with more experience for support but got turned away.

Eunice: "How many times do the people who have already gotten in even take a mentor, get one of them, hold their hands, and let them go in. First, with pahali nimefika (the place I am at) there are so many I have tried to reach this is at least hold your hand. I will not be your competitor."

The participant mentioned that women in politics have not been willing to hold one's hand and build a support system to ensure that more women join politics. Instead, they are too busy and almost impossible to reach. *Eunice: "In my view, it's just competition and then maybe they don't have time, they are too busy."* Eunice, is in short, asking for more empowerment of women in politics and that women have each other's backs.

The participants seem to think that to be a female politician is a great achievement. A woman has to balance society's expectations of women with being a public leader. However, a woman politician does not always translate into helping other women in the political arena. Instead, female politicians sometimes seem to be unreachable because they do not groom other women or offer mentorship. In a study on women candidates in Kenya by Lawless and Fox (2008, p. 60-61), many of them seemed not to understand how to support other women and address the

interests of women. There is a need for women to come together, share experiences, and offer solidarity from an empowerment perspective. (Cornwall, 2016, p. 346) Especially Eunice, who is politically active, saw this need.

5.3 The default is men

When talking about women in politics, the informants often referred to men. The male gender figured prominently in the text material from the interviews. The words "men", "man", "male", and "boy" are mentioned a total of 122 in the interview texts.

As described by the participants, society embraces and supports men. Men do not have to fight for anything because everything is theirs by default. A striking comment by one participant might sum up the role men play in women's perceptions. *Joy: "I feel like it is always the woman counts as a by the way. Oh, OK, we need to have at least one woman, no. Right? It feels like this; it's not the normal thing. You know in your heart. The arrow. It feels like the default is men."* Talking further on the subject, she contrasts women's opportunities to men's privileged position. *Joy: "These are quite unfortunate because we have to fight for a place that men don't have to. Apparently, their place is already there."*

Joy highlights her perception of power imbalance in Kenyan society, where Kenyan men primarily hold power and makes the decision. (Musali, 2017, p. 183) Kamau (2010, p. 27) describes the political field as a "no go zone" for women due to gender roles that place women in domestic roles. In many places, the same gender roles will hinder and discourage women from getting into politics, as Eunice says. *Eunice: "Yes, there are communities in Kenya where you just say, today, I am running and I am a woman, from that day onwards you are just wrong because politics ni ya wanaume. (It's for men)."*

Men are in the interview texts portrayed as the default measurement. They become the contrast that women are measured against or compete against. They own the arenas women must compete in. This is supported by statistics on female underrepresentation, as women in decision-making positions are still low in Kenya. (NDI, 2018, pg. 36) As one participant voiced. *Sofie: "unfortunately, they don't have the space and the opportunity to be able to deal to provide solutions. And, because you are going to a field that is male-dominated and a house that has more men than women, so even if you want to bring the women agenda in front, it's challenging because the voices are not as many to be able to impact the change."*

As the participant echo, women are few in decision-making positions and are not offered the space to bring in their contributions. In addition, they feel that the low numbers of women in these spaces might not be listened to because the men dominate these spaces and women's voices are few. They are afraid the men will not support their ideas.

Male dominance also figures on religious and cultural levels. *Jackie: "Religion, cultural practices, socialization, socialization that we are always told the man is the head. So, when you are told to go somewhere, it's the woman to pray; it's the boy to lead the way because it's a night. So, somehow, they are entrenched in your mind. So, over time even you as a woman, by default, you tend to think that even if you are a leader, there are things that a man should do and I should not do, even if I can be able to do it."*

The inclusion of female politicians is a sign of challenging male domination, as suggested by Campbell & Wolbrecht (2006, p. 234-236). They contend that the presence of women in politics not only challenges the dominance of men in politics but also transforms the belief among women that women may participate in politics. Empowerment theory attempts to increase the political power of the oppressed and marginalized. (Turner & Maschi, 2015, p. 152) Women in the interview were indeed concerned about who will represent them in a field dominated by men. Women face numerous challenges towards an equal participation in politics. Politics might, for example, be organized to fit the male lifestyle, with many late-night meetings when women are supposed to be home. (Shvedova, 2005, p. 33)

5.4 Obstacles faced by female politicians and voters

A significant theme within the interviews concerned the experiences and challenges faced by female politicians and voters. The topics covered in this section highlights violence against women, shaming of women, and family interference in women's lives in Kenyan society. Most of the informants expressed that there are certain expectations that one is required to abide within.

Even though the initial discussion addressed the female perceptions of women in politics, this opened a much broader discussion about women's experiences. Most of the participants seemed to have shared experiences and described their perceptions of how a patriarchal society influences their participation in politics and daily life.

5.4.1 Violence against women

Violence against women in Kenya is manifested in various forms, as has been mentioned by the participants. Five of the women in the interviews voiced concerns about violence targeted towards women, both in society at large and specifically against politically active women. For example, violence of intimidation and instilling fear. While some women actively involved in politics face the threat of attacks and threats of kidnapping on themselves, their people, women as voters also face the real threat of intimidation. *Eunice: "they create fear and violence, and violence is real, and power against such women is real. Try and get into politics; someone will kidnap your child, your husband, your mother, your father, all these things."*

One issue then is how to manage violence, and Eunice takes the stand that it has to be fought against. *Eunice: "We have to fight. We have to stand up. We have to get our voices heard. We have to do all in our power to manage the violence that comes, the intimidation that comes."*

Eunice also voiced her concerns about serious violence towards herself. *Interviewer: "Me, I thought those things happen in the movies only? Eunice: Oh, no, it's real. Even myself, I've experienced threats. I've experienced threats na bado. (And it's not over.) Yes, that's something that makes women fear."*

