

**WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE CASE FOR
THEIR POLITICAL RELEVANCE IN ZIMBABWE:
FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES (2005-2017)**

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BY

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DEDICATIONS

To my beloved family

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CEDAW	Conventions on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPA	Global Political Agreement
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IPU	Inter- Parliamentary Union
LHC	Lancaster House Conference
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MWAGCD	Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NGP	National Gender Policy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARDC	Southern Africa Regional Documentation Centre
SROC	Southern Rhodesia Order in Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WIDSA	Women in Development in Southern Africa
WiPSU	Women in Politics Support Unit
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZPWC	Zimbabwe Parliamentary Women's Caucus
ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre Network

ABSTRACT

This study examines the political relevance of the participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. The study interrogates the capability, capacity, and effectiveness of women MPs in executing their political obligations in Zimbabwe. The study also traces the historical background of political participation of women MPs from the colonial period to the present day Zimbabwe. The study further traces the challenges that women MPs have encountered in their political endeavours. This study employs a qualitative case study design and makes use of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews with 20 respondents comprising of some of women MPs in Zimbabwe, Feminist academia, some of Academic lecturers and representatives from women's organizations and dominant political parties. Documentary search and desk research was also used in a bid to understand the relevance of the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe. The theoretical framework used in this research consists of the liberal and Marxist Feminist theories. The analysis of results is based on findings from FGDs, desk study, documentary search and in- depth interviews. This study argues that few women MPs in Zimbabwe have capacity and capability of executing their political mandate. However, they continue to face obstacles in their political participation which includes: male dominance, limited resources, lack of unity amongst women, low levels of education and low numbers in decision making positions and these challenges have impacted negatively on their political relevance. This study argues that the GoZ should implement effectively policies that are meant to empower women. Capacity building for women in politics is needed if political relevance of women MPs is to be appreciated in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This dissertation consists of five chapters as presented below.

CHAPTER ONE

The first chapter of this research presented, the introductory aspects of the research which includes, the background to the study, Problem Statement, Research objectives and Questions. The chapter also presented the proposition of the study, justification of the study, methodology, delimitation and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two presented literature review and theoretical underpinnings of the study which examined the political relevance of the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe. The chapter also presented the conceptual framework and the suggested model.

CHAPTER THREE

The third chapter of the research presented a case study of Zimbabwe. Major aspects interrogated in this chapter included: motivation for choosing Zimbabwe as an area of study, explaining why women MPs were chosen as the units of analysis and justifying the decision to study the political relevance of women MPs in particular.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four presented the findings and analysis of the study which examined the political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe. Major aspects presented in the chapter included: Capacity, Capability and effectiveness of women MPs in executing their political obligations in Zimbabwe. The chapter further gives, the implications of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

The last chapter of this dissertation presented conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study examined the political relevance of the political participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. Guided by the feminist theory, the main areas of interest in their political participation presented here include: their effectiveness, feminist representativeness, capacitation and capability as far as feminist ideals of political participation are concerned. The study majored on the question: are women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe really (and/or capacitated or capable of) executing the feminist mandate satisfactorily? To accomplish this goal, Marxist and liberal feminists' theoretical propositions were used as a yardstick for measuring women's actual political participation in Zimbabwe and political relevance thereof. The study was a qualitative case study which relied heavily on purposive sampling, content and thematic analysis, Focus Group Discussions, desk research and in-depth interviews.

This study also looked into what women parliamentarians do at political party level, how they get to such positions, the powers they have and their removability procedures because what women do in parliament, how they do it and to what effect cannot be understood properly in isolation of the politics at their bases – the party politics.

1.1 Background to the Study

Participation of women in politics has been a major concern in Africa and the world at large. In Zimbabwe however, looking back to the colonial period reveals that, women both white and black were excluded in parliamentary politics by the structural, economic and legal system of Southern Rhodesia (Gudhlanga 2013: 2). Women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe played a significant role in the field of politics (Gudhlanga, *ibid*). Ranger (1981: 3) notes that women assumed such important roles as spirit mediums, arbitrators in courts, village elders, leaders in wars among others. However, the coming of colonisation had a negative impact on the privileges enjoyed by women. There were a number of factors which contributed to this position such as colonial domination, customary laws, and failure to access Western education among others. Boehmer (1985: 171) notes, "Colonialism from its onset brought capitalism and capitalism from its beginning was essentially patrilineal"

Women by law were regarded as minors with limited independence as they were subordinated to their parents and husbands (Gudhlanga, 2013: 2). The first parliamentary arm of government

created after the overthrow of the Ndebele government was the Legislative Council (LC) created in 1898 by the Southern Rhodesia Order in Council (SROC) (1898) promulgated by Britain (Saki and Chiware, 2007: 2). According to section 17 (1-2) of the SROC, this body comprised both elected (white) representatives of Mashonaland and Matabeleland on one hand and appointed (white) representatives of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) on the other hand.

According to section 18 (1-3) of the SROC (1898), the British High Commissioner (HC) was obliged by law to create laws (after consulting the Administrator of SR) regulating the conduct of and qualifications for election to the LC (Weyer, 2011). Section 26 (1) of the SROC stipulated that, “No person shall be qualified to be an elected member who ... (1) is an infant or is not a British subject by birth or naturalisation.”

Wilson (1963) notes that, the clause disqualified black women for election into parliament when read together with section 2 of the SR Ordinance 10 of 1903 which explains a naturalised black African subject or “native” as “Any male person above the age of fourteen years who is not of European descent, and is a native of South Africa or Central Africa.” Section 4-6 of Ordinance 10 adds that male natives only must have citizenship by registration in SR (Wilson, 1963). Since black women were neither registered natives nor European and/or born in Britain, it follows that they remained “not British subjects by birth or naturalisation” hence not qualified to be elected members until the enactment of the 1961 SR constitution.

In line with the discretionary power in the hands of the HC granted by section 18 (1-3) of the SROC (1898), the British HC set down the electoral law stipulating qualifications or electorates by Proclamation number 17 of 1898 which included: (a) being a British subject by birth or naturalisation, (b) being male, (c) 21 years of age or more, (d) ability to write name (e) ownership of a registered mining claim in SR, and (f) six months continuous residence in SR, or (g) possession of immovable property worth 75 pounds, or 50 pounds annual wage (Davis, 1975). Either condition (e) or (g) followed by satisfying (a) – (d) and (f) qualified a person to vote. All electorates in the above two forms of qualification were ‘all in a common roll’ and this was an extension off the electoral law of the Cape Colony which emphasised a ‘non-racial common roll’ franchise (Wilson, 1963).

In the same vein, the results of all the legislative elections showed that blacks had no such an opportunity because black men had no immovable property valued at 75 pounds and neither did they get access to a well-paying job that could give them 50 pounds per-annum, not to mention

ownership of a registered mine claim (Rasmussen and Rubert, 1990). Valuable houses were in European areas and the law made it illegal for a black man to own land there, the law also made it illegal for blacks to be employed in the public service and those who were lucky to join the army were paid below the electoral annual income requirement. In this way, blacks were seriously disenfranchised.

In line with SR Ordinance 10, the Native Registration Act (NRA) of 1936 required a 14 year male to have registration document *isthupha* and no talk about women (Davis, 1975). As stipulated by the RC's Proclamation 17, electorates were required to be male. This was very clear on the disqualification of women to vote and be voted into parliament, worse black women were not registered citizens. Women at this point, black or white were side-lined together with black men. The only power left in the hands of a white woman was in the domestic sphere - to be in control of black servants both male and female and end there.

The literacy requirement (b) of HC Proclamation number 17 of 1898 was revised in 1912, it now gave voter registration officers authority when they see it necessary to dictate fifty English words to a prospective voter who in turn wrote them correctly to qualify for registration (Wilson, 1963). This was obviously targeted at blocking Africans and worse women, who, due to their confinement in the native kitchen and lack of national registration to access education had lower chances of speaking or writing their own native language not to mention English. Towse Jolly was elected the first woman in the history of the Assembly (Weyer, 2011) and this development showed the fact that, women had the need and ability to play the parliament role however, laws hindered them. Black men and women failed to meet the target and a handful of white women did. Parliamentary was reserved for a white man.

However, the electoral law and practice continued as amended in 1912 till 1928 when literacy (d) was revised to its initial form, then changed to literacy in written and spoken English in 1957 (Wilson, 1963). Brown (1973) notes that, in the Federal army from 1953 to 1963, African Privates earned 44 pounds a year compared to 552 pounds earned by European reserves or trainees in the same army. With the highly paid blacks having a wage short with 200 pounds to qualify, it follows that black women – majorities in the country were nowhere close to Parliament and never thought of the possibility thereof. Black men and women were assured of political exclusion.

The 1961 Constitution brought a dual voter's roll system classified as: (A) roll – qualification which demanded a minimum of 21 years of age, 792 pounds per annum or real estate property

valued at 1650 pounds or lowered either to 520 or more or less than 520 but not less than 320 for voters with secondary education and primary education respectively and chieftaincy (Wilson, 1963). The B – roll qualification was as follows: 18 years of age, 264 pounds per annum, property worth 495 pounds or 132-275 or 198-35 for those with 2 years of secondary education and those over 30 years old with primary education respectively and serving as a religious leader or kraal head leading 20 households (Davis, 1975). The qualifications for the B roll could also not be met by black women because most of them did not own property in their names. These requirements were meant to marginalise black men in politics but exclude black women.

Wilson (1963) notes, that the 1970 Constitution abolished the B roll and the revised qualification was based on race. Indians, Europeans, Asians and Coloureds had their own qualification responsible for electing candidates in 50 constituency seats which was: two years earning 1800 dollars or more per annum continuously or immovable property valued at least 3600 dollars which was lowered by one-third if the electorate completed four years in secondary school (Davis, 1975). Enfranchisement test for the black people responsible for electing candidates to eight constituencies was as follows: two years earning 600 dollars annually from wages or immovable property valued at or above 1200 dollars subject to a one-third lowering if the electorate completed two years of secondary education. Eight more seats were reserved for candidates elected by an electoral college of Black chiefs. Most black women did not meet the requirements and black chiefs could not also nominate black women due to patrilineal dominance. This system meant that few black men will underrepresent black majorities but no representation was given to black women. The evidence shown from the Rhodesian parliament indicates that no black woman was seen in the Rhodesian parliament (Gudhlanga 2013: 2)

The adoption of the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution (LHC) granted one man one vote adult suffrage which gave majority blacks the legal right to vote both women and men (Chiroro, 2005). Under section 32 of the LHC, there were two voters' rolls which governed elections in into the Legislative Assembly (LA). The common roll for black majority and the white role for the white minorities. To be elected as a parliamentarian, requirements included being 21 years of age, enrolled as a voter, have been ordinary resident in Zimbabwe for not less than five years in the last 20 years (Chiroro, 2005: *ibid*). The first LA independence Zimbabwe had 100 seats 80 for the black majority and 20 reserved for the white minority (Chiroro, 2005: 100). Out of those 100 seats, only 9 were taken by women (Chiroro, 2005). However, due to patrilineal

societal values which dominated and customary laws which viewed women as minors, representation of women remained low (Gudhanga, 2013: 3).

