THE 50/50 DEBATE:
AN INTERROGATION OF WOMEN'S EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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Dedication

This work is a dedication to my late sister, Jackie Gonye (nee Zimondi) who passed on suddenly while I was in the midst of working on this dissertation. My heart bleeds with so much pain to think that you are the one who encouraged me to join this programme and used to encourage me to work hard. But it is unfortunate you did not live to witness me accomplish the work we started together. However, my heart convinces me that you are smiling and watching from heaven. Continue to rest in peace, you are sadly missed.

Abstract

Women's participation in politics is now regarded as an important measure of their status in any country. The study was about women's participation in politics in view of the 50/50 debate. The study sought to examine the systemic and structural barriers that contribute to low participation in politics for women at all levels from local to national. The study also sought to establish why Constitutional provisions with regard to equal participation in politics were not being fully implemented. A women's law perspective was used as the methodological stance. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from organisations that represent women. It was found that structural barriers such as party rules and regulations affected women's participation in politics. Socialisation, religion, patriarchy, the media and lack of political will also had an effect on how women participated in politics. It was therefore recommended that the government of Zimbabwe, through its parliament, should ensure that 50 percent of the direct election seats be allocated to women. There is a need to enact a Gender Equality Act that specifically secures Constitutional gender parity in all public, electoral and private appointments in line with Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 (the Constitution). The government should discourage all forms of violence in society by ensuring that the rule of law is respected and that impunity for the perpetrators of politically motivated violence is removed. This means the police should also be gender sensitive in the way they react to cases of violence against women. Political parties need to encourage equal opportunities for women within their structures and actively pursue mechanisms to recruit, train and finance women to be candidates for public office through increased awareness and women friendly policy measures. There is a need to amend the Political Party Finances Act to ensure that only political parties that meet the Constitutional standards receive funding. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, political parties and civil society must sensitise society and political party leadership on the basis and justifications for special measures such as 50/50. Efforts should also be made to sensitise and train print and visual media journalists to effectively profile and ensure the responsible coverage of women. It is further recommended that studies to gather more reliable data on women's representation in local government structures be conducted in order to be able to analyse trends in women's representation at the sub-national levels.

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Declaration

I, **JOSELYN NYAZIKA,** certify that this dissertation is my original work; it is an honest and true effort of my personal research. I certify that the work has not been presented anywhere else before any other thesis.

Signed ……………………………

Date   …...

The dissertation was submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor

Signed ……………………………
Professor J.E. Stewart
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Date   …...

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
FPTP	First-past-the-post
GEWE	AU's strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
Maputo Protocol	Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
NORAD	Norwegian Agency of Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMP	Single (member) plurality
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ZGC	Zimbabwe Gender Commission

List of International human rights instruments

AU Agenda 2063

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR)

Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (1997)

UN Charter

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

List of national legislation

Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 (the Constitution)

Electoral Act [Chapter 2:13] (1990)

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

The world over, women's participation in politics is now regarded as an important measure of their status in any country. Hence, in recent years, women's participation in politics and decision-making has received attention (Paxton, 2006). While there is wide consensus that women in Zimbabwe have experienced gains in their socio-economic status and formal political rights, their representation in positions of political leadership and representative institutions lags far behind that of men (nationally and especially at local levels of governance) and does not compare favourably with women in many other world regions (Hardy-Fanta, 1999). This study is an interrogation of women's equal participation in politics in Zimbabwe in view of the 50/50 debate. The chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions and assumptions as well as the significance of the study. The delimitations, limitations and definitions of key terms also form part of this introductory chapter.

1.2   Background to women's participation in politics: The 50/50 debate

In any given country an electoral system is a mechanism that regulates parties and individuals into seats in government, and spells out who is responsible and not responsible to govern. Sanger (2008) points out that the electoral system can be regarded as the "mechanic heartbeat" of the political process. It is important to note that in a democratic system or country the electoral system is considered to be the constitutional and institutional process that puts government into place through fair representation and consent.

The system can also be designed to yield results which are in proportion to the vote share of each party or can be established on the basis of the "winner takes all" approach. The election of a single winner according to Morna (2004) is premised on the candidate that has the potential to acquire a greater number of votes. This derives from the ideology of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system. In this FPTP system, Nelson et al. (1994) postulate that the voters vote for one candidate and the candidate with the largest amount of votes is automatically considered to have won the election. This system is also termed a single member plurality (SMP) or simple plurality electoral system. In a scenario where there are

two candidates competing the system is known as a simple majority system (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2011). The FPTP system is used in many jurisdictions including Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain (in elections in its lower house), the United States of America (in its presidential elections) and Zimbabwe (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2011).

The FPTP system has variations that entail the candidate who wins needs to accomplish a quota or a threshold of votes that is greater than the natural quota. For example, in a two candidate election, the candidate who wins might be required to get a quota which is normally greater than half of the votes. In Zimbabwe, as far as Presidential elections are concerned, a candidate contesting is required to win more than 50 per cent of the poll (i.e., 50 percent plus one vote). If that does not occur the two leading candidates will be forced into a presidential run-off. These systems are sometimes called quota systems, and in the case of a two-candidate election, a super-majority system. In Zimbabwe, the quota system is reserved for the legislature.

It is important to note that an electoral system generates deliberate chances for party political organization that can result in a major impact on the amalgamation of social equality (Merves & Nyemba, 2013). In addition, factors such as democracy need to be incorporated when crafting an electoral system; plurality and majority methods are less ideal for plural or divided societies than they are for a homogeneous society. The reason for this is plurality decision rule can result in the segregation of a particular vulnerable group such as women. The implication is that it will create conflict in societies that are divided, particularly if the division is based on ethnicity (Prah, 2013). This therefore means an electoral system must not be viewed separately from its political consequences because a country's electoral system and its constitutional framework have the potential to inspire or dishearten alliance building and can incorporate or eliminate minorities and women (Weed, 2012).

In recent years, focus has been on the recognition that increasing women's political representation is a worthy strategic goal that enhances social equity in political institutions. This is particularly important in view of the fact that women's participation in politics is a fundamental human right that promotes and improves the quality of governance to achieve gender justice (Tsanga, 2000). It is important to note that international aid organisations such as the Global Fund for Women, UN Women and women's rights advocates are in support and have campaigned for women to achieve political power.

In order to promote women's progression in politics, states all over the world have come up with measures that support women in their efforts to attain more political power (Tripp, 2012). They recognise that gender inequality still persists in most political institutions and societies in Africa and other parts of the world and chiefly results in women being frequently under-represented in both local and national levels of governance (Fox 2011).

Since women make up half of the world's population, equal representation is imperative for egalitarianism, legitimacy and the proficient utilisation of the country's human capital (Britton, 2010). In addition, it has been noted that specific issues that affect women are better articulated by women themselves and that women's presence in parliament helps ensure that these issues receive attention and are incorporated in policy making (Dahlerup, 2013). However, despite these noted reasons for women's participation in politics, they still contend with patriarchal values that limit their participation in this important public sphere.

It has also been noted that patriarchal values and discrimination are ubiquitous and at times difficult to change because they are ingrained in the social outlook, subtly imposed by both men and women, and are not quite evident to many people (Craske, 1999). This 'invisibility' and persistence of patriarchal values across generations and diverse regions may lead to their acceptance as natural and immutable, thus making them difficult to change. Although it is possible to change these negative attitudes towards women, it has been acknowledged that such change takes time (Franceschet, 2003). Therefore, the equality of male and female political representation is likely to take a long time to achieve.

This is not just an African phenomenon; it is pervasive in all regions of the world. According Dahlerup (2011), in spite of decades of constant improvement, fewer women in the United States of America (USA) are likely to campaign for and get voted into political office compared to men. In the case of Fiji, a combination of cultural and gendered norms may result in the stereotyping of the political sphere as masculine and the exalting of women's responsibility in the private sphere (Krook, 2017).

Political parties have powers vested in them to recruit and select candidates who are fit for decision-making positions. This gives them an upper hand and great influence in choosing the quantity and quality of women who should be elected into office. In other words, political parties determine who will reach positions of power because they decide who will be

included on candidate lists and the order in which they appear (ZESN, 2013). Thus, these parties can be considered "gatekeepers" restricting women's progress towards equality. These political parties play a crucial role in communicating, gathering and legitimizing interests in government, giving them the power to design strategies and policies that are meant to endorse the interests of their voters (Campbell, 2006).

It is against this background that one can argue that political parties should strive to make sure that women's needs and concerns are taken on board by having women leaders who represent women's issues and concerns. This has not always, however, proven to be the case in practice as political parties do not take a neutral stance about women, gender and their place in society and its governance.

Therefore, the insincere slow pace in women's achievement in political representation has driven some to advocate the use of the gender quotas (Morna, 2004). It is important to note that these gender quotas are a way of acknowledging the disadvantaged position of women in society and recognising that the identical treatment of people in unequal situations has the effect of maintaining rather than eliminating inequality (Nelson et al., 1994). On the other hand, most people have mixed feelings on the real effects and impact of gender quotas, whether they are constituted or voluntary (Campbell, 2006). Debates on gender quotas have tended to focus on the positive and negative aspects of gender quotas in relation to issues of fairness and justice for both male and female candidates, increased female representation in parliament and the effectiveness and self-esteem of legislators appointed on the basis of such quotas (Dahlerup, 2011).

It is important to note that some states adopt these quota systems simply for purposes of window dressing, while other do so for genuine reasons (Prah, 2013). Gender quotas are often considered "empty gestures" as they do not change the *status quo* of women's equal representation in that there is a lack of commitment on the part of political elites who just appear to elevate these women for their own image and not for the genuine benefit of the women (Krook, 2017). Thus the participation and representation of women is questionable in this regard as it ends up being tokenistic as opposed to substantively representative (Sanger, 2008).

In the same vein another criticism, on the grounds of equity, alleges that quotas are not capable of bringing about the desired outcome of more competent contestants hence contradicting the principles of equality of opportunity (Seidler, 2009). It has also been observed that electoral gender quotas may have a 'crippling' effect because women candidates could develop a fear of running for election in their constituencies. Yet it may also be said that women who initially enter parliament by means of reserved seats (based on a quota) can be prepared to contest in constituencies in the future (Tripp, 2012).

Clayton (2017) has also suggested that gender quotas do not really address the underlying issue of the shortage of women who are prepared and able to stand for elections. It is important to increase the supply of capable women candidates by providing women with financial resources and campaign materials. Such strategies could be employed in addition to, or separately from, gender quotas.

The 50/50 debate is anchored mainly on four arguments (Dahlerup, 2011). The main argument is the justice argument based on the fact that since women constitute half the country's population, they automatically have the right and mandate to occupy half of the seats in Parliament. In the case of Zimbabwe, despite women constituting 52% of the population, they are underrepresented in local government and in national level decision making positions (ZESN, 2013).