In the participants' perceptions, violence is used to create fear as an instrument to keep women out of politics. *Vivian: "Then what I can really do is to make sure I encourage our gender to forget about fear. The main issue is they are fearing to participate. To do it..." "It will give them the fear to start and try. Then something else maybe, for example, some violence incidents like riots. It makes a woman feel discriminated. So, some of them fear from it, but it goes and affects their subconscious minds that this happened to me, so if I vie for a political seat people will talk about it and no one will vote for me."*

In research on women and voting in Kenya, many women do not exercise their voting rights, amongst other reasons, due to physical insecurity connected to electoral violence. During the 2007/08 post-election, women and children suffered rapes, killings, and injuries in widespread riots. Also, long waiting hours and long distances to the voting booth are hindrances for female voters. (Yoon & Okeke, 2019, p. 249) During elections, women requested separate voting queues to avoid indecent touching. (NDI, 2018, p. 40)

Participants voiced the views that women in politics are important to fight broader violence issues against women in Kenyan society. A special concern mentioned by several participants is female gender mutilation. (FGM) *Vivian: "Like for example of a community like the Maasai community, for a woman to be in leadership, I think those ones have to be, I don't know, it will*

be difficult. Yeah. Because until now, they've not even dealt with the issue of female gender mutilation as much as it's been prohibited, they are still doing that." One woman knew of a female politician fighting FGM. In her perception, the role of a woman politician was to protect women. Grace: *"She's a political, I think she's an MP or a, I don't know, but she has been pushing the, you know, the female genital mutilation. Interviewer: The FGM. Grace: Yes, these are people who have pushed to protect the female gender. Interviewer: Hmm. Grace: So, their role is to protect us, actually because they know how it feels to be a female and what we undergo, they know the issues like the Female Genital Mutilation.*

Violence in Kenya is used as a political tool to intimidate and scare political opponents. Female politicians and their supporters are subjected to routine violence during the campaign season; women politicians become targeted with verbal and physical violence. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 325)

5.4.2 Shaming of female politicians

The participants explained that the violence might not only be physical threats but also shaming of women. Eunice: *"What would hinder women from vying? One is just the fear of kuchaguliwa jina." (Name shaming)* African women leaders are faced with multiple challenges, for example, cultural hurdles and stereotypes, which may sometimes lead to being accused of being uncultured by society. Sexist and abusive language has been found to be the most frequent form of violence against women in politics in Kenya. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 325) Vivian: *"First of all is discrimination from the male gender because I've not experienced it, but I've seen the way they throw words to each other. They tend to discriminate them. The females"*

"Grace" talked about the verbal abuse suffered by a female politician. Grace: *"I got to see a clip of a woman, I don't know if she was rigging the election, but the way she was maltreated was so sad because the violation there was verbal abuse against women, and it's so sad because I don't think it would have been the same case if it were a man. So I'd really like to work on the many violence's that females endure."*

In addition to name-shaming, female politicians easily get allegations of sleeping their way to the top connected with them. Depending on the female politician's marital status, both male opponents and journalists accused them of being "loose women," "prostitutes", and "adulterers." (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 325) Labelling women who get into politics as "prostitutes" impacts both the individual politician and women who might consider becoming politically active. Eunice: *"Women who get into politics ni malaya. (prostitutes) So, there are all these*

things. They have slept around with everybody to get to where they are. And that's another narrative we also need to quell as women leaders, that it is not always that I have to bribe, or I have to bribe with my body to get it; I am capable.

Eunice argues that women are more than capable and that the narrative about women leaders sleeping their way into power must change. *Eunice – "I have gone to school. I earned it. I have the papers. I have the connections. I have the networks. I have the capability. I have the power to articulate your issues when you take me to that place. These are things that we have to continuously educate our people about."*

5.4.3 Family interference and violence while voting

Family interferences during voting violate women's human rights. It denies them agency to make independent decisions. SDG 5 and 16 seek to "ensure a full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels." Hindering women's participation violates these human rights.

One participant mentioned that decisions on whom to vote for are made as a family, and most times, the candidate is chosen by the men. This greatly impacts women's choices and ability to vote. *Eunice: "What I keep hearing from women every day is that you see decisions of how they are going to vote is made as a family. So, the husband comes and says, "Hey, sisi kwa hii familia yetu (in our family) we are running behind so and so." Right?"*

There are communities in Kenya, especially in North-eastern Province, where women cannot vote for candidates of their choice; the decision for whom they will vote for usually rests with the men. (Omtatah, 2008, p. 59) "Eunice" expresses that women who oppose these decisions by their men experience gender-based violence. *Eunice: "And there are women who have come out vocally to go against that, and they have been beaten up, and things have happened to them within their homes. But you find that many women don't have that power to decide on their own."* Another kind of violence is the confiscation of the women's ID card— *Eunice: to vote the way he wants. So, in such cases, they are actually prohibited. They [inaudible] toka hapa (get away from here) or you find that the man takes her ID card and hides. Without an ID card, you know you can't vote."*

The women's experiences and concerns reflect finding that women in Kenya often cannot exercise their voting rights independently. Some of them are led to polling stations by their husbands and forced to vote for the husband's preferred candidate, while daughters are pressured into voting for their parent's candidate of choice. This highlights the power imbalance between the genders in Kenyan society. (Yoon & Okeke, 2019, p. 250)

5.5 How to support female politicians

In addition to exploring gendered expectations towards women politicians in a male-dominated political field and the violence women face as politicians and voters. Our hypothesis that a patriarchal society heavily influences women seems to be echoed in the women's stories. However, the women also highlight how to support female politicians.