In 1980, women in Zimbabwe were recognized as a marginalized group and there was need for the government of the day to change the status quo. Tripp et al (2009: 158) noted that though Zimbabwean women had played a major role in the liberation struggle the government of the day was not prepared to accept women as leaders as they were told to wait until the right time. The second legislative Assembly was in 1985 and electoral laws remained the same. The legislature had 100 seats and 8 were taken by women whilst the 1990, 1995 and 2000 had 150 seats and women representation was 21, 22 and 14 respectively (Chiroro, 2005: 100). In 1987, the white roll was abolished when the Constitution was amended and the office of the Prime minister was also abolished and Mugabe became the executive President (VERITAS, 2008: 1) while, no attention was given to women's need for proportional representation in politics.

Though representation of women was very low in the 1990s, some women MPs like Margaret Dongo managed to form political parties an indication that women had keen interest in political participation (Ndlovu and Mutale 2013: 74). Dongo managed to challenge ZANU-PF and campaigned as an independent candidate and won the Harare South Constituency. Maphosa et al (2015: 139) notes, 'Dongo was very outspoken particularly on democracy, human rights however, her case points to the hazards that In 2008, the number of seats in the National Assembly were increased from 150 in 2005 to 210 and only 30 women managed to make it to the parliament. Both political parties fielded few women as compared to men and most women candidates were knocked out during the primary elections. Major political parties fielded fewer women in constituencies they knew very well their parties were very weak as compared those given to men and this resulted in low numbers of women making it to the parliament.

Zimbabwe adopted the quota system in the 2013 Constitution whereby 60 seats were reserved for women in first two parliaments. Representation of women in the legislature has been at the core of many feminist movements. Political parties like the Zimbabwe African National Unity Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) adopted a 30% quota system for women within party structures although the two formations of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) have no such specific provisions (Tolmay and Morna, 2010).

Furthermore, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ), has domesticated regional and global instruments on women's rights (Chiroro, 2005: 95). Zimbabwe adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Convention on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR) in whose article 21 and article 25 respectively stress the rights of every individual to take part in the conduct of public affairs of their countries. In 1980, the GoZ granted citizens who had reached the age of 18 the right to vote. In 1991, the government of Zimbabwe also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), whose article 7 stresses the elimination of discrimination in all aspects of life politics included (Chiroro, 2005: 95). Affirmative action measures for instance in education have been introduced in Zimbabwe in the 1990s in a bid to comply with provisions of CEDAW.

With pressure from the international community to advance women's rights, Zimbabwe became party to the African Union (AU) Protocol on Women's Rights (2003) which stresses, through Article 9, the inclusion of women through enabling legislation to ensure that women participate without discrimination in political life of their countries. Calls for gender equality have also been part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional integration agenda and SADC has been aggressively calling for an increase in representation of women in parliament and even setting deadlines (Tripp et al, 2009: 159). Zimbabwe ratified the 2008 SADC Gender and Development Protocol which stresses in article 12 and 13 that men and women should be accorded equal opportunities in politics (Dube, 2013: 200).

It is in light of the above background, this study sought to interrogate the political relevance of women parliamentarians' political participation in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Zimbabwe, women constitute more than half of the population (ZimStat, 2014). However, representation of women in parliament has remained low. Female parliamentarians continue to be out-numbered by their male counterparts despite the fact that the country has acceded and ratified a number of multilateral instruments on women's rights. Though women parliamentarians have demonstrated their capacity to challenge the patrilineal political set up in the 1990s and early 2000, their political relevance has since been questioned. The socio-economic status of women has remained marginal as compared to that of men. Women who hold decision making positions in Parliament also remained low. The purpose of this study was to investigate how politically relevant are women parliamentarians in executing their legislative mandate in Zimbabwe.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study sought:

- 1) To examine the capacitation and capability of women parliamentarians to execute their mandate in Zimbabwe.
- 2) To interrogate the effectiveness and feminist representativeness of women parliamentarians in executing their expected political obligations in Zimbabwe.
- 3) To interrogate possible ways through which the political relevance of women parliamentarians' political participation can be enhanced and sustained.

1.4 Research Questions

In pursuit of the objectives stated above, the following questions guided and directed the study:

- 1) How capacitated and capable are women parliamentarians to execute their legislative mandate in Zimbabwe?
- 2) To what extent do women parliamentarians reflect feminist representativeness and how effective are they in executing their political obligations in Zimbabwe?
- 3) What are the possible ways through which the political relevance of women parliamentarians' political participation can be enhanced and sustained in Zimbabwe?

1.5 Research Proposition

Increase in numerical representation of women MPs in Zimbabwe does not result in their effective participation in parliamentary politics.

1.6 Justification of the study

Many studies have been conducted on women's parliamentary participation (Kurebwa 2016, Chiroro 2005, and Dube 2013). However, none have taken a step further into interrogating the political relevance of women elected to parliament. This study sought to fill this lacuna in literature and help shape the policy focus with regards to women's parliamentary representation. The rationale for carrying out this study was to explore the relevance and capacitation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. Crowding women in Parliament is not necessarily what feminist theory deems ideal feminism. Guided by the Feminism theory, this study sought to bring out the political relevance of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. In the same vein, this study sought to find out the representativeness, capacity and effectiveness

of women parliamentarians in executing their roles. The study would contribute to the body of literature especially on women's rights to participation in parliament in Zimbabwe. The study findings would give a better insight on gender issues in politics and decision making processes. Study findings would be also of significant importance in addressing gender issues in political administrative systems and would encourage the GoZ to strive to eradicate all inequalities which might be encountered by women on the legislative space. Furthermore, the research would serve as a reference point for further study undertakings in the area of women's political rights in the SADC region.

1.7 Methodology

Research methodology is a strategy that a researcher employs to gather or analyze data related to answer key questions of the study at hand (Crotty 1998: 3). For the purpose of this study, a research methodology was conceptualized as a systematic integration of the philosophical worldview, research strategy, data collection, sampling methods and data analysis techniques of the study prescribed by the theory guiding the study. Since this study was guided by feminism, it was noteworthy to state here that feminism on its own is a philosophical worldview strongly linked to constructivism and prescribes its own best ways of conducting feminist studies of this kind. This directed the study to choose a qualitative case study research design wherein, key informants (women and feminist 'literate' individuals) were purposively sampled, Focus Group Discussions, desk research and in-depth interviews with key informants served as data collection techniques, thematic and content analysis served as data analysis and presentation of findings takes a word summary format.

1.7.1 Research Philosophy

This study was guided by the feminist philosophical worldview. This was a purposive blend between feminist worldview and the constructivist research philosophy since feminism is a brain child of constructivism. Creswell (2009: 8) noted that social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation key areas of the political relevance of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. This research philosophy infers that, the world and its reality are social constructs dominated patriarchy (Crotty 1998: 54). This argument widens to tackle research methodologies, it asserts that traditional methods are corrupted with patriarchal inclinations, they were created by men and can hardly give a full picture of women's social circumstances. Crotty (1998: 54) states that

meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. This research philosophy therefore, prescribes that women and feminist “literate” individuals can tell the true story of women and inquiry should try to get down to women and learn their talk, stories and live their circumstances to learn reality which is contextual. It was this philosophy that directed this study to a purely qualitative research design elaborated below.

1.7.2 Research Design

Research design is a plan or a map that shows how one intends to conduct a research. It also shows all basic components of a research such as purpose of the research, methodology, units of analysis, data presentation among others. Babbie (2007: 111) notes that a research design outlines procedures to be followed when conducting a research. In order to meet the feminist objectives stated above, and guided by the constructivist feminist research philosophy, this study adopted a qualitative case study research design which had the Zimbabwean women Parliamentarians and their political participation as the case study, purposive sampling of women and feminist literate individuals as a sampling procedure, Focus Group Discussions, desk research and interviews as its data collection methods, thematic analysis and content analysis as its data analysis strategy. These qualitative methods were used to get an in-depth understanding of political participation of women in parliament in Zimbabwe and factors that are impeding their participation. It is stated in the feminist research philosophy of the study that unless research focused on women and feminist literate individuals, the relevance of the findings will always be questionable. This research design fitted well within the research philosophy of the study.

1.7.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

1.7.3.1 Population

A population is a full set of cases from which the sample is drawn. A population sample is an entire group of persons or set of objects and events the researcher wants to study (Busha and Harter 1980: 56). In the same vein, a population contains all the variables of interest to the researcher. Guided by the philosophical worldview of this study, it followed that the population of this study was made up of some of parliamentarians in Zimbabwe, women’s rights movements, political parties and feminist literate academics and general female citizens. As the feminist research philosophy argues, the nature of this population enabled the study to choose the right respondents with the right sort of information.

1.7.3.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis (Babbie 2007: 111). In this study, the sample size was mainly determined by the feasibility of the study within the allocated five months of study. In this study a sample of 20 respondents formed the study sample. These respondents comprised of 8 female MPs and 2 male MPs, 4 representatives from 2 major political parties chosen for this study which are ZANU-PF and MDC-T. The sample also comprised of 3 representatives from women organisations whose mandate is to promote political participation of women which are WiPSU and Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre Network (ZWRCN) and Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWAGCD). The study also comprised of 1 academic lecturer from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at UZ and 2 and feminists academia.

1.7.3.4 Sampling Design

Sampling is the process of obtaining information from a subset of the population (Babbie 2007: 182). This study used non-probability sampling which is suitable for a qualitative research. It was in the form of purposive sampling technique which was used as per the dictates of the feminist research philosophy of this study which stresses that not everyone could be selected as a sample because not everyone is feminist literate. In purposive sampling, proportionality is not the primary concern, the major concern is that selected elements should contribute in answering particular research questions (Babbie 2007: 183). For this research, purposive sampling was used in selecting women parliamentarians and representatives of political parties as mentioned above.

1.7.4 Data Collection Methods

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was first-hand information and it was collected using personal in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) whilst secondary data was collected in newspaper articles, journals, internet, academic and research papers.