The second argument for the push towards women's increased participation in politics is based on experience. According to Dahlerup (2013), women have different experiences whether they are biologically or socially constructed and they should enter politics as they will approach issues differently from the way in which men do. In Rwanda, for example, women advocated for gender equality and women's rights; women from the grassroots were mobilised during the constitution making process and women's issues were promoted through their own parliamentary caucus. In other words, issues of gender equality were prioritised in parliament and put to the forefront due to the pressure exerted by the caucus of women parliamentarians. In the same vein they also contributed in the policing up of the budget to make sure it addresses the needs and concerns of both men and women in an amicable manner. It is therefore important to note that the incorporation of women in politics results in women's daily issues such as health challenges and other bread and butter issues being viewed and debated from a women's standpoint.

The third reason is premised from the interest group argument which points to the fact that men and women are bound to have conflicting interests, therefore faced with such a scenario, men are not capable to represent women adequately (Dahlerup, 2011). Therefore, to represent both genders equally in parliament there is the need to make sure that parliament comprises both interest groups (that is males and females) in order to strike a balance between and to ensure that the two groups compete without one group dominating the other. It is also crucial to make sure "checks and balances" are conducted between the two competing groups so as to allow for transparency and order and flow of sessions and debates.

Lastly the idea of having female representation in parliament is necessary as they act as role models and encourage other women and younger generation to venture into politics and occupy positions of power so that their voices can also be heard in the political life. For instance, society years ago in Rwanda never used to consider that women should participate in politics and they were openly told that their place was the private sphere being a homemaker and a good housewife for their children and husbands. However, following in their mothers' footsteps, young women in Rwanda today have also ventured into politics (Del Campo, 2005).

Section 120 and 124 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 (the Constitution) provide for quotas allowing women to be represented in the Senate and Parliament. Section 120(2)(b) demands that elections of senators to be conducted under a party-list system of proportional representation 'in which male and female candidates are listed alternately, every list being headed by a female candidate.' Similarly, section 124(1)(b) provides for 'an additional sixty women members, six from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected through a system of proportional representation based on the votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the provinces.'

It is important to note that constitutional quotas have the capacity to improve the statistical equality of men and women in the National Assembly. Countries that introduced quota systems have managed to achieve or exceed 30 percent representation of women in parliament. For example, in Southern Africa Lesotho has 58 percent, Namibia 42 percent, South Africa 40 percent, Mozambique 35.6 percent and Tanzania 34 percent (Kibble, 2013).

Constitutional quotas that were introduced in Zimbabwe managed to increase women's representation in parliament from 14.29 percent in 2008 to 32 percent in 2013 and from 24.2 percent to 48 percent in the Senate. The constitutional quota introduced in Zimbabwe saw the improvement of the Inter Parliamentarian Union (IPU) World Classification of women in national parliaments from 90 out of 190 countries in 2012, and dropped to 27 out of 190 in 2013 elections. Although the improvement still did not reach the 50/50 mark, it creditably met the demand of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) (Maputo Protocol). Worryingly, in the 2018 elections the 50/50 mantra that both political parties and the Government had been running with all these years proved to be nothing more than wishful thinking after only a handful of women made it into Parliament and the leadership of local authorities. Of the 210 parliamentary seats, only 26 went to women.

My choice of the research subject was made for several reasons. First of all, I feel passionately about the democratic process in Zimbabwe and how it affects women. Shedding light on what is happening in Zimbabwe in terms of women's political representation and participation is thus an important contribution in terms of feminist awareness. Secondly, my interest in the subject was dictated by the fact that the quota system as enshrined in the Constitution is coming to end in 2023 and already people are beginning to put forward views about the way forward. One such view which is prominently coming out is the 50/50 perspective. Considering this, a gender perspective of the interrogation and analysis of the situation would be a worthy contribution. It is within this framework that the 50/50 debate is being interrogated with a view to taking it further.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for gender balance to ensure that women fully participate in all the various spheres of Zimbabwean society while section 56 guarantees gender equality and non-discrimination. In the same vein, Zimbabwe being a state party to international conventions, is obliged to take all necessary measures to advance the participation of women in politics. Articles 7 and 8 of CEDAW requires Zimbabwe and other member states to take all appropriate measures to overcome historical discrimination against women and all obstacles to women's participation in decision-making processes, including legislation and temporary special measures. The consensus about the need to increase women in decision-making and in politics goes as far as that. Unfortunately, the reality on the ground

is that women are not active participants in the governance of the country. There are few women in politics and those holding public office are often stigmatised and discriminated against. There is no political will among political parties or in government to deliberately increase the number of women in leadership posts. Government continues to pay lip service towards meeting its international obligations in ensuring gender parity and participation of women especially in decision-making bodies. This has resulted in few women willing to be active in politics.

1.4   Research Assumptions

The research was guided by the following assumptions:

(1)   Women's participation in politics at all levels from the local to national level remains extremely low due to systemic and structural barriers.

(2)   Constitutional provisions with regard to women's equal participation in politics are not being fully implemented.

(3)   A hybrid electoral system that is a quota system, proportional representation and first pass the post is the ideal to achieve substantive equality for women in politics.

(4)   The structures in place do not support women's equal participation with men in politics.

1.5   Research Questions

From the above assumptions, the following research questions were formulated:

(1)   How have systemic and structural barriers contributed to women's low participation in politics at all levels, from the local to national level?

(2)   Why are the Constitutional provisions with regard to women's equal participation in politics not being fully implemented?

(3)   Why is the hybrid electoral system ideal to achieve substantive equality for women in politics?

(4)   What structures can be put in place to support women's equal participation with men in politics?

1.6   Significance of the Study

The study is important for more than one reason. The study was conducted at time Government is proposing to amend section 124(1)(b) of the Constitution through extending the women's parliamentary proportional representation quota system by 10 more years. Aspiring women leaders are convinced that the move is a piecemeal measure towards the achievement of gender equality and proposes that the Government must instead fully implement sections 17, 56 and 80 of the Constitution which, if fully implemented, would clearly guarantee the achievement of gender parity. This study is therefore important in that regard.

The study is also important in that it will contribute to the development of knowledge in the area of women representation in politics and the quota system. The research will fill a gap in that regard. Other researchers and scholars may also find the empirical evidence important in advancing research along similar or related lines. On a policy front the views from the study may assist parliamentarians, constitutional experts, gender activists and feminist scholars in crafting policy or laws that advance the interests of women based on lived realities.

1.7   Delimitation

The study is an interrogation of women's equal participation in politics in view of the 50/50 debate. The study is conducted in Zimbabwe.

1.8   Limitations

The research has its own limitations. Methodologically, the sample size used may not be large enough for generalisations. However, the researcher sought the views of the women representatives in women's groups. These views were representative enough because the women's groups work with women in various spheres of life. Part of the research was conducted at a time these organisations were heading towards year end (October-December 2019) and thus the researcher had to reschedule some of the appointments with her respondents several times. Most of the key informants were always busy. Some of the interviews had to be done during the data analysis phase. This did not however affect the final analysis and interpretation of the data generated.

1.9   Definitions of key terms

Terms used in this study should be understood within the context below:

Political participation

Political participation involves an array of activities that people develop as a way of expressing their views on how the society is governed and try to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

Stereotypes

A stereotype is a set of characteristics and fixed general images that a lot of people believe represent a particular person or things based on social construct of gender roles.

Substantive representation

Substantive representation is the process of elected legislators advocating on behalf of certain groups and doing what the citizens want.

Affirmative action

Affirmative action is the process of allocating resources or favouring a disadvantaged group of people as a way of correcting past injustices through positive discrimination as a way of achieving equality.

Quota system

A quota system is a concept or way of organising society so as to have a demographic representation at all levels and aspects of political representation.

First past the post (FPTP)

The electoral principle of first past the post (FPTP) occurs when the candidate with the plurality of votes is the winner. It entails using a voting system in which a person is elected because they won more votes than anyone else in the area they represent.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0   THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework upon which the study is grounded. The study uses feminism as a framework for analysis. The chapter also presents the methodology that was used in the collection of data for the study. The rationale for the choice of each of the strategies used is clearly explained.

2.2   Feminist Theories

The study is grounded in feminist theory. According to Seider (2009), feminist theory as a theoretical or philosophical framework, aims to understand the nature of inequality between men and women. Its focus is on power relations in society. While generally providing a critique of social relations, much of the feminist theory also focuses on analysing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights in society (Seider, 2009). The basic assumption of all the traditions of feminism is that they believe in human equality. To this end the equal participation of both women and men in political decision-making provides a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society. In Zimbabwe, according to the Zimstats (2012), 52% of the population are women while men constitute 48%. It is therefore only just and fair for the legitimacy of political processes to reflect such realities particularly in governance.

Feminists abhor the discrimination against women made on the basis of gender particularly in the fields of education and politics. Essof (2013) notes that feminists are critical of the imposition of men-centric ways of life. Women should have the choice of everything in their lives and have the same opportunities as men. They are very critical of patriarchy which oppresses women in several spheres of life. To them patriarchy gives men an unfair advantage not only in politics, public life and the economy, but also in all aspects of social, personal and sexual existence (Prah, 2013). According to some feminists, "femininity is being imposed upon women by men" (Tamale, 1999). To the feminists, women's liberation and emancipation are their chief concerns. Weed (2012) concurs and states that women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes. More importantly

the low levels of education and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women also affects how they participate in politics.

2.2.1 Liberal Feminism

The study is premised on the liberal feminist theory. Theoretically, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based in biology, and therefore women and men are not all that different in the sense that their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation (Ndhovu, 2015). If women and men are not different, then they should not be treated differently under the law. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities (Essof, 2013).

Liberal feminism talks about various issues such as voting, education, equal wages and health care emphasising political and legal equality between men and women (Essof, 2013). This theoretical framework helps women to realise their ability. The theory concentrates on the interaction between men and women and believes that gender equality can only be achieved through the laws that speak of equality in all the spheres of life. To this end, Tsanga (2000) is of the view that women and men should have equal rights regarding legal matters, education and work opportunities.

Craske (1999) observes that women are striving to assert an influential role in determining their overall condition in society by participating in politics. Although they have been faced with many challenges, they have used such challenges to their advantage by allowing them to strengthen their resolve. The political environment and conditions are often unfriendly or even hostile to women. Often the after effects of the consequences of abuse that women and girls face during conflicts, especially when it comes to political participation and women's involvement in politics and governance, are often ignored. In Africa, lack of political will among men who dominate politics greatly affects women. This has jarred the confidence of women in their ability to participate in political processes especially in positions of leadership.

Central to the liberal feminist theory is that women have been excluded from most important positions and decision making platforms in public spheres especially those in political and economic spheres. They aim "to incorporate women into the mainstream contemporary society" (Craske, 1999). Liberal feminists note with concern the extent to which women are

under-represented within traditional areas of (national) and international political activity and seek also to show the ways in which women may overcome barriers to their participation. Reasons given for the under-representation of women in politics include the socialization of women away from political activities. From the liberal stand point young boys are encouraged to play with toys such as guns and military toys whilst little girls are discouraged from doing so. This later on translates into socially shared attitudes that arms control, security issues, political decision-making and public responsibilities are "a man`s topic," in which women are presumed not to have or to show any interest or expertise.