5.5.1 Empowering the society

Empowering society to embrace women leadership was a prominent theme in the interviews. The participants described a society that has to become more equal and give women a chance to lead by moving away from cultural norms and patriarchal structure that oppresses women. Empowerment should be inclusive of the whole society, so women are encouraged to participate in politics in different capacities. This reflects the values of African feminism that both male and female experiences are needed for addressing inequalities in society. (Blay, 2008, p. 69) Men form part of this society, so educating and empowering men was important to the participants. "Joy" mentioned that men should not feel threatened by female leadership. We need men that support women participation in politics. *Joy: "So, it needs to start with empowering them on that basis, also empowering the male counterpart, so they do not feel threatened by the fact that women in politics and understand that they are just people as them with a mind and brain. They have everything that they have."*

Sofie talks on the same theme. *Sofie: "Some are, some may not care as much, but of course, with the fact that they to have that gender rule be it that there are men who support women."* *Sofie: "We just need to empower the society to see women as equal to men."*

Vivian suggests there are certain steps needed to be taken to see a change when it comes to empowering women in Kenyan societies: *"The first step we should take is to enlighten the community... Because if we start at the top, we'll never get there. We start with the community because I've come from a very small community, ...and I am the branch. If we enlighten the community that a female can lead, a female can deliver, a female can do what these men are doing even better..."*

Cornwall (2016, p. 345-346), writing on empowerment, emphasise the importance of engaging with "culturally embedded normative beliefs" about gender and power imbalance. This goes

for any cultural setting; notions of what men and women can be transformed through training that exposes participants to different ways of framing their social world.

5.5.2 Empowering women

Participants described the need for empowerment of women. Joy: *"We need women empowerment. From the grassroots level, from the household level, women need to be empowered, and they should be given a chance to also be decision-makers in their family."* The participants expressed the need to encourage women and build their capacity through educating them with the right knowledge.

Within the political field, women need grooming. They come too late into the game of politics, and they want to play in a field where men have been playing for a long time. Eunice: *"Women come into politics to late in the game.... Second, they get into political parties too late. So, if you get in too late, that means you don't understand the systems and how it works. So, if you don't understand how it works, most probably you'll be removed technically."*

"Grace" and "Jacki" expressed a need for educating women. Grace: *"There should be webinars, seminars that encourage women, and the... of course, there are women in leadership in this community."* Grace: *"They need to also be educated, empowered so that they have knowledge of their rights."* Jacki: *"Where women need a lot of capacity building, women aspirants. We need to build and capacity build of if you win, but we also need to be given the same dose of if you don't."*

Participants expressed the desire to see that all women are given an opportunity. They believe that women are just lacking the opportunity to showcase what they are capable of. Sofie: *"And more so, what if we give them an opportunity to stand up."* Sofie: *"We should give a chance to women to see what they can do so that because you cannot just think about their inability without giving a chance to them to try and see."*

As expressed by Kabeer's empowerment framework, resources, agency, and well-being are all critical measures to consider when assessing women's empowerment. Kabeer (1999, p. 437) insists that women need both economic, human and social resources to achieve decision making authority within institutions. In the voice of the respondents, women need more than positive actions to enter political life; they need grooming. Women's opportunities must therefore be strengthened if they are to play on the same political stage as men.

5.5.3 Supporting women financially

To enhance the participation of women in politics, women also need to be empowered through financing. Ballington argues that politics is an expensive affair, and if one cannot raise enough money to finance a campaign, one should not enter politics; from the point of entry to politics, money is required. (Ballington, 2008, p. 21) As also the informants discussed, money is a huge part of politics. Money is used to finance political campaigns and pay for various requirements needed in political parties, and women are known to not have as much money as men.

Finance has been an enormous barrier for female politicians to enter politics or even use the money for campaign purposes.

Eunice: "You know, you have to have quite some real money and women are not as endowed financially speaking. And then of course, if you want to run through your political party, all these games that are played within political parties, you know, kuoshwa, (clean up) pay for a certificate, it depends on who you know ndio upewe, (so you can receive) you know that game. That is at the level of participating as an aspirant."

Politics is run with money in Kenya. As the participant's mention, with enough money, one can even predict the outcome of the elections. *Eunice: "We have to figure out as women where to get the money because a political seat is money. You can do all you can up to the last minute, someone will come from nowhere with all the money, and that person will win."* *Eunice: "Yes, people are moved by money. That is a reality that even me as an aspirant I'm living that reality of telling myself for real, look for money, figure out where you're going to get it."*

Women in Kenya are usually at a disadvantage while raising money, given the gender wealth distribution in Kenya is in the hands of men. (Kamau, 2010, p. 70) Also, in politics, for one to run a successful campaign, economic resources are necessary for party membership, nomination fees, campaign materials and logistic support. Voters also expect candidates to bribe them with water, lunch, and money for transport. Women in Kenya have access to only 65 per cent of the personal financial resources available to men and less flexibility in spending their money. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 322-323) This could be understood as one of the hindrances to women's ability to run for public office in Kenya. (Bouka et al., 2019, p. 324)

5.5.4 Political party support

Political parties are prominent in Kenyan politics. Data indicates that political parties are the gatekeepers for candidates in political positions, because as a candidate one must be selected and supported by a political party. (Kittilson, 2006, p. 2; Paxton et al., 2007, p. 8) In Kenya the

role of political parties is clearly stated, political parties assume the role of nominating candidates, they also educate members on several issues, as they are also responsible for party discipline and policy making. (National Assembly, 2017)

Male-domination is in the interviews understood as being systemic, especially in party politics. *Interviewer: "Q: So, you're saying that some cultural and social practices hinder women from political participation? Jackie: "Yes. There are social challenges, there are systemic challenges. Systemic challenges include political parties, they are male dominated, they are male owned, so that makes it a challenge."*

Within the context of Kenya, party leaders' attitudes support the state of patriarchy. (Bosire, 2017, p. 11) This existing party culture acts as an impediment towards gender inclusiveness in party processes. According to Shvedova political parties bypass women, rarely do they choose women as candidates or even nominate them, as "male characteristics" are emphasised and often become the criteria in selecting candidates. (Ballington & Karam, 2005, p. 37) Kamau (2010, p. 68) argues that there is manipulation of the nomination process going on in political parties in Kenya, with intentions of keeping the women out of these positions especially in major parties. Lack of political party support and fraudulent party nomination processes tend to disadvantage women more than men. (Kabira & Kameri-Mbote 2013, p.196)