[I] In-depth Interviews

Interviews involve direct interaction between two parties namely interviewer and the interviewee. In this type of interview, the interviewer directly interacts with the interviewee in a bid to seek in depth information on a particular topic/subject (Babbie 2007: 306). This is an

ideal data collection that fits well under the feminist constructivist research philosophy that calls for contextual, in-depth inquiry from women and feminist literate individuals in their settings to get reality. For this study, respondents were asked about their experiences in politics as women parliamentarians while others assessed their political relevance. In-depth interviews provided detailed information about women's experience. However, at times they are prone to bias. To overcome the limitations in these in-depth interviews, this study also used documentary search to determine the reliability of the data.

[III] Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Powell et al (1996: 449) define a focus group as, "a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research." The researcher conducted FGDs with some of women MPs in Zimbabwe in order to get an in-depth information on political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe, challenges they are facing and their success stories.

[III] Desk Research

A desk study took place in the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) library, Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) offices and at home. WiPSU is one of the actors in emancipating women parliamentarians and it was a major contributor of feminist conscious secondary data.

1.7.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

1.7.4.1 Data Presentation

The presentation of data is a form of communication and any number selected or diagram should tell a true story to make an investigation worthwhile (Saunders et al 2000). Data was presented in summarised topics focussing on the relevance, effectiveness, capability and capacitation of participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe.

1.7.4.2 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse data from secondary sources on participation of women in parliament and their true feminist representativeness. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected through in-depth interviews to assess the capacitation and capability of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the political relevance of the political participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe from 2005-2017. The period was chosen because Zimbabwe had ratified and acceded to multilateral instruments which promote participation of women in decision making positions. The period also saw the adoption of a new Constitution that saw a drastic increase of women Parliamentarians. Zimbabwe also conducted elections in the period 2005, 2008 and 2013 so this helped the researcher in analysing the trends in participation of women parliamentarians as well as their contribution to the country. The period chosen also saw the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2009. With 10 years down the line, it is worthwhile to conduct a litmus test of their political relevance. The study was carried out from February 2017 to May 2017.

1.9 Limitations

The respondents had busy schedules so taking long interviews was a problem to them. Delays in getting information from respondents was also another challenge especially in women's organizations. However, to counter these challenges the researcher also used telephone interviews and secondary sources. Consent was sought from the interviewees. They were made to consent to a letter through signing of a consent form. The target population of the study was assured confidentiality on the information they had provided. They were relevant documents from the department which showed that the research was solely for academic purposes.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the basic aspects of the research. It gave the background to women's parliamentary participation in Zimbabwe. It described the historical background on the participation of female MPs in Zimbabwe. The chapter also gave the justification for the study. Major methodologies, samplings procedures and techniques were also presented. The next chapter presented the literature review and theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The present chapter provided the background literature and the theoretical underpinnings of this study which examined the political relevance of women parliamentarian's participation in high level politics in Zimbabwe. The purpose of this chapter was to present the body of literature on political participation of women parliamentarians. It sought to illustrate how this study would fill the gaps in literature which this study would uncover. The chapter first presented a general overview of studies on political participation of women in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. It also presented the theoretical frameworks which formed the basis of this study. The chapter finally, presented a suggested model for political participation of parliamentarians in Zimbabwe.

2.1 A General Overview of studies on Women Participation in Politics in Africa.

Many studies on the participation of women in politics have been carried out in the region. However, there is dearth in literature dedicated to the political relevance of women Parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. Tripp (1999: 3) noted that, Africa had the lowest rates of female participation in politics in the 1960s however, post- independence Africa has seen the fastest growth rates in female representation with countries such as South Africa rising from 3% in 1991 up to 30% in the late 1990s.

In a similar fashion, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2008) also conducted a survey of women and men in Parliament globally and found that positive changes have occurred in some African countries in terms of representation of women in parliaments. The IPU (2008: 26) noted that some quotas have led to increase in the representation of women in parliament as evidenced by countries such as Rwanda who have reached more than 50% representation of women in parliament. Though, the IPU (2008) noted that, there are several factors that are deterring women from entering Parliament, significant changes have been observed in terms of representation of women. A Survey by IPU (2008) also concurred with a study by Kassa (2015) who noted that, the number of seats held by women in Parliament in Ethiopia increased from 2% in 1995 to 22% in 2010 (Kassa, 2015: 7). Yet, one wonders how significant are the alleged significant changes as far as women's political relevancy is concerned?

Another study was carried out in Nigeria and it was noted that, women were participating in politics. However, their representation in decision making positions has remained stagnant as

noted by Okpo et al (2012). The study showed that, women in some parts of Africa continue to be marginalized in decision making positions though they are politically participating. This also concurs with a study by Doorgaspersad and Lukamba (2011: 101) in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who noted that, in DRC the percentage of representation of women in parliament was low because candidates were politically appointed and in most cases it was biased towards men. (Okpo et al, 2012) noted that, women in Nigeria constitutes more than half of the population however, they continue to be marginalized in the political super structure as evidenced by their low numbers in decision making positions. The Obasanjo Government had 7 women out of 360 legislators (Okpo et al, 2012: 1078). This study by Okpo et al (2012), focused much on representation of women in decision making positions and it did not measure the political relevancy of those few women in decision making positions.

In the SADC region, member states recognizes that equal and meaningful participation and representation of women who constitute more than half of the population of member states is an essential component of good governance. A survey conducted by the SADC Secretariat (2013) on Tracking the Implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development with special focus on Governance articles 12 and 13, noted that progress towards the equal participation of women in Parliament has been mixed across the region with some countries improving and some not. The survey found that, representation of women in decision making positions such as in Parliament is mixed with some countries like South Africa doing well with more than 40% of representation of women in Parliament (SADC Gender Monitor, 2013: 24). This survey only focused on numerical representation such as counting heads of women in parliament without necessarily tackling the truthfulness of their representation, their representation capability and capacity and their effectiveness which seem to matter the most. Hence, this study would fits well in this gap, by examining the political relevance of political participation of women parliamentarians in executing political obligations in Zimbabwe.

Studies above have shown that, women's political representation has increased in parliaments of most countries even in Africa as shown by statistics. However, none of the studies have attempted to ascertain the political relevance of women in parliament yet doing so is the best way possible to measure the possibility of addressing key marginalization challenges faced by women. This study sought to interrogate the effectiveness, capacity and capability of women parliamentarians in executing their legislative duties as representatives of true feminism.

2.2 Women's Political Participation issues in Zimbabwe: A general overview

In Zimbabwe, many studies have been carried out on political participation of women in politics. However, little is known about the political relevance of women MPs from the period 2005 up to 2017. Skaine (2008: 56) notes that, in Zimbabwe, despite alleged progress in political participation of women in politics, women parliamentary representation has remained low. This concurred with Maphosa et al (2015: 142) who notes that, representation of women in parliament since independence has remained very low. Maphosa et al (2015: 138) notes that, the nature of women who were seen in parliament just after independence of Zimbabwe were veterans in the liberation struggle or were related to male political figures in the Government. This was also supported by Chigora and Goredema (2009) quoted in Maphosa et al (2015) who note that, heroines at the National Shrine were not because of their own strengths but because of political strengths of their male relatives or husbands.

In the 1990s, representation of women remained low as noted by Gudhlanga (2013: 6). The number of women participating in parliament remained low though the government had adopted a number of legal framework that were meant to emancipate women. This was also supported by Dube (2013: 1) who noted that, in Zimbabwe between 1995 and 2008 the country remained stagnant in terms of increasing women's representation in parliament hence going against benchmarks set by AU of reaching 30% in parliament by the period 2005. Important as it seems, the meaning of representation used is however limited to numerical proportionalities rather than actual effectiveness and results achievements.

Representation of women in parliament from 1980 to 2008 was shown in the table below.

Table: 1 Representation of women in Zimbabwean parliament from 1980 to 2008

Year	No.of women	No. of men	Total number of. of seats	Total % of seats by women
1980-85	9	91	100	9%
1990	21	129	150	14%
1995	22	128	150	14.6%
2000	14	136	150	9.3%
2005	24	126	150	16%
2008	30	180	210	14.2%

Source : Chiroro, B. 2005. Pg100

Zimbabwe held its sixth general elections after independence in 2005 and Chiroro (2005: 92) notes that, during the election campaign, nothing much was said about the role of women in politics and gender issues were not given a priority. Much attention was paid on perceived imperialist threats posed by opposition party ties with Western countries, land reform and the economy (Chiroro, 2005: *ibid*). Women participated in the elections though the political environment was hostile and this affected their numbers and performance. Effectiveness of those few women who made it in the sixth Parliament was also affected by their political allegiances to different political parties.

The period 2009 to 2013 Zimbabwe was governed by an Inclusive Government which comprised of ZANU-PF and two MDC formations (Maphosa et al, 2015). The preamble of the GPA recognised the need for gender balance in all spheres of life. Shaba (2011: 154) notes that, during the inclusive government, women representation in parliament and Cabinet was low as women only occupied only 30 of the 210 seats in the House of Assembly which translated to 14%. The SADC Secretariat (2013: 35) notes that, the low representation of women MPs was exacerbated by legal and structural rigidities in political institutions which are responsible for nominating candidates for elections. This was also supported by Tolmay and Morna (2010) who noted that, political parties remained male dominated and they have the discretionary power to determine the quality and quantity of women to participate in elections. The above information showed that, though women were participating in politics, the political environment was not conducive to them.

Made (2015: 32) notes that, Zimbabwean women celebrated their increased representation in parliament to more than 30% in 2013. The increase in the number of women MPs in the 2013 parliament was made successful by the special constitutional measure. However, without the Constitutional measure it was clear that reaching the critical mass of 30% might have remained in a pipe dream. Although these revelations so informing about the observed inclusion of women in political structures, to what extent are those few women exhibiting their real representation before crying for more and what is being done about it? The question will be: are those women parliamentarians chosen as stipulated in the constitution really capable of taking those seats in parliament and execute what they are expected of?

As shown from the literature above, participation of women in parliament was surrounded by many challenges. From the studies carried around Zimbabwe, it was shown that many factors such as possession of limited resources, male dominance, culture and socialization have

deterred women from participating effectively in parliament as noted by Dube (2013). The main gap in literature, as argued above was that, studies seem to view “inclusion” as synonymous to “representation and participation” and this has seen many studying numerical proportionalities of women in parliaments and factors preventing ability to have more figures as if that is the whole story about women’s political participation.

This study argues that, “inclusion” is of course a key element of “participation and representation” but it is however not its valid replica. Political participation goes further than that, it includes effectiveness, capability and representativeness concerns. Actually, as argued in this study, political participation and representation is all about political relevance of women political figures. Since much has been done by previous studies on “inclusion” of women, this study moves on to interrogate the political relevance of women parliamentarians’ political participation in Zimbabwe in a bid to fill the identified gap in literature.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

There are several writers who have wrote on a similar subject of this research and since they have varying definitions of the terms, this researcher derived and adopted a common working definition which is political participation.