The socialization argument is also used to explain women`s under-representation in national and international decision making bodies. At international level, Tripp (2012) suggests that many women within the United Nations system are less ambitious than men, having internalized society`s expectations that they are not suited to policy making positions. Moreover, she argues that women are faced with a double-day, where they try to balance career and family responsibilities, resulting in limited opportunities for career growth. Additional explanations to women's under-representation and participation are linked to systemic barriers (Morna, 2004).

Women lack the will to participate in upper echelons of national and international political activities as a result of systemic discrimination against them by men in authority who refuse to promote them and also by laws that limit their opportunities for employment and training. Liberal feminists suggest that societal attitudes, the division of labour within the home, educational and career opportunities must all change before greater numbers of women are empowered to participate in national and international decision making positions (Mervis & Nyemba, 2013).

It is important to note that while equality and non-discrimination have been interpreted in vast ways, the human rights based approach of 'treatment as an equal not equal treatment' upholds an exceptional logical truism by which equality and non-discrimination can be interpreted into meaningful legal and policy instruments (Clayton et al., 2017). Therefore, women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, where women's active participation on equal terms with men is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development and democracy. Despite this, Ndhlovu (2015) states that women are facing obstacles in their political participation. Women around the world at every socio-

political level find themselves under-represented in parliament and far removed from decision-making levels. Thus, women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life which is at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment.

2.3 Qualitative methodology

I used a qualitative approach as the research method for this dissertation. A qualitative research approach is appropriate because it is primarily used to investigate and study a wide range of topics in the social world (Bentzon, 1998). I also chose this methodology because this approach reinforces an understanding and interpretation of meaning as well as intentions underlying human interaction. Britton (2002) describe qualitative research as a multi-faceted research method involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to subject matter. The multi-faceted nature of qualitative research enables researchers to develop a holistic picture of the phenomenon in question. In this case I wanted to understand the reasons why women were not actively taking part in politics. I therefore made a conscious decision to understand the social setting in which women find themselves. To this end I was the instrument of the research.

2.3.1 Women's law Approach

This approach is based on exploring the reality of women's lives and, from this perspective, investigating the law (Bentzon et al., 1998). According to Stang Dahl (1987) the women's law approach takes woman as the starting point by exploring their experiences in relation to the law. This approach also seeks to explain, understand and analyse women's legal rights in order to improve their social, economic and political position in life. The women's law approach also emphasises the right of women to enjoy the equal treatment of men and women before the law. This approach is therefore important as it benefits woman and accords them the same rights as men. The study focuses on the possibility of 50/50 in terms of political representation. Through the use of the approach, it became apparent that women were not represented equally at all levels of decision making. The law should level the playing field so that both men and women can take part in politics.

2.3.2 Human Rights based approach

This approach was found important for a study of this nature so as to understand what the international instruments provide for in as far as rights and responsibilities of state parties in

terms of women's political representation is concerned. Article 7 of CEDAW provides that state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of their country and, in particular, ensure that this right is afforded women on equal terms with men. This means that both men and women should vote in all elections and public referenda and are both eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies. The same Convention also seeks to provide for the participation of women in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government. The Maputo Protocol has an almost similar provision in its Article 9 that states should ensure that men and women enjoy the same rights. According to Article 9, States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that women participate without any discrimination in all elections and also that women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes. The research therefore sought to measure the Zimbabwe government's compliance with these human rights provisions.

2.4   Selection of Participants

I used purposive sampling in selecting the participants for the study. This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Etikan et al., 2016). In addition to knowledge and experience I was also interested in their availability and willingness to participate, and their ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. Table 1 provides some details of the participants.

2.5   Methods for gathering data

According to Morse (2010) there are methods of data collection that are available to researchers using qualitative techniques. This process of data collection enables the researcher to obtain comprehensive answers to the research questions, make the necessary evaluation of results and draw conclusions about what will likely happen in the future. In this study, I used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and document analysis.

Table 1:   Showing details of the participants in the study

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER	FEMALE	MALE
Government agents	4	3	1
NGO Rep	5	8	2
Women's caucus FGD	1	20	0
Youth NGO	1	2	0
Total		**33**	**3**

2.5.1   In-depth Interviews

I conducted interviews from 3 November 2019 to 12 February 2020. These were in-depth interviews. According to (Goddard & Melville, 2004), an in-depth interview is often considered a form of conversation. The aim was to collect rich data. Interviews were advantageous in that they permitted collection of data in a more conducive environment. Boeije (2002) asserts that there are a number of stages in an in-depth interview. Interviews can be employed in cases where interviewees are not comfortable responding to question in a group environment. The use of in-depth interviews as a data collection method enhances flexibility and interaction between the researcher and respondent. Participants in an in-depth interview express their feelings in a manner not possible when using a rating scale or questionnaire. The main reason why I used this type of interview was that it provided depth of evidence by allowing interviewees to talk about the subject in terms of their own frames of reference. In so doing, the method enabled me to maximize my understanding of the respondent's point of view (Major & Baden, 2010). Appendix 1 is the interview guide that I used.

2.5.2   Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

I conducted a focus group discussion with women parliamentarians. The advantages of focused group discussions are that they generate an opportunity to collect data from group

interaction on the topic of the researcher's interest and they provide high "face validity". I managed to have a group discussion after having to exercise a great deal of patience as the protocol to set up an appointment with the caucus' secretary was tedious as she wanted further assurances (beyond my introductory letter) that my motive for carrying this study was for purely academic purposes. This resulted in some delay in confirming my appointment. I emphasised to her that I wanted a group of a maximum of 12 participants but due to some internal politics she insisted that the group comprise 20 members of parliament. I had no choice but to accept and ended up acquiring a great deal of data from the participants. At first they were antagonistic towards each other as they belonged to opposing political parties. Then I explained to them that my research was not party based but focused on the plight of all women in general, irrespective to the parties to which they are affiliated. Although some group members were very dominating, I actively sought out the opinions of the quieter participants even if they did not raise their hands in a bid to participate. As the discussion progressed I encouraged everyone to participate which they eventually did as I had given them the confidence to do so. I challenged the more vocal members on the advantage of giving everyone present a voice and a chance to express their opinions all of which were different. The FGD had also gave me the chance to question the participants more deeply about their answers and answer questions raised by others.

2.5.3 Document analysis

Document analysis involved data examination and interpretation to bring out meaning, enhance understanding, and develop first-hand knowledge (Noor, 2008). I analysed the petition that was presented to Parliament (Appendix 2), documents that I got from UN Women during Brown Bag seminars, priority area documents from women NGOs.

2.6 Trustworthiness of Data

I employed several ways to ensure that the data collected is trustworthy.

2.6.1 Triangulation

In this study, I used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis as part of the measures to achieve triangulation. Triangulation means the verification of findings through referring to multiple sources of information and using multiple methods of data collection. In other words, if a conclusion is based on one person's report given during one

interview to only one interviewer, it is less credible than if several people confirmed the finding at different points in time.

2.6.2   *Member Checking*

Lincoln and Boeije (2002) posit that member checks are one of the most appropriate crucial methods for achieving trustworthiness in a qualitative study. In this study, I took the data and my interpretation of it back to the participants in the study so that they could confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account I had written. I availed the results and interpretations of the interviews to the participants for them to confirm their contributions during the interview encounters. I also asked the participants if the themes I formulated made sense and whether they were developed with sufficient evidence. I also asked them to confirm if the research was convincing and accurate. In turn, I incorporated the participants' comments into the final narrative.

2.6.3   *Prolonged engagement*

I was in the field from October 2019 to March 2020. I spent sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, social setting, or phenomenon under study. This involved spending adequate amounts of time speaking with a range of people involved in the dynamics of women in politics and developing relationships and building up a rapport with members of the culture. The development of rapport and trust facilitates understanding and co-construction of meaning between researcher and members of a setting.

2.7   Ethical Considerations

Kothari (2004) is of the view that ethics are the principles of appropriate conduct that govern researchers. The study was conducted in line with the University of Zimbabwe research ethics and regulations. To approach each participant, written permission was sought and granted. Participation in the research was voluntary and based on informed consent, meaning that all the people who participated did so willingly. Participants could withdraw from the study at any stage, but this does not mean, however, that their prior input (interviews) could not be used in the study. The rights of participants were ensured. In this study I gave them the say as to where and when to be interviewed. I did most of the interviews in the offices of the participants. Furthermore, confidentiality was maintained. I made sure proper safeguards were in place to protect the privacy of participants and their information from unauthorized access. My laptop has a password and the information on it is accessed only by me. To

enhance the anonymity of the data collected, the information will not contain any identifiable trace, and thus the risk of being able to attribute data to particular individuals is low. According to Furlong (2008), one way in which researchers can reciprocate for the time and input participants contribute to the research process is to provide them with a rewarding debriefing following the study. In this study, I phoned all the key informants to acknowledge the important role and contributions they kindly played in the research.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0   FINDINGS

3.1   Introduction

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. The findings are presented in themes as they emerged during the data collection. The findings are also supported by substantiating statements.

3.2   50/50 Debate: Competitive Electoral System

The participation of women in decision-making positions in politics is limited by tedious processes taken to appoint or select them. In Zimbabwe the first past the post (FPTP) electoral system continually affects women's equal representation to elected positions (Tripp, 2012). The plurality-majority, FPTP or 'winner takes all' electoral system means that the political candidate who wins the highest number of votes is declared the winner even if they do not have an absolute majority. The disadvantage of the FPTP system is that men and women candidates focus on their individual traits to compete against each other for votes. According to Weed (2012), stereotypes against women and patriarchy often results in voters preferring male over female candidates.

The candidate selection process is both strenuous and tedious for women. For example, political parties usually identify candidates from a list of those who have attended meetings regularly. These tend to be men as women do not attend political meetings as often as their male counterparts. One woman politician said:

> "Women pass through several barriers that are crucial if they are to get to elected to parliament. The political party need to choose them as a candidate. They also need to select themselves by being visible through attending meetings frequently. Lastly the voters should also select them."[1]

Throughout the stages of the electoral process women face challenges that they have to overcome before moving to the next stage and these stages start at the primary election stage. Several participants were of the view that during primary elections male candidates breached party procedures and rules by buying votes and intimidating other candidates. An experienced woman politician candidly observed:

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[1]   Member of the women's caucus.

> "As women there are several barriers especially with our party primary elections were we are intimidated and harassed by some male candidates. Male candidates do not do this to each other maybe they fear each other but to us women they threaten us, belittling us and even jeering at us when we try to address members of our party."[2]

Furthermore, there are some 'male' gate keepers who are very influential in these political parties who block women's entry into primary elections. This was a serious concern as noted by one participant who commented:

> "Men formulate and dominate the political game through defining the standards by which politics is measured and evaluated. This is a male-dominated political framework and it results in women shunning politics or rejecting this style which tend to favour males". [3]

It was found that male leaders often favoured their male friends in political parties and only a few female colleagues took part in primary elections. Some women candidates forged strong alliances with male leaders and in some cases they even provided them with sexual favours. However, the practice tended to alienate some women as reported by one participant who said:

> "Yes, there are also some women who make friends with prominent male politicians and can contest in primary elections and win. At the same time there are also some male politicians who are notorious for demanding sexual favours from women political candidates. In fact, let me tell you this, sexual harassment is rife in politics, it's just that its under-reported and other women have been socialised to accept it as normal where they are not confident to report. That's why you see married women not so keen in participating in politics lest they are viewed negatively by their families and in-laws."[4]

Possible models or scenarios for attaining 50/50 representation were identified by participants. One participant suggested overhauling the electoral voting system from a first past the post system to a proportional representation system on a 50/50 gender representation party list basis. She said:

> "A proportional representation system of elections will definitely guarantee equal representation of women and men in leadership. It is achievable because

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[2]   A senior woman politician from a major political party in Zimbabwe.
[3]   Director of a prominent women's organisation working with women in politics at a UN Brown Bag meeting.
[4]   A woman participant at the Heal Zimbabwe workshop.

our electoral patterns since 2000 show that voters actually vote for political parties when it comes to the House of Assembly elections and even for President."[5]

Another participant argued that it was possible to attain 50/50 by amending the Electoral Act [Chapter 2:13] to ensure that 50% of the constituencies are reserved for women. She said:

> "If the Electoral Act is amended so that 50% of the constituencies are contested by women candidates only, then 50/50 can be achieved. This will however require extensive stakeholder engagement so that everyone is abreast of the fact that gender equality is important and central to our constitutional democracy." [6]

She further noted that there was a need to enact a law regulating internal political party processes to attain 50/50 at the party level.

Another option towards 50/50 was also presented by a participant who argued that a hybrid system of reserving a women's quota and having direct elections in certain constituencies will result in 50/50 representation. She argued:

> "This model assumes that we retain the 210 constituencies but have 150 directly elected through a zebra system (proportional representation). The remaining 60 constituencies will then be allocated to women on the basis of the votes garnered by each party across the 10 provinces."[7]

She further added that the model will have to work alongside incentives for having more women in parliament.

> "We can also take a cue from South Africa which gives more political party finances to political parties which meet a certain threshold of women in parliament. Of course this is not [meant] to commodify women representation but to promote it using a clear incentive which induces a change of culture in political parties."[8]

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[5]   A woman Member of Parliament during a FGD.
[6]   Zimbabwe Gender Commission participant during the Gender Forum held in Mutare.
[7]   A woman participant from an Election Support Group.
[8]   Ibid.

3.3   Lack of political will

It was revealed that lack of political will is most evident among political parties who are chiefly pre-occupied with how to win the elections and stay in power. This has resulted in women not having confidence and lacking the capability to participate. In the same vein the Government was said to lack political will because of its failure to implement laws in Protocols and Conventions that it has already ratified. In short the government is failing implement the already existing laws that promote the participation of women. One participant put it in these words:

> "If the Government is to faithfully and effectively implement sections 17, 20, 56 and 80 of the Constitution then some of the challenges we are facing could have been resolved a long time ago. In fact, section 56 of the Constitution is very clear in so far as the right to equal opportunities in politics, economics culture and social spheres is concerned." [9]

As a result of this lack of political will, women fail to participate on the same level playing field with their male counterparts. There are moves by some women to change this. As a result of my interaction with an NGO that promotes women's participation in politics I was invited to witness a march to parliament by women leaders which was scheduled for 28 February 2020 and the submission of their petition demanding equal representation in politics as stated in the Constitution (Appendix 2). I observed their march through the city centre during which they carried placards demanding equal representation as stated in the Constitution. A participating women NGO official explained that Zimbabwe has good laws but they are not being implemented hence very few women are keen to enter politics. She said:

> "Our Constitution has very good laws. It is only that our male politicians are not interested in implementing what is contained in the statutes. So we have no option except to petition parliament itself and this is what we are doing now for our voice to be heard." [10]

The gathering comes against a backdrop of the Government's efforts to put in place outstanding electoral reforms that promote free, fair and credible elections in the country. The event was also necessitated by the Government's proposal to amend section 124(1)(b) of the Constitution which seeks to extend the women's parliamentary proportional representation

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[9]   An official from an NGO that supports women participating in Politics – Brown Bag meeting.
[10]   Ibid.

quota system by 10 more years. Aspiring women leaders are convinced that the move is a piecemeal measure towards the achievement of gender equality and proposes that the Government should instead fully implement sections 17, 56 and 80 of the Constitution which clearly guarantee the achievement of gender parity.

The petition appealed to the Government to:

- Exercise its full powers as provided for by the Constitution of Zimbabwe to align the Electoral Act with the Constitution which is the supreme law of the land.
- Ensure that the electoral reform agenda which is before Parliament guarantees 50/50 gender equality in all elected leadership positions as directed by the Constitution.
- Put in place punitive measures to curb all forms of violence and other malpractices against women throughout the electoral cycle.
- Amend the Political Party Finances Act to put budget ceilings on campaigns for all contested publicly elected positions set out in the Constitution or by any law.
- Amend the Electoral Act to include the equitable use of public funds allocated to parties in line with the Constitutional provisions of 50% gender representation.

The main reason for rejecting the extension of the quota system is that it delays the achievement of gender equality in Zimbabwe by 10 more years. They cited that the extension is a ploy to avoid aligning gender parity laws with the Constitution and, in the process, maintain the *status quo* under which women occupy less than 15% of all leadership positions in the country.

The women leaders who submitted the petition wanted Parliament to direct the government to whole heartedly implement sections 17, 20, 56 and 80 of the Constitution which clearly provide for gender equality in Parliament. I was told by one of the participants present that they were in the process of finalising a court challenge to seek the intervention of the Constitutional Court to order the Government to implement both the letter and the spirit of

the provisions of the 2013 Constitution, especially those relating to gender parity. The participants were also mobilizing women across Zimbabwe to reject the proposed amendments during Parliamentary public hearings.

3.4 Patriarchy and Culture

It was reported by participants during a FGD that the ability of women to engage in politics is often shaped by cultural norms and values that influence social structures. One of the participants argued that the patriarchal system is embedded in the family where it constraints women to believe that males control all aspects of decision-making and relegate women to the periphery. Another participant from the FGD further noted that cultural attitudes and traditional beliefs shape women's status and roles in society where the system does not allow women who challenge the *status quo* to take up leadership positions. This was clearly articulated by another participant who was attending a workshop organised for rural women where the participant was invited to commemorate the 16 days of activism against gender based violence focusing on violence against women in leadership positions. She commented:

> "Politics and leadership are regarded as male domains. Families do not provide adequate support to the girl child and women who may want to enter politics. The girl child is socialised from birth to respect male authority and not to question or challenge men. There is a glass ceiling for women in terms of how far they reach because of social barriers that emanate from the patriarchal system that perpetuate gender inequalities in all spheres of life. Women already in politics also face the same dilemma. Therefore, it results in women not participating on the same level playing field with men due to the system that allows male dominance."[11]

One of the major findings was that traditional roles and the division of labour are still clearly gendered. One of the participants present was of the view that social norms make it more difficult for women to leave their traditional domestic roles for more public roles outside of the home due to strong patriarchal influences. Hence women's gender identity and their place and role in society is still chiefly perceived as being domestic in nature and continues to act as a barrier to women's entry into formal politics.

It was reported that women interested in participating in politics were despised by and subjected to bitter verbal attacks by men and even other women. This was a result of deeply

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[11]   Women participant at Heal Zimbabwe workshop.

rooted societal norms which regard the public sphere as a domain exclusively reserved for males and therefore women who tried to challenge this view were scorned and humiliated. The verbal attacks mostly target the candidate's private life which has nothing to do with her leadership skills or potential. Gossip about the marital status and sexual life of any woman who dares to enter politics is deliberately generated and circulated to tarnish her image and discourage her from pursuing any political ambition. The general view of the participants was that men verbally abuse women the world over in order to keep them in line and under check. This was considered character assassination which caused many of its women targets to lose self-confidence, become discouraged, refuse to enter politics or to withdraw from it. One participant noted the role of culture in preventing women from entering politics when she observed:

> "Our traditional beliefs based on our culture are very clear. Women are not supposed to lead, they are supposed to cook take care of children and clean the house. This is what women are socialised to do from birth, as they grow and even till old age."[12]

3.5   Socialisation and traditional roles

One participant revealed that society views the place of women is in the home where they act as homemakers, apprehended with reproductive roles while men are the ones at liberty to take up productive roles and leadership positions in the public sphere. These activities are passed on and reinforced by the media that considers that all women are responsible for performing the tasks in the home while men are responsible for doing work in the public sphere. One participant noted that the media's portrayal of women in the home had an effect on the appointment of individuals to political positions and even on the voting behaviour of the voters themselves.

It was also revealed in the FGD held that the majority of women are confined to their homes doing household chores resulting in their failure to obtain leadership experience or the autonomy to network. The many demands on women leave them overwhelmed with no time or energy to participate in political meetings and campaigns that are normally conducted at odd hours which also put a restriction on women who have multiple responsibilities, especially the care of young children and the family. One participant has this to say:

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[12]   A female Member of Parliament.

"Imagine some meetings are just called at short notice where it's mandatory to attend, yet, I have small children who need to be picked up at school and helped with their home work. At times you end up excusing yourself and in the process you are not taken seriously. However, when other crucial workshops are called, your name is just crossed out as they will openly remind you that time is not on your side without even consulting me [and they will] just use my previous excuse [as a way] to fix me."[13]

She also emphasized how at times men team up against women just to make sure that as a woman you do not have access to foreign trips that include allowances and make sure that women stay in the office. She said:

"Women who do not attend these meetings and workshops lose out since these are platforms for exposure and growth but as a woman one is not given the chance to partake due to political muscle to prove woman's place is in the kitchen and taking care of the children." [14]

One of the key informants in the study mentioned how socialisation is also perpetuated at schools which he described as the second chief socialisation agent that deters women from participating in politics from a tender age. It was found that the teacher training curriculum had a component called 'life skills and lifelong education' which exposed learners from ECD to grade 7 to survival skills. Some of the life skills taught from an early age included leadership issues, gender issues, sexual and reproductive health rights, mentoring and children's rights.

"In schools they have some clubs and activities where learners are prepared for leadership roles, for example, the training of class monitors and school prefects is a school wide activity while clubs such as Girl Guides, Brownies Boy Scouts. Generally, some of these clubs and activities are meant to empower both boys and girls and prepare them from a tender age into leadership roles."[15]

From the discussion it was revealed that the teachers' attitudes played an important role in preparing and shaping the learners for leadership in the future. It was noted that most teachers were socialised to allow the boy child to freely experiment and explore, whilst the girl child was confined and restricted from opportunities to explore and experiment.

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[13]   A woman Member of Parliament during an in-depth interview.
[14]   A woman Member of Parliament during an in-depth interview.
[15]   A male principal from one of the teachers training colleges in Harare in an in-depth interview.

"A school is a microcosm of society. It's a mirror reflection of what happens in the bigger society. Our teachers bring to school attitudes that the bigger society has about the treatment of boys and girls. That is boys are mostly given leadership roles such as class monitors or prefects. These attitudes by teachers are a reflection of the patriarchal nature of our society which regards males as leaders and to be active in the public sphere."[16]

3.6 Political violence as a thorny issue

Most of the participants cited violence and intimidation as a thorny issue that restricts women's participation in public life due to rampant gender based violence. Participants interviewed in the FGD revealed how women are subjected to some form of violence most of the time deliberately in order to intimidate and humiliate them. For instance, one Honourable women Member of Parliament interviewed mentioned how women who entered through the quota system are looked down upon and constantly jeered at:

"Some PR MPs have been considered passengers who are careful not to offend their political leaders who are mostly males. Some have been considered excess baggage or "Baccosi" meaning women of cheap quality that are given as extras."[17]

One participant reminded the researcher that during elections there is physical, verbal and psychological violence that leaves women with emotional scars, especially for women activists. It was also suggested that violence was the reason why so many women did not turn out to vote in the 2018 elections. One participant said violence had the long term effect of preventing women from participating in politics for fear of their lives as well as that of their families. One participant had this to say:

"My sister, politics is not for the faint hearted especially here in Zimbabwe. Mind you when I entered politics back then I did know I was asking for trouble. However, the situation inside teaches you to be tough in order to survive. However, not all women are bold, that's why most do not even dare participate due to the violate nature of our politics in Zimbabwe'[18]

3.7 Lack of economic resources

The participants were unanimous in their view that poverty was a major stumbling block restricting women from participating to achieve 50/50 representation. Participants expressed

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[16]   A male principal from one of the teachers training colleges in Harare in an in-depth interview.
[17]   A woman Member of Parliament in an in-depth interview.
[18]   Ibid.

their concern about how poverty is caused by a lack of education, resources and information all of which were considered to be some of the major barriers preventing them from participating in politics on a par with their male counterparts. One female Member of Parliament noted that the lack of economic resources plays an important role acting as a barrier to women's participation in politics. It was highlighted that political parties do not specifically fund women candidates who want to enter politics. There is also no support from government specifically targeting women who may want to enter politics. The blame was attributed to the contemporary commercial nature of politics which puts it beyond the reach of the poor, especially women, and thus leads to the eventual feminization of poverty, i.e., poor women who do not have the resources to enter politics remain politically unrepresented and therefore without access to national resources.

One participant said aspiring women candidates are the most affected as they struggle to secure political funding to engage in effective campaigns and purchase campaign materials. It was also mentioned that the participation of poor women was affected largely by inequality, dependence and exclusion as compared to those women who are well resourced and financially stable. One participant said:

> "Poverty is a major stumbling block for most of us due to lack of education which also contributes to low self-esteem hence the reason why many women shun politics. If one has a good education she is able to meet all her financial obligations unlike me who does not have any financial independence. Moreover those who are financially privileged are better recognised whilst most of us women are jeered at for lacking campaigning resources."[19]

Poverty and limited education was said to reduce the self-esteem of women. This meant that many women shunned the public sphere because of their inferiority complex. It was also reported that voters tended to elect and leaders of political parties tended to appoint financially apt, educated people in society. They emphasised that limited financial opportunities, lack of financial resources for campaigning and unfriendly policies are some of the challenges affecting the ascendancy of women to leadership positions.

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[19]   A Member of Parliament in the FGD.

3.8 Mentorship and capacitation

Women expressed concern that they lacked role models who are capable of moulding young aspiring politicians. The problem was attributed to the older women who, once in power, do not want to pass the baton on to up-coming young women yet it is such young women who have fresh ideas about how to improve society and need to be given the political space to share and implement them. The environment does not provide room to train young politicians from a young age as older women in politics bully their younger contemporaries and are very hostile towards them, treating them with scorn. One young female politician expressed her opinion as follows:

> "Capacity building resources are essential to reinforce our skills and boost our confidence as at times we are just thrown into the deep end without proper mentoring. More so if you suggest brilliant ideas, you are looked down upon. Yet age is just a number [it's irrelevant]."[20]

The young politicians felt that there was the need to support women to participate actively in politics through training them how politics is conducted and how to appeal to voters.

One key informant was of the view that in secondary schools, learners are exposed to various clubs and activities that prepare them for political life such as being junior parliamentarians and junior counsellors and joining young business clubs that enhance their leadership skills.

> "As a way of catching them young, learners in secondary schools are exposed to such political activities as being junior counsellors, junior members of parliament and various young business club that feed into politics."[21]

It was also revealed that both boys and girls are mentored into various leadership positions depending with the nature of the club they join. Such clubs include young women's farmers club, young women's business club, Toast Masters Club for Public Speaking and Rotary Club for charity activities. One of the key informants also mentioned how colleges practice gender affirmative action by enrolling 65 percent women and 35 percent men. The reason for this is that women who become secondary technical school teachers will become role models to the school girls who may go on to aspire to be leaders.

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[20]   An official from an NGO supporting women politicians at a UN Brown Bag meeting.
[21]   Principal from a teachers training college.

3.9 Whipping systems and party politics

It was found that there is an official in parliament whose task is to ensure that there is party discipline. This entails that any member of the party vote according to the party's wishes, not their own or that of their own constituents. Whips are the party's "enforcers." Therefore, members are not free to decide on their own whether to support or vote for a particular motion. The whipping system is meant to keep them in line so that they remain loyal to their party.

One parliamentarian reported that political parties used the PR quota system to deny women (particularly young women) opportunities to compete for constituency seats. She further claimed that the system was abused by political party leaders (mainly men) to further divide women. In fact, she noted that the women were appointed based on loyalty, bootlicking and according to factions and such practices exclude more deserving women. Therefore, the system also fails to produce many new leaders as the older women Parliamentarians who have served for many years take 'retirement' in the PR 'safe seats.' One key informant was concerned about how men abuse their positions in politics to dominate women:

> "There is a need to challenge patriarchy in its various manifestations especially the attitudes of male politicians who feel they own women and sexually harass us to comply with their agenda. Men use force to control us. Most of us end up quiet for fear of further victimisation and not being voted for in the next election. Thus we have no option except to remain loyal to the system for survival."[22]

In Zimbabwe political parties are not required to use their (the parties') public finances to train women in political matters despite the fact that such finances come from the government. To this end, one can argue that political parties do not have programs in place to finance the mentoring, capacity building and awareness raising targeting women using funds provided by the government under the Political Finances Act.

3.10 The media's portrayal of women in politics

It was found that women have an important role to play in the politics of the country but the media failed to expose this role in a befitting manner. I was told that the media covered women in a stereotypical way. The participants were generally of the view that the media

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[22]   A young aspiring female politician from an NGO that supports young women (UN Brown Bag meeting).

tended to focus on the mannerisms of women politicians, their wardrobe and their appearance. They also reported that some photographers were notorious at trying to take photographs of women politicians in compromising situations in order to sensationalise them and thereby grab the attention of their readers. Therefore the media's evaluation of women politicians according to their representation of them is gender based.

One participant explained one of the reasons for the media's poor coverage of women politicians and its bias toward their male counterparts:

> "The media is skewed in favour of male politicians. Most female politicians are stereotypically covered in their constituencies or wards. The language used against them does not portray them as competent or hardworking politicians. There is no balanced coverage of male and female politicians' activities. In fact, some have argued that male politicians pay journalists to receive wider coverage because they have resources at their disposal, unlike women, which poses as a major challenge."[23]

It was found that political coverage of women tended to focus more on their domestic background and this disadvantaged them. The media not only plays an important role in shaping the values of society but it also reflects those values. One participant was of the view that female politicians only appear fully covered on the front page of the newspapers for the wrong reasons. When they ought to be publicly credited for some good work they may have done, they receive not such publicity due to the fact that women are viewed as inferior. One honourable woman Member of Parliament said:

> "Such discrimination is felt during campaigning where male coverage is intensified whilst women lack the resources to also cover themselves as it is very expensive."[24]

The participants also felt that the media's portrayal of women politician fails to focus on their potential but rather obsesses over their private lives which is of little value to their the voters they genuinely desire to represent and serve.

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[23]   An official from an NGO working with women parliamentarians in an in-depth interview.
[24]   A woman Member of Parliament from the women's caucus in an in-depth interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0   DISCUSSION

4.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses the data that was collected during the study. The discussion and analysis are done in relation to the themes that were generated from the assumptions. Each theme is discussed and linked to literature so as to confirm or refute the given view.

4.2   Systemic and structural barriers to women's participation in politics

It is important to note that in politics, systemic and structural barriers are a hindrance to women's political participation and appointment to decision making positions (Chung, 2006). Systemic barriers are patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that embrace part of the structures of an organization that are capable of creating or perpetuating drawbacks for women. Organizations tend to reproduce many of the same biases as the people who operate within them. The implication is that organizational rules sometime develop out of past histories that are not easily remodelled, where such rules may seem quite unbiased on the surface. However, if these processes result in or contribute to differential treatment or produce different outcomes, the results can be harmful. Such an engrained institutional process that can occur formally or informally within society is sometimes referred to as a structural barrier (Nelson, 1994).

To make strides towards achieving gender equity in political parties and in national public policy, it is vital to focus on the fundamental factors that prevent women from being represented in leadership positions in political parties and movements. According to Chung (2006), party leaders and members of decision-making bodies of political parties (such as the Politburo or Central Committee) are responsible for the selection of candidates and members of the legislature.

Britton (2012) suggests that political parties often have both formal and informal policies, practices and decision-making in their organisation that can act as barriers for the exclusion of women. It is therefore vital to craft policies, practices and decision-making processes in a manner that does not lead to individual differences or that allows the dominant culture to be the norm. Political parties, just like organizations, use their own internal cultures which, if not

all-encompassing, can side-line or alienate women. Likewise, networks and social relationships are known essential platforms in politics and, if monitored, may lead to women being segregated. Thus political parties have a mandate to ensure that they are not practicing systemic discrimination unconsciously. As a result, Chung (2006) maintains that such practices require alertness and willingness to monitor and review policies, organisation culture and practices and decision-making processes. From a human rights point of departure, it is not acceptable for an organization to choose to remain ignorant of systemic discrimination. Therefore, institutional constraints include barriers that include political systems that operate via rigid schedules which do not consider women's domestic responsibilities.

The capacity of women to endorse a gender equality agenda is restricted not only by the absence of a "critical mass" of women at strategic levels in parties, but also by the fact that they are given weaker positions in party structures. In the same vein, the division of labour within parties normally mirrors the traditional sexual division of labour (Tamale, 1999). This implies that it contributes to confining women to the domestic and private spheres where society has ascribed to them the family role which makes it difficult for them to cope with political responsibilities, especially where there are no strategies in place to alleviate their gender roles.

As a result of this phenomenon, those women who have been elected or appointed to decision-making positions within party structures have traditionally been allocated education and social welfare committees, which is basically an "extension" of their traditional role as mothers and caretakers (Tamale, 1999). These committees have less power and esteem as compared to the economic, electoral affairs and security committees.

It is important to note that laws, policies and procedures that support gender equality have the ability to send positive signals to women and girls concerning their place and role in a country, the absence of such sends the opposite message. Comprehending policy as "whatever governments do or do not do" makes us realize that state silence in the face of on-going injustice and inequality is a real challenge for women (Dahlerup, 2013). Furthermore, informal policies, practices and decision making processes do not only alienate women but also marginalise them in the same organisations that purport to embrace them. To this end, such policies and practices violate section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which calls for

the promotion of the full participation of women in all spheres of society on the basis of equality with men. The fact is that political parties in Zimbabwe continue to discriminate against women along systemic and structural lines despite the fact that section 56 of the Constitution provides that all persons are regarded equal before the law and have the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres,

As far as domestic policy making within political parties on substantive equality and issues are concerned, there needs to be strong awareness of the relationship between party political work and women's private care burdens. In other words, full political equality in politics demands women-friendly policies that support public solutions to women's "private" caring roles and burdens so that women can have ample time and energy to participate in politics.

Tripp (2012) is of the view that women's ability to combine work and family is embedded in the systems of social provision that include access to paid parental leave, child care, education, health and other family support. Therefore, enabling laws and policies such as publicly paid parental leave, including maternity leave, paternity leave, and gender-neutral parental leave which are comparable to other jurisdictions are essential in achieving equal political participation of women and men. To this end, Tamale (1999) observes that in Uganda the state protects women taking into account their unique needs and natural maternal functions in order to achieve equality with men. It is therefore important to provide legal rights that comprise numerous baskets of provisions, each of which should be embedded in a distinct legal code or policy framework.

In short, structural barriers in the form of political party composition affects women's ascendency to political leadership. These structural barriers are taken as normal and more needs to be done to change the *status quo*. Therefore, political cultures, customs or traditions which are against the political interests of women or which undermine their status should be shunned by all political actors. Only then is it likely that 50/50 will be achieved.

4.3   Constitutional provisions for equal participation

The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for equal participation in all spheres of life by men and women, boys and girls. Section 17 provides that:

> "The state must promote gender balance to ensure that women fully participate in all the various spheres of Zimbabwean society."

Section 56 guarantees gender equality and non-discrimination and according to section 56(6):

> "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures to promote the achievement of equality and to protect or advance people who have been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination."

Section 80 also provides that:

> "every woman has full and equal dignity of the person with men and this includes equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.

The Constitution reiterates prior obligations as shown by 2005 Constitutional Amendment No.17 which outlawed discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Chapter 2 of the Constitution which deals with National Objectives emphasises gender balance as its main objective to guide the state and all institutions and agencies of Government. Section 26 which falls within this chapter provides for equality for women in marriage and girls within families.

Chapter 4 which contains the Bill of Rights of the new 2013 Constitution specifically provides that both men and women have a right to equal treatment, as well as a right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres.

In spite of all these provisions, Zimbabwe's achievement in gender equality is classified as poor. According to the 2015 Human Development Report, Zimbabwe scored 0.583 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) compared to the ideal of zero (Kibble, 2013).

Advocacy on equal representation as supported by several provisions in the new Constitution has brought about the acceptance that 50:50 representation in decision making positions in commissions and other elective bodies is fundamental to achieving equality as provided for by the new Constitution.

As a result, this new Constitutional regime is ideal for the improvement of new policy mechanisms that can lead to 50/50. However, according to Tamale (1999), men who are the most politically active are not inclined to promulgate laws or policies designed to take power from them and share it equitably with women. Women should therefore pursue their right to political participation through actively engaging the legislature. Such robust engagement can be used as a vehicle to attain 50/50.

The Constitution is inclusive in its objectives for gender equality and therefore provides a safe platform that guarantees equality rights that can be demanded and initiatives that can be put in place and followed for future generations. It is in doubt that Zimbabwe acknowledges that good governance and sustainable development is derived from women having the capacity to take part in key decision making processes. However, the lack of a comprehensive legislative framework that speaks of affirmative action to guarantee the fulfilment of gender quota systems for political parties both in the urban and rural councils undermines the process of achieving gender equality (Tripp, 2012).

Additional core issues that perpetuate gender disproportions in candidature in the electoral system and contributions in public office include a lack of resources for the campaigning process, limited education, negative cultural norms, gender based violence and harassment and intimidation. These all call for stern policy measures that can be employed to effectively address them (Tamale, 1999). Such factors also restrict the participation of girls in leadership positions from a tender age.

It has been argued that there is a need to improve and buttress policies, legal provisions and programmes to ensure the accomplishment of a 50/50 representation of men and women in the political arena and other key decision making positions (Kibble, 2013). This will require formulating and devising capacity building programmes for women already in leadership and aspiring women leaders who need initiatives that support them and resource mobilisation efforts that aim to sustain and promote women in politics and other governance structures.

Krook (2017) observes that there is a need to devote programmes that aim to enhance confidence, leadership and assertiveness for young girls and which are aimed at creating a fertile ground for their equal participation in leadership in schools, tertiary institutions and junior parliament. Similarly, Del Campo (2005) advises that activists should advocate for

measures that call for affirmative action in areas where severe gender gaps exist. The lobbying should also extend to the removal of cultural and traditional customs that constrain the equal participation of men and women in traditional governance and other grassroots structures.

The global call for 50/50 representation, combined with requests from national women's organizations, created a demand for governments to come up with positive approaches that aim to take special measures that address the low numbers of women's representation in legislatures (Crake, 1999). The most common answer to the increased petition for gender equality in decision-making was to come up with different kinds of gender quotas that include preserving special seats for women and requesting that different parties recommend a certain number of women on their lists. Such measures call for the demand side of politics that has more recently gained a lot of attention from scholars and researchers world over (Burn, 2004). However, more attention needs to be given to provide measures that address the supply problem of women in politics to achieve 50/50.

4.4   National Gender Policy in Zimbabwe

The new Zimbabwe Constitution adopted in 2013 is acknowledged for its firm commitment to gender equality (Ndlovu, 2015). The prevailing social, economic and political developments provide a firm basis to pursue gender equality and equity as defined in the National Gender Policy of 2013-2017. In fact, Section 5.1 of the National Gender Policy speaks of gender constitutional and legal rights which establish mechanisms to actualise the gender equality provisions of the new Constitution and other legislative provisions on gender equality. Furthermore, Section 5.3 provides for politics and decision making mechanisms.

There is, therefore, a need for a framework for affirmative action to ensure the attainment of gender quota systems for political parties. This can lead to an increase in numbers of women in lower levels of governance such as councils as well as the National Assembly. It may be noted that the pursuit of gender equity has progressed from advocacy, negotiation and efforts to create awareness on the impact of gender equity to a situation where gender deliberations are a prerequisite in development programs and operations. This National Gender Policy of Zimbabwe sets out priorities, builds coherence and facilitates resource mobilization in support of gender equality and equity whose goal is that of improving the status of women. To that end, the goal of achieving 50/50 becomes attainable.

Merves & Nyemba (2013) note that the Gender Policy provides a framework of how all the institutions are supposed to mainstream gender into all their program policies and projects. Such a move helps to incorporate and empower women into positions of power from a young age where the mandate to consider gender equality will have been set out as a priority from the grassroots level. To this end, such moves may result in the realisation of section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which speaks to gender balance in all institutions including politics.

4.5   Using human rights instruments to increase women's participation in politics

The equal participation of women and men in politics and other positions of decision-making is a major achievement at the core of an effective pluralist democratic society. To this end a number of international human rights mechanisms have been put in place to support women's participation in politics. Gender equality between men and women is a requirement for all state parties that ratified the aforesaid mechanisms that include conventions, charters, treaties and resolutions. One of the conditions that signifies the legitimacy of a democratic regime that complies with its obligation and responsibility is its ratification and implementation of human rights instruments (Craske, 1999).

The establishment of the United Nations Charter endorses the foundation of the importance of access to public and political life for both men and women as a principle of the right to equality and non-discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) also upholds the privilege of all persons to non-discrimination based on sex. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) also reinforces the importance of the equality of opportunities in political, economic, cultural, and social activities. It is therefore important that Zimbabwe as a signatory has the mandate to fulfil its obligations of equal participation in politics to ensure the meaningful increase of women participating in the political arena to achieve 50/50.

4.5.1   CEDAW's provisions relating to women's participation in politics

It is important to note that political participation is divided into three categories. The first is the right to choose political leadership and the second is the right to participate in political leadership that upholds gender-sensitive approaches. Article 7 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides for the realization of equality between women and men in politics to achieve 50/50. CEDAW

maintains women's equal access and equal opportunities in political and public life. The third element is the right to vote and to stand for election and to hold public office at all levels of government. This therefore demands all state parties who have ratified this UN Convention to take all proper measures to remove past discrimination perpetrated against women. They also have a mandate to make sure that all obstacles to women's participation in decision-making processes (Article 8), including legislation and temporary special measures (Article 4) are eliminated.

In spite of equality and non-discrimination being the basic principles to boost female participation, these principles have not been adequately assimilated into the electoral laws, policies, regulations and guidelines (Ndlovu, 2015). For instance, most party constitutions fail to walk the talk when they use in their constitutions phrases like the party will be "guided by" or is "founded on" principles of equality. Such wording implies that most of these principles are stated in general terms only and merely for rhetorical purposes. In other words, they are not gender specific as such clauses do not speak to the situation on the ground where women are victims of GBV and other kinds of discrimination that restrict them from participating in politics to achieve 50/50 (Essot, 2013).

Having exposed the above mentioned gap it is important to make sure that legal provisions speak to the reality which lies beyond formal and substantive equality to transformative equality. Transformative equality calls for states to not only focus on direct discrimination but above all to fight systemic and structural gender discrimination (Burn, 2004). CEDAW has adequate provisions that speak to the achievement of gender balance in all political activities especially if its provisions are correctly implemented after they are domesticated. In the same vein, CEDAW's provisions can be used to achieve 50/50 if there is political will not only in government but also from political parties that have a membership which includes women. Zimbabwe has laws and policies that recognise the need for gender equality. However, the situation on the ground is that there is no political will to implement these laws and policies to achieve 50/50.

4.5.2   *Maputo Protocol*

In Africa a revolutionary moment to achieve gender equality was called for in 2003. It was after the African Union made a follow up to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) in terms of which member states

were given a mandate to achieve a balance in gender equality in decision-making by 2005 (Paxton et al., 2006). Article 9 of the Maputo Protocol confirms that women, like men, have the right to participate in the political process and decision-making and requires states to take positive action to promote the participation of women in politics.

The Maputo Protocol has tailor made the provisions of CEDAW to suit the African context with a view to achieving gender balance in all the spheres. In the light of the above, it is therefore important for Zimbabwe to apply such provisions to actually achieve 50/50 since ratifying the Protocol and failing to walk the talk does not contribute in any way to achieve the goal of 50/50 especially in the political arena. Therefore, the Maputo Protocol is an important instrument that should be taken on board when deciding how to incorporate women into political leadership. Zimbabwe through the 2013 Constitution and especially section 80 should treat women with full and equal dignity of the person in political, social activities and other platforms in order to achieve 50/50. There is a need for political will and an end to some patriarchal tendencies that stifle the implementation of progressive provisions in the Maputo Protocol as far as women's participation in politics is concerned.

4.5.3   *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development calls for all heads of states and government to put in place special measures that enable equal participation and parity in the political arena. Heads of states are obliged to make sure that both men and women participate equally in politics and in decision making positions without any prejudice. Such provisions should also be clearly spelt out in their constitutions and ensure that women's rights are not compromised by any legal provisions or practices. The Protocol also commends all state parties to strive for gender balance in politics where they should strive to ensure 50 percent representation of women in decision making positions in both private and public sectors. Despite the effort to achieve a 50/50 representation in Parliament by 2015, Zimbabwe is still grappling with such a provision as the number of women participating in politics is actually decreasing.

Since Zimbabwe is a member of SADC it should emulate what other countries have done to increase women's participation in politics and other sectors. For instance, South Africa has the same provision in its Constitution that call for gender equality and equal participation of men and women in politics. Ndhovu (2015) argues that the SADC Protocol is a relevant

instrument through which state parties can achieve 50/50. Zimbabwe, through section 56 of its Constitution, recognizes that women and men have the right to equal treatment including the right to equal opportunities in political and social spheres, among others. Thus, there is a need to implement the law in its entirety in order to achieve 50/50.

4.5.4   AU Agenda 2063 and women's participation in politics

AU Agenda 2063 is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future (Krook, 2017). This is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity.

In fact, Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for:

> "An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."

Agenda 2063 therefore requires that we live in a more inclusive society where all the citizens are actively involved in decision making in all aspects and where no child, woman or man is left behind or excluded on the basis of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age or any other factor. Article 3 of the Protocol on Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union recognizes the critical role of women in promoting inclusive development and calls for the AU "to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas." This is in line with section 5.3 of the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy which aims to include women in decision making particularly in the political economic and cultural arena.

Since the AU recognizes that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an integral part of regional integration, economic growth and social development, it has developed the AU's strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) to ensure the inclusion of women in Africa's development agenda. The African Union strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) (2018-2028) contains Pillar 3 which emphasises the need for effective laws, policies and institutions for the attainment of equality.

In as much as Africa has made progress in crafting progressive laws and policies and institutions to promote and protect women's rights, there is still a huge deficit when it comes to effective implementation and gender machineries remain among the weakest public institutions at a time when they are needed the most to push the gender agenda forward. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Small and Medium Enterprises Community Development are mandated with implementing policies to do with women and gender equality in the country. However, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, being an autonomous institution, is in favour of 50/50 while the Ministry, which is an executive arm of the government, is in favour of the extension of the quota system which defeats the purpose of moving towards 50/50 representation.

The GEWE Strategy proposes to design and implement a new initiative called "All for Maputo Protocol Program" which will support the full and universal ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol (Krook, 2017). This therefore puts to the test the fact that the Maputo Protocol is an effective institution that must be implemented by all countries. It is transformational in that its outcomes aim to mitigate, if not eliminate, the major constraints hindering gender equality and women's empowerment so that women and girls may participate fully in economic activities, political affairs and social endeavors. Therefore, the AU Agenda 2030 has underscored the need to create space for all women in leadership positions and advocated for a "zebra leadership model" where whenever a man is in a leadership position, a woman is appointed to deputize him and vice versa. This will most likely result in the realization of Agenda 2063.

4.5.5 *Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 and women's participation in politics*

An international appeal to achieve gender equality in the political arena has recently taken centre stage. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No.5 is an international appeal to consider gender equality in the political arena. Gender equality in important leadership positions is to be considered. It also ensures *"women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life"*. It is a given fact that there is usually a solid connection amid women's political participation and gender equality programs and policies or laws (Essort, 2013). The participation of women in government institutions is important to achieve a true democratic society (Krook, 2017). Since women world over constitute half the world's population, it is a noble idea to ensure that they also participate in key democratic institutions. Based on the

foregoing and the fact that globally fewer women hold electoral or decision making positions than men, Weed (2012) asks the very valid question "when and where are women present in political offices?"

4.6   Gender and Politics

The electoral process is governed by specific laws, policies, regulation and procedures. It is such laws and regulations that in most case restricts women participating meaningfully in politics. Normally such jurisdictions have deeply ingrained patriarchal strongholds that view women as only there to be seen not heard. This is in line with Tamale (1999) who observes that in patriarchal societies women are not supposed to speak up or express their opinion in public. Men are regarded as natural players in the game of politics therefore women who dare challenge men for political office are regarded as renegades and gives the example of a crowing hen as an omen of bad tidings in Ugandan culture.

However, in jurisdictions such as Rwanda and South Africa where there is political will and the desire to implement laws, regulations, policies and procedures the results are different in that there are many women in decision making bodies too. In fact, boosting the number of women participating meaningfully in politics helps to create a democratic society that allows for every voice to be heard in order to achieve gender justice. Thus, allowing both sexes equal opportunity results in gender balance allowing the voice of all minority groups to be heard and represented by specific people in the same category who can relate to their specific needs. Jurisdictions that have a fully operational legal framework allows for a functional democratic state that is conducive to achieve 50/50.

Dahlerup & Freidenvall (2011) acknowledge the significance of taking into consideration the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality as a crucial measure that should be considered before the registration of political parties. It is necessary to make these principles into legal requirements. For instance, women should be included in the leadership composition of political parties and also be signatories of political party constitutions. Kibble (2013) notes that in order to campaign for political positions one needs to start with primary elections as an entry point. However, as a result of the way in which the primary elections are conducted within political parties most women candidates are side-lined. During the campaign process politicians who are mostly men usually give handouts to potential voters including food packs, seeds, fertilisers and tee-shirts. They also host guests who are likely to

provide them with financial assistance Women candidates may not have such resources or contacts. They end up not participating in politics not because they are not interested in doing so but because they do not have the resources to do so and they are poor. In fact, in Zimbabwe primary elections are more expensive than any other part of the electoral process which women have to negotiate and win (Mervis & Nyemba 2013).

In Zimbabwe there no legal provisions which govern how primary elections should be conducted by political parties. Furthermore, internal party political rules and even the guidelines on how primaries are supposed to be conducted are ambiguous. Ndlovu (2015) observes that the political parties are not clear with regard to their party funding of women candidates. To this end, Fox (2011) is of the view that legislation should be enacted to facilitate fairness in elections.

Some countries such as Bosnia, Mexico and Ireland link political public finance allocation to the promotion of women's participation in decision making. According to Burn (2004), these innovative practices to channel more funds to women candidates facilitates transparency and fairness. In fact, Craske (1999) is of the view that political parties should pay specific consideration when distributing political funds provided under the public political finances statutes.

In Zimbabwe's 2013 elections, for instance, there were several instances of electoral malpractice and misconduct involving intimidation, threats, name-calling, harassment, mudslinging, vote buying, abuse of public resources, especially the public media and violence, voter card buying, abuse of public resources and campaign violence (Clayton et al., 2017). Contests for political positions are dominated by men and the end result is that women view politics as dirty because of the abusive language that is used and the violence that is perpetrated against people. This discourages women from contesting (Ndhlovu, 2015). There is therefore no doubt that the electoral legal framework in Zimbabwe is not tough on perpetrators of violence.

The framework governing elections in Zimbabwe facilitates the dissemination of election information to voters. The legal framework guarantees the right to campaign freedom of expression, freedom to publish and produce campaigning material and the freedom of assembly. Ndhlovu (2015) notes that the framework does not, however, provide for gender

balanced voter education material nor does it provide for a gender balanced delivery of the electoral message to voters. To this end there is therefore a need for a gendered civic education strategy which is important to address negative attitudes that society has towards women candidates.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter concludes the study and makes recommendations. The study was guided by the following research questions:

(1)   How have systemic and structural barriers contributed to women's low participation in politics at all levels, from the local to national level?

(2)   Why are the Constitutional provisions with regard to women's equal participation in politics not being fully implemented?

(3)   Why is the hybrid electoral system ideal to achieve substantive equality for women in politics?

(4)   What structures can be put in place to support women's equal participation with men in politics?

5.2   Conclusion

From the above research question, the following conclusions are drawn based on findings of the research.

5.2.1 Systematic and structural barriers that contribute to women's low participation in politics

Many contributing factors are causing the continuous low representation of women in politics. The socio-cultural obstacles comprise the pervasiveness of patriarchal systems and structures in Zimbabwe's society. Patriarchy, which can also be equated to male dominance, starts in the private domain, the home, and further manifest itself through choices made in the public domain. For example, women are usually given stereotyped posts such as treasurers, secretaries, choir mistresses and cheer ladies of social clubs. Fear often prevents women from participating in politics and so they pave the way for men.

In most parts of the world agricultural labour, livelihoods, child bearing and the sustenance of the family are all women's responsibilities. Women often have a very limited time to pursue a political career due to the fact that so much of their time is spent on providing labour to perform the tasks than must be conducted in their homes to keep them functioning properly. In spite of women showing an interest in decision making careers patriarchal societies tend to overburden them with gender specific roles that do not excite or motivate women to pursue or persevere with a political career. In the worst case scenario women are forced to abandon their parties and join those of their husband.

The socialization process is responsible for assigning different roles and responsibilities to women and men in a given society. This implies that women are often assigned those duties associated with serving others and being restricted to leadership positions that are mostly reserved for men. Furthermore, women are subjected to harmful traditional and cultural practices, coupled with domestic violence and the deliberate exclusion from key communal leadership positions. There is a well known belief that women are not able to participate in politics. Furthermore their roles at home contribute to their being disempowered. The labelling of women as submissive and being the weaker sex in comparison to their male counterparts results in their losing self-confidence and social standing. In most cases women are perceived as being shy, lacking resources and self-confidence, qualities opposite to those considered vital to contest and prosper in politics.

Women are affected disproportionately by economic barriers that often result in poverty. This implies that if a woman is poor it automatically means her political participation is poor as well as the fact that she spends the bulk of her time worrying about her personal life. Therefore, women have little or no time for political participation. It is important to note that poverty often results in increased suffering that has the net effect of a decrease in political participation. In addition, women rely on handouts during political campaigns, and end up aligning themselves to the role of being singers at rallies or to any other role that has the potential to support their daily needs. Women's political candidacy is also affected by their lack of financial resources. The reason is that in order for women to compete effectively in parliamentary elections they need financial resources to enable them to purchase campaign materials and they need cash to give to people to win support from potential voters and people of influence. However, it is important to note that women in most cases lack financial

resources that has the potential to make their campaigns vital, were there is vote buying during elections.

Similarly, a number of women who participate in politics experience a number of challenges, ranging from being subject to chastisement, bias, unfair criticism, mocking at political rallies, domestic violence and the collapse of their marriages. The threat of escalating domestic violence might sometimes result in a woman abandoning her own party to join her husband's and if she resists, she risks being falsely blamed for flirting with other men. In some instances, marriage is considered a stumbling block to a political career since culturally women are not supposed to hold political views different from that of their husbands; this is yet another instance of women being deprived of their individual freedom of choice.

In the quest to redress gender imbalances and promote women's participation in politics, a number of gender equality commitments have been availed and transformed into formal institutions by state and non-state actors both at national and global levels. The commitments date as far back as 1979 when the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was crafted. Other instruments that include such commitments are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), the Millennium Development Goals (Goal No. 3) (2000) and the Maputo Protocol (2003), the AU Agenda 2063 and women's participation in politics and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. As a result of the re-affirmation of these commitments women's political participation and representation at all levels of the political landscape has become a noticeable part of politics in Africa and the world over.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe has the power to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution are upheld by all institutions and agencies of government at every level as provided for by section 119(2) since Zimbabwe was founded on the principals of gender equality as stipulated by section 3(1)(g). In fact, section 17 of the Constitution mandates the state to promote gender balance by taking legislative measures needed to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all agencies of government and other elective bodies established under the Constitution or by any Act of Parliament. Despite these provisions, the number of women and young women in elected posts in Parliament, local government, the executive, appointed posts in parastatals and public administration are very low. This signifies the inertia and lack

of commitment by the government to faithfully and effectively implement sections 17, 20 and 56 of the Constitution.

It can therefore be concluded that the under-representation of women in Parliament is attributed to the under-representation of women within political parties. Despite all major political parties having policies and declarations to incorporate gender equality principles in their structures they have not implemented them as women still trail far behind the political progress of men in politics and fail to penetrate the political parties' higher echelons.

The solution is to make some reforms to the foundations of the political parties by streamlining both mandatory and voluntary quotas. More importantly, the failure to transform gender equality clauses in the Constitution into tangible meaningful results that enhance equal representation in the political arena by both men and women does not equate to gender justice and democracy. It is also important to note that the FPTP electoral system normally relegates women to the periphery of the political arena thereby affecting their political representation.

5.3   Recommendations

Based on the findings, these are the recommendations of the study:

- Through its Parliament, the government of Zimbabwe should ensure that 50 percent of direct election seats be allocated for women. Hence, there is a need to enact a Gender Equality Act that specifically and administratively secures Constitutional gender parity in all public, electoral and private appointments in accordance with the Constitution.

- The government should endeavour to level the playing field to incorporate female political participants by condemning all forms of violence in society. There should be a mandatory duty to respect the rule of law so as to curb the impunity for politically-motivated perpetrators who hamper women from participation. Political parties should take steps to establish policies that have strong sanctions against sexual harassment and exploitation and gender based violence and sexual abuse so as to deter would-be offenders. In addition,

institutional rules should be put in place to encourage women members to formally report offences to political leadership and to the police if a violation occurs. This means that the police should also be gender sensitive in the way they react to cases of violence against women in general. More importantly the police should receive training on how to handle such cases to avoid re-traumatizing women especially those participating in politics.

- Political parties should strive to create an enabling environment that encourages equal opportunities for women within their structures; provides mechanisms that enhance women's potential and capacity (such as training); provides financial resources for the training of women to be assertive, empowered candidates for public office. This can be achieved through improved awareness raising, favourable policies, transparency and effective non-compliance sanctions, and results-based financing. There is also a need to amend the Political Party Finance Act to ensure that only political parties that meet the constitutional standards receive funding under the Act.

- The national gender machinery, guided by the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, should educate civil society and political parties that they have a duty to sensitise society and political party leadership on the importance of gender equality as a tool to achieve gender justice. Having such measures put in place might persuade women in society to participate in politics and take up leadership positions. More importantly they may be induced to take advantage of the technological era and come up with effective awareness raising strategies in the form of online and print media platforms such as social media. It is through such platforms that women can share experiences with other women role models across the globe who occupy positions of influence such as cabinet members, legislators, party members or civil society leaders and learn best practises from them.

- The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development should always collaborate and work in solidarity with other women's organisations to structure and review policies advocating for legislative

change, and lobbying government and parliament for specific gender agenda issues. Similarly, the formal and informal parliamentary women's caucuses need to be reinforced so as to avoid party politics dynamics and aim to work in solidarity especially on issues that affect women.

- Special attention should be focused on training and sensitising print and visual media journalists on effectively profiling and ensuring responsible coverage of women leaders that is gender sensitive. Such efforts will motivate women to participate in politics and decision-making and above all reinforce the value of women in political and decision making institutions among different stakeholders, society at large and party leaders.

- Women activists should strive to force leader to ensure gender balance can only be achieved through constitutional petitions and public interest litigation, nullifying gender imbalanced appointments on the grounds that they conflict with the provisions of the Constitution.

5.4   Areas for further research

Further studies are desired to collect more (and more dependable) data on women's representation in local government structures in order to be in a position that permits one to evaluate trends in women's representation and function at the sub-national levels. This is important in order to be able to gauge the numbers of women in these grassroots governance structures which will most likely feed into national politics with a view to eventually achieving 50/50 in Parliament.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:   Interview Question Guide

How have systematic and structural barriers contributed to low participation in politics for women at all levels from the local to national?

- What do you think are the causes of low participation in politics for women?
- What do you think should be done to increase women's participation and strategies that can be used to achieve equal representation?
- Do women have equal power and privilege?
- How do women in politics view each other?
- Do you have cases of women who have reported being violated in relation to political participation? If so can you give the statistics of cases that have been successful.
- Do you have any challenges in representing women in politics?

Why are constitutional provisions with regard to equal participation in politics not being fully implemented?

- Do you think section 56 of equality and non-discrimination is fully being implemented?
- Do you think women are participating on equal terms with men? If not what could be the reason?
- What should be done to make sure the constitutional provisions are implemented?
- Who should be driving the agenda for equal participation in politics?
- Do you think the provisions are adequate in addressing issues of women's participation?

Why is the hybrid electoral system ideal to achieve substantive equality for women in politics?

- How effective has been the hybrid electoral system that encompasses the following quota system, proportional representation and first pass the post in achieving equality for women's participation in politics?
- In your view would you think such strategies are adequate towards achieving substantive equality? Please explain

- How else can we achieve substantive equality for women in politics?

What structures can be put in place for women to participate equally with men in politics?

- What structures are there in place that enhance women's participation?

- How can the structure be used to increase women's participation?

- What strategies can be adopted using the structures in place to achieve gender equality?

- How are the structures supported by the various actors (political parties, NGOs, Government Departments and Commissions)?

Appendix 2:   Petition presented to the Parliament of Zimbabwe for 50/50

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

FORM OF PETITION

TO THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, IN

PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

SECOND SESSION – NINTH PARLIAMENT

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON 11 NOVEMBER, 2019

The Petition of the Undersigned:

The **Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe** a non-partisan network of women's rights organizations and activists, with a membership base of 65 Organizations and 2 045 individual members, whose contact details are 31 Harvey Brown Avenue, Milton Park, Harare, and contact number is 0775 708 657. It is registered as a Trust

WHOSE Funding Method is: Donor funding from various organisations;

WHOSE Board members are as follows: Ronika Mumbire, Lydia Madyirapanze, Audrey Charamba, Linda Mpofu, Selina Marewangepo and Joyce Mhungu.

Together with the women, young women, girls, boys and men of Zimbabwe whose signatures are in full support of this petition, and with the support of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission,

Respectfully shows-

That Your Petitioners:

Being citizens of Zimbabwe;

COGNISANT that every citizen of Zimbabwe has the right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including the enactment of legislation as stipulated under section 149(1) of the Constitution.

AWARE that the Parliament of Zimbabwe has the power to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution of Zimbabwe are upheld and that all institutions and agencies of government at every level act constitutionally and in the national interest as provided by section 119(2) of the Constitution.

RECOGNISING that Zimbabwe is founded on the principle of gender equality as stipulated by section 3(1)(g) of the Constitution.

APPRECIATING that section 17 of the Constitution mandates the State to promote full gender balance in all the spheres of Zimbabwean society and to take legislative measures needed to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all agencies of government at every level and that women constitute at least half the membership of all Commissions and other elective and governmental bodies established under the Constitution or any Act of Parliament.

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the reduced number of women and young women in elected posts in Parliament, Local government, the Executive, appointed posts in Parastatals, and Public Administration which signify inertia and lack of commitment by government, and stakeholders both in public and private sectors, to faithfully and effectively implement sections 17, 20 and 56 of the Constitution.

AND YEARNING for a Zimbabwean society where women's and young women's rights are protected and both are equally represented in politics and decision-making positions

NOW THEREFORE the petitioners beseech Parliament of Zimbabwe to ensure firstly, the full implementation of the supreme law of the land and secondly, the establishment of a legal framework that unequivocally promotes gender equality and gender parity as prescriptively provided by the spirit and letter of section 17, section 20, section 56, section 80 and section 194 of the Constitution.

BACKGROUND

The participation of women in their full diversity including young women and girls and women living with disabilities in leadership and decision-making processes is fundamental to the achievement of democracy and good governance.

Section 17 of the Constitution provides thus "*the state must promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society. The state must promote the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality with men. The State must take all measures including legislative measures needed to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level.*" The section further states that **the State should ensure that women constitute at least half the membership of all Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under the Constitution or any Act of Parliament"**

Section 20 of the Constitution provides that people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, young women included have opportunities to associate and to be represented and participate in political, social economic and other spheres of life

Section 56 of the Constitution provides that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres.

Section 194 (1) (k) of the Constitution provides that employment and advancement practices must be based on the equality of men and women, inter alia.

Cognizant that the powers to appoint exercised by the President and the Ministers in the Executive are directly correlated to the representation of women in elected positions at both local government and parliamentary level as required by the Constitution, it is a glaring fact that in Zimbabwe, women still lag behind men in decision-making and leadership positions in public, private, economic and social life.

Petitioners' Plea and Prayer:

THUS, your petitioners appeal to this August House to:

1. Exercise its full powers as provided for by the Constitution of Zimbabwe to ensure the Constitution is upheld.
2. Ensure that the electoral reform agenda delivers 50% of the direct election seats to women including young women and women living with disabilities.
3. Ensure that within the 50% direct election seats, 25% is secured for young women between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five including young women living with disabilities.
4. Enact a Gender Equality Act that specifically and administratively secures the mandatory constitutional gender parity and gender equality principles in all public, electoral and private appointments in line with the Constitution.

5. The aforesaid legislation to clearly set out the institutional, operational and budgetary punitive measures for failure to comply with the same.
6. Amend Political Party Finances Act to ensure that only political parties that meet the constitutional standard receive resources under the Act.

WHEREFORE your petitioners pray that the Honourable House will be pleased to take their case into favourable consideration, and grant such relief as it may deem fit.

AND your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Dated at Harare, this 11th Day of November 2019

Signed………………………………..

SIGNATURES IN SUPPORT OF THE CAUSE

ITEM	FULL NAME	PROVINCE/COUNTRY	SIGNATURE	DATE
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