Affirmative actions, as Marcela V. Rodríguez argues, can sometimes be necessary to give certain groups real equality and opportunity. (Ballington & Karam, 2005, p. 171) This is mentioned by the participant Eunice. *Eunice: "And then of course, given the place, we are right now, it also calls for a lot of affirmative action, so we need to see like sound policies, not just on paper, because it is quite unfortunate that the Kenyan Parliament has not been able to pass into law the 2/3 gender rule"*

5.6 Gender matters when voting

A question in this last section on findings is how influenced women are by the norms and expectations of a patriarchal society regarding voting? Does gender matter when voting? It can be suspected that women's views are coloured by the notion that men are better leaders than women and that women are therefore less likely to vote for their fellow women.

Eunice considered gender to be of importance in Kenyan politics. *"Well, gender is a huge consideration in the politics of Kenya... But, to answer your question, gender is a huge consideration in the eyes of the voters."* Of course, this consideration can go both ways regarding female candidates gaining support from their fellow women. Ndeda writes that *"women have always been considered world over as their own enemies in other words they do not vote for their own gender. It has been evident in Kenyan politics that women rarely vote for fellow women."* (Ndeda, 2014, p. 224)

Voting was mentioned by the participants as one of the things to be done to support women in politics. The fundamental issue here is to what degree everyone can exercise their right to vote. As one participant mentioned, voting is important, and everyone should be able to exercise this fundamental right freely. *Grace: "Also, I wanted to say there are several ways that you can get involved in politics, not just like vying for, you can support women, empower them, you can create awareness, you know, like, encourage other women to vote and things like that."* As previously examined, this right to vote can be hindered by violence in various forms, as well as by cultural expectations.

Considering the obstacles already mentioned regarding women politicians in Kenya, not all the informants were positive to vote for women just because they are women. One informant described her experiences as a politician as an opportunity to showcase the capabilities of women. *"I want to sell my agenda not my gender. Don't vote for me because I'm a woman, no, vote for me because you believe I have the capability that if I'm given the opportunity, I'm going to woo my constituents from point A to point B."* The participant emphasized the importance of equality and fairness in voting. She emphasised that in consideration of political positions, women have something to offer in their own right. They should be voted in due to merit and not as an affirmative action. This echoes the liberal feminist view on women's capabilities as rational individuals and that women's rational capabilities equal that of men. (Wendell, 1987, p. 69)

Five of the participants mentioned that gender matters in voting. Some of them clearly stated they like to vote for women. *Rose: "I prefer voting for a woman because I am a woman, and at the same time, I believe women can make a difference because all along we have been voting for men, and they have let us down. So, I believe a woman can bring change in this country."* Grace also confirmed that she had voted for women. *Grace: "Yes, I have. I have voted for women in political sector."* Jackie thought her voting for women was elitist, and therefore

probably not a common attitude. Jackie: *"Like in the last election, I voted for women because I believed that women needed to transcend into leadership, but that was an elitist decision. Not everyone thinks that way."* One participant mentioned that each aspirant must prove to be worthy of her vote. Another informant mentioned that she votes for women because she believes in increasing the number of women in politics. A third participant mentioned that she votes for women because men in the past have disappointed her. She believed women would do a better job. Vivian: *"Actually, according to me, it is disappointing because what I really love is to see the gender, the female gender dominance."* As a reason for voting for women, many participants have repeatedly mentioned that women tend to be more caring of society in general while men are out for themselves.

A major finding then from the conversations with Kenyan women regarding their views on women in politics is that they indeed wish to vote for other women while also wanting people to acknowledge women as competent, resourceful leaders who are good for the greater society. This goes against the hypothesis that women do not support other women. (Ndeda, 2014, p. 224). According to Dolan (1998) women, respondents in the USA showed a significantly greater tendency to vote for women candidates for the House of Representatives than do men, and women are more likely to use gender-related issues in determining their vote choice than are men. (Dolan, 1998, p. 288) Findings by Kamau (2010, p. 35) also seem to support that women in Kenya favour being represented by other women, while at the same time, gender is not an important consideration in determining if you are a good leader. If women like to vote for women, this begs the question of why women fair so poorly in Kenyan elections. (Kamau, 2010, p. 35).

Although women in Kenya have had the equal right to vote, according to Yoon & Okeke (2019, p. 248), many eligible female voters do not vote due to the challenges they face in exercising this right, such as violence, family pressure, long distances and waiting time at polling stations, and illiteracy. In addition, women in Kenya experience that their voices are suppressed by a lack of avenues to contribute to nation-building. (Anyango et al., 2018, pg. 1517) The respondents in this study mentioned many of the same issues. To combat these challenges, several of the women mentioned the there is a need to educate girls about their rights. Grace: *"Because as much as we want to believe that the girl child is being supported, in terms of providing sanitary towels which is, because that's not enough. They need to also be educated, empowered, so that they have knowledge of their rights."*

The study revealed a certain optimism on behalf of Kenyan women in regard to a better representation within politics. "Sofie" mentioned that society is slowly moving in the right direction concerning female leadership, though it is not changing fast. *Sofie: "I think one of the issues is that the society's perception. The society is slowly accepting women in leadership, but we have not reached where we should."*

One of the participants who was a prominent politician in Kenya had hopes for a break-through for female politicians in the upcoming election. *Eunice: "2022 general elections is the best time to be a woman aspirant in Kenya politics."* She argued that: *"There has been an awakening of some sort that Kenyans need more women in decision-making tables especially within the political space in Kenya... Within political parties. Like my own party, that is..., there is a deliberate effort to bring in women aspirants. I have heard our own party leader say over and over again, challenging the leaders within the party to bring as many potential women aspirants as possible."*

The question about whether the 2022 election will be the best time to be a woman aspirant is yet to be decided. The Afrobarometer SDG 2021 scorecard reported no change regarding SDG5 on women's empowerment and a slight turn for the worse on trust in the government. (Afrobarometer, 2021)

6.0 Conclusion

SDG Number 5 and SDG number 16 provided new momentum for governments worldwide to address gender inequalities in society at all levels. This body of research focused on the gender inequalities of women in Kenya concerning perceptions of women on female politicians. Issues examined concern voting and the challenges women face in political participation. The existence of male domination causes problems of a power imbalance between men and women. The argument here is that the patriarchal nature of Kenyan society has shaped and perpetuated the status of gender inequalities that women face in society in all sectors, including politics. This male domination has shaped society expectation of women; women are expected to carry themselves in a particular way.