2.3.1 Political Participation

Munroe (2002) quoted in Maphosa et al (2015: 135) defines political participation as the extent to which citizens are exercising their constitutional right to participate in political activities whilst, Greenburg and Okani (2001) quoted in Kurebwa (2016:18) defines political participation as, “a number of public actions such as being a member in a political party, political candidature in elections, holding a public office, debating governance issues, and lobbying.” Mtintso (1999) noted that, political participation looks into what elected representatives do when they are elected

The Zimbabwean Constitution (2013) Section 67 (d) defines political participation as to participate individually or collectively, influence, support or challenge policies of government. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development conceptualize political participation as participation in electoral processes and voting.

To further substantiate this line of thought, Shvedova (2002: 11) argues that male dominated political institutions of government excludes women’s needs, aspirations and interests. It is

imperative therefore, for inclusion of women in politics as it allows them to become more in determining issues that are of concern to women (Dube, 2013: 202). This was also supported by IPU (2008: 50) which noted that, involvement of women in all aspects of political life produces more equitable societies and delivers a stronger and more representative democracy. Kurebwa (2016: 20) also noted that, the major focus on political participation is on whether elected representatives have the ability and influence to fully take part in decisions that are made at all political spheres.

The argument in this study was that political participation must be politically relevant especially in cases where some politicians are not elected but get to Parliament by preferential treatment procedures. Those procedures must use test of political relevance for the admissibility of a candidate and the possible second term comeback. UN Women (2017) also noted that, women's political participation is a prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy. This study operationalizes political participation of women parliamentarians as political activities that are done by women on behalf of and for their fellow women after being elected into parliamentary seats and decision making.

2.4 Feminist Theoretical Ideas on Women Participation in Politics

Owens (1994) defines a theory as a thought process or way of thinking about reality which becomes a model of that reality. There are at least two important ideas that came out of the definition by Owens (1994). These are firstly, a theory was taken to be a thought process that guides researchers and secondly it could be used to explain practice and action taken. It was within that context that, Liberal and Marxist feminist theories were adopted as the working theoretical framework in this study.

2.4.1 Liberal and Marxist Feminism

This research referred to the Liberal and Marxist Feminism. The major aim of the study was to interrogate the political relevance of the participation of women parliamentarians in politics in Zimbabwe. Giddens (2001: 692) defines the liberal feminist theory as a “feminist strand that believes gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources” The low representation of women in political structures therefore, according to liberal feminism has been caused by sexist division of labour that has pushed women into private sphere of household and excluded them from full participation in the public life. Dube (2013: 205) notes that, “This socio-economic structure acts as a sieving

mechanism that prevents women from competing and winning political positions.” SADC Secretariat (2008: 4) notes that, adding women to unaltered social and political structures was likely to lead to frustration as women would continue to suffer discrimination and exclusion.

Szapuova (2006: 182) notes, John Stuart Mill was one of the proponents of the liberal feminist theory. Mill (1984: 275) notes, “the subordination status of women was an unjust violation of the principle of equality.” The liberal feminists assumed that creating an enabling environment for women was best for women to be effective in politics. Mill (1984: 302) argues that, any gap in intellectual achievement between men and women can be explained by better education and privileged social position which men enjoy.

Another liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) in her writings, ‘*A Vindication of the rights of women*’ notes that, women lacks education that is why they seem inferior to men. This was also supported by Mhlanga (2014: 1) who noted that, lack of confidence to participate in politics has impacted negatively on the status of women in Zimbabwe. To substantiate this line of thought, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has also echoed the same sentiments noting that, lack of knowledge and expertise on the side of women had an effect on their effectiveness (Mhlanga, 2014).

Haralambos and Holborn (2008) quoted in Samkange (2015: 1174) notes that, the liberal feminists advocate for equality of men and women through legal and political reform in all spheres of the society. In Zimbabwe the legal framework after independence for instance, Lancaster House Constitution provided for a non-discrimination clause, which prohibited discrimination on the grounds of gender, among other things. However, this non-discrimination clause was undermined by a claw-back clause which provided that in the application of customary law or matters of personal law, customary law should not be held to be discriminatory (Gaidzanwa 2004: 8). The liberalists do not consider patriarchy as the major problem in politics, rather they consider inequalities in the social structure and their major goal was to deal away these inequalities in order for men and women to compete on equal basis.

Jaggar (1983: 35) noted that, the overriding goal of liberal feminism has been the application of liberal principles to women as well as to men. In politics liberal feminist advocate for legal reforms that enable man and women to participate on equal basis (Jaggar, *ibid*). However, its major weakness as noted by Samkange (2015: 1176) is that while the theory has contributed much in terms of laws and policies that outlaws different forms of discrimination for instance education and employment in Zimbabwe there is much to be done in politics as shown by low

participation levels of women in parliament. In this study, liberal feminism was the cornerstone as it helped in establishing the political relevance of women in parliament.

The study also referred to the application of the Marxist feminism. Marxist Feminism is a theory which believes that the situation in which women are cannot be understood in isolation from their socio- economic context (Bryson, 1992). Propounds of the Marxist feminists such as Marx and Engels blamed capitalism for the oppression of women. Engels (1884) noted that the shift from collective ownership of property to private ownership of property had a huge effect on the status of women. This was also supported by Gudhlanga (2013: 2) who notes that,

‘In its imperialist stage capitalism was essentially patriarchal and women took a back seat in this ventureColonialism bracketed Zimbabwean woman into restricted roles of mother and wife. This was the root cause of Shona and Ndebele women’s economic marginalisation, which has been argued by Western scholars to originate in African Patriarchy.’

To further substantiate this line of argument, Marxist feminists argue that women’s subordination was not because of biology but it was a function of class oppression (Engels, 1884). Marx and Engels, (1848) in ‘*The Communist Manifesto*’ argue that women’s liberation can only be achieved through a radical restructuring of the current capitalist economy. This theory implies that, for women to effectively participate in politics there should be abolishment of capitalism thereby, allowing women to have the same status as men. This was one of the [in] capacitation mechanisms studied. The Marxists blame capitalism for the exploitation and oppression of women and the major goal of the Marxist feminism was to deal away with capitalism so as to capacitate women to effectively participate in politics (Jagger, 1983: 63). Informed by this study, it was within the scope of this study to examine how the influence of the capitalist system in Zimbabwe affected the participation of women parliamentarians in politics.

In line with the above, the Marxist feminists also argue that, for women to realize their potentiality in the public sphere, they have to be brought into the public industry only then would they shape history and transform the social world (Jagger, 1983: 224). Engels (1884) asserts that, the first condition for the liberation of women was to bring the female sex back into the public sphere. Participation of both sexes in public sphere would eliminate material basis for the oppression of any group by another (Jagger, 1983: 225). For political relevance of women MPs to be achieved, class oppression should be dealt with.

The Marxist and Liberal feminist theories have been preferred because of their applicability in the historical marginalization of women in the political realms and decision making positions. The theories above have shown that women have experienced different types of oppression and marginalization. Political relevance test sought to address the issues raised in the theories in order for women to effectively benefit from their political participation.

2.5 Suggested Model: Political Relevance Model

This study proposed another theory in women's political participation to be known as the political relevance theory. This theory would be the major litmus test of political participation upon which, all the efforts and motivations of studies on political participation would be derived from. Without this concept, the studies of political participation would lack existence. Its concise definition is pivotal to the understanding of what this study actually focuses on and why.

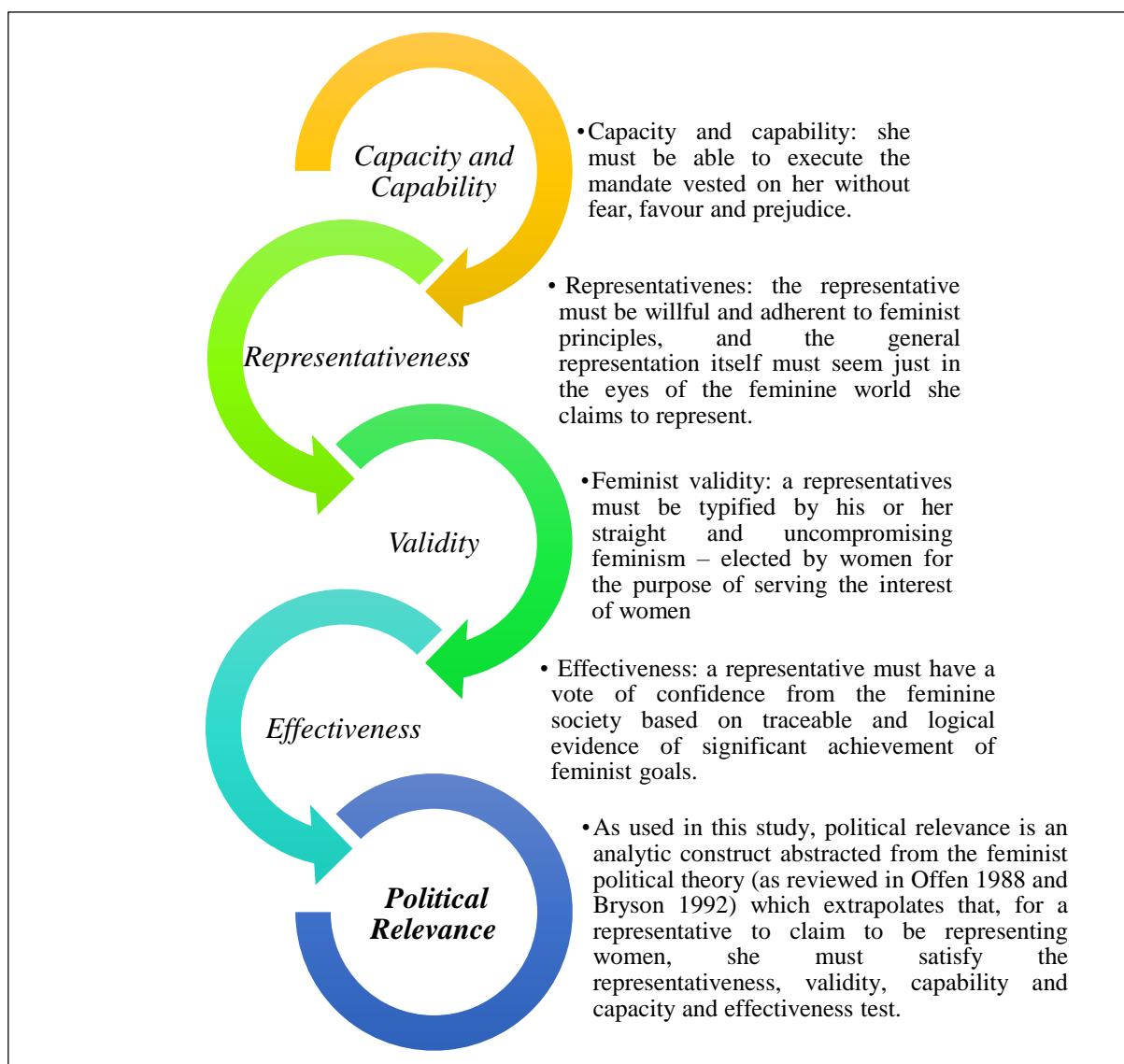
Gorayska, and Lindsay (1993) in their pragmatic theory of relevance, submitted that relevance is a goal-directed phenomenon. An entity is seen as relevant if it serves as an essential element capable of achieving the desired goal. Thus, 'political relevance' refers to the relevance of an entity or action in a political context, whether there is a 'traceable, significant and logical' connectedness between a political entity and the political demands on it and outcomes expected from it. Political relevance as an analytic construct, questions the capability and capacity of a political entity to achieve set goals, and traceability of outcomes of a political entity vis-à-vis political demands, expectations, targets and goals set for it.