Gender matters for voters as well as for aspirants. Several participants believed that women have more concern for the larger society, hence prefer to vote for women. This goes against the assumption that women tend to vote for men, but as acknowledged in this study, several issues impair the process leading to political participation. In view of the SDG goals of inclusive participation, this study argues that the described hindrances hamper women's equal

participation in political processes. When women are treated unequally and excluded from political processes, including the ability to make decisions, run for elections and gain the support of male counterparts, this is equals a democratic deficit in Kenya.

However, moving away from outdated traditional values, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the appropriate roles for men and women in society could increase women's political resources and reduce existing barriers to political participation. Empowerment of the whole society should emphasize embracing women leadership within their own right.

In conclusion, the participants had hope for women in Kenya, both as political participants and voters. Women should come forward, set aside their fears, and go out in more numbers to fight for political seats. Also, as voters, women should vote for women politicians. Politically active informants describe a sort of awakening within the Kenyan parties to include more women in political decision-making roles.

At present, the Two Third of Gender Rule action has not yet been adopted; how this affirmative action is handled in Kenyan politics will have to be further researched. It is also important to conduct detailed research on how to address the issues of violence experienced among women as aspirants for political seats and as voters.

7.0 References

- Afrobarometer. (2021). "Kenya Round 7 data." Retrieved from <https://afrobarometer.org/publications/kenya-sdg-scorecard>
- Ambani, J. O. (2016). The roots and effects of electoral sexual and gender-based violence on women's political participation in Kenya. In Biegona, J. (Ed.). (2016). *Gender equality and political processes in Kenya. Challenges and prospects*. Strathmore University Press. https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6d11c449-e6a8-4e44-2e35-c9303bca4f9d&groupId=252038
- Anyango, B. O., Alupo, B. A. & Opoku, M. P. (2018). Women in Politics in Kenya: An Analysis of Participation and Barriers. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 7(1), pp. 1505-1530. doi: 10.17583/generos.2018.3179
- Bahlleda, R. (2015). Chapter 1: The Legacy of Patriarchy. *Counterpoints*, 488, pp. 15–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45136330>
- Ballington, J. & Karam, A. (2005). *Women beyond parliament: Beyond numbers*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Retrieved <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/women-parliament-beyond-numbers-revised-edition>
- Ballington, J. (2008). Equality in Politics: A survey of Women and Men in Parliaments, Inter Parliamentary Union, Geneva. Retrieved from <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2016-07/equality-in-politics-survey-women-and-men-in-parliaments>
- Bates, R. H., Fayad, G. & Hoeffler, A. (2012). The State of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Area Studies Review* 15(4) (December 1): pp. 323–338. doi:10.1177/2233865912462373.
- Blay, Y. A. (2008). *All the 'Africans' are Men, all the "Sistas" are "American," but Some of Us Resist: Realizing African Feminism(s) as an Africological Research Methodology*. Ph.d. published by the Journal of Pan African Studies, vol.2, no.2, March 2008. Retrieved from <https://jpanafrican.org/docs/vol2no2/AllTheAfricansAreMenAllTheSistas.pdf>

- Bosire, M. R. (2017). *Political Parties Strategy on Gender Equality in candidates' nomination in Kenya*. Published by CMD Kenya, International IDEA & NIMD. Retrieved from <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Political-parties-strategy-for-gender-equality-in-candidate-nominations-in-Kenya-CMD-Kenya-IDEA-NIMD.pdf>
- Bouka, Y., Berry, M. E. & Kamuru, M. M. (2019). Women's political inclusion in Kenya's devolved political system. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 13:2, pp. 313-333. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2019.1592294>
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006:3, p. 77-101. DOI: [10.1191/1478088706qp063oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa)
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, D.E. and Wolbrecht, C. (2006). See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents. *Journal of Politics*, 68: pp. 233-247. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00402.x>
- Clifton, K & Carrasco, J.A. (2018). Workshop Synthesis: Measuring Attitudes and Perceptions in Quantitative Surveys. *Transportation Research Procedia*. Vol:32, p. 495-500. DOI: [10.1016/j.trpro.2018.10.040](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trpro.2018.10.040)
- Cornwall, A. & Rivas, A-M. (2015) From 'gender equality and 'women's empowerment' to global justice: reclaiming a transformative agenda for gender and development, *Third World Quarterly*, 36:2, 396-415, DOI: [10.1080/01436597.2015.1013341](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1013341)
- Cornwall, A. (2016.) Women's empowerment: What works? *Journal of International Development J. Int. Dev.* 28, pp. 342-359. DOI: [10.1002/jid.3210](https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3210)
- Crasnow, S. (2014). Feminist Standpoint Theory. In Cartwright, N. & Montuschi, E. *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction*. pp.145-147. Oxford University Press.
- CREAW. (Sept. 25, 2017). Background and current status of the not more than 2/3rds principle. *Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW)*. Retrieved from <https://home.creaw.org/tag/article-27-8/>
- Daly, M. (1978). *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Beacon Press.

- Dolan, K. (2014). *When Does Gender Matter? Women Candidates and Gender Stereotypes in American Elections*. Oxford Scholarship Online.
DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199968275.001.0001
- Ebila, F. (2017). 'A proper woman, in the African tradition': The construction of gender and nationalism in Wangari Maathai's autobiography *Unbowed*. *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde*, 52(1), 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.4314/tvl.v52i1.10>
- Gallagher, A. (2008). The United Nations, Democracy and Human Rights. *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring an Introduction for Human Rights Field Officers*. Published by The Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights
- Grant, J. (1993). *Fundamental Feminism*. Routledge.
- Hague, G., Thiara R. K. & Turner, A. (2011). Bride-price and its links to domestic violence and poverty in Uganda. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 34, Issue 6, November–December 2011, p. 550-561. University of Bristol, University of Warwick, and MIFUMI. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2011.06.008>
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 1-10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232>
- IDEA. (2019). *The global state of democracy 2019. Addressing the ills, reviving the promise*. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2019) Retrieved <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/global-state-of-democracy-2019>
- IDEA. (2021). *Women's Political Participation - Africa Barometer 2021*. Published by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2021>
- IDEA. (28. January 2021). *Taking Stock of Regional Democratic Trends in Africa and the Middle East before and during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021).
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2021.2>

- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (IPU). (2016.) *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*. Retrieved <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2016-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-parliamentarians>
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and change*, 30(3), pp. 435-464. Retrieved from <http://weehub.ku.ac.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Naila-Kabeer-Empowerment.pdf>
- Kabira, M, W. & Kameri-Mbote P. (2013). Gender issues in electoral politics in Kenya: The unrealized constitutional promise. Published in Ondote C. & Musumba, L. (Eds.) *Balancing the scales of electoral justice-Resolving dispute from 2013 Elections in Kenya and the Emerging Jurisprudence*. International Law Development Organisation, 2016, pp 177-214.
- Kamau, N. (2010). *Women and Political Leadership in Kenya. Ten case studies* Heinrich Böll Foundation. Retrieved from <https://ke.boell.org/en/2013/11/20/women-and-political-leadership-kenya-ten-case-studies>
- Kamruzzaman, P. (2020) Exploring the Nexus Between Participation and Empowerment. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice* 5(1), pp. 32–53. DOI: 10.1177/2455133320909926
- Kasomo, D. (2012). Factors affecting women participation in electoral politics in Africa. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences* 2012; 2(3). pp. 57-63. Doi: 10.5923/j.ijpbs.20120203.01
- Kioko, C., Kagumire R. & Matandela M. (2020). *Challenging patriarchy: the role of patriarchy in the role back democracy*. Published by Heinrich Böll Stiftung. <https://africanfeminism.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Challenging-Patriarchy.pdf>
- Kitetu, C. (2010). Organisational Networks of Kenyan Female Migrants in England: The Humble Chama Now Operating at Higher International Levels. Retrieved from https://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/CATHERINE_KITETU.pdf
- Kittilson, M, C. (2006). *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments: Women and Elected Office in Contemporary Western Europe*. Ohio State University Press.

- Kolawole, M. M. (2002) Transcending incongruities: Rethinking Feminisms and the dynamics of identity in Africa. *Agenda: Empowering women for Gender Equity*. No. 54 (2002), pp 92-98. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4548076>
- Lawless, J. & Fox, R. (1999). Women Candidates in Kenya. *Women & Politics*, 20:4, pp. 49-76. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v20n04_03
- Lührmann, A., Grahn, S. Morgan, R., Pillai, S., & Lindberg, S.I. (2019). State of the world 2018: democracy facing global challenges. *Democratization*, vol. 26, issue 6, pp. 895-915. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.ezproxy.oslomet.no/10.1080/13510347.2019.1613980>
- Lutomia, A. N., Sanya, B. N, & Rombo D. O. (2016) *Examining and contextualising Kenya's Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO) through an African feminist lens*. Women Emancipation and civil society Organisation. Policy Press.
- Maseno, L. & Kilonzo, S. (2011). Engendering development: Demystifying patriarchy and its effects on women in rural Kenya. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Vol. 3(2)* pp. 45-55, Available online <http://www.academicjournals.org/ijsa> ISSN
- Mburu, P. N & Nyagah, G. (2012). Effects of gender role portrayal in textbooks in Kenyan primary schools, on pupils academic aspirations. *Problems of Education in the 21st century*, vol. 47, 2012. pp. 100-109. Retrieved from <http://journals.indexcopernicus.com/abstract.php?icid=1020836>
- Mekgwe, P. (2010). Post Africa(n) Feminism? *Third Text*. 24. 189-194. DOI: [10.1080/09528821003722116](https://doi.org/10.1080/09528821003722116)
- Mueller, S. D. (2011). Dying to win: Elections, political violence and institutional decay in Kenya, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29:1, pp. 99-117. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2011.537056>
- Musali, J. (May 24, 2017). Household Decision Making Among Married Women in Kenya: A Latent Class Analysis. *Sex Roles* 78. (2018). pp. 182–193. DOI 10.1007/s11199-017-0788-1
- Mwobobia, F. (2016). The Contribution of Table Banking in the Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Kenya: A Case of Eldoret Town. *Journal of Business Theory and*