The Political relevance model would also take cognizance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Good Governance Indicators (GGI) which comprise of participation, accountability, rule of law, transparency and effectiveness (UNDP, 1997: 1). Participation here would not be synonymous with representation as noted by Kurebwa (2016). On the context of women MPs participation would be in form of making their voices heard in decision making positions as well as issues that are of concern to women. Women' MPs would be accountable to women and their actions should be acceptable in the feminine world.

In this study, political relevance would be measured in four basic indicators defining it, that are: participation, feminist representativeness, capability and capacitation. These four are the central components of political relevance. They reflect on the political relevance of a legislator and the

extent of that relevance in justifying how one can be elected as one of the members whose continued continued presence in the legislature.

Figure 2.1: A conceptual yardstick for measuring political relevance of female MPs



Source: Researcher's synthesis of key feminist ideas on real political representativeness.

In light of the above, whatever women do in the August House would never be politically relevant if their actions does not meet the above milestones of politically relevant women political participation. This Political Relevance Model was a conceptual yardstick used by this study to measure political relevance of women parliamentarians' political participation in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter provided the background literature and theoretical underpinnings of the study on the political relevance of women parliamentarian's participation in high level politics Zimbabwe. The purpose of this chapter was to present the body of literature to which this study would contribute. The chapter also presented the previous studies that attempted to tackle the phenomenon of women's participation in politics in Africa and in Zimbabwe. The chapter also discussed some of the factors that are pushing women out of politics. The next chapter presented the motivation for the choice of Zimbabwe as an area of study.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the rationale for conducting the case study of this nature. It responded to the foundational question – what is the rationale for choosing a case study of this nature and/or type? It particularly presented reasons for: the choice of Zimbabwe as an area of study, explaining why women parliamentarians were chosen as the study population, justifying the decision to study the ‘political relevance’ of women parliamentarians in particular and why the time frame of the case study is pegged from 2005 to the present. As was discussed hereinafter, the main reasons undergirding the choice of a case study of this nature were historical, political, socio-economic, legal, and academic in nature.

3.1 Reasons for choosing Zimbabwe as a Study Area

3.1.1 Historical and Political Record Creation

Zimbabwe was chosen as an area of study mainly because of the observable lacuna in historical records of women and their struggles for political power. In addition, a new Constitution was adopted in Zimbabwe (2013) in pursuit of ‘democratic change’ which is never at home leaving women behind, hence, a lot of interest is brewed as far as resultant women political emancipation is concerned. Historically, the participation of women in political life especially in parliament in Zimbabwe has not been compiled, yet in practice, limited due to several obstacles which included discriminatory laws, socialization, and low levels of education among others.

There is a gap in literature in Zimbabwe that has attempted to trace the history of women parliamentarians since creation of the modern state in Zimbabwe, yet, this is pertinent to the understanding of current nature of women’s politicking and shaping the future of women parliamentarians in this generation and many more to come. Zimbabwe has been subjected to a black-light in the media and the international arena on allegations of gender inequalities, human rights violations and smokescreen pro-women democratic reforms. Unlocking actual facts pertaining to these allegations was the main concern of this study towards of cause creation of a correct history. The SADC Secretariat Gender Monitor (2013: 34) revealed statistics which showed low numerical representation of women in parliament and other decision making, it goes on to show that in 1995, Zimbabwe had 15% in the lower house of Assembly whilst in 2008 it had 15.2% and in 2013 stood at 34%. This study sought to add this struggle for gender

equitable parliamentary representation in the main body of Zimbabwean history and that, women have historically been side-lined from the highest structures of the state that determine political and legislative priorities (IPU, 2008: 1).

Women's enhanced participation in governance structures was viewed as the key to redress gender inequalities in societies (Bari, 2005: 1). There are success stories on women parliamentarians in Africa. Rwanda leads in the world on representation of women in parliament and has produced positive results as shown by the level of development in Rwanda (Made, 2015). The continued marginalization of women in parliament has impacted negatively in Zimbabwe such that, the political relevance of the few women shepherded into parliamentary seats has come into question. Whilst, Zimbabwe is part to regional and international Conventions and Protocols that seek to promote equal 'numerical' representation of women and men in all levels of decision making, the percentage of women participating in Zimbabwean parliament has not reached 50% (Dube, 2013: 205).

The Constitution of Zimbabwe has been hailed for being gender sensitive in the region however, the number of women holding decision making positions especially in the executive remains very disappointing to a true radical feminist. Dube and Dziva (2013: 2) notes that, the appointment of a male dominated cabinet in 2013 was a retrogressive move and an ambush on the war to promote gender equality in all levels of decision making positions as shown by the low percentage of women in the cabinet which stands at 15.3%. The prevalence of traditional and cultural practices in most African countries including Zimbabwe has often been cited as major obstacles to women's participation in politics.

This historical struggle for political equality in parliamentary politics was one of the major factors that informed the choice of Zimbabwe as a case study.

3.1.2 Academic Motivation

Studies carried out in Zimbabwe concerning political participation of women have shown that low numerical representation of women in positions of influence has left women issues not addressed properly. Since equal participation of women in politics has been seen as their fundamental human right taking from the argument that women in Zimbabwe constitute half of the population (Zimstat, 2014) and, it is only fair that they should have equal participation and representation in positions of influence (Bari, 2005: 1). This study saw the need to follow up and enquire whether women are actually side-lined from parliamentary position by the political

system or by their own incapacities. Thus, the study saw a great academic opportunity to scrutinise the new Constitution of Zimbabwe and current political party constitutions in a bid to ascertain whether they should be held to blame for women's limited appearance in parliament. Women's participation in political life has also been placed on the essentialist ground which argues that men and women are different therefore male dominated institutions of government will marginalise women because women's need, desires and expectations are different to those of men (Dube, 2013: 201). It is assumed that women in politics will bring a special caring focus and female values to politics. This is the development needed in Zimbabwe, maybe when well-studied and implemented, it might be the right kind of politics to set Zimbabwe on a sustained development trend given the stagnating record in the male dominated governments that have been in place since Zimbabwe came into being.

3.1.3 Socio-economic Considerations

Many studies conducted in the African region and in Zimbabwe have sought to show how socio-economic enhancement effects to follow from the political emancipation of women. As Zimbabwe makes progressive and gradual steps towards women's political emancipation, this researcher was convinced to study whether there is indeed corresponding resultant socio-economic development enhancement among the general citizenry in Zimbabwe. It was this line of argument that, Zimbabwe was chosen as a case study. Some argue that, women have also played a fundamental role in the social and economic development of societies, yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant (Bari, 2005: 1). For instance, the average earnings of women in Zimbabwe have been lower than those of their male counterparts and this has resulted in the feminization of poverty which has been seen as a major cause for women's marginalisation in politics because their ability to stand on the same footing with men is limited (SADC Secretariat, 2009: 10).

The National Gender Policy of Zimbabwe (2004) states that, women contribute to 70% of agricultural labour. However, when it comes to access and control of productive resources numbers of women are very low. The 2013 NGP illustrated that, the 2004 NGP had a number of achievements, the representation of women remained below the gender parity ideal especially in areas of politics, economic, education as well as employment and commerce. This low numerical representation of women in positions of influence had a negative impact on women especially as shown by increase in cases of Gender Based Violence. This exclusion of

women in positions of influence have contributed to their marginalization. These were some of the considerations that influenced the choice of Zimbabwe as a case study.

3.2 Motivation for the choice of the Study Population – Women Parliamentarians

Zimbabwe is a party to global and regional instruments that promote the political participation of women in all levels of decision making positions for instance ICCPR, CEDAW among others. With the historical background of marginalisation of women, this study has chosen women parliamentarians as representatives of concerns of other women. It was of great concern to note that many studies have concentrated much on political participation of women in Zimbabwe in general, this study was motivated by this generalization to seek more clarity by focusing on women parliamentarians.

The IPU (2008: 1) noted that, if women were given an opportunity in all aspects of political life, including as members of Parliament, societies would be more equitable and democracy would both be strengthened and enhanced. Women's access to social economic resources have been limited due to several obstacles and this has perpetuated their marginalisation in decision making positions as argued by the liberal feminist that there is need to reconstruct the social world in such a way that both men and women will view each other as equal partners in development (Jagger, 1983: 35). The choice for women parliamentarians was motivated by the need for women to be integrated in decision positions. A society where women are viewed as second class citizens in politics is an unjust society as noted by Kurebwa (2016: 25). It would be important for women to be represented in political processes as their experiences can be understood by other women.

Furthermore, Opare (2005) quoted in Kurebwa (2014: 3) notes that, the ability of women or their chosen representatives to take part or determine decisions affecting their lives not only puts them in a position to contribute ideas but also provides them with the tools and options for reshaping the course, direction, and outcome of specific programmes and activities which would determine their future. It was considered critical in this research to engage women in decision-making processes within the political system so as for them to further their interest because they understand their experiences. It was imperative for this study to choose women in parliament, where laws concerning the use of societal resources and policy issues that are of concern to women are determined.

In view of the foregoing argument for the political participation of women in politics, this study investigated the political relevance of the political participation of women parliamentarians which zeroes-in the analysis of the capability, capacitation and effectiveness of those women as well as examining their true feminist representativeness.

3.3 Why ‘Political Relevance’ of Women Parliamentarians in particular?

This study chose to examine the political relevance of the participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe because this topic has little literature. Many studies carried out in and out of Zimbabwe on women’s political participation have focused on inclusion and numerical representation of women in politics and in decision making positions (Gaidzanwa 2004, Chiroro 2005, Dube 2013, Dube and Dziva 2014 and Kurebwa 2016). However, though numerical representation and inclusion of women in politics is a vital aspect which has been attributed to contribute to stronger attention on women issues as noted by UN Women (2012), in Zimbabwe, it has not translated to that because, increase in number of women in Parliament has not transformed to meaningful representation of women issues.

The political participation of women in formal political structures and processes have been said to be vital in addressing issues and concerns of women (Bari, 2005: 1). Kurebwa (2016: 21) notes that, when women are integrated into decision making positions they bring improvements on the status of women. However, the SADC Secretariat (2009: 8) noted that adding women to unaltered political structures do not bring positive changes rather it will lead women to frustration and marginalisation. It was against this background that women parliamentarians’ political relevance in Zimbabwe was interrogated. It has been noted that, there are instances in which in most cases women’s representatives in parliaments were accountable to political parties or organisations that nominated them and not fellow women (SADC Secretariat, 2009: *ibid*). It was of significant importance to find out whether parliamentarians in Zimbabwe are meeting the political relevance test – that is, do they qualify the representation of women by women for women feminist yardstick?

3.4 Reasons for the choice of the 2005 to 2017 Time Frame of the Study

The time frame chosen for this study was important because, during the period chosen, Zimbabwe had become part to a number of global and regional instruments on promoting women’s rights. As part to the Maputo Declaration (2003) which states that member states should ensure that women are equal partners with men at all levels of development, Zimbabwe

has domesticated some of the provisions of the Protocol. The period chosen also saw Zimbabwe being guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in which, goal number three supported the need to achieve gender equality and women emancipation. Worth mentioning in this research was the fact that Zimbabwe ratified the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development during the time frame chosen. Dube (2013: 1) noted that, one of the key agreements of the SADC Protocol was to increase representation of women by 30% in 2005 and 50 % in 2015.

In complying with the instruments, the GoZ had also put in place the National Gender Policy (NGP) in a bid to domesticate multilateral treaties on women's rights. The NGP (2004) clearly states that, the Zimbabwean society has been regarded as highly unequal in terms of race and gender and this has impacted negatively in aspects such as politics, decision making positions and education. The enactment of the policy was meant to redress gender imbalances between man and women in all aspects of life. The period also saw the drafting and enactment of the new Constitution.

In addition, the period stated above also witnessed women taking part in highest levels of decision making positions for instance in the presidium as shown by Joyce Mujuru, Thokozani Khupe and Edna Madzongwe as Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Senate respectively (Gudhlanga, 2013: 6). The GoZ also conducted general elections between the period 2005 and 2017 and this was important for this study to examine trends in the political participation of women Parliamentarians. These developments in the time frame chosen made it necessary to examine whether such developments have indeed contributed relevantly to the struggle for women's political emancipation.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the drive for choosing Zimbabwe as a case study, women parliamentarians as the study population and the period 2005-2017 as a time frame. It was shown that the representation of women in politics, especially in parliament, has increased. It was also shown that, Zimbabwe was hailed in the SADC region for having a gender sensitive Constitution which granted equal opportunities between males and females. However, as noted by the SADC Secretariat (2009: 8), measures that were taken by some states to increase representation of women have not always delivered expected goals hence, the issue of political relevance of women parliamentarians studied here features as a key concern in the struggle for real emancipation of women in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The present chapter presented the major findings and analysis of the political relevance of participation of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. The findings have been deduced, first from the FGDs and in-depth interviews that the researcher had with some of MPs in Zimbabwe, women organizations, dominant political party activists, feminist in the Zimbabwean academia and some of academic lecturers from UZ Department of Political and Administrative Studies. Secondly, the findings were also deduced from the desk research the researcher had at UZ library and WiPSU offices. The data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis. The following general issues came up: The legal framework has enabled women's entry into politics. There is lack of political will in the implementation of policies that allow women to be politically relevant through being elected into influential political positions. Socio-economic factors have negatively affected women's political participation. Women have continued to show willingness and capacity in taking up their political obligations in Zimbabwe.

4.1 Capacity and Capability of WPs to execute their mandate in Zimbabwe

4.1.1 Findings on the Legal Environment and women MPs' Capacity and Capability Issues

Findings from the interviews conducted during this study 20 respondents said that the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013) has enabled women's entry into politics and decision making position because the Constitution guarantees equal opportunities between men and women. One key informant interviewee Honorable Shiri revealed that, "the Constitution of Zimbabwe has provisions that enable women to enter into politics such as Section 124." This was buttressed by a documentary search which revealed that, the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013) was hailed in the SADC region for being gender sensitive (SADC Secretariat, 2013: 35). The legal framework in Zimbabwe has cleared barriers to participation of women as evidenced by the Articles in the Constitution for instance Article 2 Section 17 (1) (a-b) which states that,

'The State must promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society, and in particular- the State must promote the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality with men and women constitute at least half of the membership of all Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under this Constitution or any Act of Parliament' (SADC Secretariat, 2013).

Feminist academia also showed that, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) guarantees women of equality of opportunity and treatment as shown through the provision of gender equality in Section 3 (g) and Section 67 (2) (a) which states that, “Every citizen in Zimbabwe has the right to form, to join and to participate in the activities of a political party or organization of their choice.....”.

A desk research conducted revealed that, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) makes firm commitments to political participation of women MPs as it guarantees women for the first two Parliaments after the effective date of the Constitution, a women’s quota through Section 124(b) which states that,

‘for the life of the first two Parliaments after the effective date, an additional sixty women members, six from each province into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected under a party list system of proportional representation based on votes cast for candidates representing political parties in general election for constituency members in the provinces’ (Maphosa et al (2015: 132).

This study argues that, the Constitution of Zimbabwe has provided an opportunity for women to take part in the politics of their country as shown by the provisions in the Constitution which sought to promote gender parity in all spheres of life. The above findings showed that, the legal framework in place in Zimbabwe have facilitated women’s entry in parliament. However, from 8 women MPs interviewed, Honorable Lilian Temvios was of the view that, “the Constitution has provided an opportunity for women to be in parliament but there is lack of political will on the part of the government to implement what is in the constitution.”

4.1.2 Findings on what Political Party Constitutions have to offer women MPs

The Constitutions of the two dominant political parties selected for this study were also analyzed to assess whether they promote political participation of women or not. From FGDs conducted with 8 women MPs, all of them revealed that both ZANU-PF and MDC-T Constitutions facilitates women’s entry into politics. Findings from a documentary review of the two Constitutions by this researcher at UZ Women’s Law Library showed that, ZANU-PF in its constitution specifically stipulates that women shall constitute at least one third of membership of the five of party’s principle organs which comprise of the Central, District, Province, Branch and Cell Village Committees (Made, 2015: 34). The ZANU-PF Constitution also states that, one third of the Political Bureau (Politburo) which is the secretariat of the Central Committee should be women. An in-depth interview with a male key informant

interviewee from ZANU –PF revealed that, the ZANU-PF Constitution in Article 2 (8) stresses that the party shall uphold the principle of equality of opportunities of all people regardless of sex. The Constitution further stresses in Article 8 (36) (1) that, women shall constitute one third of members in the Politburo. The MDC-T Constitution also enables women’s entry into politics for instance Article 16 (2) of the Constitution showed that, the National Council shall in the interest of gender representation have the power of reserving any seat or positions for women. A telephone interview with Honorable Fanny Chirisa from MDC-T revealed that, the MDC-T Constitution is very good as it provided for equal representation of both sexes.

This study argues that, the legal environment for instance Constitutions to be specific have provided an opportunity for women to participate in politics. However, this researcher found that the national Constitution and political party Constitutions chosen in this study have good provisions that promote equal participation of males and females. However, a major weakness was on the implementation part.

4.2 Findings on the impact of the Socio-economic Environment on women’s participation in politics

Women’s political participation is generally affected by many challenges which include, social, economic and political challenges (Chiroro, 2005: 99). Findings from a FGDs with 8 women parliamentarians revealed that, the social, economic and political environment in Zimbabwe has not favored women and this has resulted in most women shunning politics. One key informant interviewee Honorable Lilian Temvios revealed that, “economically, most women do not possess enough resources such as money which enables them to campaign effectively in respective constituencies”. Her views were also buttressed by findings from a documentary search which showed that, women continue to have fewer political resources for instance financially and this has been limited due to the economic mode of capitalism which facilitated private ownership of resources (Mofoluwawo, 2014). This was further buttressed by a documentary search which showed that,

‘due to lack of resources most women get lured into bed by powerful politicians during election time to campaign thus reducing their bargaining power and voice in parliament once elected into office’ (Mhlanga, 2014).

As shown in this study, the economic environment in Zimbabwe has pushed many women out of politics because very few women have access and control of productive resources.

Socially, lack of unity amongst women was found as a challenge for women to participate in parliament. One key informant interviewee Lizzie Katumbe from Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWAGCD) Gender department Program Officer revealed that, “women in Zimbabwe have a tendency of looking down upon other women and they do not vote for each other because they consider female candidates as incapable leaders as compared to male leaders.” Her views corresponded with findings from a documentary search conducted by the SARDC and WIDSA which showed that, women are also their own worst enemies in as much as their political participation is concerned (Tolmay and Morna, 2010). The study also revealed that, women who are usually majority voters tend to vote for men. SARDC/WIDSA (1998) quoted in Dube (2013: 201) showed that politically, socially and culturally, the society has turned women into their own oppressors as they too tend to see men as better leaders than women. Dziva et al (2013: 55) also showed that, women are jealousy of each other and they join the fray in instigating unpleasant attacks on fellow women in public life. So, this lack of unity among women has also affected their political relevance.

4.3 Findings on the impact of the Political Environment on women’s participation in politics

The political environment has a bearing on the level of participation by women. Politics has been referred as a dirty game in Zimbabwe (Dube, 2013: 206). A survey by the IPU (2008) showed that, the prevalence of masculine mode for political life has thrown most women out of politics. One key informant interviewee an academia Mr Murwira from the UZ Department of Political and Administrative Studies was of the view that, “the political culture in Zimbabwe has been characterized by violence and struggle for survival and women by nature are generally weak.” This was also buttressed by findings from a documentary search which showed that the political environment in Zimbabwe has been unfriendly to women (Mhlanga, 2014: 1). “Violence and irrationality in Zimbabwean politics has made it difficult for women of high standing to come even close to politics” (Mhlanga 2014: *ibid*). This study argues that, the political environment in Zimbabwe has affected negatively on the political participation of female MPs in the country.