- Practice. Vol. 4*, pp. 168-173. Retrieved from <http://www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/jbtp/article/download/623/595>
- Ndeda, M. A. J. (2014). Luo Women Voters/Aspirants and the New Constitutional Dispensation in the March 2013 Kenya Elections: The case of Siaya and Kisumu Counties. In Thibon C., Fouéré M., Ndeda M., & Mwangi S. (Eds.), *Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election*. (pp. 211-231). Twaweza Communications. Doi:10.2307/j.ctvh8qxd1.19
- NDI. (2018, February 18). *Record number of women elected in Kenya's 2017 general election, but women representation remains low*. Retrieved <https://www.ndi.org/our-stories/record-number-women-elected-kenya-s-2017-general-elections-women-s-representation>
- NDI. (2020, October 13). *A judicial rebuke: Next steps for women's political equality in Kenya*. Retrieved <https://www.ndi.org/our-stories/judicial-rebuke-next-steps-womens-political-equality-kenya>
- Nnaemeka, O. (2003). Nego-Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2003, vol. 29, no. 2. pp. 357-385. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/378553>
- O'Neill, A. (2021). Total Population of Kenya 2020, by Gender. *Statista*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/967855/total-population-of-kenya-by-gender/>
- Okin, S, M. (1989). *Justice Gender and the Family*. Basic Books
- Omtatah, O. O. (2008). The Affirmative Action Debate: Developing Winning Strategies, in N. Kamau, *Perspectives on Gender Discourse: Enhancing Women's Political Participation*, Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Foundation
- Parliament of Kenya. (2021). *Roles of the National Assembly*. The Government of Kenya <http://www.parliament.go.ke/the-national-assembly/about/roles-functions>
- Paxton, P, Kunovich, S. & Hughes, M. M. (2007). Gender in Politics. *Annual Review of Sociology* 2007, 33:1. pp. 263-284. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131651>
- Pertiwi, F. D., Sudrajat, A., Kumalasari, D., Retnawati, H., Waspada, S. P., Dossayeva, S. K., Kassymova. G. K. (2019). Gender Equality in Feminism. *Bulletin of the National*

- Academy of Science of the republic of Kazakhstan, Volume 5, Number 381 (2019)*, pp. 112 – 121. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.32014/2019.2518-1467.130>
- Richardson, R.A. (2018). Measuring Women’s Empowerment: A Critical Review of Current Practices and Recommendations for Researchers. *Soc Indic Res 137*, pp. 539–557
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-017-1622-4>
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 3rd ed. Sage.
- Schirmacher, K. (1912/ 2010). *The Modern Woman’s Rights Movement*. Macmillian.
<https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/33700/pg33700-images.html>
- Shvedova, N. (2005). Obstacles to women’s participation in parliament. In IDEA *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. (2005) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Retrieved
<https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/women-parliament-beyond-numbers-revised-edition>
- The Economist. (2021). *Democracy Index 2020 In sickness and in health?* The Economist Intelligence Unit.
https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=democracy2020
- The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Federation of Women Lawyers - Kenya (FIDA-K). (February 2018) *A Gender Analysis of the 2017 Kenya General Elections*. Washington DC. Retrieved from
https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Analysis%20of%202017%20GeneralElections%20FINAL%20High%20Res%20for%20Printer%20-%20NEW%20COVER_small.pdf
- Tong, R. & Botts, T. F. (2017). *Feminist Thought: A more Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge.
- True, J. (2013). Feminism. In Bruchill, S. & Linklater A. (Eds.) *Theories of international relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Turner, S. G & Maschi, T. M. (2015). Feminist and empowerment theory and social work practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 29:2, 151-162.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2014.941282>

- UN Millennium Project. (2013). *UN millennium development library: Taking action. Achieving gender equality and empowering women*. Boca Raton: Taylor and Francis
- UN security council. (2000). *Resolution 1325*. United Nation. /RES/1325 (2000) Retrieved from [http://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325(2000))
- UN Women Africa. (2020). *New Women's Empowerment Index for Kenyan Women and Girls*. Retrieved from <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/08/womens-empowerment-index-for--kenyan-women-and-girls>
- UN Women. (2005). *EGM/EPDM/2005/REPORT*. Accessed from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/FinalReport.pdf>
- UN women. (2020, July). *Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>
- UN. (2021). *Target 16.7*. Accessed from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>
- United Nations General Assembly. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- United Nations. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf
- United Nations. (2006). *Ending violence against women: From words to action. Study of the Secretary-General*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2006/1/ending-violence-against-women-from-words-to-action-study-of-the-secretary-general>
- United Nations. (2006). *On advancement of women Secretary-General's study on violence against women*. Background documentation for: 61st session of the General Assembly Item 60(a). Forthcoming as document A/61/122/Add. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/violenceagainstwomestudydoc.pdf>
- United Nations. (2021). *Lack of women in key decision-making, "should not be allowed" – UN Women chief*. UN News. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/Story/2021/03/1086702>

- USAID. (2020, April). *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment fact Sheet*. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/kenya-gender-fact-sheet>
- Voronca, D., Walker, J. R., & Egede, L. E. (2018). Relationship between empowerment and wealth: trends and predictors in Kenya between 2003 and 2008-2009. *Int J Public Health (2018) 63*: pp. 641-649. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/1007/s00038-017-1059-1>
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Wendell, S. (1987). Defence of liberal feminism. *Hypatia, Summer, 1987, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer, 1987)*, pp. 65-93. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810017>
- Wendt, A. (2012). Constructing International Politics. *International Security, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995)*, pp. 71-81
Retrieved <http://maihold.org/mediapool/113/1132142/data/Wendt-Constructing.pdf>
- Wesangula D. (May 16, 2017). *Kenyan women candidates decry violence and threats ahead of poll*. Published by Thompson Reuters Foundation.
- Wipper, A. (1989). Kikuyu Women and the Harry Thuku Disturbances: Some Uniformities of Female Militancy. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, Vol. 59, No. 3 (1989)*, pp. 300-337. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1160230.pdf>
- Wolski, J. C. (1991). New Vitality: The Challenge from Feminist Theology.” CTSA Proceedings 46 (1991). pp. 70-74.
- World Economic Forum. (2020.) *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*. World Economic Forum, Geneva: Switzerland. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf
- Yoon, M. Y and Okeke, C. (2019). Kenya: Women's Suffrage and Political Participation as Voters. In Francechet et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Women's Political Rights, Gender and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59074-9_17

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Female Perceptions of Women in Politics in Kenya

A. Respondent information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your level of education?
3. What is your occupation

B. General thoughts on politics

4. What are your general thoughts on politics in Kenya?
5. What kind of news or media do you follow?
6. There will be an election in 2022. Where would you get your information about the election?

C. Personal political choice

7. What influences your voting choice in the election?
8. When you're voting, what consideration do you put in place for a candidate?

D. Views on women in politics

9. Does the candidate's gender influence how you vote?
10. What obstacles do you feel there as women voters in the coming election in 2022? Will you vote?
11. In the Kenyan parliament there are approximately women 22% in parliament and 78.2% men in parliament. What is your opinion on the current ratio of women compared to men?
12. Say something about the number of women active in politics. Are you satisfied with the current representation of women in politics?
13. How do you perceive women in politics?
14. Should women take part in political campaigns/public assemblies?
15. What problems do you think women face in getting into politics?

E. Participation in politics

16. Have you ever participated in politics? How?
17. Given a chance, would you like to get involved in politics? Local or national?
18. Are you part of a political party or movement?
19. Do you participate in any women's empowerment groups?

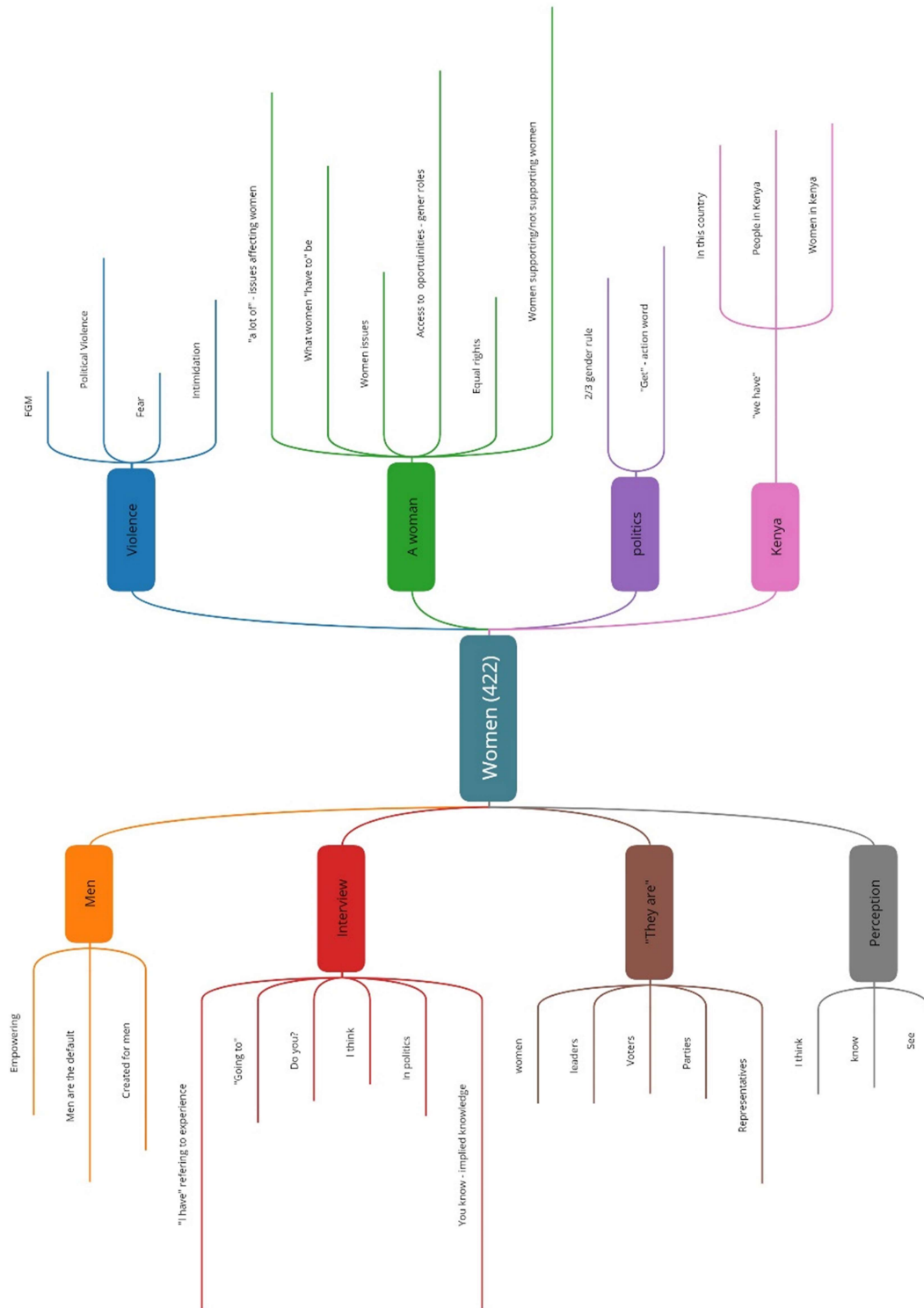
20. Have you thought about becoming a politician for example (MCA, MP, President) what kind of change will you bring to the country?
21. Do you have any avenues to convince women to participate in politics?
22. Do you feel politicians are concerned with women's issues? For example, FGM,
23. How do you perceive women in politics?
24. Should women take part in political campaigns/public assemblies?
25. What problems do you think women face in getting into politics?
26. In your opinion what steps should be taken to improve women's participation in politics?

F. Social norms and practises/ cultures

27. Do you think a woman's place is in the kitchen or taking care of children?
28. Are there some jobs that are meant for women and others for men?
29. Can you think of any cultural practices that hinder women from political participation?
30. Do you advocate for more women in political participation?
31. In your opinion, should women become President/ Prime minister of the country?

Appendix B

Mind map of coded themes





Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003
NO-1432 Ås
Norway