Women have also been viewed as political liabilities rather than potential winners and this has impacted negatively on women political participation. This has been caused by the fact that most political parties in Zimbabwe are male dominated and they have been viewed as major stumbling blocks for women’s political participation. Two key informant interviewees from

Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre Network (ZWRCN) revealed that, “fewer women were fielded by political parties in the 2013 elections as compared to those fielded in 2008.” This corresponded by findings from a documentary evidence from (WiPSU, 2013: 1) which showed that, the number of women representing constituencies in parliament decreased from 34 in 2008 to 25 in 2013. These findings showed that, the political environment has affected women’s political participation and this has impacted on their political relevance negatively.

4.4 Findings on how Personality affect Women MPs in Zimbabwe

Low levels of literacy rate amongst women in Zimbabwe has impacted negatively on women parliamentarians’ political participation. In an interview with Honorable Rosewitter Makoni, she revealed that, low levels of literacy rate amongst women MPs have affected their participation. This was also buttressed by desk research where a survey by OXFAM (2012) showed that education and low levels of literacy rate makes women access to information difficult and commonly undermine the confidence and skills needed to enter public life. Documentary evidence by Mutale and Ndlovu (2013: 7) showed that, education has empowered many women to join political parties and participating in political activities. In Zimbabwe low levels of education by women MPs has affected on their political relevance. Documentary evidence from Schlozman and Verba (2001: 286) also showed that, education is a powerful predictor of political participation. However, in Zimbabwe the constitution on Section 125 (1a and b) clearly states that for one to be qualified for election as a member the National Assembly he or she must be: a registered voter and at least 21 years of age. Qualification for election as a member of Senate one must be a registered voter and at least 40 years of age. There is nothing mentioned about educational qualifications and as a result women MPs interviewed in this study revealed that, they needed to be capacitated educationally for them to participate fully in parliament. Dube (2013: 206) indicated that limited access or lack of access to adequate, quality and quantity of formal education has contributed to the sidelining of women in politics.

Women MPs under the banner of the G-20 were actively involved in the constitution making process. Findings from 3 Program Officers of chosen women organizations and women MPs revealed that women MPs have played a pivotal role in the Constitution making process. This also tallied with findings from a documentary search which showed that, the inclusion of provisions that sought to achieve gender equality within all spheres of life was a great achievement by women parliamentarians. Representation of women in Parliament has arose from 10.6% in the 6th Parliament to 34% in the 8th Parliament (Parliament of Zimbabwe –

ZWPC Strategic Plan -2015-2018). It was revealed that Honorable Majome lobbied the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to amend section 23 of the Lancaster House to grant women the same legal rights as men (Gudhlanga, 2013: 5). This was buttressed by findings from the Strategic Plan of ZWPC (2015-2018) which clearly showed that, the Women's Caucus have successfully lobbied for the abolishment of discrimination against women in matters of personal law which permitted the GoZ to embark on affirmative action and equal treatment between men and women.

4.5 Findings on the role of female MPs in Tackling Socio-economic Gender Challenges of Women

Political participation is shown through a number of actions Kurebwa (2016). In this study, participation was measured through a number of factors which includes, capacity to execute political mandates, effectiveness and representativeness of women MPs in Zimbabwe. Documentary evidence by RAU (2013) showed that, some female MPs have stood up to advocate for women's rights for instance on issues such as reproductive health, education, political violence, commerce and constitutional debates (RAU, 2013: 12). This corresponded with findings from in-depth interview with Honorable Shiri who revealed that,

‘Honorable Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga presented an emotional debate on sanitary ware and displayed sanitary ware which included cotton wool, tampons and pads in the House of Assembly protesting against exorbitant prices and this resulted in the scraping of import duty on products used to manufacture sanitary ware by Minister of Finance Honorable Patrick Chinamasa.’

Honorable Misihairabwi –Mushonga has also been vocal in advocating for women's rights. This was supported by documentary evidence which showed that, the Honorable MP at one point raised a point of order with the speaker stating that, female legislators were being sexually harassed in the House of Assembly. This study, argued that some female legislators have managed to tackle socio-economic gender challenges of women.

Motions have also been raised on imposing minimum sentences on certain crimes, provision for child sex and rape offenders and growing Gender Based Violence (GBV) by Honorable Jessie Majome. Honorable Majome has also raised a point of order on ending child marriages. This was also buttressed by a documentary search which showed that, women MPs have through the ZWPC successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the Sexual Offences Act which criminalizes marital rape and attract prison sentence as well as the Domestic Violence Act Bill

which was introduced in the 6th Parliament (Parliament of Zimbabwe- ZWPC Strategic Plan 2015-2018: 4).

However, this study also considered that, not all women MPs have managed to represent women's issues in the parliament. One key informant interviewee Farai Hondonga revealed that, "most Proportional representation women MPs have contributed nothing in the parliament." This was also buttressed by documentary evidence by Zhangazha (2014) which revealed that,

‘despite their increased number in parliament, little has changed as it is usually the voices of the same women like Joice Mujuru, Oppah Muchinguri, Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga, Thokozani Khupe, Nyasha Chikwinya and Jessie Majome who dominate coverage of women legislators. Given their numbers in Parliament one would have expected to hear more women's voices expressing their sentiments on the variety of topical issues, and standing up and fight for other women who suffer all sorts of prejudices and stereotypes in a patriarchal society’

The observation by Zhangazha illustrates that, though some of women MPs have managed to tackle a number of issues, parliamentary impact of the increase in the number of women MPs has not been achieved as shown on the ground that, there are few vocal women who are participating.

4.6 Findings on models on Political Relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe

Low representation of women in decision making positions was viewed as a major challenge that has impacted negatively on the political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe. In a FGDs with 8 women MPs, 5 of them revealed that, women who holds decision making positions especially in the executive are few and for decisions to be made the executive has the final word. This also tallied with a documentary search which showed that, despite strong provisions for gender balance in the Zimbabwean Constitution, the leadership of the GoZ has appointed just three women ministers to a 26 member Cabinet (Made, 2015: 32). The power of numbers especially on decision making positions have a greater role to play if women's political relevance was to be achieved in Zimbabwe. This research argued that, increase of women in decision making positions could improve their political relevance in parliament.

Limited resources amongst women was also found as another factor which has affected political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe. In an in-depth interview with Honorable Fanny Chirisa, she revealed that,

‘limited resources amongst women has affected negatively on the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe and the onus is given to political parties and the Zimbabwean government to support women through access and control of productive resources.’

This tallies with a desk study from documentary search which showed that the social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions (Shvedova, 2002). This was also supported by findings from a documentary evidence from Mofoluwawo (2014: 173) who showed that, politics has been largely commercialized and not many women are financially strong to participate in politics and this has affected political relevancy of women MPs in Zimbabwe. This research argues that, access and control of resources on the part of women could improve on their political participation.

Lack of implementation of policies that promote women’s participation has impacted negatively on the political relevance of women Parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. One key informant interviewee Lizzie Katumbe from Gender Department in the Ministry of Women Affairs revealed that, “there is lack of political will in Zimbabwe with regards to implementation of policies that are meant to empower women.” For instance, she also quoted Section 17 (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which mandates the state to promote full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality which has not been implemented fully by the GoZ. There are twenty Portfolio Committees in the Zimbabwean parliament and out of that only six Portfolios are headed by women (HIVOS, 2016). Since 2008, statistics show that women comprised less than a third of the candidates for each political party thus going against party’s constitutions for instance that of ZANU-PF which clearly states that women shall constitute at least one third of the total membership of the five principal organs of the party.

Lack of political will in implementation of policies that are in place was considered by this research as a major challenge in achieving political relevancy of women MP’s political relevance.

Political parties also have a greater to role to play in as much as women’s political participation is concerned. They ensure that more women are put forwards as candidates or not (Tolmay and Morna, 2010). However, these structures are largely dominated by men and in some instances remain obstructive to women. In their study, Tolmay and Morna (2010) found that, political parties in Zimbabwe are under no legal obligation to ensure gender equality or equal representation of women and men. Tolmay and Morna (2010) showed that, candidates are

selected through a vigorous system where they compete in primaries to determine which candidate will represent the party in a particular constituency. Documentary evidence by Shaba (2010) quoted in Tolmay and Morna (2010) revealed that,

‘the primaries are so competitively contested that most women get eliminated by their parties at this initial stage and they are usually placed in the party’s weakest areas where electoral loss is predictable denied access to stronghold areas.’

This means that, political parties are left with discretionary powers to determine the quality and quantity of women to include in politics because they can decide to put particular women on the list and exclude certain women. This, has impacted negatively on the political effectiveness of women MPs in Zimbabwe.

4.7 Implications of the study

This study showed that the legal framework in Zimbabwe such as Constitutions have enabled women’s entry into politics as shown through provisions which facilitates women’s participation. This has the potential to make major contribution to the knowledge gap in the literature. Most of the literature relating to this study makes reference to representation while this study goes beyond as it looked at political relevance of the participation of women MPs. However, the situation on the ground remained unfavorable to women. The Constitution of Zimbabwe might have provided a capacitating environment for women MPs to participate fully in politics, the fact remains that actual effectiveness of some of women MPs have not been realized. The implication is that new knowledge is being added to the subject on political participation of women parliamentarians.

Study findings have revealed that, the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe has faced many challenges. The hindering factors as revealed have been the prevalence of male dominance in political parties, low levels of education and possession of limited resources amongst women. It was also further revealed by the study that, women’s participation in parliamentary politics has been affected by limited and unequal distribution of wealth at the disposal of women particularly potential and sitting women parliamentarians. The implication of this is that, it can inform policy on the quota system. Presently it focusses mainly on numerical representation at the expense of empowering and emancipating women to increase their capacity and effectiveness in parliamentary politics.

The study revealed that, the dominant political parties in the country are led and dominated by mostly males. There is scant information relating specifically to the gender composition of the dominant political parties. Hence the revelation by this study has the potential to make contributions to the literature and knowledge gap. The parties have hierarchies in which few women occupy decision positions which can capacitate their parliamentary politics and effectiveness.

It was also revealed in this study that personality and low literacy rate amongst women have affected their participation in politics. An analysis of the Parliament Hansard from 2005-2017 revealed that the same vocal women are the ones participating in parliament. The implication of this is that it can inform policy in the sense that the Constitution does not specify educational qualifications. This usually impacts on women capacity and effectiveness in parliamentary politics.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter presented the findings and analysis of the political relevance of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. The findings and analysis have been deduced from mainly documentary search and in-depth interviews. It was shown in the chapter that for women to be politically relevant, a number of factors have to be taken into consideration. Several obstacles which affected political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe have been discussed. The next chapter presented the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to interrogate the political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe. The historical background of the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial period. The legal framework existed during the colonial period discriminated against women's involvement in parliamentary affairs. It was shown in this study that, during the colonial period no black woman was elected in the parliament. This also meant that issues and concerns of black women were not taken into consideration. Women were regarded as minors and this made them to be viewed as second class citizens. The public sphere was the domain of the males and this resulted in the subordinate status of the women.

Women were recognised by the GoZ just after independence as having played a greater role in the liberation of the country. It was shown in this study that, in a bid to ensure that women's rights are promoted, several policies were put in place to facilitate political participation of women such as the National Gender Policy (2004). Women have been participating in politics and in parliament though their numbers have remained lower than those of their male counterparts. Zimbabwe has also adopted a number of regional and international Conventions and Protocols that promote the rights of women such as UDHR, CEDAW, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women, The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development among others.

This study showed that previous researches that have attempted to tackle the political participation of women in Zimbabwe have dwelled much on political inclusion and representation of women in politics and in decision making positions. It was also noted in this study that, representation and inclusion are fundamentals of a democratic state however, increase in numerical numbers of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe has not translated to their effective participation.

This study also showed that, the legal environment for instance the Constitution of Zimbabwe and political party Constitutions of ZANU-PF and MDC-T have facilitated for women's political participation. Representation of women in parliamentary politics has increased from 9% in 1980 to 34% in 2013. The Constitutional quota system has ensured that Zimbabwe joins other countries in the world with above 30% of representation of women in the legislature (Made, 2013).

Socio, political and economic environment have proved to be stumbling blocks for women's full political participation in Zimbabwe. Social factors such as socialisation of women in societies have also serve as deterrent measures for the political participation of women. It was shown that societies continue to view women's place as home and whenever they try to enter into politics, they are confronted by male domination. Patrilineal systems do exist even in the present day Zimbabwe.

In party politics, male dominance continue to be the order of the day. It was shown that men continue to dominate the political space. In all political parties chosen for this study, it was shown that males dominate the political structures and this have negative effects on women's political relevance.

It was also shown in this study that, limited resources amongst women have affected women MPs' political relevance in Zimbabwe. It was shown that, limited resources amongst women has contributed to their defeat in election times. Campaigning requires a lot of resources and very few women possess resources and this have resulted in women losing elections.

This study showed that lack of political will has also affected political relevance of women MPs in Zimbabwe. Both the GoZ and political parties have been reluctant in improving the status of women. Policies that are in place for instance Section 17 of the Zimbabwean Constitution has not been implemented fully. This study showed that in the last election (2013), the number of women who were elected in constituencies was very low when compared to 2008. The reason revealed in this study was that political parties did not field enough women because of the quota system.

5.1 Recommendations

Earlier studies on women's political participation have shown that increase in representation of women in parliament or decision making positions can improve the status of women. However, in Zimbabwe the situation is different. Special measures that have been put in place to increase representation of women in parliament such as the quota system in the Constitution have not translated to effective participation of women MPs. This research proposed that, there should be effective monitoring and evaluation of policies that are meant to improve the status of women for example the quota system. The idea of the quota system was to redress the gender disparities in parliament. However, it was shown from this study that, the quota system did not work because the number of women elected in constituency decreased in 2013 as compared to

2008. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation of policies is critical for political relevance of women to be achieved. This recommendation is practically achievable because there are Portfolio Committees in parliament who holds public hearings and investigations on bills that are passed in parliament.

Educational empowerment was viewed as a vital aspect for effective participation of women parliamentarians. This study has shown that, low levels of education among women MPs in Zimbabwe has contributed to their silence in Parliament. A parliament is an important place in Zimbabwe because laws that determines how Zimbabwe is governed are crafted in parliament. Therefore, if women who are representatives of women's issues and concerns are not capacitated educationally, this would impact on the status of the general women in Zimbabwe. The Constitution of Zimbabwe does not have any clause that specify educational qualifications for one to be a Parliamentarian. This study propose that, there should be minimum requirements educationally for one to be a Parliamentarian. If, women are capacitated educationally this will improve their assertiveness and they will also contribute much in the formulation of policies that affects women and the general populace.

In this study, it was shown that one of the major problem that has affected women's political participation is the fact that women are not united. Tolmay and Morna (2010) noted that, women have become their own enemies. In most countries Zimbabwe included, women constitute more than half of the electorate but when it comes to representation their numbers are very low. Lack of unity amongst women was viewed as a contributor to women's low representation because women do not vote for each other. Study findings have also shown that men use women to threaten other women. Therefore, this study proposed that, there should be oneness and collective action amongst women regardless of their political affiliation for their political relevance to be recognised. This recommendation is practically achievable because there are some organisations such as WiPSU who are sensitizing communities and encouraging women to vote for other women.

The political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe has been also affected by possession of limited resources amongst women. Political participation involves, travelling and campaigning and all women MPs interviewed reviewed that limited resources has been their major stumbling block in their political participation. This study proposes that, there should be creation of an enabling environment that enables both genders to acquire adequate resources

for them participate effectively in political life. The onus here would be given to political parties and the Zimbabwean Government to support financially or materially both genders.

This study also propose that there should be implementation of policies that are meant to empower and increase political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe. It was shown that Zimbabwe has a very resounding Constitution which is gender sensitive. However, despite having that, there has been lack of implementation of what is in the Constitution. For instance Section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe requires the state to take all measures including legislation to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all institutions and government bodies. The situation on the ground is different for instance in Parliamentary Portfolios. Women who holds decision making positions are few. So, this study propose that implementation of policies is vital. The Zimbabwean government should walk the talk.

In line with the above, this study has shown that very few women holds decision making positions and this has impacted negatively on the status of women. Thus, increasing women's visibility in decision making positions can enhance women's MPs participation. Therefore, this study proposed that, there should be provision of targeted training to women MPs who wants to assume positions of leadership for instance campaigning skills, knowledge of political systems and how to develop and propose agendas that upholds women's rights. This would enable women MPs to influence decisions that are taken with regards to the status of women.

Lastly, this study proposed that, there should be development of research and documentation of best practices in the political participation of women MPs. One size fits all approaches should be discarded. The quota system worked in Rwanda because there are now more than 50% representation of women in Parliament but in Zimbabwe the quota system was implemented however, equality is not yet achieved. This study proposed that there should be development of research and documentation, this would help in coming up with better solutions to improve the status of women in politics.

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10 MPs in Zimbabwe, Parliament of Zimbabwe, Harare 23 March- 9 April 2017

1 Program Officer, Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre Network, Harare, 6 April 2017

1 Program Officer Women in Politics Support Unit, Harare, 10 April 2017

Ordinary members of ZANU-PF, Marondera, 21 March 20

APPENDICES

CONSENT FORM

My name is Winnet Banda. I am a final year student in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, undertaking Msc in International Relations at the University of Zimbabwe. I want to conduct Focus Group Discussions and In-depth interviews, I am seeking consent of women MPs.

What the study is about: I am conducting a research on the Political Relevance of the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe.

What you will be asked: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews with you. Questions to be asked includes: political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe, challenges you are facing and expected changes you expect as women MPs. The interview will take about 30 minutes to complete. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the discussions.

Risks and benefits:

There is risk that you may find some of the questions about your job to be sensitive. There are no benefits to you.

Answers to this guide are confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be kept in a locked file and the information you will give will be used for academic purposes only.

Participation is voluntary: Participation in this study is voluntary. If there are questions you would not feel comfortable to answer, you may skip them. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Signature of the Researcher.....Date

Signature of person obtaining consent..... Date.....

Appendix 1. Interview and FGDs Guide for Women Parliamentarians

This guide is aimed at obtaining information on the political relevance of the political participation of women MPs in Zimbabwe.

Introductory Remarks

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this interview. My name is Winnet Banda a postgraduate student at University of Zimbabwe. In partial fulfilment of my studies I am required to undertake a research and as such you have been randomly selected to participate in this study.

Please be as assured that the information you will share with me will be treated confidentially and no one can link your answers to you personally. During data analysis, information from all respondents will be combined and analysed together.

In this discussion I will be recording what we will be discussing. This recorder is an aid to help me capture all the important points in our discussion. The information recorded will not be used for any other purposes besides this evaluation. Please feel free to discuss on any issue related to women participation in parliament. Do you have any questions on the process before we begin? We will now begin the interview.

Section A: Examining the capacitation and capability of women parliamentarians to execute their mandate in Zimbabwe.

Questions Areas and Responses

[I] How are WPs' entry into politics enabled or limited by the constitution of the land? -----

[II] How are WPs' ability to challenge patriarchy enabled or limited by the constitution of the land? -----

[III] State the socio-economic factors that affect WPs' entry into politics and explain how. ---

[IV] Explain how the socioeconomic factors given above affect WPs’ ability to challenge patriarchy? -----

[V] How do political party constitutions enable or limit WPs’ entry into politics? -----

Section B: Interrogating the effectiveness of women parliamentarians in executing their expected political obligations in Zimbabwe.

Question Areas and Responses

[I] Giving specific instances, state what WPs have done to reshape laws affecting women’s socio-political and economic development?-----

[II] Citing observable evidence if there is any, state what WPs have done to enhance the right to quality and equitable education to a girl child and women?-----

[III] With reference to tangible evidence [if there is], state what WPs have done to address health challenges of women. -----

[IV] Explain with examples, what WPs have done to enable political participation of women in all levels of decision making. -----

[V] Citing relevant examples [if there are], state how WPs have shaped political party laws and traditions to buttress women's ideal participation without fear or prejudice-----

[VI] What has been the performance of WPs in enabling access to land, employment and salient resources to women? -----

END OF INTERVIEW

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Feminist Academia, Academic Lecturers, Women Organisations and Political Parties

Investigating the feminist representativeness of women parliamentarians in Zimbabwe.

Question Areas and Responses

[I] Giving case examples, explain whether women influence the appointment of Proportional Representation WPs in Zimbabwe? -----

[II] How does the manner with which PR WPs are appointed affect their loyalty to the cause of women? -----

[III] Citing evidence, explain whether women determine the assigning of women to parliamentary constituency posts at party levels? -----

[IV] How does the manner with which women are assigned to parliamentary constituency posts by parties affect their ability to speak for women? -----

[V] With reference to tangible evidence [if there is], state whether you think what WPs do in parliament really reflects the demands of ordinary women? -----

[VI] Do women have the ability to punish or reprimand unrepresentative WPs in Zimbabwe? Give case examples.-----

[VII] Do WPs have the ability to challenge gender domination at high political levels such as decisions from President's office? Give example. -----

END OF INTERVIEW

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT