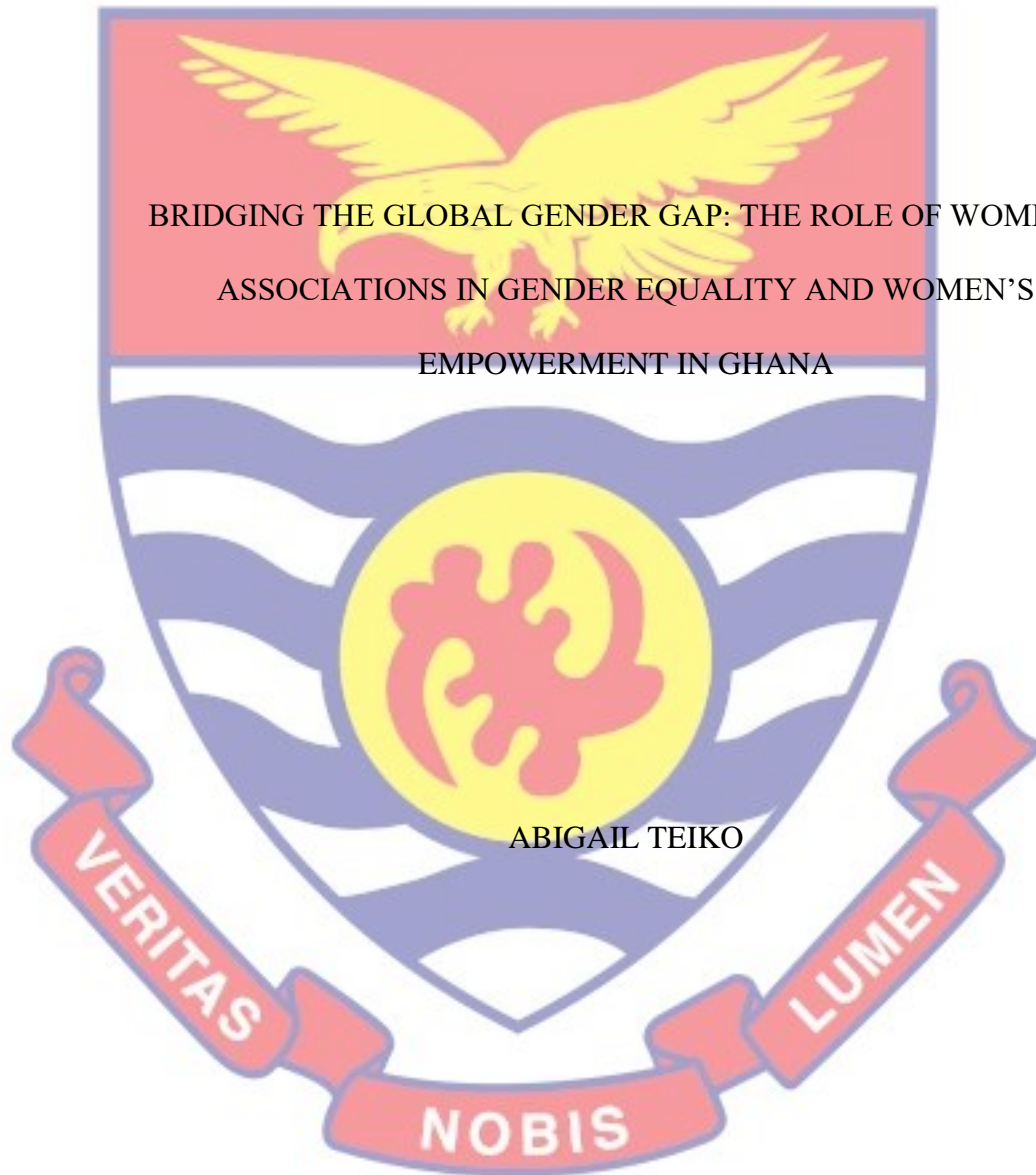


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BRIDGING THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP: THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATIONS IN GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT IN GHANA

BY

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Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast. In
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy
degree in International Studies

DECEMBER 2020

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidates Signature Date:

Name:

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature Date:

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature Date:

Name:

ABSTRACT

For decades, gender inequality and women's empowerment have gained global attention. State and non-state actors alike have made several efforts towards this end. Yet, gender inequality continues to plague all countries. Academics have examined the issue extensively from different angles. These angles, however, leave much to be desired in terms of what women themselves are doing to better their lot. This study, therefore, concerned itself with one question: what roles have women played in tackling gender inequality and empowering women? In answering this question, the study sampled eight women's associations and three coalitions to analyse their roles in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women in Ghana. The descriptive case study design with an interview guide was used to gather primary data from participants, and the data were analysed using thematic content analysis. Further, the study adopted four targets of the SDG Five: Targets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5, to analyse how these roles of women's associations feed into the targets. The study found that through *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, the Domestic Violence Law, the Affirmative Action Bill, and strategies such as coalition building, internationalisation and lobbying, women's associations in Ghana have contributed to global efforts aimed at ending gender inequality and empowering women. Most of these were achieved through coalitions formed with other active social agents such as the media. However, these coalitions were abandoned once the purpose for which they were formed was achieved. The study recommended that such coalitions be kept active for easy pursuance of related issues towards bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

KEY WORDS

Coalitions

Gender Equality

Non-State Actors

State Actors

Women's Associations

Women's Empowerment



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DEDICATION

To Dr Adjoa Afriyie Poku, in whom, at a tender age, I saw my future.



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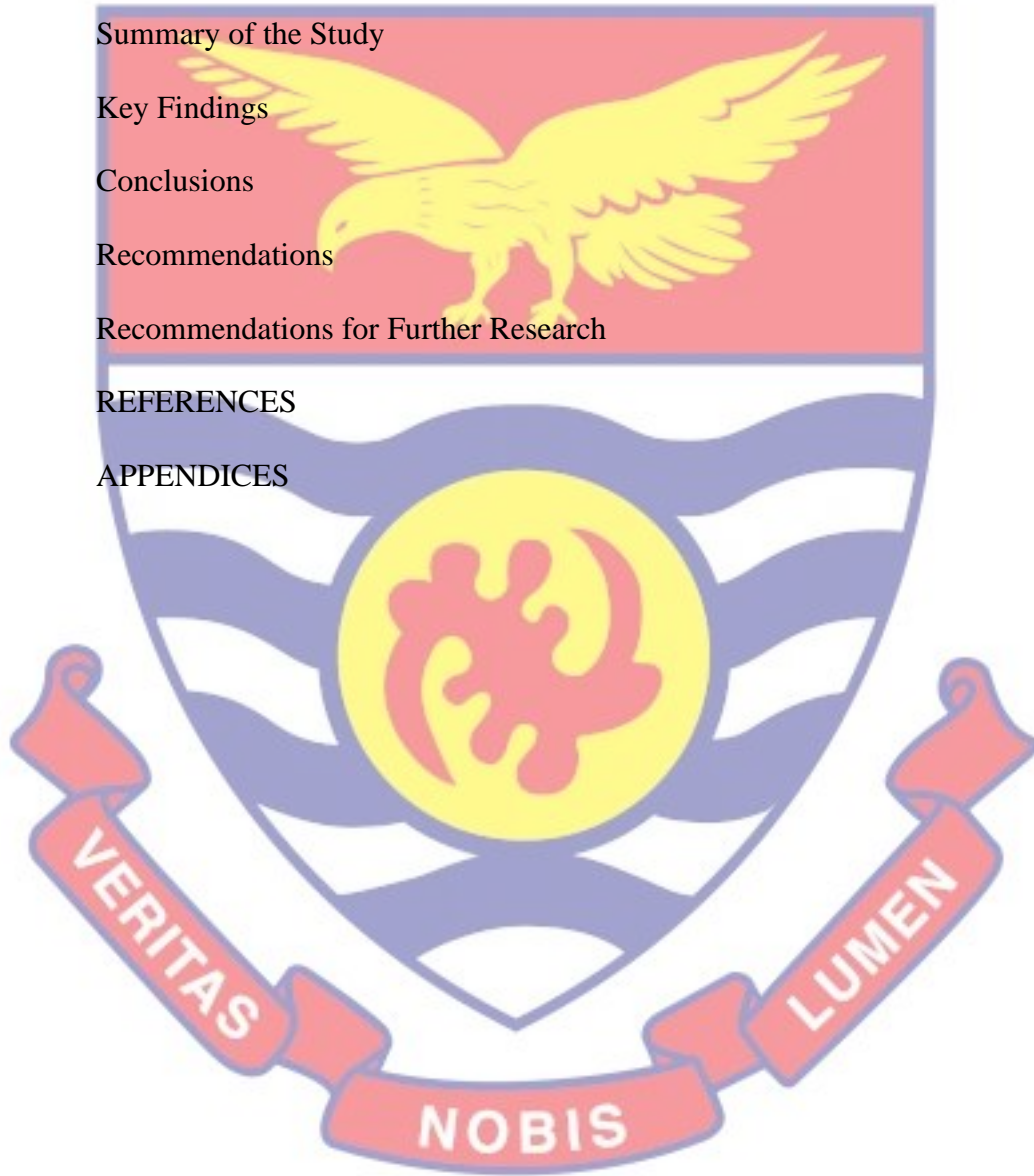
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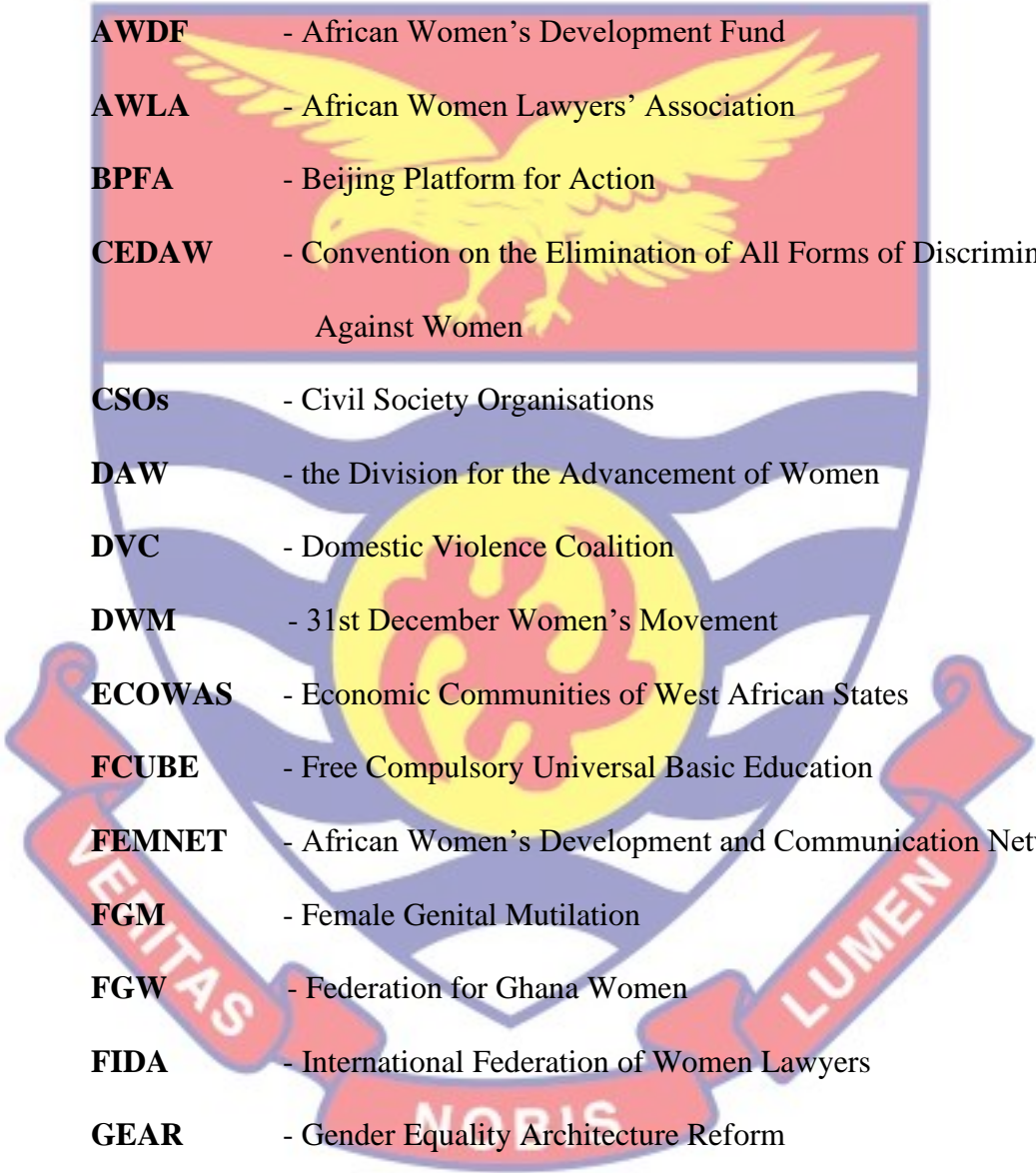


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LIST OF ACRONYMS



AABC	- Affirmative Action Bill Coalition
AAC	- Affirmative Action Coalition
AU	- African Union
AWDF	- African Women's Development Fund
AWLA	- African Women Lawyers' Association
BPFA	- Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	- Civil Society Organisations
DAW	- the Division for the Advancement of Women
DVC	- Domestic Violence Coalition
DWM	- 31st December Women's Movement
ECOWAS	- Economic Communities of West African States
FCUBE	- Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FEMNET	- African Women's Development and Communication Network
FGM	- Female Genital Mutilation
FGW	- Federation for Ghana Women
FIDA	- International Federation of Women Lawyers
GEAR	- Gender Equality Architecture Reform
GEWE	- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
INSTRAW	- United Nations International Research and Training Institution for the Advancement of Women

LAWA - Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

NAWA - North American Women's Association

NCGW - National Council for Ghana Women

NDC - National Democratic Congress

NETRIGHT - Network for Women's Rights in Ghana

NEWIG - Network of Women in Growth

NHIS - National Health Insurance Scheme

NSAs - Non-State Actors

OSAGI - Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement
of Women

PNDC - Provisional National Defence Council

SADC - Southern African Development Community

SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

WAD - Women and Development

WID - Women in Development

WMC - Women's Manifesto Coalition



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

International relations has largely been shaped by two major theories; realism and idealism (McGlinchey *et al.*, 2017). Realism considers the state to be the only meaningful actor within world affairs. It is advocated by authors such as Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli and Kenneth Waltz among others. The theory posits that global relations take place within an anarchic system in which countries compete economically and politically for positions of relative advantage (McGlinchey *et al.*, 2017). Realists consider international relations the triumph of the state and its apparatuses. Very little consideration is given to entities other than the state, the internal structure of the different states or the role of organisations beyond government control (Lakhany, 2006).

However, the rise of idealism after the Second World War greatly influenced the involvement of entities other than the state in international affairs (Hirst & Thompson, 1996). As a consequence, non-state actors (NSAs) have proliferated the international system. This does not in any way mean that NSAs existed only after the Cold War. The Red Cross, for instance, dates to the 1860s (Forsythe & Rieffer-Flanagan, 2016). What distinguishes and shapes contemporary NSAs, however, is an unprecedented operating environment, mainly because the Cold War has ended (Wilkins, 1991). It must, however, be noted that the state has not been rendered powerless in international relations. Even with the internet, NSAs

cannot operate in a vacuum, and therefore need the consent of the state to operate in their spaces (McGlinchey *et al.*, 2017).

When the Cold War ended, the world did not only realise that idealism was the appropriate ideology to adopt, hence the inclusion of actors other than the state in the international system. Global leaders also came to appreciate that, the problems facing the world are multi-dimensional and trans-national. In combating them, therefore, all hands are needed on deck. When speaking of NSAs at the turn of the 21st century, the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan remarked, “I was convinced that the UN would achieve little in the twenty-first century unless it reached out to such people and convinced them that it was a useful ally, able and willing to work with them to achieve common objectives” (Annan, 2014, p. 5).

Currently, one of the UN’s development paradigms guiding all member states, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also recognise NSAs and call on them to contribute their quota in building a more sustainable world. Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals, calls on all partners to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development” (Seth, 2015, p. 40). Under the subheading of “multistakeholder partnerships” of Goal 17, Targets 17.6 and 17.7 specifically state, “enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multistakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, in particular developing countries”, and, “encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of

partnerships” respectively (UNGA, 2015, p.16). Thus, the ambitious goals that make the UN aspire to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger whilst making substantial progress in the fields of environmental protection, inequality and wider human well-being, also require NSAs working with, or even without, governments (Florini, 2018). This suggests that the advent of the UN’s SDGs in 2015 once again refocused global attention to the collectiveness of all stakeholders in finding solutions to the world’s environmental, socio-political and economic problems.

Consequently, NSAs have become dominant in every sphere of life where they had been previously denied (Goldstein & Pevehouse. 2013). In particular, NGOs as NSAs have received greater visibility and influence on issues in the area of the environment, health, security, migration and displacement, social and economic justice and inequalities. Amnesty International, the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Médecins Sans Frontières, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, to mention a few, have become household names due to their international reach and influence.

One key area NGOs tackle is inequalities, especially regarding gender. Gender inequality continues to be among the leading inequalities that permeate all spheres of life in the world (Cela *et al.*, 2014). Endalcachew Bayeh indicates that in no part of the world are men and women equal regarding their social, legal, or economic rights (Bayeh, 2016). He also notices that gender inequality continues to be an issue of great interest around the world owing to its widespread nature across cultures, and Rogers Orock adds that, despite the monumental achievements of gender activism worldwide, “there is still a long way to go” (Orock 2007, p. 93).

Gender inequality lingers in all parts of the world (Sen, 2001), impeding human progress (UNDP, 2016). Ahmed, Aurora, Biru and Salvini (2001) record that it is extremely rampant in developing countries compared to the developed ones, and mostly portrayed as a hierarchical gender relation where females are considered less valuable and inferior owing to their gender

As a result, African governments have put in measures to foster equality between males and females and empower women. In July 2003, several African states signed the Women's Protocol to the African Charter for People's and Human Rights, which has far-reaching rights for women, and many of these states have ratified it. Several others have ratified the the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and in the instance of the countries in the southern African region, the South African Development Community Declaration on Gender and Development (SADC SDGD). At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, most African states signed and adopted the MDGs (Fester, 2007), and the story is the same for the SDGs in 2015. The re-drafting of the constitution of some countries like Namibia has also ensured equality and legal and human rights for all (Fester, 2007).

In the case of Ghana, Dzorgbo & Gyan (2016) have established that the laws and policies in place make it possible to pursue women's issues. Several UN conventions and declarations aimed at ensuring gender equality have been endorsed. In 1986, the state ratified CEDAW. Ghana has also endorsed other UN Conventions including the MDGs and the SDGs. Constitutionally, section 17 bars discrimination based on colour, gender, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, and

economic or social status, whilst sub-section 3 of section 23 makes provision that women shall be granted equal rights devoid of any form of barriers from anyone (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). In 2007, the government enacted the Domestic Violence Act (Act No 732), to mitigate against gender inequality and ensure that the welfare of girls and women are promoted. Other legal provisions have been made and state institutions such as Ministry for Children, Gender and Social Protection set up to battle out the various forms of discrimination meted out to women (Dzorgbor & Gyan, 2016). Within the national government, gender focal points have been set up within sector ministries, and gender budgeting has been instigated (Madsen, 2012).

Despite these numerous steps on the part of the UN and its member states to tackle gender inequality and empower women, other NSAs are also making key strides in this regard. Dzorgbo and Gyan (2016) rightly say that aside from the robust policy and legislative environment that is established in Ghana for pursuing women's issues, many NGOs act as "duty-bearers" in combating all manner of discrimination meted out to women. One such type of organisation is women's associations. Women's movements/ groups/ associations have been pivotal in the progression of women's issues (Medie, 2016). They vary in terms of membership as members could be from the same or different political, professional, economic, and religious backgrounds, depending on the purpose and objective of its establishment.

Despite the state's efforts and those of the other organisations, gender equality seems to evade Ghanaian society (Dzorgbo & Gyan, 2016). Ghanaian

women still experience gender-based discrimination, relative poverty, and powerlessness. Also, they continuously lag in political involvement and decision making, and as well in articulating and enjoying their reproductive rights (Sossou, 2006). Furthermore, women in Ghana remain threatened by forced and early marriages, harmful traditional and cultural customs like female genital mutilation (FGM) and *trokosi*, and have restricted access to health services (Dzorgbo & Gyan, 2016). In UNDP's 2018 Gender Inequality Index, Ghana ranked 140 in the world, with a score of 0.592 (UNDP, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Academics have written extensively on the issue of gender inequality and women's empowerment in Ghana and Africa at large, analysing it from different angles. The first are those studies that tackle the deeply rooted cultural, social, and traditional values that inform patriarchy and lead to discrimination against women. In 1998 for instance, Oware-Gyekye in a joint study conducted by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana and Bradford University's Development and Project Planning Centre, discovered the existence of numerous indications to suggest that sex-based inequalities in the field of work were deeply rooted in the cultural dynamics of the Ghanaian society. This joint study stated unequivocally that until the traditional attitudes fueling the prejudice and exclusion against women in the public sphere were dealt with, no amount of legislation alone would salvage Ghanaian women (Oware- Gyekye *et al*, 1998). Olowu (2012) goes

a step further by suggesting that such cultural attitudes should be dealt with on a community basis by stating that, gender issues in Africa take their roots from the cultural, social and traditional values, so instead of being tackled in isolation, they should be examined and questioned within the community context.

In addition to the views above, there have been calls appealing to the government and related stakeholders to empower women through legislation and policy enactment (Dzorgbo & Gyan, 2016; Owusu-Mensah, 2017). Also, Bayeh (2016) calls on the government to “work hard” to amend the existing status of women and empower them, perhaps through its agencies such as the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, as well as civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs, to sensitise women countrywide on their basic rights and reproductive health issues, and also encourage them to vie for political office, as suggested by Dzorgbo & Gyan (2016). Furthermore, studies like that of Dimbie (2013) and Owusu-Mensah (2017) recommend the financial assistance of women from both the government and donor agencies as the solution. Yakubu (2018), in her bid, also looks at international development agencies as a means of empowering women. Akhtar (1992; Cited in Rowlands, 1995), Olowu (2012) and Orock (2007) suggest that the application of women’s empowerment agenda in a bottom-up approach, that is, from the grassroots to the urban centres, as opposed to the current top-down approach, is a more appropriate approach to adopt.

These studies and several others disclose that their approach towards women’s empowerment either perceives women as victims to be cared for or as a marginalised group that require an integration into existing national and

international initiatives. These trends in the existing literature, therefore, reveal that there is a paucity of knowledge about what women themselves can do or are doing to better themselves. Concerning women empowering themselves, this study focuses on women's collective efforts.

In this regard, the closest study one could refer to that is aligned with the central thesis of this study is Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong's '*Historicising the Women's Manifesto for Ghana: A Culmination of Women's Activism in Ghana*', in which she documents how the creation of *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana* in 2004 plays a crucial part in women's collective organisation and also serves as a key roadmap for women's empowerment (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). However, this study focuses on women's success in relating their problems with other minorities such as CSOs, NGOs, organised labour, the media and political parties, through coalition building and collective action (Amoah-Boampong, 2018, p. 27). So, Amoah-Boampong's study does not focus on women's ability to fight their discrimination, but rather their ability to connect their issues with that of other minorities. This gap in the literature regarding women fighting against the discrimination they suffer is what this current research aims to fill. The study fills this gap by providing an insight into the works of women's associations in Ghana that add to the global efforts in achieving gender equality and empowering women.

Thesis Statement

The main argument this study advances is that the roles of women's associations in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana

contribute to the global efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the roles women's associations are playing in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana as part of the global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowering women worldwide.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine how the roles of women's associations in Ghana feed into global efforts towards achieving gender equality and empowering women.
2. Examine the strategies women's associations in Ghana employ to achieve their goals.
3. Assess the achievements of women's associations towards bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

Research Questions

1. How do the roles of women's associations in Ghana feed into the global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowering women?
2. What strategies are employed by women's associations to achieve their set goals?
3. What achievements can be attributed to women's associations concerning their roles in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana?

Significance of the Study

The study helps to find out how women's associations as NSAs in Ghana are helping to bridge the gender gap in the country and are also contributing towards eliminating gender equality and empowering women worldwide.

Gender inequality against women continues to be a greater part of the narration of inequalities around the world (Clarke, 2017). This study contributes to this global discourse by emphasising what women themselves, through associations, are doing to better their situation.

The study also provides insights into the activities of women's associations which can serve as a guide to other organisations that seek to better the gender inequality narration in Ghana, to get on board in eliminating gender inequality and empowering women.

It also contributes to knowledge by joining the global debate on ensuring equality among all people, by emphasising the specific roles women's associations in Ghana are playing to fight gender inequality and women's empowerment in the country.

It also reveals the extent of Ghana's contribution to the global efforts of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

Delimitations of the Study

The study focuses mainly on the practices of women's associations that contribute to bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana. Other activities of the associations are not the concern of this study. The study also covers the period from 2000 and 2020 because this was the era during which new

associational autonomy arose and the era of women's quiet activism on the basis of community organisations and welfare associations came to an end (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). Also, the late 1990s saw the end of the co-option of key women's organisations by the PNDC/NDC government through the 31st December Women's Movement, by means of the registration of a plethora of women's coalitions such as Abantu for Development in 1991, the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) in 1999, the Network for women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) in 2000, Gender Violence Survivors Support Network (GVSSN) in 2001, the Domestic Violence Coalition in 2003 and the Women's Manifesto Coalition in 2004.

Definition of Key terms

Non-state actors: are non-sovereign entities that exist independent of any state and exercise considerable economic, social or political power and control at the national and in some cases, at the international level.

Sustainable Development Goals: they are the 17 goals adopted by the UN and its member states as the development model that should guide all states as they seek to develop their country and its people, from 2015 to 2030 (UNGA, 2015).

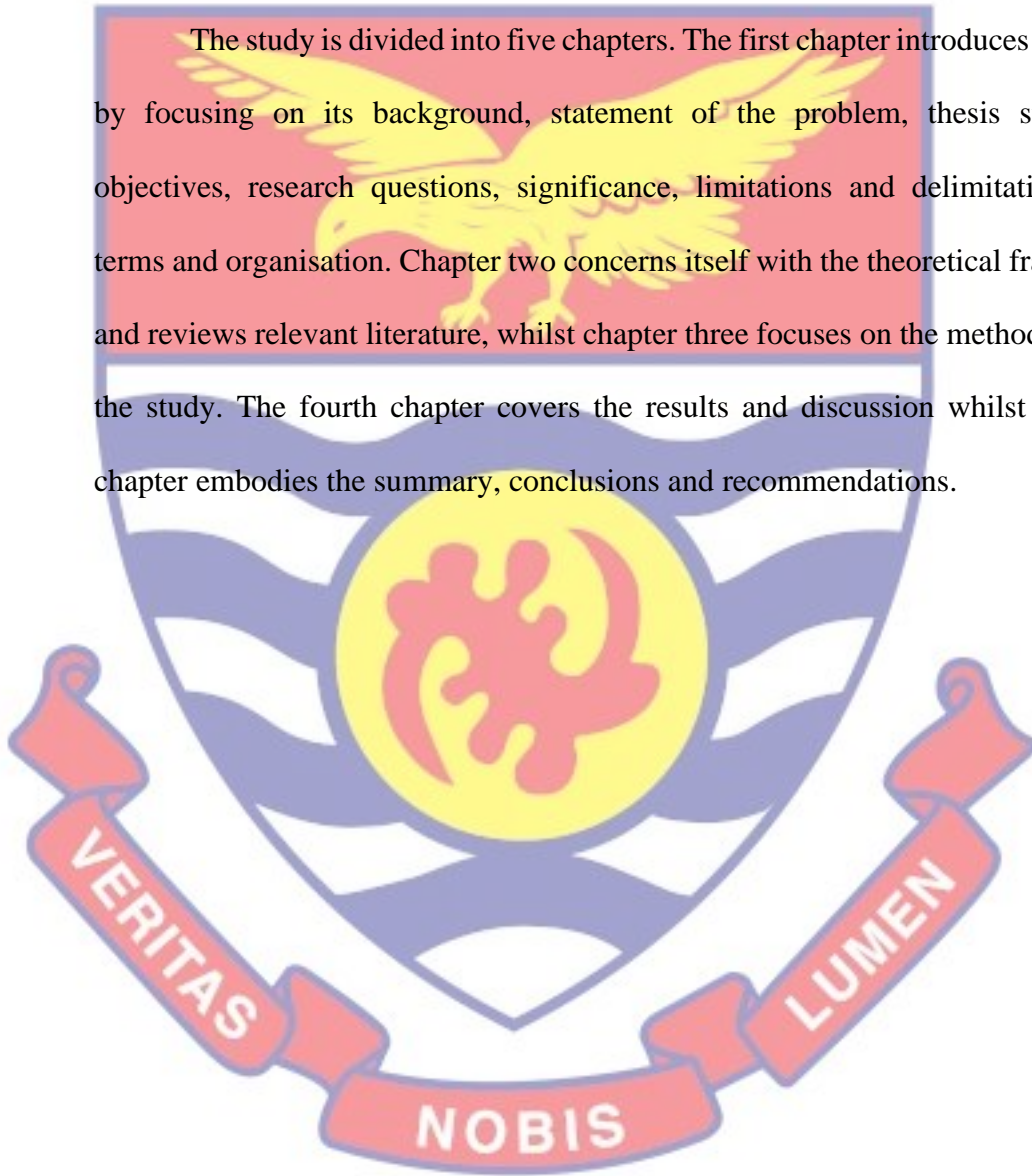
Women's Association: an association formed by women with a basic focus on their identity as women to promote the desired change in different scopes (Ferree & Tripp, 2006).

Women Empowerment: the expansion of the ability women have to make choices concerning their lives in a context where they were hitherto denied (Kabeer, 2001).

Gender Equality: the idea that the responsibilities, rights, and opportunities individuals have should not be dependent on their gender, that is, whether they are born female or male

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by focusing on its background, statement of the problem, thesis statement, objectives, research questions, significance, limitations and delimitations, key terms and organisation. Chapter two concerns itself with the theoretical framework and reviews relevant literature, whilst chapter three focuses on the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter covers the results and discussion whilst the final chapter embodies the summary, conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study assesses the roles women's associations play in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women. This chapter examines the theories underpinning the study and reviews related literature. In doing so, the chapter is divided into three parts. The first discusses the theories employed for the study and how they are used. The concepts of empowerment and women's empowerment are the main concepts that are also examined in this chapter. The Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches of interaction between feminism and development are also discussed here. The second part of this chapter reviews these concepts. In the third and final part, empirical studies related to feminism and women's empowerment, women's movements in the Global South, the UN and women's empowerment and measuring women's empowerment, are reviewed.

Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the idealist and feminist theoretical standpoints in international relations, and how they are employed in the study.

The Theory of Idealism

In contrast to the realist perspectives which place much of their analyses on the significance of the state as the main player in international politics, this study employs an idealist school of thought in international relations. It is used to examine

the roles of non-state women's associations concerning bridging the global gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

In international relations, idealism is generally considered an optimistic doctrine that seeks to surpass the international anarchy and generate a more harmonious and cosmopolitan world order (Wilson, 2011). There is no agreed definition of idealism. Consequently, several approaches or schools of thought, particularly cosmopolitanism, internationalism and liberalism, are usually lumped together and considered idealism, although they have substantial variations between and within them (Wilson, 2011). For this study, however, the aspects of idealism that recognise and emphasise the relevance of NSAs in the international system, are employed to assess the roles of women's associations as NSAs in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

State-centrism, a key feature of realism assumes that only states are meaningful actors in global affairs (Ataman, 2003). With the proliferation of actors other than the state, predominantly the multinational corporations (MNCs), intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and transnationally organised groups that emerged after the after WWII period, many scholars questioned this state-centric paradigm of realism. Banks (1985) documents that by the mid-1970s, the real challenge to realism arose from several scholarly developments. Scholars like Keohane and Nye also argue that from the post-WWII era, realism has ceased to offer a complete theory owing to the substantial variations in the structure of the international system (Keohane and Nye, 1971).

Idealism generally focuses on globalisation and the role of non-state entities within international system. The idealist tradition advocates that though states are significant in international relations, several other actors operate in the global system and must therefore be considered alongside state actors (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013). Whereas realists analyse the continuity of state sovereignty, idealists emphasise the change of state sovereignty in the post-Cold War world order. Idealists, therefore, contend that in conditions of global interdependence, states can no longer perform their sovereign functions on their own as compared to the previous times. States, therefore, have to share their authority with non-state actors (Ataman, 2003).

Unlike realism's stand that the only discourse among states is primarily centred on foreign policies and foreign affairs, idealism claims that this is a thing of the past as the discussion of the internal affairs of states has now developed into a norm of contemporary international affairs (Ataman, 2003). This gives credence to the point that issues of gender which had been absent from international relations for decades (Stienstra, 2016), is now an issue of great importance at all international fora. It is therefore not surprising that the UN has taken numerous steps towards fighting gender inequality in all its member-states.

Interdependence is now a great characteristic of global politics, as well as the advancement of transnationalism and the emergence of new global concerns such as gender, in the international realm. Idealists, therefore, call for different pluralistic paradigm to evaluate the transformations and complexities of contemporary world politics (Ataman, 2003). This is because realism offers a

slender and incomplete description of world affairs. Idealists unlike realists, pay more attention to non-state actors and recognise them as full-fledged autonomous entities powerful enough to transcend states, state policies and impact international relations (Ataman, 2003). In the fight against gender inequality, therefore, the state's efforts cannot be enough. The role of non-state actors such as women's associations must be harnessed in the state's quest to ensure GEWE.

The Feminist Theory in International Relations

Traditional international relations theory holds that military and war-making are masculine endeavours. This is related to the credence given to men as protectors and warriors, that they are legitimate armed actors who engage in combat to protect those who require protection i.e. women, children and non-fighting men. (O'Connor & Torres, 2019). This relies on gendered constructions in international relations, which depict how the feminine is undervalued or devalued. This, in turn, reveals the contribution of feminism in understanding how gender influences international relations.

The state, power, sovereignty and military security are the main areas considered as 'high' politics in traditional international relations perspectives (Hooper, 2001). As such, these perspectives focus exclusively on these areas whilst neglecting areas including gender, although they have an impact on global politics and global politics have an impact on them (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013). Because women are more probable to populate those areas not considered high politics, this negatively affects their essential contributions to global politics. Traditional international relations perspectives that disregard gender ignore the

contribution of women and how global politics affect them, and also continually defend this exclusion. It follows that, if women are outside these spheres of influence, their perspectives and contributions are not important. (Stienstra, 2016).

The feminist paradigm has challenged such perspectives.

Feminist theorists in international relations have therefore demonstrated that this separation of the private and public is a false creation. They demonstrate that areas that were previously excluded from global politics such as gender contribute greatly to the functionality of international relations, although they may not be recognised (McGlinchey *et al*, 2017). This is because, including and excluding some areas in traditional international relations thinking are centred on gendered assumptions of what matters or does not matter. In this context, Cynthia Enloe asks the question, “where are the women?” (Enloe, 1989, p. 620). This is to encourage international relations scholars to see the position women occupy in the international system and show that women are important actors in global politics. She focuses on critiquing the division between what is regarded as international and what is considered to be domestic. Through this, she demonstrates how global politics influences and forms the day-to-day activities of males and females, and how these activities are centred on gender identities (Enloe, 1989).

The feminist theory in international relations has therefore exposed women’s marginalisation as well as their contributions in and to global politics (McGlinchey *et al*, 2017). It also questions gendered constructs of women as innately weak and vulnerable, and therefore victims of the chaotic international system in need of protection. Feminists consider such constructions as additional

proof of gender inequality which contribute to the elimination of women from traditional international relations perspectives (Blanchard, 2003). This is because if women are considered as victims instead of actors, or as feeble rather than powerful, or as belonging to only the private or domestic sphere as opposed to the public sphere, then it is reasonable to sideline them or disregard their experiences and views on international politics. Reports of women rising above these gender stereotypes, such as being agents of their own empowerment, therefore, challenge these assumptions. This is a vital contribution of feminism as it calls into question the formation of gender identities that do not mirror the diversity of women's engagement in international relations, and additionally, reinforce their limited access to power (Blanchard, 2003). Therefore, being serious about feminism is not just about overturning women's historical alienation. It is also about telling a complete story of global politics, by considering a wider spectrum of actors and activities.

Undeniably, the feminist critique of traditional global discourse has effectively deconstructed the idea that issues of gender have little or no role to play in global politics that shape international relations. However, the feminist school of thought seems to have so far shied away from carrying the outcome of their theoretical perspective to its logical conclusion, by at least, suggesting the outline of the kind of political arrangement that would materialise their theory. They have done little in translating their theory into action (Bandyopadhyaya & Mukherjee, 2001).

This major criticism of the theory notwithstanding, feminist analysis has shown the significance of considering women's perspectives and acknowledging their contributions. It has served as a framework for explaining how international relations is focused on and continually holds on to gendered assumptions concerning what men and women do or experience, and why, in international politics (McGlinchey *et al*, 2017). Further, it has recognised women as vital actors of the political, economic and social processes that shape the international system (Blanchard, 2003). It is in this line of argument that women's contribution to bridging the global gender gap and empowering themselves, through associations, is highlighted in this study.

The Conflation of the Theories

In challenging the ideas of the male bias in global politics in which women are almost invisible and traditionally considered irrelevant (Stienstra, 2016), a study of this nature must employ the idealist and feminist theories of international relations, to assess what women's associations as non-state international actors, contribute to closing the gender gap and empowering women. In this regard, the study contends that the UN as a world body is taking key steps towards GEWE by rolling out key international development agenda from CEDAW through to the SDG Five and calling on its member states to adopt them for action. Ghana, for its part, has also signed and adopted these protocols, in addition to the provisions in the 1992 Republican Constitution, as well as the various interventions from the state. On the part of NSAs, NGOs like Amnesty International have often condemned violence against women whilst others empower women through

various forms of education and financial support. What remains unknown is what women themselves, in the form of associations, are doing towards their own empowerment. It is in this context that the study embraces the idealist and feminist theories of international relations.

These two theoretical perspectives employed in this study, therefore, analyse women's associations as key and meaningful non-state international actors able to wield influence and power, and cause change, in combating global gender inequality. This is done by assessing the specific ways women's associations, complement the efforts of the UN and the state, in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

Conceptual Review

This second part of the chapter reviews the concepts of empowerment and women's empowerment as the key concepts of the study.

The concept of empowerment

The concept of empowerment is historically rooted in several collective struggles for social justice such as Protestant Reformation, Jeffersonian democracy, Quakerism, capitalism and the black-power movement to mention a few. Today, terms like status, autonomy, agency, and power are used interchangeably with empowerment (Lee-Rife, 2010). It is nonetheless important to acknowledge the subtle differences that exist among these individual terms. Perhaps this justifies why Batliwala argues that "of all the buzzwords that have entered the development lexicon in the past 30 years, empowerment is probably the most widely used and abused" (Batliwala, 2007, p. 557).

Faitira Manuere and Neria Phiri trace the beginning of the concept of empowerment to the works of a Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire, who championed the “pedagogy of the oppressed” (Manuere & Phiri, 2018). In his 1974 publication, Paulo Freire debates that each society comprises two forces, the oppressor and the oppressed (Freire, 1974). In this regard, Page and Czuba (1999, p. 3) define empowerment as a “multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important”.

Also, as alternative option to the prevailing gender models meant for development which was defined principally on economic standing as a motivation for involving women, the empowerment approach emerged in the 1980s. Empowerment offers a transformational foundation to contest gender prejudice and patriarchy, ethnicity and race, as a bottom-up and grassroots approach to development (Batliwala, 2007). Proponents of the empowerment approach debate that women can gain from developmental projects if power relations that affect the lives of women negatively at all stages are reformed, and when women are endowed with a voice to be self-reliant instead of relying on development planners to facilitate the transformation of their lives (Batliwala, 2007). Kabeer recognises that “empowerment from below arises from newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength and a sense of not being alone” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 246).

As a result, the empowerment approach places emphasis on people and local contexts, considering women as active advocates and voices of their individual lives as well as their own progress (Yakubu, 2018). Including women's groups in development programmes by permitting them to actively participate in making decisions and as well contribute to the implementation measures, empowers them and further ensures that they partake in the major growth successes of their countries (Friedman, 1992). It is thus not surprising that a substantial number of literature associate empowerment with personal control, which, according to Rappaport (1987), boosts the prospects for people to take charge of their own lives. After all, as Moncrieff Cochran says, people appreciate their personal needs more than anyone else, hence they should have the power to drive the achievement of their needs (Cochran, 2003).

The concept of women's empowerment

In the mid-1980s, the concept of women's empowerment arose as a means of questioning patriarchy, and in the 1990s the notion was extended from the thoughts of it as a collective process to include a discrete process of self-transformation (Batliwala, 2007). The World Bank's Sourcebook on Empowerment and Poverty Reduction makes an extensive reference to empowerment as the broadening of freedom of choice and action (Narayan, 2002). This definition as articulated by the World Bank does not only apply to women but also applies to other socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.

However, it is crucial to recognize that women's empowerment is exclusive, as it encompasses other unique elements on several counts. First, women are not

just subgroups among several disempowered of society, like the poor, ethnic minorities and the disabled; they are a cross-cutting category of personalities that overlap with all the various groups. Second, household interfamilial and societal relations form a key pillar of women's disempowerment in a manner that is not true for other disadvantaged groups. What this means is that efforts aimed at empowering women must particularly take into consideration the consequences of wider policy action at the household and societal levels. Third, Kabeer (2001), Bisnath and Elson (1999), Sen and Grown (1987) and Batliwala (1999) argue that women's empowerment needs systemic transformations in most institutions but primarily in those that support patriarchy.

Warth and Koparanova (2012) are also of the opinion that discussions on women's empowerment are held against the background that compared to men, women have continually been disadvantaged in all the different spheres of life: economic, socio-cultural and political. Women's empowerment in this context, means "women gaining more power and control over their own lives", as a pivotal process in attaining gender equality (Warth & Koparanova, 2012).

It is in this sense that the definition of empowerment, as giving power to a certain unprivileged section of the society for maximising their opportunities, capacities and resources, now abound. Women's empowerment, now more than ever, also stresses strengthening their capacities, enabling them to help themselves by active participation and being managers of their affairs, rather than being mere recipients of government interventions and international development

organisations, aimed at ending the social, economic, cultural and psychological barriers and disparity (Porta & Diani, 2006).

Despite the diversity and emphasis in the agenda on discussions related to women's empowerment, there seems to be a consensus on certain key terms on its conceptualisation and definition. These terms are options, control, choice, and power. Most of the definitions refer to the capability of women's to make decisions and influence significant outcomes to themselves and their families. Also, reference is made to women's control over their personal lives as well as their resources. Thus, there is common reference to possible forms of the ability to 'affect one's well-being' and 'make strategic life choices'. Gita Sen, for instance, defines empowerment as "altering relations of power which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and wellbeing" (Sen, 1993. p. 5). Batliwala (1999) defines it in terms of the level of impact women possess over outward actions that are important to their welfare. It is also "a process whereby women become able to organise themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent rights to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination" (Keller & Mbwebwe, 1991, p. 104).

Also, the idea of human agency and self-efficacy often appear in definitions. They come primarily from feminist and human rights viewpoints, and they contain the notion that a radical inner transformation or change in perceptions is central to generating various choices. This indicates that women should be able to determine their own desires and choices, and also to consider themselves not only competent

but within their civic right to make choices. (Rowlands 1995; Sen, 1993; Nussbaum 2000; Sen, 2000; Kabeer, 2001). Kabeer (2001, p. 437) goes a step more and describes this process in terms of “thinking outside the system” and challenging the status quo. She again provides a useful concept of empowerment that essentially highlights the common relations among these definitions, and can be extended across a variety of contexts women’s empowerment is concerned with, “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”. This definition includes two elements that help to differentiate empowerment from other concepts that are related to it. First, the concept of a process, from a state of disempowerment, and second, the idea of a human agency and choice, “choices made from the vantage point of real alternatives” (Kabeer, 2001, p. 437).

Kabeer’s use of choice comprises three interconnected components: agency, resources, and achievements. These ‘Resources’ are the circumstances that influence choices, ‘agency’ forms the core of the process through which various choices are made, and ‘achievements’ are the results of choices. From this, Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment as a process by which women redefine and extend what they can be and do in circumstances where, relative to men, they have previously been prevented from being and doing.

It then follows that women’s empowerment is a state of being that represents a certain degree of critical consciousness of external realities, and an awareness of their internal, in-depth construction and belief structures concerning their well-being in terms of gender justice. It is also the determination to use all the resources

available to them: their physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional, to protect their lives and maintain values that guarantee gender equality at the personal, and institutional, economic, social, and political levels (Arabi, 2006).

The Women in Development (WID) approach

Women in Development (WID) as a term was coined by a Washington-based network of women development professionals in the early 1970s. These women opined that their counterparts in the South were not having equal benefits from the mainstream development paradigms of the 1950s and 1960s. They held that women had been sidelined in efforts for growth and development, with resources and skills primarily directed toward men (Dimbie, 2013). Women's movement in the North and the efforts by Western feminists to get equal rights, employment and involvement in public life were a formative influence on WID. WID was thus born as a trans-national movement, built on a powerful sense of unity among women across national borders. (Dimbie, 2013).

The concept of Women in Development has therefore had a great bearing on women's development, both as an approach and as a movement aimed at reforming the gender insensitive nature of mainstream development paradigms in most developing countries. The concept emerged from the series of research and studies conducted across the globe by some world-renowned feminists, writers, sociologists, and anthropologists (Dzorgbo & Gyan, 2016). Of particular influence was Ester Boserup's *Women's role in economic development* (1970), which has been dubbed the foundational text for the UN Decade for Women (referring to the first decade 1975-1985) (Tinker, 1990). Also, there was a growing body of studies

on women in developing countries at the same time. The series of UN Women Conferences organised in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985, during this decade was one of the key factors that led to the establishment of WID. Building the movement upon “a strong sense of solidarity among women” was of utmost importance during the 1970s and 1980s (Newland, 1991). The search for real-world responses to the failure of development concepts and the growth of feminism founded on a more systematic assessment of the origins of women’s disadvantage contributed to the rise of WID concept.

During this decade, women’s productive labour and economic integration as an avenue for improving their status gained great attention. This could partly be considered as a response to earlier policies that defined women almost exclusively by their wifely and motherly roles, and the ‘welfare approach’, which limited policy interventions to social welfare problems including nutritional education as well as home economics (Moser, 1993). The creation of women in development policies in several countries and international development organisations came about as early feedbacks to women’s advocacy as well as the first UN International Decade for Women. WID became prominent and was widely recognised by several international bodies and governments within a short period of existence (Miller & Razavi, 1995). In 1973 for instance, the US government amended the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) law. The amendment mandated that a percentage of the agency’s budget be dedicated to women’s activities, and a WID office was established within USAID departments (Miller & Razavi, 1995). The UN also established an Institute for Training and Research for the

Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in 1975, as part of WID's outreach. This resulted in an increase in revenues for both women and development, now referred to as United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Almost all the sections of the UN established a programme for women and development. Other institutions such as the Ford Foundation, World Bank, and the Rockefeller Foundation among others, responded with development aid (one form) or another. WID desks and focal points in international agencies, in addition to women's ministries and bureaux in the national government, proliferated the system, as WID informed many women's organisations and projects (Miller & Razavi, 1995). In Ghana, for instance, the National Council for WAD was created to champion and improve the wellbeing of women (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004).

WID is theoretically rooted in liberal feminism, which aims to apply to both men and women the liberal political ideas of equality, liberty, and fairness. The thesis of liberal feminism is that women's disadvantage in society derives from stereotyped customary expectations held by males, internalised by women, and propagated through socialisation processes (Kanjie, 2013).

The liberal feminist aside, WID accepted development as a linear process of economic progress, which was the prevailing modernisation theory of the time. It aimed at reducing women's conventional workload and subjugation. It was also focused on promoting effective development by boosting women's participation and benefit. It again sought to incorporate women into the existing development process by focusing on women-specific activities incorporate women into the

prevailing development process by focusing on women-specific activities (Dimbie, 2013).

Although WID sought to include women in global economic, political, and social growth and change processes, writers like Moser (1993), Young (1993) and Buvinic and McGreevey (1983) have criticised WID for its focus on women in isolation. It did not pay much attention to men or male-female power dynamics. It is argued that it isolated women as a distinct and homogeneous class and was unsure and confused in its identification and analysis of female subordination (Young et al., 1981). Women's issues were also addressed as if they were an independent and alienated entity, apart from the family, community, and society.

The approach was also critiqued for its inconsistencies and lack of specificity. Proponents of the concept were not so critical of the fact that women had not benefited from the dominant model of development. Many development programmes and initiatives had improved women's lives, but they had also brought new challenges while eliminating old avenues of productivity (Moser, 1993).

To feminists in the South, women needed to be empowered, not to be included in processes of development which according to them were based on inequities between the North's industrialised economies and the impoverished states in the South. As Gine Zwart puts it, "the struggle for women's emancipation is much more than ... adding a woman to a project or a programme" (Zwart, 1992: 21).

Another criticism of the WID approach is its focus on the productive sector to the detriment of the reproductive aspects of women's work and lives (Zwart, 1992).

Aside from WID, the interaction between feminism and development has also generated two other related approaches – WAD and GAD (Mama, 2004).

The Women and Development (WAD) paradigm assumes that development processes have always had a place for women and that they did not show up in the early 1970s as a result of a few scholars' and agency personnel's insights and intervention techniques. so, rather than just concerning itself with efforts to include women in development, it is based on the relationship between women and processes of development. Its position is that women have at all times been included in their various societies and that the execution of their duties, both within and outside the home, is important to the existence of the said societies, although this inclusion mostly serves to maintain current worldwide inequity patterns. Hence, the WAD approach opposes a rigid analytical focus on women's problems separately from men's problems, because it considers both sexes to be disadvantaged within repressive global frameworks based on class and capital. (Rathgeber, 1990).

However, the WAD approach, like the WID, tends to put women together in groups without taking careful note of class, race, or ethnicity, all of which can have a significant impact on women's true social status. Again, it appears to assume that women's status will advance when international structures become more equitable. (Rathgeber, 1990).

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach on the other hand emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to the previous WID and WAD focus. It is theoretically rooted in socialist feminism. The basis of women's oppression, according to socialist feminists, is the social construction of production and reproduction, and focus on gender social relations, probing the validity of the roles assigned to women and men in various societies. It connects the relations of production and reproduction, taking into account all facets of women's lives. (Jaquette, 1982).

This perspective does not focus on women specifically, but rather on the social construction of gender and the assigning of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations to both men and women. It also examines the nature of women's contribution in the framework of duties performed both within and outside the home, rather than focusing just on productive or reproductive parts of women's (and men's) lives to the exclusion of the other. (Rathgeber, 1990). Women are perceived to be agents of change rather than passive beneficiaries of development in the GAD approach, which emphasises the need for women to organise themselves to have a more effective political voice. It also embraces the potential contributions of males who are concerned about issues of equity and social justice (Sen & crown, 1987).

History of Women's Movements in Ghana

It was Chandra Mohanty, who, in 1991 argued that women in the global south had for a long time not been considered as agents of their own destiny but rather as victims (Mohanty, 1991). Yet, research on women's activism has revealed

that women do mobilise, not only as women, but also as citizens, mothers, and workers among others (Ray & Korteweg, 1999). Even before colonialism, in pre-colonial African societies, women organised themselves into groups based on kinship ties, lineage membership, occupation, and age. These groups offered the foundation for a common, and occasionally feminist awareness which could be mobilised when the society's existence was threatened, as well as an avenue for the formation of social networks. (Hassim, 2006). These women groups also wielded tremendous authority, which they used to safeguard their members' interests in areas where women controlled economic activities like trading and farming. However, the establishment of colonial administrative rules, the introduction of the cash crop economy and formal education, which came about at the dawn of colonialism, significantly altered the status and roles of women. These alterations also affected women's modes of mobilisation owing to the changes that came about in the wider society (Opong, 2012).

Certain features of indigenous women's organisations and institutions were modified as a result of social change and acculturation (Akurang-Parry, 2004). There emerged some elite women's groups especially in the coastal areas, that were mainly concerned with mingling with their kind as well as tactically immersing themselves in some significant concerns of the day (Opong, 2012). Akurang-parry (2004) mentions, as an example of such groups, the Native Ladies of Cape Coast, which was a prestigious women's group that organised funds towards the Anglo-Asante war of 1873/74 and also provided labour mainly as carriers for the British. Some women also used the introduction of formal education to their advantage and

as a result, in the 1920s and 1930s, the Gold Coast had thriving literary and debating clubs (Gadzekpo, 2001).

Several religious and voluntary organisations such as the Girl Guide, the Young Women's Christian Association and the Child Care Society also sprang up. Also, voluntary organisations that were established in the 1930s and 40s particularly in Asante (Allman & Tashjian, 2000) complemented the efforts of fellowships that were led by First Evangelical Women Missionaries of the Methodist Church. The latter greatly focused on education and inculcated Christian values in their members to mould them into 'proper mothers and wives', and to have a way to link up with greater development that was ongoing in their surroundings.

Studies like Opong (2012), Cooper (2008) and Geiger (1997) reveal that women across Africa were very active in the struggle for independence in their respective countries. Most women organisations led demonstrations and protests against colonialism in countries like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Gold Coast.

The demand for economic justice has been identified as a key part of Ghanaian women's mobilisation, since the nationalist struggle for independence. This included the trade blockade of 1917 and 1918 (Britwum, 2017). Market women facilitated political change in the country by mobilising money to help their party's events and participating in actions that disrupted civil activities that weakened the economy of the colony (Awumbila, 2001). Ghanaian women also contributed immensely to making the Convention People's Party (CPP) win

national elections (Tsikata, 1989). These political initiatives, were, nonetheless, driven by general activities on a national scale rather than concerns about gender equality and the rights of women (Britwum, 2017).

In the early years after independence, the Ghana Women's League and the Ghana Federation of Women (previously called the National Federation of Gold Coast Women), which were the two prominent women's organisations in the country, merged to form the National Council for Ghana Women (NCGW). The main actions undertaken by the NCGW were campaigns for educational reform, protests against global injustices, seminars, protests on childcare, nutrition, and philanthropic donations to disadvantaged children (Awumbila, 2001). However, because it was closely aligned with the CPP government, the military regime that deposed Dr Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana's first president), in 1966 disbanded the NCGW. After this time, women's organisations were mostly charitable religious and professional groups whose activities rarely challenged the social status of women (Britwum, 2017).

In the early 1980s, the Federation of Ghanaian Women (FGW) and the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) were the broad-based national women's organisations that emerged. Initially, they were interested in proposing alternatives to prevailing female gender norms. Apart from the FGW and the DWM, the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) initiated conversations on the rights of women in the public sphere. The DWM was dominated by Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, the wife of the then head of state and president, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. The DWM however lost its dominance when the rule of the party

within which it operated, the PNDC and then the NDC, ended in 2000. Afterwards, several civil society organisations dedicated to the rights of women sprang up, but only FIDA gained some initial popularity and got close to matching DWM's hegemony (Britwum, 2017).

The NETRIGHT has recently made a significant impact on the status of women's rights in Ghana. In 2017, it had 81 organisations and 151 individuals as members from all around the country. Quite a lot of of these groups are representative bodies with their own members. These include the women's wing of Ghana's main national trade union, the Trades Union Congress, and a number of its associated unions (Britwum, 2017).

Madsen (2012) identifies that the United Nations Decade for Women and the series of UN Women's Conferences culminating in the 1995 Beijing Conference, have given advocacy a global boost. Also, the national democratisation process leading to and including the 1992 free elections, a growing number of women with higher education in the country, and financial assistance from donors for good governance, as the background for the mobilisation of women's movement in Ghana in the fourth republic.

Empirical Review

In this final part of the chapter, empirical studies related to feminism and women's empowerment, women's movements in the Global South, the UN and women's empowerment and measuring women's empowerment, are reviewed.

Feminism and women's empowerment

When looking at efforts geared towards advancing the cause of women, the most noticeable movements that deserve mention are feminist movements. Until feminists began to challenge patriarchy, women were continually trapped in sexism, without even clearly realising that this situation was a result of patriarchy (Jaggar, 1980). Feminist movements challenged patriarchy as a social structure that was followed uncritically for centuries of human existence, where the brute strength of males was the ultimate means of resolving social disputes. In the process of challenging male supremacy, feminist theories were developed in several fields, including anthropology, economics and women's studies. Feminist theories concentrate on power structures and gender politics in understanding gender inequality, while also promoting women's rights and interests (Jaggar, 1980).

When feminism began in the 19th century, it was mainly concerned with establishing that women were nothing but human beings and that they should not be treated as property. Feminists, therefore, advocated for equal property rights, and against the ownership of married women by their husbands (Jaggar, 1980). Feminists later campaigned for women's franchise which was followed by the struggle to have the same political, social, economic and legal rights as men (Yusif, 2018). Feminism as a movement began in the industrialised countries, but later on, women from the Global South joined the struggle to have power and be at equal standing with men in their own cultures, thereby giving the movement a global perspective. Generally, Feminism is a belief in the right of women to enjoy political, social and economic rights like men. However, the bone of contention is

the type of equality and how to achieve it. This point of separation is what has given rise to the different shades of feminism we have today.

Liberal feminists are of the view that the equality of women can be realised by reforming the political and judicial systems (Jaggar, 1980). This idea, according to Lovell (2004), is based on research finding that women's status, role and position in society is not natural, but as a result of social construction which can be changed. Liberal feminists hold that the mind/body split that gave nature or body to females and rationality and mind to males was wrong. They propose 'procedural' equality of opportunity or legal reforms to address the oppression of women (Lovell, 2004)). Feminism considers the family as a key factor in the explanation of the patriarchy. Liberal feminists, therefore, acknowledge the gendered social role of mother and wife but do not ask for a shift in the family structure. Rather, they believe that women should be allowed a choice about their marriage and family through education and legislative reform.

Jaggar and Young (1998) identify that the major weakness of liberal feminism is that it ignores the actual and visible disparities between men and women within the current social system. Smart (1989) has demonstrated the fact that legal amendments have little effect on women's lives. He notes that although women have the right to petition for an injunction to evict an abusive man from their family home in countries where violence against women is punished, domestic violence still exists. Liberal feminism does not recognise the importance of reforming the current social system but wants it reformed.

Radical feminists, in contrast, believe that the only means by which women can liberate themselves is to do away with what they consider the fundamentally oppressive and dominant patriarchal structure. According to them, society will not be reformed until the male-based system and power responsible for the oppression and exploitation of women are changed (Echols, 1989). They believe that family, as a major institution of society contributes significantly to gender inequality through the socialisation of children, and through pressuring women to adhere to feminine stereotypes. Yet, while some radical feminists aim for the complete uprooting and reconstruction of society, others want just a cultural change. Socialist and Marxist feminists, despite their minor differences, attribute women's discrimination to capitalist exploitation and the system of private property.

According to Jaggar and Young (1998), they connect women's exploitation to Marxist ideology of exploitation, oppression and labour. To social feminists, women have been suppressed due to their unequal status both in the workplace and in their homes (Echols, 1989). Therefore, domestic work, marriage and child care are all means through which women face exploitation by the patriarchal society that looks down on them and their work. Because socialist feminists view women's oppression as part of society-wide oppression, they advocate for the cooperation of all oppressed groups to bring about change. Nonetheless, some of them have criticised the traditional Marxist view which holds that the abolition of class oppression would automatically do away with the oppression of women as naive. Socialist and Marxist feminists propose a wide range of ideas as the solution to the inequality of women, beginning with compensation for reproductive and household

labour, to the socialisation of the home and work, and the abolition of family and capitalism (Echols, 1989).

Although liberal, radical and Marxist/socialist feminists have variations in their approach to addressing women's issues, they all claim that gender identities and roles are socially established and that male domination and patterns of gender disparity can be explained socially and economically (Seidman, 1994).

Feminists were criticised for being ethnocentric in that they did not take into consideration the unique experiences of women from the non-Western world. However, Third World feminism was developed by women who took inspiration from their opinions and participated in the struggle for their equalities, in their respective societies. Although feminist consciousness in the Third World was first linked with their active involvement in the revolutionary struggle for independence against colonialism and foreign dominations in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Algeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe to mention a few, Amira Osman opines that the women's movement further became visible as they continually addressed post-independence challenges of inequality, poverty, underdevelopment and the lack of democracy (Osman, 2014). Feminists in Africa, therefore, assert that the struggle for gender equality and women's liberation goes in hand with the struggle for Africa's liberation and development (Winyi, 2013). This vision to liberate African women and ensure gender equality has resulted in the creation of several women's organisations that work in a wide range of areas, both at the local and international levels.

Women's movements in the Global South

Associations, organisations or groups made up of only women have over the years contributed significantly towards reducing the plight of the vulnerable in the society, especially women and children. Women's movements have been key players in pursuing a forward-looking agenda in promoting the equality of women around the world. With their pressure, gender equality is playing a greater role in the global governance system (Holzner *et al*, 2010). In general terms, a women's movement can be said to be women organising with a basic emphasis on their identity as women to promote the desired change in various scopes (Ferree & Tripp, 2006). Hassim (2005) in her work on South Africa, groups women's movement into three categories: community-based women's organisations, women's organisations that focus on national advocacy and policy, regional and national networks as well as coalitions of women's organisations.

Several names have been used to describe and refer to the women's movement that originated outside Europe and the USA. These include 'local feminisms' (Basu, 1995 & 2010), and 'global feminism' (Morgan, 1984), 'Third World feminism' (Narayan, 1997), 'feminism without borders' (Mohanty, 2003) and 'transnational feminism' (Grewal & Kaplan 1994; Swarr & Nagar, 2010). These names signify the location of feminism outside the West, in the post-colonial world, and more importantly the cross-border linkages among them as well as their historical imbrications (Roy, 2015). Basu (n.d) calls for "a much more inclusive understanding of the range of the forms of women's activism that constitute women's movements". Basu (1995) documents how a macro understanding of

women's movements did not consider postcolonial particularities such as how nationalism and the state influenced the nature and development of women's movements in the South.

Srila Roy, however, opines that one means through which women's movements in the South have remained relevant is by distancing themselves from the 'feminism' label (Roy, 2015). On this, Tejaswini Niranjana, speaking of South Asia, says that academics and activists are mostly comfortable with the use of "the women's question" when referring to the historical context and 'women's movement' when referring to the contemporary formations, rather than feminism which is invariably associated with the West" (Niranjana, 2007, p. 210).

In Ghana, Mansah Prah reveals that there are several women's groups that aim to make the situation of women in the country better (Prah, 1996). Opong (2012) adds that Ghana these days enjoys the existence of several voluntary organisations many of which are said to be keen to the welfare and empowerment of women. Dzorgbo and Gyan (2016) also mention that the number of women's groups and activists has increased, and note that aside from state institutions, numerous NGOs act as "duty-bearers" to contest all forms of discrimination against women in Ghana. Opong (2012) continues that unlike the situation in 1950 – 1966, these organisations operate in a tolerant and calm political atmosphere with easy access to information as well as means of disseminating it.

Madsen (2012) traces the mobilisation of the Ghanaian women's movement to the late 1990s when they called on the government to address issues of gender inequality and women's right. She identifies the international momentum given to

activism, including the series of UN Women's Conferences culminating in the 1995 Beijing Conference, the United Nations Decade for Women and as well the national democratisation process leading to and including the 1992 free elections, the increasing number of highly educated women in the country, and donor support for good governance, as the background for the mobilisation of women's movement in Ghana.

Yusif (2018) also shows how women's wings of political parties function as women's associations to ensure prosperity and wellbeing of their members. Globally, the establishment of women's wings in political parties has become a source of women's organisations to ensure that women and men have equal political participation and representation. Political parties such as Mexico's National Action Party (NAP), Sweden's Social Democratic Party and the African National Congress of South Africa, all set up women's wings to advance their course (Yusif, 2018). The ANC women's wing, African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), gained official recognition in 1948 (Ginwala, 1990, as cited in Cowell-Meyers & Patrick, 2017) following the opportunity and equal rights that were given to women to participate in political discussions in 1943 which led to the end of male dominance in the party (Yusif, 2018). In West Africa, the Women in Nigeria (WIN), and the Sierra Leone Women's Movement (SLWM) as well as Ghana's CPP Women's League, which later metamorphosed into the NCGW all played critical roles towards the independence of their respective countries (Yusif, 2018).

Africa's struggle for freedom from colonialism has been narrated from different angles. One of these perspectives, that had been previously ignored, but which historians have found necessary to explore for a broader understanding of the struggle, is women's roles and contributions (Opong, 2012). Studies like

Opong (2012), Cooper (2008) and Geiger (1997) reveal that women across Africa were very active in the struggle for independence in their respective countries. Most women organisations led demonstrations and protests against colonialism in countries like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Gold Coast.

Other countries within the African region such as Cameroon, Tanzania and Eastern Nigeria during the era of colonialism saw the transformation of women's traditional institutions into political protest groups, which became an important avenue for challenging aspects of the colonial administrative policies that were imposed on the people. Mention can be made of the custom of Anlu which existed among women of Kom in British Cameroon which was used to state categorically the displeasure of the people against rumours of sale of lands by the British colonial officials (O'Barr, 1984). A similar incident took place in Eastern Nigeria among the women of Igbo who protested against the mindset of colonial officials to increase taxes (O'Barr, 1984).

These traditional women's associations which metamorphosed into groups for political protest during the colonial era aside, several religious and voluntary organisations such as the Child Care Society, the Girl Guide, and the Young Women's Christian Association also sprang up. Also, voluntary organisations that were established in the 1930s and 40s particularly in Asante (Allman & Tashjian,

2000) complemented the efforts of fellowships that were led by First Evangelical Women Missionaries of the Methodist Church. The latter greatly focused on education and inculcated Christian values in their members to mould them into 'proper mothers and wives', and to have a way to link up with greater development that was ongoing in their surroundings.

Despite the roles of the women's associations mentioned so far, it has to be noted that even before colonialism, in pre-colonial African societies, women organised themselves into groups based on kinship ties, lineage membership, occupation, and age. These groups offered the foundation for a common, and occasionally feminist awareness which could be mobilised when the society's existence was threatened, as well as an avenue for the formation of social networks. (Hassim, 2006). These women groups also wielded tremendous authority, which they used to safeguard their members' interests in areas where women directed the affairs of economic activities such as trading and farming. However, the establishment of colonial administrative rules, the introduction of the cash crop economy and formal education, which came about at the dawn of colonialism, significantly altered the status and roles of women. These alterations also affected women's modes of mobilisation owing to the changes that came about in the wider society (Opong, 2012).

Certain features of indigenous women's organisations and institutions were modified as a result of social change and acculturation (Akurang-Parry, 2004). There emerged some elite women's groups especially in the coastal areas, that were mainly concerned with mingling with their kind as well as tactically

immersing themselves in some significant concerns of the day (Opong, 2012).

Akurang-parry (2004) mentions, as an example of such groups, the Native Ladies of Cape Coast, which was a prestigious women's group that organised funds towards the Anglo-Asante war of 1873/74 and also provided labour mainly as carriers for the British. Some women also used the introduction of formal education to their advantage and as a result, in the 1920s and 1930s, the Gold Coast had thriving literary and debating clubs (Gadzekpo, 2001).

The UN and women's empowerment

Through landmark agreements from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA) to CEDAW, the UN has for years, made significant strides towards the advancement of gender equality. Aside from such agreements, it has from time-to-time created specialist bodies towards this end. In 1946, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) was instituted for regulatory implementation. 1976 saw the founding of two other agencies for implementation in practice, the UNIFEM and the INSTRAW, as a training institution for gender-based research. Another body that was also created by the UN in its quest to address gender disparity in the world is the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). These institutions were given the mandate for GEWE following the first World Conference for Women in 1975 (Holzner *et al.*, 2010).

Today, it is difficult to discuss these special offices created by the UN in charge of women's issues without speaking of UN Women. However, unlike many other women's associations, it was not founded by women but rather by the global

institution, the United Nations. Between 2008 and 2010, over 300 civil organisations comprising feminist associations from around the world under the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) umbrella pressed upon the UN and its member states to create a new UN agency devoted to gender equality. The GEAR campaign argued that if the UN would be successful in promoting gender equality as a vital facet of development, human rights, peace and security, then a new, well-funded agency was needed (Sen, 2019). In July 2010, the UN took a historic step towards the acceleration of its goals on GEWE. The UN General Assembly created the UN Women, an entity of the UN in charge of GEWE in all member states. Sen (2019) argues that it is probably the first time that the UN established a key new agency as a response to civil society activism. UN Women was set up to drive progress in addressing the desires of girls and women worldwide. Its main roles are:

- To assist inter-governmental bodies, such as the Common on the Status of Women, to formulate policies, global standards and norms.
- To help member states enforce these requirements, be prepared to provide adequate technical and financial support to those countries that request it and forge successful partnerships with civil society.
- To lead and coordinate the work of the UN system on gender equality, and to foster transparency, including through frequent monitoring of system-wide progress (UN Women, 2010).

The body supports member states of the UN to set global standards for the achievement of gender equality, and also works with state and NSAs to design

laws, policies, programmes and services which are required to ensure that set standards are not only implemented effectively but that they also truly benefit women and girls across the globe. It also coordinates and promotes the work of the UN in advancing gender equality as well as all deliberations and agenda related to the Agenda 2030. Its work is also geared towards making gender equality a prerequisite to the attainment of the SDGs and a more inclusive world.

In working to ensure that the vision of the SDGs become a reality for girls and women whilst also pushing for women's equal involvement in all scopes of life, its focus is on four strategic priorities.

- Women lead, engage in and profit equally from governance structures.
- Women have income, security, stable employment and financial independence.
- All women and girls live a life that is free from any form of violence.
- All women and girls contribute to and enjoy greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and have equal benefit from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action (UN Women, 2010).

Measuring women's empowerment

It is difficult to form a quantifiable measure of the status of women that could be compared across nations (Mikkola, 2005). This is because the nature and process of empowerment make it tough to be measured directly, but rather through proxies including health, employment, educational level, and knowledge among others. However, even with these proxies, it is still difficult to achieve a uniform

and universal measure for empowerment. Rather than accepting that empowerment is a long-term process of thinking, learning and acting (Smyth, 2007), the number of meetings organised or the number of women who are elected to leadership positions has become a measure of success, thereby narrowing the meaning of empowerment which emerged as a socio-political process to apolitical, and a pathway for neo-liberal studies. Cornwall and Anyidoho (2010, p. 146) question the measurement of empowerment by asking:

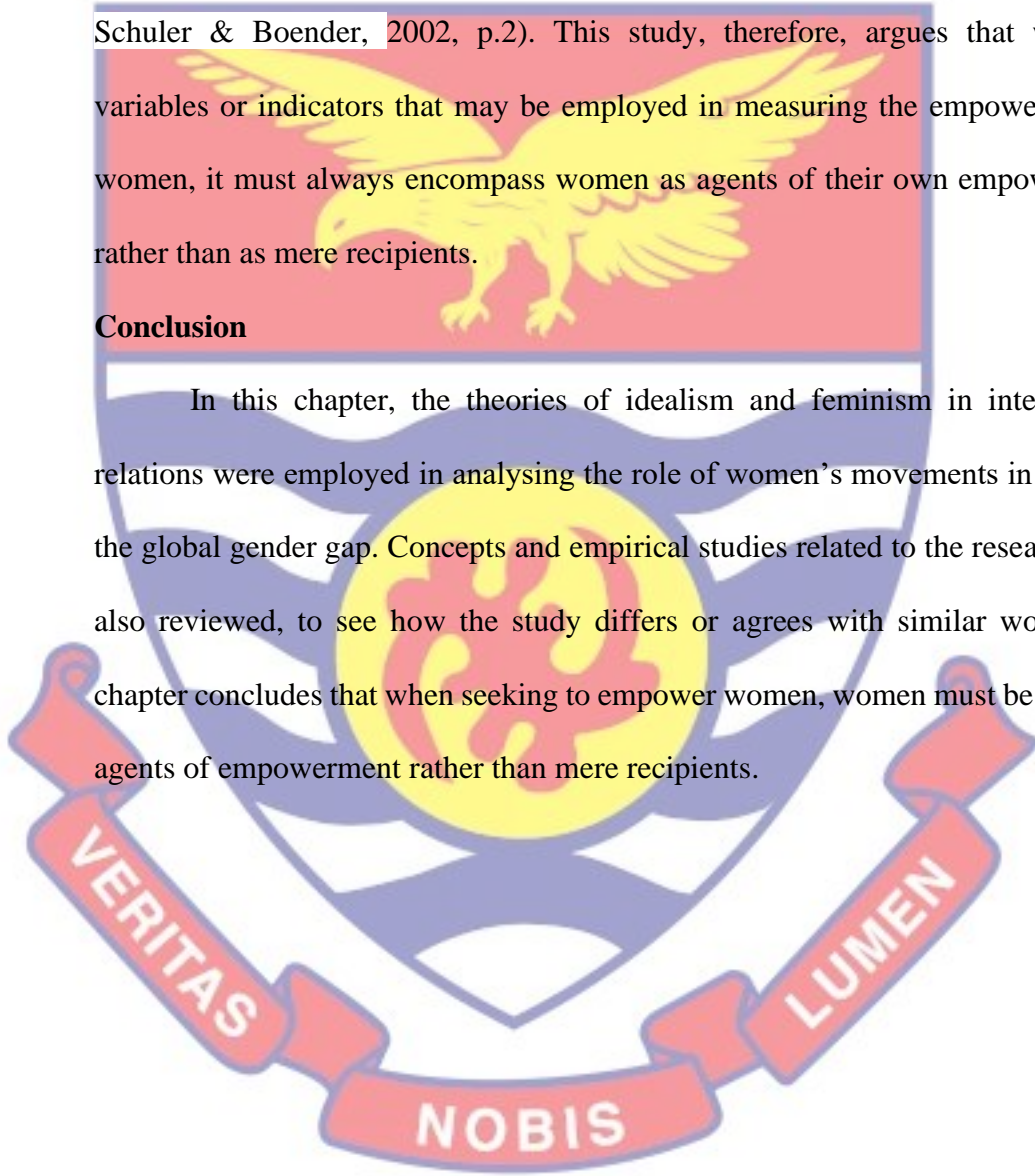
What does it mean in the lives of diverse women whose experiences of power, of oppression, of liberty, of pleasure, and of the injuries of discrimination and structural violence may be so very different? And what does it come to mean in contexts with distinctively different histories and configurations of state-society relations, of expressions of citizenship, of social mobilisation and political engagement, of the rise and wane of religious and ethnic identifications, and of gendered identities and relations?

The measurement indicators of women's empowerment should therefore consider how context shapes the process of empowerment, because "unless indicators are sensitive to these contextual possibilities, they are likely to miss the significance of empowerment" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 460). Anju Malhotra, Sidney Ruth Schuler and Carol Boender in *Women's empowerment as a variable in international development*, argue that the measurement of empowerment is dependent on the establishment of universal standards such as human rights, although such standards must make room for context-sensitive indicators.

(Maholtra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). However, they succinctly put it this way, “... there could be an improvement in gender equality by various measures, but unless the intervening process involved women as agents of that change rather than merely as its recipients, we would not consider it empowerment” (Maholtra, Schuler & Boender, 2002, p.2). This study, therefore, argues that whatever variables or indicators that may be employed in measuring the empowerment of women, it must always encompass women as agents of their own empowerment, rather than as mere recipients.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the theories of idealism and feminism in international relations were employed in analysing the role of women’s movements in bridging the global gender gap. Concepts and empirical studies related to the research were also reviewed, to see how the study differs or agrees with similar works. The chapter concludes that when seeking to empower women, women must be the main agents of empowerment rather than mere recipients.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter details the systematic means by which the data for this study were gathered and analysed. It includes the research design, the method of and instruments for data collection, and data analysis.

Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was employed to explore how the roles women's associations are playing in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana, are in line with global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowerment. The qualitative research is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). It involves the collection of information that is non-numerical, which is why it does not rely significantly on statistical analysis (McLeod, 2008). Patton and Cochran (2002) also hold that it is correlated to the understanding of social phenomena and methods generated in words other than numbers for analysis of data. The procedures for qualitative research are characterised as emerging and inductive and shaped by the "researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19). The qualitative approach was appropriate because it allowed the study participants to tell the roles of their respective institutions.

Qualitative techniques using interviews offer an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon because participants can freely share their thoughts, experiences and

feelings without constraint (Creswell, 2014). It also aids in the collection of data that cannot be quantified and also helps the researcher gain understanding of the given context. It also aims at understanding the social phenomenon and reality of individuals, cultures and groups, and also explains why and how a certain behaviour operates in a given situation (McLeod, 2008). Although women's associations have existed and operated in diverse forms for a long while in Ghana, examining their roles in respect of global gender goals is a relatively new phenomenon. It is against this backdrop that the study used the qualitative research method, as against the two others; quantitative and mixed methods, to investigate, explain and describe how the introduction of the global goals have altered and affected the activities and roles of these associations, in a bid to contribute to bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

According to Mack *et al* (2005), a qualitative research design gives information about human perspectives regarding a specific issue; it reveals complex contextual descriptions of people's experiences in a specified research phenomenon and also aids the researcher in identifying intangible but important factors of a phenomenon such as societal norms, roles of gender as well as socio-economic status of certain individuals or social groups.

Research Design

A research design is “a plan and procedure for research that spans the steps from a broad assumption to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation” (Creswell, 2014, p. 31). Yin (1994, p. 19) also defines it as “a logical sequence that connects the empirical data of a study's initial research questions,

ultimately, to its conclusion”, an action plan that begins with asking the research questions and ends when those questions are answered. It can as well refer to a systematic procedure of enquiry. Yin further stresses that it is purposed to provide evidence to respond to initial research questions (Yin, 1994).

This study employed a descriptive case study design in collecting and analysing the data. A case study is a “scientific study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Specifically, Yin (2009) adds that a descriptive case study is used to describe a phenomenon or an intervention and the real-life context in which it happened. This study describes the roles of women’s associations in Ghana and how these complement the global effort in attaining gender equality and empowering women, as it plays out in a real-life context. Through scrutiny and comprehensive analysis, the study examines the processes and strategies of women’s associations in their bid to bridge the global gender gap. The descriptive case study allowed the use of multiple sources of data collection like reports, newspaper articles and interviews. Focusing on only the roles of women’s associations in bridging the gender gap also allowed the researcher to conduct a detailed investigation which would not have been possible if the study had set out to investigate all the activities of women’s associations.

There are many organisations which purport to fight for the equality of Ghanaian women and girls in various spheres of their lives. However, since all of them cannot be subjects for this study, eight women’s associations and three

coalitions were selected for the study. Four of the women's associations are international whilst the other four are local ones. The international ones are; African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), North American Women's Association (NAWA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Mbaasem foundation, whilst the local ones are; NETRIGHT Secretariat, Executive Women's Network (EWN), Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG) and Sisters' Keepers. These associations were selected based on their vibrancy in issues concerning women in the country as well as their willingness to participate in the study. The coalitions selected are; the Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC), the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) and the Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC). These coalitions have also been selected because, since the late 1990s, they are the ones that have been able to organise on a national basis to work on matters of concern to Ghanaian women to bridge the gender gap and empower women. They have worked on *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, the Domestic Violence Law and the Affirmative Action Bill respectively. These associations are therefore in a good position to participate in the study.

Population and Sampling Size

A population is "the total collection of all cases in which the researcher is interested and that he/she wishes to understand better" (Healey, 2012). The population considered in this study are the members of the eight women's associations and three coalitions; African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), North American Women's Association (NAWA), Mbaasem Foundation, and NETRIGHT Secretariat, Executive Women' Network (EWN), Network of Women

in Growth (NEWIG), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Sisters' Keepers, the Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC), the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) and the Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC). The target population was drawn from three members of the executive body who hold key positions, and active members of the associations and coalitions.

A sample is a "carefully chosen subset of a population to make inferences about the population. Samples are easier to organise and suitable for accurate generalisation" (Healey, 2012, p. 17). According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative research design is characterised by a small sample size, but Marshall (1996, p. 523) believes that "an appropriate sample size is the one that adequately answers the research questions". Creswell (2014) further adds that the sample size is determined by the qualitative design, and proposes that for a phenomenological study such as a case study, a 3-10 sample size is enough. Wallace Foundation (2009) also proposes 10-15 participants as enough for qualitative research. Likewise, Patton and Cochran (2002) are of the view that in qualitative studies the sample sizes are "typically small", as the researcher can continue to recruit participants until the data reaches saturation. Charmaz (as cited in Creswell 2014) likewise states that the researcher only stops the data collecting process when the themes are completely utilised, that is when saturation is reached. As such, "... the number of required subjects becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523).

The study used a sample size of 20. This comprised 14 officials from the women’s associations and 6 officials from the coalitions. These were selected due to their direct relevance to the study. The total targeted sample for the study was 30 but the number that was interviewed was 20 as shown in table 1. The researcher stopped at this point because the rest of the participants were providing comparable information as the 20 which meant that saturation point had been reached.

Table 1 shows the targeted population and the number of people that were interviewed.

Table 1: Targeted sample and the number of people interviewed

Institutions	Targeted Number	Number of people interviewed
AWLA	3	2
NAWA	3	2
Mbaasem Foundation	2	1
NETRIGHT Secretariat	3	2
EWN	2	1
YWCA	3	2
Sisters’ Keepers	3	2
NEWIG	3	2
WMC	3	2
DVC	3	2
AAC	3	2
TOTAL	30	20

Source: Field Data (2020)

Background of the organisations

The African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA) was conceptualised in 1998 at a networking meeting of African women lawyers in Accra. This was as a response to the need for an all-African Women Lawyers grouping committed to addressing issues affecting African women and children. AWLA Ghana was registered on 12th August 1999, to concretise the vision of networking for the passage of gender-responsive laws across Africa to engender issues of patriarchy, domestic violence & sexual abuse. It also exists to advocate for the passage of legislation of women's right to own property amongst others and affirms spousal rights to property acquired within marriage. AWLA Ghana continues to act as a civil rights organisation that tackles gender advocacy issues for the timely and effective delivery of justice for women and children in Ghana. It also works in sensitising women in the law, law enforcement, issues of domestic violence and other gender-sensitive legislation (Edna, AWLA, personal communication, August 20, 2020).

The NETRIGHT is a network of civil society individuals and organisations committed to bringing a gender perspective to national processes and advocating for policy reforms that improve the human rights of women. To ensure inclusivity, NETRIGHT provides a nationwide advocacy platform for civil society groups to lobby for gender equality and women's rights concerns in national and international processes, as well as educating the public on these topics. It has a membership of about 151 individuals and 81 organisations nationwide. Many of these groups are representative bodies with their own members. They include the women's wing of

Ghana's main national trade union, the Trades Union Congress, and some of its associated unions (Patricia, NETRIGHT, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

The North American Women's Association (NAWA) was established over 30 years ago by a group of ladies looking to find a deeper sense of purpose while living in Ghana. The volunteer organisation has over 400 members of women from 50 different nationalities. It is dedicated to promoting its members with meaningful volunteer and social opportunities. Its goal is to better the lives of women, children and communities in Ghana by promoting empowerment, understanding, and friendship among women of all nationalities and by volunteering and raising funds to support local charities (Nancy, NAWA, personal communication, August 21, 2020).

The Young Christian Women's Association (YWCA Ghana) was formally inaugurated in 1952 and became affiliated with the World Young Christian Women's Association in 1952. It is a Christian voluntary women's organisation but opens its doors to all women and girls irrespective of their faith. The association seeks to bring women and girls in Ghana together to develop their leadership and collective power to achieve justice, peace, human dignity and freedom. It also seeks to create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for young women by equipping them with skills in ICT, catering and sewing. It also tackles teenage pregnancy and early marriages with workshops in schools and communities (Cynthia, YWCA, personal communication, August 7, 2020).

The Executive Women's Network (EWN) was formed by six women executives, Maidie Arkutu, Freda Duplan, Edith Dankwa, Lucy Quist, Pearl Esua-Mensah and Patience Akyianu. It is a group of women in Ghana who work in high executive positions in private organisations and institutions, as well as women who own and operate well-established enterprises. The network aims to motivate, encourage, and assist female executives in becoming more successful and powerful. This is motivated by a desire to empower Ghanaian women so that they can have more influence and participate in local and international activities that will improve their lives (Emma, EWN, personal communication, August 30, 2020).

The Sisters Keepers Association (SK) was founded by a group of friends of Ghanaian descent, who wish to make a difference in the life of the marginalised and abandoned in Ghana. The association mainly focuses on educating the Ghanaian populace on dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Their reason is that these are the two conditions that mainly contribute to the "odd" behaviour of the elderly. They believe that through this education, Ghanaians will understand and accept the elderly, especially the women, who are often seen as witches. Currently, the organisation is in the process of working on a policy that will make the government turn all witch camps into homes for the aged, where they can receive the care and support that they need (Gifty, SK, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

The Network for Women in Growth (NEWIG) works to improve the socio-economic and political status of poor, marginalised and vulnerable women in Ghana. They believe that working to improve the socio-economic status of Ghanaian women will help them get into gainful employment and help them attain

leadership roles in society. Through training and advocacy, they hope to make Ghanaian women aware of their rights, to have a society where women and men have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for sustainable development. It organises programmes, seminars and workshops on anti-witchcraft campaigns, advocacy, domestic violence, human and child trafficking/reintegration and HIV/AIDS (Anna, NEWIG, personal communication, August 10, 2020).

Mbaasem Foundation is a registered non-governmental organisation founded in 2000 by the Ghanaian writer and poet, Ama Ata Aidoo. It exists to support and promote women writers in Ghana and across Africa. It seeks to achieve this by addressing and combatting the myriad of problems and challenges that Ghanaian and African women encounter, to help change the African literary landscape (Tina, MF, personal communication, August 5, 2020).

Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a “process in which a researcher selects a sample of participants for a study from a population of interest” (Leary, 2001, p. 109). The two main methods of sampling are probability and non-probability samplings. The purposive sampling technique, employed in this study to select participants, is a non-probability sampling type. The researcher deemed the purposive sampling technique the appropriate one for the study because it helped “the researcher to understand the problem and research questions” (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). The purposive sampling technique entails the researcher choosing participants with explicit expertise or qualities whose information can sufficiently answer the research questions. The purposive sampling technique helped the researcher to

obtain data from the correct sources for easy description and analysis. It was used to select the participants from the respective associations and coalitions “due to the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 235). It made room for participants with quality information and distinct experiences to respond to the research questions (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Patton and Cochran (2002) say that qualitative research samples are normally purposive as subjects are selected as a result of the prospect that they will afford valuable data for the study. It is for this reason that the researcher employed this technique to select participants that could afford precise information for purposes of understanding the phenomenon under study.

Sources of Data

Two sources of data were used in this study; primary and secondary sources. The primary data was sourced from face-to-face and phone interviews conducted with the participants using in-depth interview guides. The in-depth interview helped the participants to have a bigger room to provide answers to the questions asked and also, add any information they deemed relevant to the study, even if it was not among the questions on the guide. This helped the researcher to get very diverse views from the participants as they were not limited to specific answers to choose from, which also contributed to the richness and variety of the information provided. The interviews were conducted with twenty members of the eight women’s associations and three coalitions who occupy key positions in their respective organisations as well as active members. Official documents such as constitutions and reports from the eight women’s associations were additionally

sourced. The secondary data was sourced from books, journals, working papers, magazines, conference proceedings, thesis, internet, and various newspaper reports.

Data Collection Instruments

Cresswell (2014) identifies the interview as a significant instrument in qualitative research design, and Mason (2002) points interviews out as one of the most frequently used methods of research instruments in qualitative research. Patton and Cochran (2002, p. 11) liken interviews to “everyday conversations, although they are focused on the researcher’s need for data”, and add that, one difference between the two is that the former is conducted rigorously to ensure reliability and validity”. The main instrument used for the collection of data in this study was an in-depth interview, using a tape recorder for face-to-face interviews and Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge for phone interviews.

There are three key interviews; unstructured, semi-structured and structured. In an unstructured interview, there is “no predetermination of questions, topic or wording” (Patton & Cochran, 2002). It is devoid of well-structured step by step questions written down to be posed to participants. Its direct opposite is the structured interview which has a well-organized interview guide to be followed by participants. In this regard, the interviewer poses questions to the participants following the questions written down in the interview guide, and the participants answer accordingly. The semi-structured interview employed in this study lies between the other two. Mason (2002, p. 62) mentions that qualitative research usually has to do with “in-depth, semi-structured, or loosely structured forms of interviewing”. Interviews that use semi-structured interview guides are conducted

based on the topic guide which comprises open-ended questions that spell out the appropriate areas to be explored. Gill *et al* (2008) state that it is made up of many questions that helps the researcher to identify the research areas to study, and allows the interviewer to follow up questions in the form of probing for better understanding of an issue under study.

The interview guide for this study had two sections. The first section entailed questions related to the organization, such as its year of establishment and aims, whilst the second section sought to find out what roles the association is playing in contributing towards bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana. The researcher employed the semi-structured interview guide because the participants' views, knowledge, experience, understanding and interpretation gained through the interview all provided a detailed understanding of the topic under study. It also helped to explore the belief and motivation of the participants. Also, because the participants answered the questions when it best suited them, they gave very detailed and comprehensive information that could not have been sourced using other research instruments. As a result, the study was able to gather enough data although a relatively short time was used in its collection.

Data collection procedure

Immediately after approval was sought from supervisors, data collection began. An introductory letter from the Centre for African and International Studies (CAIS) assisted the researcher to obtain information from the eight women's associations and three coalitions selected for the study. The letters were taken to the offices of the associations and were also sent via e-mail to members of the

coalitions and associations whose offices could not be located. The cover letter attached to the interview guide addressed the purpose of the study and assured participants of their confidentiality and voluntary participation. The letter also estimated the time it may take a participant to complete the interview. The participants then consented to partake in the study. Before the interview was conducted the purpose of the study was explained to the participants.

To ensure a natural flow of discussions, a voice recorder and a Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge phone were used to record the face-to-face and phone interviews respectively, by seeking the consent of study participants. All the interviews were conducted in English. The average time spent by each study participant was 30 minutes. The basic criteria used to select the study participants were the positions they hold in their respective associations and their willingness to participate in the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing is a process of bringing order, structures, and meaning to the mass of collected data (Cresswell, 2014), whilst data analysis is a “search for answers about relationships among categories” (Tiwari, 2013, p. 125). Dey (1992, p. 33) adds that “the analysis of data in a qualitative work is the process of describing the phenomenon, classifying and observing how all the concepts are interconnected”.

In analysing the primary data gathered from conducting interviews for this study, the study adopted qualitative content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2014, p. 1279) state that content analysis has become one of the many methods researchers

use to analyse text data, and define it as “a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. As a method of research, it provides a systematic and unbiased means of making valid extrapolations from visual, verbal or text to allow the researcher to quantify as well as describe a particular phenomenon (Bengtsson, 2016). Bengtsson (2016) adds that in qualitative content analysis, data is represented in the form of words and themes, and has a purpose of organising and generating meanings from collected data and also to deduce a realistic judgement.

Generally, there are two major kinds of content analysis; deductive and inductive. The deductive is used to analyse and test for theories whilst the inductive analyses texts in a manner that conveys understanding and provides responses to the research questions (Bengtsson, 2016). The inductive content analysis is also employed when there is limited knowledge or when limited studies have been conducted on a phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This study set out to investigate a social phenomenon of the role of women’s associations in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women in Ghana and used interviews to gather data.

The researcher, therefore, found it imperative to use inductive content analysis to transcribe verbal conversations into written texts. The inductive method of the qualitative research analysis involves creating categories, open coding and abstraction, which allows the researcher “to provide a means of describing the phenomenon, to increase knowledge and to generate the appropriate knowledge” (Cavanagh as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 111). This aided the researcher to

make decisions regarding the interpretation and classification of texts into categories (Dey as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the researcher used in-depth interview to collect data, which informed the adoption of the qualitative content analysis. To deduce meaning from the recorded voices of participants gathered during the collection of data, the audio was transformed into written texts in the contexts as presented by participants in their speech. This made it possible for the researcher to deduce reasonable judgement and interpretations.

The main goal of the qualitative content analysis is to provide knowledge and a thoughtful understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2014). The qualitative content analysis permitted the researcher to use of her own planned procedure of interpretation (Mayring, 2014). It also afforded the researcher enough space to work with huge texts of data from various sources in order to obtain confirmatory evidence.

Additionally, the researcher was very meticulous during the transcription process to make meaning of the data gathered from the participants. Mayring (2014, p. 45) defines transcription as a method of “transforming spoken language into texts”. However, since the interviews were quite long, the researcher defined the aspects of the interview that were relevant to answering the research questions, by avoiding certain unimportant words and aspects of the interview (Mayring, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics as a branch of philosophy talks about people’s conduct and acts as a guide to norms and or people’s behavioural standards and their relationships with one another (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). In academic research, ethics entails doing

what is morally right when conducting research. Ethical norms improve the purpose of the research such as ensuring that the researcher reports nothing but the truth, disseminates knowledge and also minimises errors as much as possible (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The researcher only conducted the interviews after she had plainly explained the purpose and benefits of the study to the participants and they had given their consent. For confidentiality, anonymity and privacy, the researcher did not disclose the identity of the participants and the data collected to any third party, except for those participants who did not mind letting their identities be revealed. In this line, the names and positions of those who did not want to conceal their identities were clearly stated, whilst pseudonyms were used for those who wanted to remain anonymous. In such cases, their positions were not revealed but were indicated as members of their respective associations and coalitions.

The Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research aims to produce knowledge that is based on human experience (Sandelowski, 2004). There is therefore the need to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This can be ensured by transparently communicating the systematic approach through which the research was conducted (Malterude, 2001). Data analysis, according to Thorne (2000), is the most complicated stage of qualitative research yet it is also the part that gets the least attention in the literature. This is perhaps the reason for which some writers (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Malterude, 2001; Thorne, 2000) contend that researchers must be open about what they are doing and why they are doing it and plainly describe the methods of analysis. When the data is analysed in a systematic

approach, it can easily be communicated to others (Malterude, 2001). This is because it is difficult for readers to assess the credibility of the research if they do not understand how researchers analysed their data or the assumptions that guided their analysis. It is therefore the responsibility of every researcher to ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of the research (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Trustworthiness is a key means through which researchers convince themselves as well as other readers that their study findings deserve attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To complement the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability (Newell, 2017), Lincoln and Guba (1985) broadened the concept of trustworthiness by including the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These trustworthiness criteria will be briefly defined to see how the study attempted to conduct a trustworthy analysis.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed some approaches for dealing with credibility, such as sustained involvement and continuous observation. With the aid of the semi-structured in-depth interview guide used for the collection of data, the one-on-one interviews conducted with the respondents lasted for an average of forty minutes. As a result, the researcher had enough time to ask all questions and give the respondents enough time to freely express their opinions on the questions. This also made it possible for the researcher to observe the mannerisms of the respondents to make inferences within the context in which they spoke. As “credibility addresses the “fit” between respondents’ views and the researcher’s representation of them” (Nowell *et al.*, 2017), the researcher interpreted and

analysed the data strictly based on the raw data, as against the researcher's view of the phenomenon.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability has to do with the generalisability of inquiry (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This means that the researcher must do well to provide detailed descriptions so that others who want to apply the findings to their own sites can assess transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The detail given on the collection and analysis of the data, as well as the tools employed in doing so, allows other researchers who may want to transfer the findings of this study to their sites to do so with less difficulty.

Dependability

Researchers must ensure that the research process is logical, traceable and well documented, to achieve dependability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This helps readers to examine the research process so that they can judge the dependability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure dependability in this study, the researcher has given the step-by-step means through which the data was collected and analysed for the study, from the collection through the transcription to the analysis of the data.

Confirmability

In the view of Lincoln and Guba (1989), confirmability is achieved when credibility, dependability and transferability are all realised. Its goal is to demonstrate that the researcher's conclusions and findings are clearly drawn from the data. This necessitates that the researcher demonstrates how results and

interpretations were arrived at (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Again, to ensure that others can fully appreciate how and why certain decisions were made in research, Koch (1994) advises researchers to include markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout a study. Through an audit trail, the researcher provides readers with a clear rationale for the decisions and choices about theoretical and methodological issues (Koch, 1994). The researcher has therefore justified the methods and theories employed in this study. Also, to create a clear audit trail, the researcher kept records of the raw data, field notes, transcripts and journals. This also aided the researcher in systemizing, relating, and cross-referencing the data, as well as in reporting the research process. This way, a different researcher with the same data, perspective, and scenario is likely to reach similar, but not opposite, conclusions (Koch, 1994).

Challenges encountered in the research process

The major challenge encountered in this study was getting participants at scheduled dates. Due to the outbreak of the Corona Virus pandemic in the country since March 2020, many offices including those sampled for the study were officially closed. When the offices finally opened after 2-3 months, participants were hesitant in granting the interview for fear of contracting the virus. The researcher, therefore, found it extremely difficult to get some of the participants on the scheduled dates, which delayed the data gathering process. The researcher therefore resorted to phone interviews in such cases. Also, the transcription of the recorded data was time-consuming. Whilst listening to the interview recordings,

the researcher had to intermittently pause to interpret into word form. Admittedly, these challenges delayed the study but did not affect its outcome.

Conclusion

This chapter of the study discussed the step-by-step procedure the researcher followed to conduct the study. It elaborates extensively on the methods used in the study as well as the justification for using them. It also highlights the sources of data and instruments used to gather them, and also how the data was analysed. An explanation of the framework of data analysis and interpretation was also given as well as the trustworthiness of the study. Lastly, challenges encountered during the data collection process were discussed.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study seeks to explore how the roles women's associations are playing in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana, is in line with global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowering women. Qualitative methods were used to collect the data for the study. The primary data was gathered from interviews conducted with twenty (20) participants from the selected women's associations and coalitions. The discussion is based on the interpretation of the interviews conducted, as well as documents, newspapers and online sources consulted to corroborate the findings from the data. These were compared and contrasted with the literature reviewed and the theories guiding the study. The presentation is thematised according to the three research questions guiding the study. Therefore, the chapter is divided into three sections, with each section assessing one research theme.

Section one adopts four targets of the SDG Five to examine how the roles of women's associations in Ghana feed into the global efforts of ensuring gender equality and empowering women. The second section discusses the strategies women's associations employ to achieve their end, whilst the third section surveys the achievements they have made in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana.

The Roles of Women’s Associations in Ghana and How They Feed into the Global Efforts of Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women

This section of the chapter discusses the first research question: how the roles of women’s associations in Ghana feed into the global efforts of ensuring gender equality and empowering women. Playing roles towards bridging the global gender gap and women’s empowerment requires organisations to have a global focus, regardless of their countries of operation. This stems from the fact that in no part of the world are men and women equal (Sen, 2001). So, although the study focuses on how women’s associations in Ghana are helping to bridge the gender gap and empower women, it does so while considering how those roles feed into global efforts of ensuring equality and women’s empowerment. In this regard, the SDGs become the perfect measure, since they are the development framework guiding all member states of the UN. However, since the SDGs cover several areas of development, SDG Five is the specific goal used to guide this study. The study, therefore, strives to assess how the roles played by these associations in one form or the other are in line with the selected targets of the SDG Five.

The study adopts four targets of the SDG Five to analyse how the roles of women’s associations in Ghana in bridging the gender gap, feed into these four targets of the SDG Five. The four targets have been selected because they are the main areas that the data collected cover. The four targets are 5.1 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5.

The specific targets are in the table below:

Table 2: Selected Targets of the SDG Five

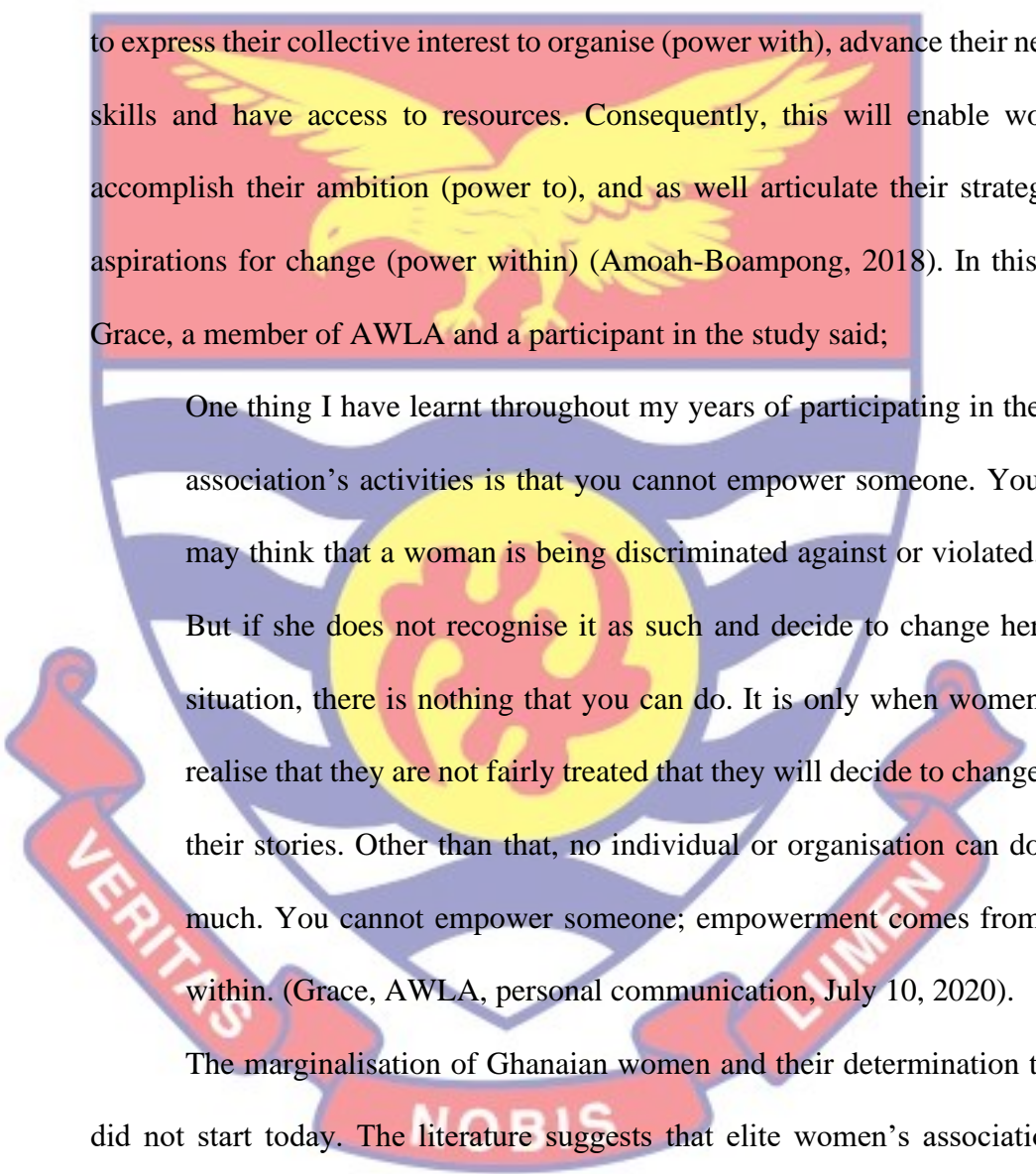
Target Number	Targets
5.1	“End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.”
5.2	“Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and in the public and private spheres, including trafficking sexual and other types of exploitation.”
5.3	“Eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.”
5.5	“Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.”

Source: Sustainable Development Goals (UNGA, 2015 p.14)

End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in Ghana

Here, the study discusses how the roles of women’s associations contribute to the ending of all forms of discrimination against women and girls in Ghana. Gender inequality continues to linger in all parts of the world (Sen, 2001), impeding human progress (UNDP, 2016). To bring an end to the discrimination against women, the concept of empowerment has been conceptualised differently by academics and advocates. In the 1980s and 1990s, feminist scholars defined women’s empowerment with a focus on transforming power relations to the advantage of women’s rights while also increasing gender equality and equity (Batliwala, 2007). This implies that empowerment is not something that can be

done to, or for women. Rather, it necessitates that women become conscious of the existing inequalities in society and act on them to achieve structural transformations that would change the unequal power relations that lead to their discrimination. The interpretation given on empowerment comes with a focus on the ability of women to express their collective interest to organise (power with), advance their necessary skills and have access to resources. Consequently, this will enable women to accomplish their ambition (power to), and as well articulate their strategies and aspirations for change (power within) (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). In this regard, Grace, a member of AWLA and a participant in the study said;

The logo of the University of Cape Coast is a watermark in the background. It features a shield with a yellow eagle at the top, a yellow sun with a red face in the center, and a red banner at the bottom with the Latin motto 'VERITAS LIBERABIT VOS'. The shield is surrounded by a blue and white pattern.

One thing I have learnt throughout my years of participating in the association's activities is that you cannot empower someone. You may think that a woman is being discriminated against or violated. But if she does not recognise it as such and decide to change her situation, there is nothing that you can do. It is only when women realise that they are not fairly treated that they will decide to change their stories. Other than that, no individual or organisation can do much. You cannot empower someone; empowerment comes from within. (Grace, AWLA, personal communication, July 10, 2020).

The marginalisation of Ghanaian women and their determination to end it did not start today. The literature suggests that elite women's associations that existed all through the colonial period with examples such as the Native Ladies of Cape Coast, Ladies Mutual Club in Sekondi and Young Ladies Christian Association also aimed "to create limited space that they could hold their own", to

empower the Ghanaian woman. The Native Ladies of Cape Coast, for instance, relied on the “Ladies Column” in the *Western Echo* Newspaper to articulate women’s interest (Amoah-Boampong, 2018 p. 32). However, they were formed on welfare concerns and were geared towards moulding women into the ideal Victorian woman as wives and mothers (Allman & Tashjian, 2000; Akurang-Parry, 2004). Also, their legitimacy was questioned as they were given some support by the British government (Amoah-Boampong, 2018).

The narration is no different during the immediate post-colonial period as successive governments boycotted or co-opted women’s associations into state machinery. Even when democratic rule began in Ghana, the 31st December Women’s Movement which was created earlier in 1982 by Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, the wife of the chairman of the PNDC, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, continued to monopolise the space for women’s collective activism (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). Sandra, a participant in the study added,

When democratic rule began in Ghana, we thought the road had been cleared. However, during the NDC era, many organisations that focused on women’s issues could not operate for fear of being tagged enemies of the state. The 31st December Women’s Movement became the most vibrant women’s movements to operate. (Sandra, NETRIGHT, personal communication, July 16, 2020).

This marginalisation and co-option of Ghanaian women and their activism however became a thing of the past by the late 1990s. In the era of 1996, women

grew bolder when they realised the shift in political structure and the potential provided by democratisation to express their voice and challenge the state in the public domain. Simultaneously, new associational autonomy arose within the same period and the era of women's quiet activism grounded on welfare associations and community organisation came to an end. Again, the late 1990s saw the end of the co-option of key women's organisation by the PNDC/NDC government through the 31st December Women's Movement owing to the registration of a plethora of women's coalitions such as Abantu for Development in 1991, the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) in 1999, the NETRIGHT in 2000, GVSSN in 2001, the DVC in 2003 and WMC in 2004 (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). Sandra added, the monopoly enjoyed by the 31st Women's Movement did not last forever. "By the late 1990s many organisations that focused on women's issues registered and started operating. This allowed many others to register later". (Sandra, NETRIGHT, personal communication, July 16, 2020).

Ghanaian women have been marginalised by successive governments, although each epoch presented its peculiar character of struggle. At best, they were said to have quiet activism. This quiet activism hardly questioned or contested women's social status. However, this became a thing of the past when women's groups contested the state by creating *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana* in 2004 (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). This manifesto critically contributed to the role of Ghanaian women's collective organisation and also served as a major roadmap for their empowerment. Ghanaian women took it upon themselves to resort to their voting right as a negotiating tool to "ensure political party accountability as they

would ultimately be assessed based on where they stand in relation to issues that concern women as outlined in the Women's Manifesto" (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004, p. i). During the period between the first two decades of the 21st century, Ghanaian women recognised their power and acted collectively with other organisations to question the discrimination they suffered within the society by producing a non-partisan political document, *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, which outlined the shared concerns or demands of Ghanaian women. Aba, a member of the WMC who participated in the study said;

We realised that we needed to have a single document that contains all the demands of Ghanaian women. So, we talked among ourselves and called other civil society organisations, political parties and the media on board. Through numerous activities and consultations with women all over the country, including those in traditional and political roles, it became a reality (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Comfort, another member of the WMC who also participated in the Study added,

The Women's Manifesto for Ghana was put together through the collaborative effort of Ghanaian women who cut across ethnic, regional, political and educational boundaries in the country. Through this collaborative effort of Ghanaian women led by women's organisations, a clear path for addressing women's discrimination was provided. It was time to end the discrimination

against Ghanaian women (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

Ghanaian women through their collective efforts, therefore, rejected their passive role and state of powerlessness epitomised by the marginalisation of women's association throughout the 1980s and 1990s to a state of women's activism beginning in the year 2000 and climaxing in 2004 with the creation of the Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC). Comfort argued that;

Through this coalition, Ghanaian women took charge of their destiny by seeing themselves as assertive citizens and changed their state of worthlessness by breaking the shackles of the false consciousness of the Ghanaian patriarchal society which was reinforced by the colonial structure. Therefore, marginalised women in Ghana gained critical consciousness and acted to control their lives by partaking in the WMC, a movement of social transformation. The WMC provided an avenue for us to fight for the inclusion of Ghanaian women. It had been our dream, and it was a joy taking part in it. Every activity of the WMC was a step towards Ghanaian women's inclusion (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

Tsikata (2009) argues that women's networks lent a collective spirit to the work of women's rights in Ghana and a forum for women's organisations to participate in discussions on issues related to women's rights. Based on the experiences of Ghanaian women activists and those of other African women in

Uganda, South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania and Namibia, who had embarked on similar activities leading to the mobilization of women for consensus-building on various issues of utmost importance to them, “Ghanaian women activists realised that working in their individual units had little impact on the state. Therefore, to create real social transformation they needed to work together as a collective and engage the state as a united front” (Amoah-Boampong, 2018, p. 380). Aba succinctly put it this way;

We knew that we would achieve very little if we worked as individual organisations. We were aware of the magnitude of work before us, and we also knew it would take collective efforts to get it done. We, therefore, participated fully in the coalition. It was time for collective action (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

This was against the backdrop that despite the advancement of women’s activism in Ghana, the country was far from ending the marginalisation against women. Women’s right activists supported by NETRIGHT and ABANTU for development, therefore realised that they needed to “rethink the concept of women’s political empowerment and refashion the tools for lobbying and advocacy and the need to hold government accountable for the commitments made to women” (Mensah-Kutin, 2005, p.5). This realisation resulted in the birth of the idea of Women’s Manifesto for Ghana. According to Aba, “the Manifesto was important because there was no consensus on how women’s issues should be voiced and

translated into national policy” (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Although the WMC comprised women’s organisations and individual women, it was extended to include other politically and socially conscious organisations such as organised labour, NGOs, civil society organisations, the media and representatives from the political parties and the state. Aba added, “although this was our call, we needed the support of other social groups like CSOs and the media. So, we called them on board, and they did not hesitate to answer our call” (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

The Manifesto consists of a preamble and ten thematic chapters that specifically outline the popular demands of Ghanaian women to minimise the nation’s gender bias and power imbalance. “Women’s economic development; women and land; women, social policy and social development; women in politics, decision-making and public life; women, human rights and the law; discriminatory cultural practices; women and the media; women, conflict and peace, and women with special needs”, are the ten themes of the Manifesto that cover the demand of Ghanaian women. The thematic areas can be classified into two comprehensive categories; issues that can be changed by legislation and government policies and problems rooted in Ghanaian cultural norms.

Irrespective of these categories, however, the coalition believes that the concerns that underlie women’s discourse on empowerment are political. The Manifesto, therefore, advocates political solutions. At the heart of the Manifesto,

three main issues concentrate on women's economic self-reliance, women and decision-making, and greater government representation.

The three key issues of the manifesto

i. Economic self-reliance

Economic self-reliance as a means of empowerment is crucial for Ghanaian women because weak economic and social policies that have been perpetuated for decades are responsible for the prevalence of poverty among women (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004). This situation, combined with overdependence on donor aid with its related conditions, has harmed women. The Manifesto calls for a shift in the structure of domestic responsibilities executed by both genders to enable women to achieve economic self-sufficiency so that men and women share duties at home equally. This would encourage women outside the home to participate in economic activities. The Manifesto calls for an economic policy that integrates domestic labour into the state's concept of economic activities for women who continue to execute much of the household duties. Regarding Ghanaian women's economic independence as provided in the Manifesto, Comfort concurred that,

I agree with the provisions in the Manifesto. When women have less to do at home, they will be able to engage in economic activities which will reduce their dependence on their husbands and fathers. Once Ghanaian women become economically empowered, the discrimination they suffer will be greatly reduced (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

ii. Women's Participation in Governance

The quest for women's empowerment in Ghana is also associated with increased participation in governance and autonomy in self-determination decisions. The under-representation of women in government is symptomatic of their marginalisation at home and in the public domain in decision-making. Beyond the obstacles of an insufficient financial base to finance political campaigns and a high level of female illiteracy, the Manifesto points to the disparity between women and men with regards to education as a crucial impediment. The idea of increasing the participation of women in governance is not simply a matter of encouraging women to get involved with politics, but rather a shift in socio-cultural policies that discriminate against women's education and discourage women from having access to higher education. When this is achieved, the Manifesto states that women will have the ability to expand their participation at the local and national levels in decision-making processes. According to Comfort;

During our deliberations when putting the Manifesto together, we agreed that women's low-level of education greatly contributed to the marginalisation they suffer, especially in the political terrain. It was therefore important for us to emphasise this to enhance their political participation (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

iii. Patriarchal Cultural Practices

Culture has historically been used as a justification for patriarchal practices against women in Ghana (Oware-Gyekye *et al*, 1998). Women are supposed to submit to their husbands regardless of the problems at stake, and religious doctrines affirm such opinions. These cultural practices take away women's freedom and

self-determination and invest them in the patriarchal culture. The implementation of this cultural dictum is at odds with the reproductive health of women, especially regarding the use of contraception. The Manifesto notes, “while awareness of contraception is over 90% in Ghana, only 22% of married women use contraception as compared with 32% of men. The figure is even lower among the poor” (*The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004, p. 43). This is due to the fear some men have, that the use of contraception will enable their wives to be promiscuous. This makes women prone to unintended pregnancies as well as contracting sexually transmitted diseases. This harms women as it makes it highly difficult for them to engage fully and effectively in the decision-making processes regarding their bodies. This highlights one of the aspect of powerlessness that the implementation of the Women’s Manifesto aims to put an end to. Aba added;

Almost every study that has been conducted on the discrimination women suffer in Ghana has identified patriarchal cultural practices as one of the key factors. Therefore, we could not put the Manifesto together without addressing it and calling for a change in that respect. I can even say that it is the foundation on which the inequality women in Ghana suffer is built (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

The Manifesto has put the demands of Ghanaian women to end their marginalisation in one document. Noting the several areas of Ghanaian women’s marginalisation that the Manifesto captures, Comfort said, “I find the Manifesto very comprehensive, it covers almost all aspects of our lives as Ghanaian women,

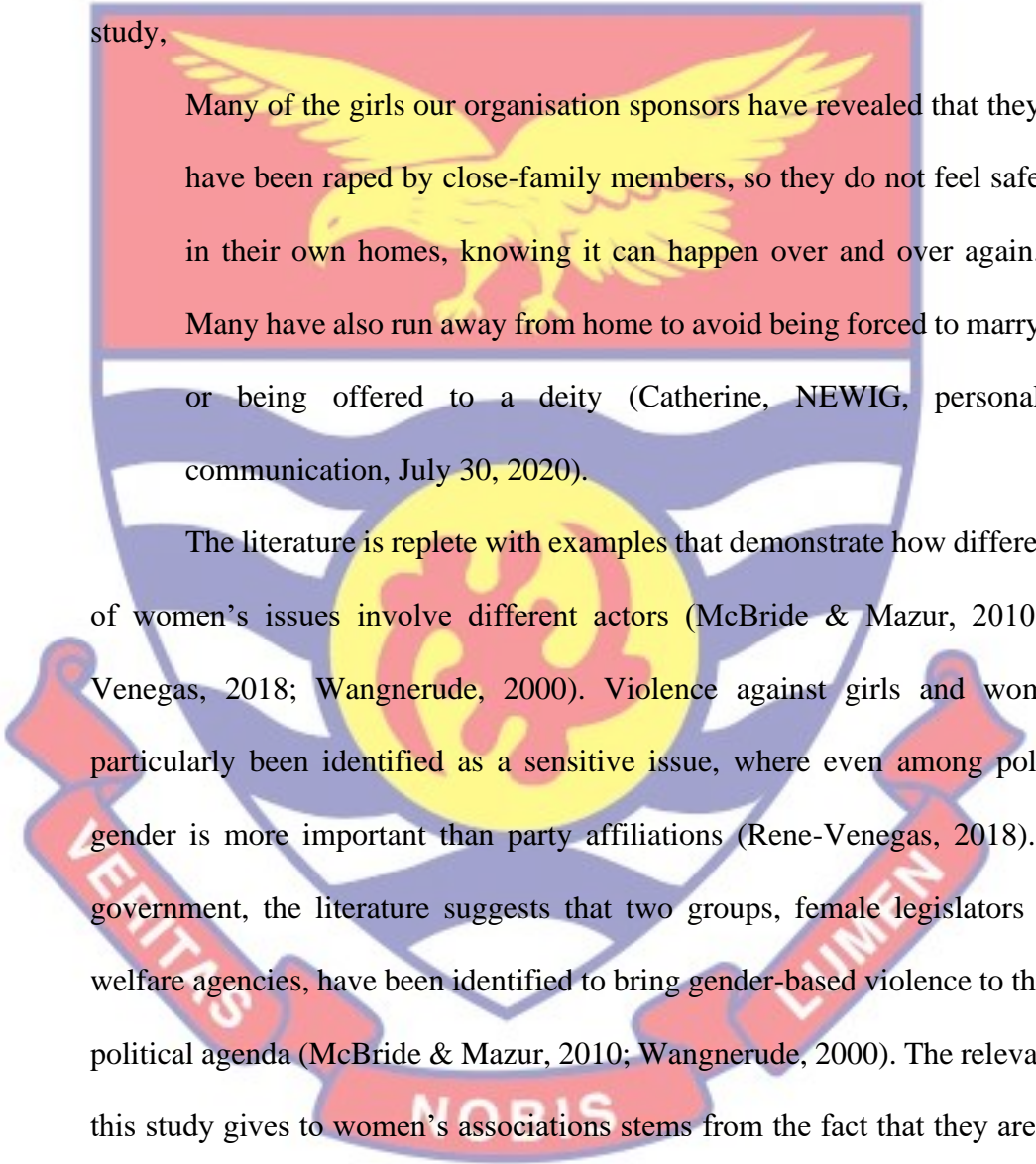
and calls for action in those areas”. (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana has therefore become a collectively owned document that sets out and makes demands to resolve important issues of concern to Ghanaian women. For several years to come, it will serve as a gender checklist and benchmark to assess the outcomes of the progress of women’s participation in different spheres. This collective public action of the coalition made it possible for cognizant Ghanaian women to end the era of quiet activism which was fuelled by their reserved individual entities, to a broad-based national movement that advocated against women’s marginalisation. This is a great step towards contributing to the attainment of Target 5.1 of the SDG Five: “End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.”

Violence against women and girls

This section discusses how the roles of women’s associations contribute to bringing an end to violence against Ghanaian women and girls, as Target 5.2 of the SDG Five suggests. In 1997, the Gender Centre for Research and Documentation (Gender Centre), in collaboration with eight other NGOs and the Trades Union Congress, conducted social research on violence geared towards women and children in Ghana. The result of the research released in 1999 revealed that one in three Ghanaian women had ever experienced physical violence. Also, 33 percent of the women surveyed had witnessed forced inappropriate touching concerning sexual harassment and 20 percent indicated that their first experience of sexual intercourse happened against their will (Sam, 2007). More than a decade

afterwards, Dan-Bright Dzorgbo and Sylvia Esther Gyan reported in 2016 that women in Ghana are continue to remain threatened by forced marriages as well as early marriages and other harmful traditional and cultural practices like FGM and *trokosi* (Dzorgbo & Gyan, 2016). According to one primary data collected for the study,



Many of the girls our organisation sponsors have revealed that they have been raped by close-family members, so they do not feel safe in their own homes, knowing it can happen over and over again. Many have also run away from home to avoid being forced to marry or being offered to a deity (Catherine, NEWIG, personal communication, July 30, 2020).

The literature is replete with examples that demonstrate how different types of women's issues involve different actors (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Rene-Venegas, 2018; Wangnerude, 2000). Violence against girls and women has particularly been identified as a sensitive issue, where even among politicians, gender is more important than party affiliations (Rene-Venegas, 2018). Within government, the literature suggests that two groups, female legislators and the welfare agencies, have been identified to bring gender-based violence to the public political agenda (McBride & Mazur, 2010; Wangnerude, 2000). The relevance that this study gives to women's associations stems from the fact that they are usually the ones to identify violence meted out to girls and women as a problem, implement a response in the absence of a state response and bring it to the attention of the public (Weldon, 2002). This is confirmed by what Gifty, the Welfare Director of

Sisters' Keepers, said in an interview. "We were the first to come out with a public statement condemning the public violence against Akua Denteh which resulted in her death in Salaga. Yes, we were the first, even before the government issued a statement" (Gifty, SK, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

According to Adomako (2008); Fallon (2008); Tsikata (2009); Crawford and Anyidoho (2013), the approval of the for Domestic Violence into a law in 2007 was principally credited to the vibrant campaign steered by the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation in Ghana, also known as the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) which comprises a coalition of Civil Society Organisations, mainly women's movements. On this point, Geraldine, a member of the DVC who also participated in the study said;

Women's movements in Ghana did a lot to put that bill together. We were fed up with how women were being violated in the country, so we could not take it any longer when getting to the 2000 general elections, approximately 30 women were killed in similar ways and the government refused to do anything about it. At that point, we knew we had to fight to protect our women, and we thought that a law on domestic violence was going to help us do that (Geraldine, personal communication, August 3, 2020).

Between 1997 and 2000, about 30 women were found murdered in oddly identical ways, leading to the suspicion of serial killing, a phenomenon that was practically unheard of within the enclaves of Ghana (Fallon, 2008; Tsikata, 2009). As a response to these murders, women's groups founded a loose coalition called

Sisters' Keepers which confronted the government and other state agencies about their inaction. This was the origin of the DVC. Subsequently, however, it was extended to counter Ghanaian society's wider agenda of violence against women (Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020). Research had indicated earlier in 1999 that by sampling a group of three women and girls in Ghana, at least one in three of them suffered some level of domestic violence (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999).

A key issue of concern was the absence of legislation to deal with those who committed such acts. Geraldine revealed in an interview that, "we knew that a law against domestic violence would go a long way to protect women and girls against domestic violence" (Geraldine, personal communication, August 3, 2020). Therefore, members of 45 women's rights and other organisations mobilized themselves in March 2003 and founded the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation in Ghana. Members of the coalition took turns hosting the DV Secretariat and also took the lead on specific activities including media campaigns, public education, and training, depending on their interest and capacity (Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020).

Prior to the formation of the DVC, in 2001 and 2002, women's legal organisations in partnership with the Attorney-General's Department were involved in drafting possible domestic violence bills (Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020). Despite this, the bill faced considerable resistance within the government when it was finally presented to parliament (Fallon, 2008). A provision in the Domestic Violence Bill presented to parliament proposed the repeal of Section 42(g) of the Criminal Code, 1960, Act 29, which states, "The consent given

by a husband or wife at marriage for the purposes of marriage cannot be revoked until the parties are divorced or separated by a judgement or decree of a competent Court”, was the bone of contention (Parliamentary Debates: Official Reports, 15/02/07, p. 449; Cited in Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020).

Contrary to the assertion of Rene-Venegas (2018) that female legislators are among the two identified groups within the government who have been identified to expose gender-related violence to the public political agenda, the most vociferous opposition came from Hon. Gladys Asmah, the then Minister for Women and Children’s Affairs. Repeatedly, she contended publicly that parts of the bill did not agree with the cultural values of Ghanaians. This led to a “big fight” between the minister and the coalition which often played out in the media. She constantly and publicly showed that she was not in support of the DVC Bill, especially Section 42(g) of the Criminal Code, 1960, Act 29 (Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020).

This tension made the coalition mount intense pressures on the government during the 2004 election to make changes at the Ministry of Women and Children’s affairs. Eventually, Hon. Alima Mahama, a lawyer with a previous civil society involvement, was appointed to head the ministry to the joy of the DVC. “Her appointment gave us hope”, revealed Mina (Mina, DVC, personal communication, August 5, 2020). The DVC counted her as an ally because she was instrumental in getting the cabinet to support the bill. Following approval by the cabinet, the bill was sent to parliament. There too, some prominent male members of the House opposed the bill with the concern that this bill would cause ‘social dislocation’ to

the Ghanaian society and make women trample over their husbands and deny them their conjugal rights. One male parliamentarian, Honourable Okerchiri asked, “why should Parliament pass a bill which will allow our wives to trample upon us and deny us our conjugal rights?” (Parliamentary Debates: Official Reports, 15/02/07, p. 449; Cited in Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020).

It was, therefore, not all smooth in parliament, but owing to the resilience and determination of the DVC in which numerous strategies including public campaigns, demonstrations and marches, were employed, the coalition accomplished its set target when parliament passed the bill on February 21, 2007, and later enacted it into law in May the same year (Anyidoho, Crawford & Medie, 2020). Therefore, the DVC, mainly comprising women’s movements, played a crucial role in adopting domestic violence legislation, which protects women and children against violence, in Ghana.

Indeed, we have not been able to measure the percentage by which domestic violence has been reduced since the enactment of the Domestic Violence Law, but as someone who is involved in settling domestic violence issues, I can say without hesitation that cases of domestic violence have reduced since the enactment of the law (Personal communication, Mina, WMC, 2020).

The enactment of the Domestic Violence Law has therefore affected the lives of girls and women in Ghana positively. The law has provided an avenue for women’s associations to play a role in ending violence meted out to girls and women in Ghana, thereby contributing to Target 5.2 of the SDG Five.

Harmful practices against women and girls

This section of the study discusses how the roles of women's associations contribute to ending the harmful practices meted out to women and girls in Ghana, Target 5.3 of the SDG Five. Harmful traditional practices are types of violence that have been perpetrated predominantly in some cultures and societies against certain people for so long a time that they are considered as part of accepted cultural practice. They take place across both sexual identities and genders and are not unique to a particular culture or religion. The most common ones are early and forced marriage, FGM and so-called 'honour' based violence. Dzorgbo and Gyan (2016) documents that women in Ghana continue to be threatened by early and forced marriages, harmful cultural and traditional practices like FGM and *trokosi*. Cynthia, a member of YWCA and a participant in the study revealed that "most of the girls we educate that hail from the north of the country have gone through FGM" (Cynthia, YWCA, personal communication, August 7, 2020). Other forms of harmful practices against women include banishment and or killing of suspected witches (U.S. Department, 2008) and inhumane widowhood rites (UNDP, 2007 p. 123). These practices continue to be widely perpetrated in Ghana.

On Thursday, July 23 2020, Akua Denteh, a 90-year-old woman, who was suspected to be a witch was lynched by members of her community at Kafaba in the East Gonja District of the Savannah Region. This shows that laws alone are not enough to improve and reform the lives of women (Dowuona-Hammond, Atuguba & Tuokuu, 2020), especially regarding harmful practices. "Even those who know there are laws against such practices, still perpetrate them, knowing that they have

the protection of the society”, Cynthia added (Cynthia, YWCA, personal communication, August 7, 2020). Please indicate the organization this respondent represents

Smart (1989) demonstrates that legal reforms do little in impacting the lives of women. He notes that although women can apply for an injunction to drive away a violent man from the family home in countries where violence against women is punished, domestic violence still exists. Later in 1998, after Smart’s assertion in 1989, Oware- Gyekye and his colleagues stated unequivocally that until the traditional attitudes fueling the prejudice and exclusion against women are dealt with, no amount of legislation alone would salvage Ghanaian women (Oware- Gyekye *et al*, 1998). “Some women are aware that there are laws that protect them against violence but are unable to report such acts for fear of being marginalised by the community. I think this indicates that it has more to do with culture than laws, said (Cynthia, YWCA, personal communication, August 7, 2020).

Even on the part of the government, sometimes the laws do not work. In 2017, for instance, Martin Kpebu, a private legal practitioner specialised in human rights cases requested a statement from the Human Rights Court of Ghana that the government had an obligation under Sections 8(3) and 29 of the Domestic Violence Act to set up a fund for domestic violence and to make available free medical care for domestic violence victims from that fund (Kpebu, 2017). He argued that the government had a duty to set up a fund to cater for basic material assistance to unfortunate preys of domestic violence and to rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate them. Although this action against the government was successful, the government

has not yet met its statutory obligation to set up the fund (Kpebu, 2017). In this regard, Patricia, the head programme Manager of NETRIGHT Secretariat said, “we can have all the laws, but if you don’t have the systems in place to ensure its effective implementation, then the laws alone will not address the problems” (Patricia, NETRIGHT, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

While it continues to remain important to enact, adopt and implement existing laws against harmful practices, it is even more important for those suffering from such practices to be empowered to stand against them. Unfortunately, they are usually meted out to the weak and vulnerable; children, the aged and widows. Patricia summarised it this way, “you will always notice that it is poor people who are accused of witchcraft. If you are rich, you are not a witch, if you are poor and miserable, then you are a witch” (Patricia, NETRIGHT, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

Women’s associations in Ghana have, therefore, made several efforts to protect girls and women from these practices. Gifty, in an interview for this study, said that her organisation focuses on the elderly. According to her, Ghanaian society does not understand the aged and often think of them as being possessed by evil spirits. Her organisation, Sisters’ Keepers, therefore, educates the public on dementia and Alzheimer’s disease; the two conditions the association believes contribute significantly to the biological and behavioural changes that take place during old age. Citing the example of Akua Denteh’s public lynching, she said her organisation visited the bereaved family and sensitised the community on dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease. Currently, the organisation is in the process of working

on a policy that will make the government turn all witch camps into homes for the aged, where they can receive the care and support that they need. She said;

Some doctors have specialised in taking care of children, and there are children's hospitals, but we do not have specialists who take care of the aged. That is what we are trying to do. At least, there should be a policy for them, because they are not heard, especially the women (Gifty, SK, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

In addition, Anna, the Executive Director of the Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG) in an interview for this study indicated that NEWIG has rescued more than 50 girls from being tortured through FGM and *trokosi*. She added that the organisation has trained several suspected witches from Witch Camps in the northern part of the country in soap and bead making among others to support their livelihoods. According to her, "this will keep them busy, as an antidote to the loneliness they suffer, and also generate income to support their livelihood" (Anna, NEWIG, personal communication, August 10, 2020).

The community sensitisation on dementia and Alzheimer's diseases has ensured that society understands the biological and social changes that occur in old age. This way, they do not need to attribute 'odd' behaviour from aged women to witchcraft, but rather offer them the necessary support they need. The campaign offered by NEWIG also ensures that young girls are not married off to deities through *trokosi*, and others do not lose their sexual pleasure through FGM. Also, teaching inmates of witches' camps business skills ensures that they have money to support their livelihood while also keeping them engaged to avoid boredom.

These efforts on the part of Sisters' Keepers' and NEWIG have ensured that vulnerable women and girls are cared for and protected against harmful practices, thereby contributing to Target 5.3 of SDG Five.

Women's full and effective participation in leadership positions

This section of the study discusses how the roles of women's associations contribute to increasing Ghanaian women's active involvement in governance and other public spheres. Initiatives across the world to legalise the domestic, political professional roles of women in society obtained a foothold in the 1960s. In many countries today, the voices of women echo in government and various processes of decision-making through resilient affirmative action processes. Women make up 20 per cent of parliaments worldwide, and 20 per cent of parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa (Matey, 2014).

Affirmative action is a series of steps taken by the government, private and public organisations including political parties, businesses, educational institutions, and companies to remedy the legacy of structural discrimination and the exclusion of a specific social group or to champion the efforts of a particular social group in the interests of certain developmental objectives (Matey, 2014). It is generally a concerted effort to change or eradicate past and current discrimination through a series of public policies and programmes intended to support those who are discriminated against based on their colour, creed, geographical place, race, origin and gender. Usually, it entails preferential policies. It, therefore, addresses the issue of inequalities engendered by law and culture. As a principle and policy, it offers a

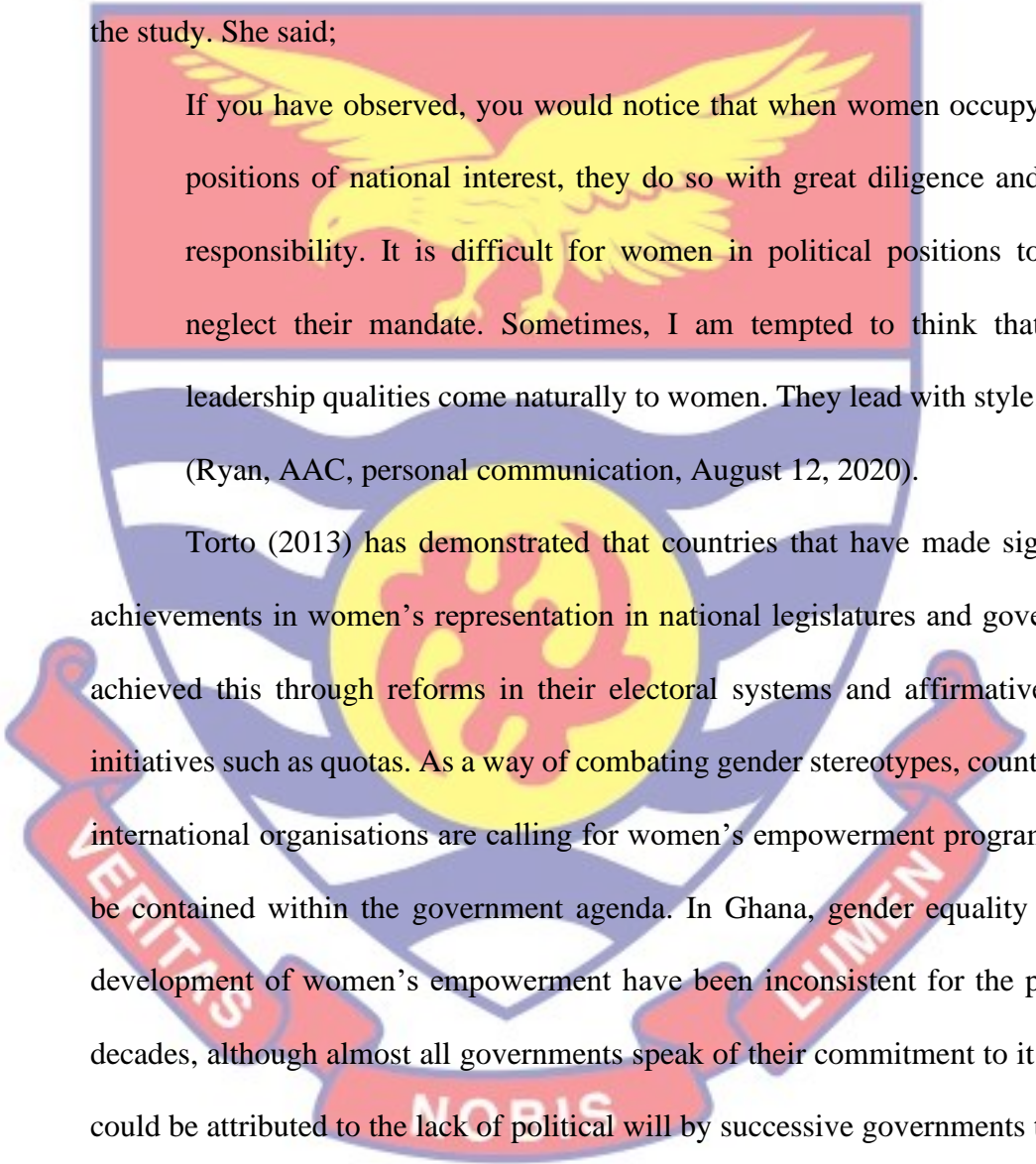
stop-gap solution to mitigate against a systemic problem over time when practised effectively.

Affirmative action was first used by President Kennedy as an executive order in 1961 to counter racial inequality in the United States of America. The Civil Law Act of 1964 made segregation unlawful and provided equal opportunity for all Americans, irrespective of race, cultural background, colour or religion (Matey, 2014). The apartheid legacy of South Africa has also been the basis for calls for affirmative action to level the playing field for black people in terms of education, politics and jobs (Matey, 2014).

In recent times, however, affirmative action has been defined concerning women, an outcome of the great effort of women's rights activists. Consequently, affirmative action for women has been enshrined in various United Nations documents. Key among these are CEDAW the Beijing Platform for Action, the MDG 3 and the SDG 5. Affirmative action insists that any type of discrimination that impinges on women's fundamental rights should be prohibited, whilst traditionally and constitutionally entrenching women's socio-economic development, impact and influence on society. (Torto, 2013).

Despite these persistent attempts to increase measures to alter the divide between men and women in national decision-making processes around the world, it has been a very slow process. However, Drude Dahlerup, believes that women can make major changes in parliaments in various and long-term ways to boost their status (Dahlerup, 1988). She argues that women inherently possess a distinct approach to, or 'style' of, politics. The election of women to the highest decision-

making body in any country is likely, therefore, to reshape the structural component of parliament and also significantly impact policy priorities and laws (Devlin & Elgie, 2008). This position of hers is corroborated by the primary data as revealed by Ryan, a member of the Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC) who participated in the study. She said;

The logo of the University of Cape Coast is a watermark in the background. It features a shield with a yellow eagle at the top, a yellow sun with a red face in the center, and a red banner at the bottom with the Latin motto "VERITAS LIBERABIT VOS".

If you have observed, you would notice that when women occupy positions of national interest, they do so with great diligence and responsibility. It is difficult for women in political positions to neglect their mandate. Sometimes, I am tempted to think that leadership qualities come naturally to women. They lead with style. (Ryan, AAC, personal communication, August 12, 2020).

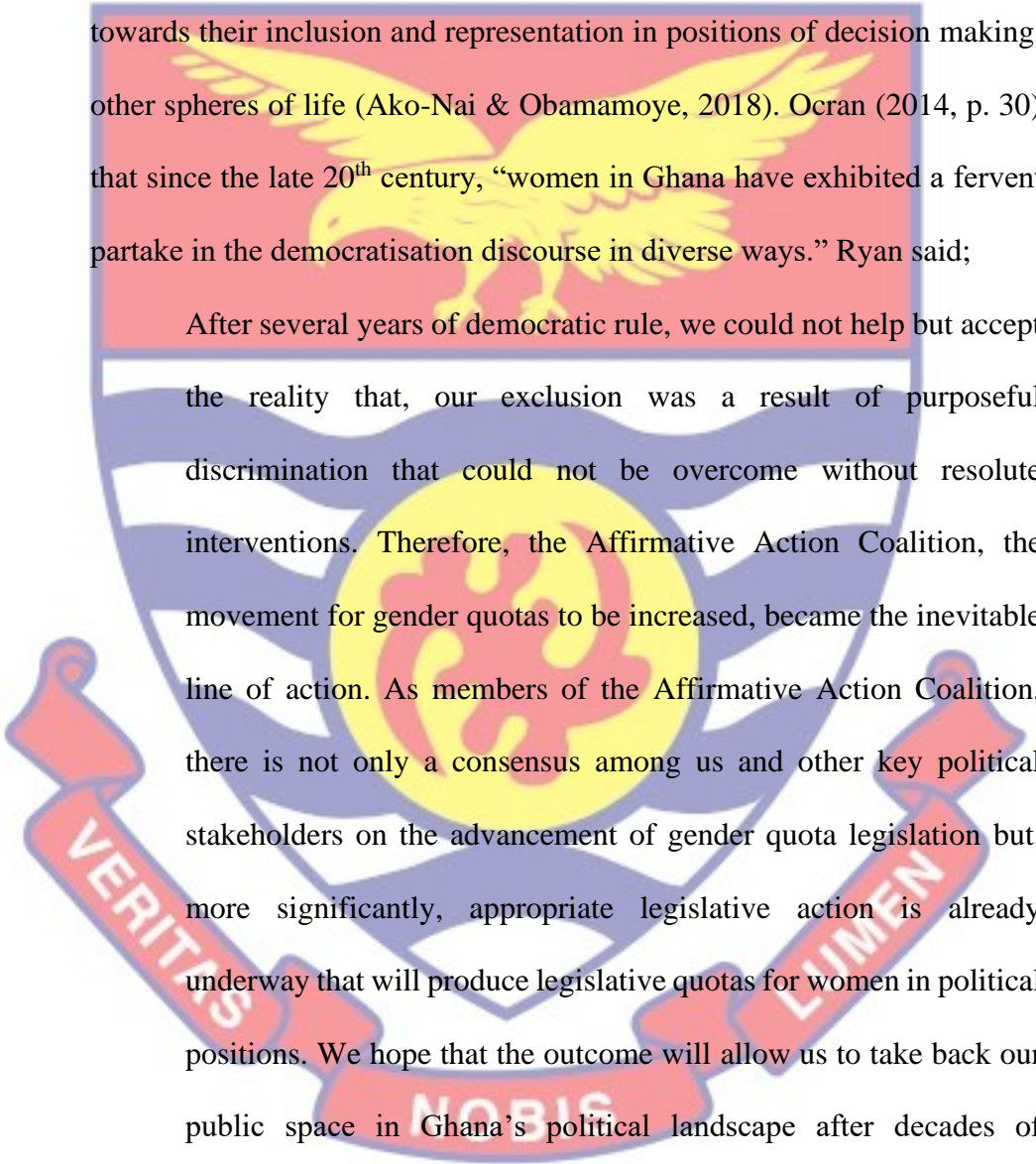
Torto (2013) has demonstrated that countries that have made significant achievements in women's representation in national legislatures and governance, achieved this through reforms in their electoral systems and affirmative action initiatives such as quotas. As a way of combating gender stereotypes, countries and international organisations are calling for women's empowerment programmes to be contained within the government agenda. In Ghana, gender equality and the development of women's empowerment have been inconsistent for the past five decades, although almost all governments speak of their commitment to it. This is could be attributed to the lack of political will by successive governments to adopt and implement constructive policies to that effect. According to Patricia, "this is because the governments lack the political will and commitment to ensure this.

They themselves sign up to gender protocols, but when it comes to implementation, it's a problem" (Patricia, NETRIGHT, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

Despite women's historical, political and socio-economic contributions to Ghana's progress, coupled with media outcry, issues related to gender have seen marginal growth. Although Ghana's democracy is one of those thriving in Africa, its processes aimed at ensuring women's inclusion and input in decision-making and governance affairs have been a struggling one. Ghana has not yet attained any international recognition of consciously improving women's participation in governance, leadership and decision-making processes. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU) observer missions for the 2012 general election recommended that Ghana ran affirmative action policies to ensure women's participation in national decision-making activities. It is, therefore, important to critique Ghana's affirmative action and women's empowerment process, to match its advancing democratic leadership and practices, especially with respect to institutional and constitutional development.

The third wave of the international women's movement, which began in the 1990s broadened the focus of women's activism to include the clamour for large number political representation of women (Paxton *et al.* 2006; Heywood 2011). This is focused on the assumption that the realisation of women's equal right to vote, the right to own land and the general freedom from patriarchy settings, significantly depend on the satisfactory involvement of women in decision-making activities. Therefore, to achieve the ultimate goal of creating a large political space for women, women's groups across the world have deepened their advocacy for

national policies and legislation that aim to create a bigger room for gender quotas. (Childs & Krook, 2008). In this broad struggle for the inclusion of women in the corridors of power around the globe, women in Ghana are not left out. Especially since democratic rule began in 1992, Ghanaian women have taken key steps towards their inclusion and representation in positions of decision making, and all other spheres of life (Ako-Nai & Obamamoye, 2018). Ocran (2014, p. 30) concur that since the late 20th century, “women in Ghana have exhibited a fervent zeal to partake in the democratisation discourse in diverse ways.” Ryan said;

The logo of the University of Cape Coast is a watermark in the background. It features a shield with a yellow eagle at the top, a yellow sun with a red face in the center, and a red banner at the bottom with the Latin motto "VERITAS NOBIS LUMEN".

After several years of democratic rule, we could not help but accept the reality that, our exclusion was a result of purposeful discrimination that could not be overcome without resolute interventions. Therefore, the Affirmative Action Coalition, the movement for gender quotas to be increased, became the inevitable line of action. As members of the Affirmative Action Coalition, there is not only a consensus among us and other key political stakeholders on the advancement of gender quota legislation but, more significantly, appropriate legislative action is already underway that will produce legislative quotas for women in political positions. We hope that the outcome will allow us to take back our public space in Ghana’s political landscape after decades of marginalisation (Ryan, AAC, personal communication, August 12, 2020).

This contemporary women's political consciousness and the campaign for adequate representation in Ghana can be traced back to 2003/ 2004 when a specific mobilisation of women culminated in the codification of a political document titled *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*. The drafting of the Manifesto gave room to wide consultations with women's groups, District Assemblywomen, NGOs, civil society organisations, representatives of political parties and press agents (Tsikata 2009; Adams *et al.* 2016). The Manifesto distinctively bemoaned the relegation of women to the margins in the decision-making processes and recommended affirmative action in political parties that would build space for 50 percent representation of women by 2012 (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004). Since then, women's collective activism for affirmative action in Ghana has taken a more forceful dimension. More importantly, the emphasis has been placed on making the constitution of political parties gender-friendly to the demand for affirmative action. Indeed, a remarkable characteristic of the women's movement for affirmative action in Ghana is the realisation among the activists of the struggle that, the first appropriate step towards such a policy reform is the enactment of the corresponding legislation.

They have, therefore, committed a lot of effort to make sure that suitable legal measures are put in place that will facilitate the overarching objective of increasing the political representation of women. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that an Affirmative Action Bill is presently before Ghana's National Parliament for consideration and final approval into municipal law. The Bill is said to have recommended 40 percent representation for women across government

institutions/agencies (Ako-Nai & Obamamoye, 2018). In this context, *Adams et al.* (2016, p.152) stress that “women’s organisations [in Ghana] have pressured politicians to adopt and implement party and legislative quotas. They have gained some headway in amassing party and government support for these initiatives, but this support has not yet led to changes in laws or official policies”. When asked about how the Affirmative Action Coalition was formed, Maud, a member of the AAC who also participated in the study narrated the processes leading to the formation of AAC as follows;

In 2000, the then Minister for Women and Children’s Affairs, Juliana Azumah-Mensah, called a team to come up with a collective set of proposals. The team was made up of 21 members including Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA), NETRIGHT and ABANTU for Development, as well as representatives from political parties. The team questioned why existing policies were not enough to secure a place for women, and set out a justification for an Affirmative Action Bill. For consultations, all regions of the country were visited to seek the views of many including traditional leaders and local-community-based organisations on what an Affirmative Action Law should look like, explaining to them Article 17 of the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution, which allows Parliament to come up with laws to address imbalances. After this, we summarised the key findings of the consultations. These findings were also translated into specific

proposals in the form of a draft, which was also sent out nationwide to solicit views and feedback on how to improve the draft. By 2012/2013, the draft was in good shape. With the help of the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Nana Oye Lithur, the bill was gazetted and sent to parliament in 2016, but it was too late to complete all the stages of the parliamentary process before the 2016 general elections (Maud, AAC, personal communication, August 15, 2020).

In a conversation with Kate Skinner, Sheila Minka-Premo, the convener of the Affirmative Action Bill Coalition (AABC), revealed that the change of government after the election affected the passage of the bill. Nonetheless, the president, Nana Akuffo Addo, during the first two years of his presidency, committed to the passage of an Affirmative Action Bill in his State of the Nation Address, and the AABC continues to push for its passage (Skinner, 2020). The Affirmative Action Bill Coalition (AABC) aims to coordinate women's groups as well as other CSOs to make sure that the bill is passed into law. It was launched in Accra on September 27, 2019. The AABC acts as a mother to all the organisations that are advocating for gender equality initiatives, to make sure that the bill is passed into law. The final draft of the bill was given cabinet approval in 2016 but then it did not get to the consideration stage before the dissolution of the 6th Parliament of the 4th Republic. "Once the bill is passed, it will secure a permanent place for women in governance and other public sectors" (Maud, AAC, personal communication, August 15, 2020).

Although the bill has not yet become law, the AAC has been able to draft a bill that seeks to secure a forty percent quota for Ghanaian women to take up key positions in government. Undeniably, the push for an affirmative action law in Ghana has come this far due to the unrelenting effort from women's groups, including FIDA-Ghana, African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), Female MPs, Alliance for Women in Media, NETRIGHT, ABANTU For Development and other active societal agents, who consider women's marginalisation as injustice and violation of their inherent human rights, hence the need to secure a forty percent quota for women. This move on the part of women's associations, therefore, contributes greatly to global efforts towards attaining Target 5.5 of the SDGs: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life."

This section adopted four targets of the SDG Five to analyse how the roles women's associations are playing in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana, is in line with global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowering women. With regards to this, the study showed that the activities of women's associations in Ghana are in line with Targets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5. Hence, their roles are helping to close the global gender gap and empower women.

Strategies Women's Associations in Ghana Employ to Bridge the Gender Gap and Empower Women.

This second section of the chapter addresses the second research question; what strategies are employed by women's associations to achieve their set goals? It answers this question by examining some strategies that women's associations in

Ghana employ as a means to achieve their goals. A strategy refers to a term that describes several types of decisions taken in the interests of the social movement or its constituent organisations (Smithey, 2009). For Ganz (2000), a strategy is the conceptual connection that social movements make between the locations, times and ways in which they mobilise and allocate resources, and the goals they hope to achieve. For this study, however, strategy refers to the various means women's associations employ to achieve their intended goals. They include coalition building, internationalisation, lobbying and protest and demonstration.

When asked about strategies, Geraldine and Mina, both members of the DVC and participants in the study stated respectively, "I must admit that the numerous options of strategies available to us made it possible for us to achieve our goals. You know these days, we are free to employ several strategies for our course" (Geraldine, personal communication, August 3, 2020), and "we did not stick to particular strategies, but resorted to any that would help to achieve our goals. Today we may resort to protests and demonstrations, but lobbying may work better tomorrow, depending on the situation and the issue at hand" (Mina, personal communication, August 5, 2020).

Coalition building has been identified as one of the main strategies women's associations employ to achieve their intended goals. With coalitions, women's associations interested in pursuing a certain line of action come together and also call other civil society agents who have the tendency to help their course on board. This way, they increase in terms of number and have more influence. The WMC for instance was comprised of individual women, women's organisations and

further defined to include other social and politically focused organisations such as organised labour, non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, the media, representatives from the political parties and also the state. Tsikata (2009), speaking of the WMC, says that the Women's Manifesto project showcases how broad-based partnerships that involve mass membership organisations can aid small groups to rise above their limitations, maximise their resources, form an industrious division of labour and, most importantly, realise their set goals. Aba added,

I cannot point to a particular achievement of ours where we did not collaborate with other women's associations as well as civil society agents to form a coalition. On our own, I don't think we could have done much, *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana* was possible through the coalition. We just couldn't have done it on our own (Aba, WMC, personal communication, August 3, 2020).

Mina also said;

One thing my involvement with women's issues in Ghana has taught me is that if you want to be heard and succeed at what you intend to do, form a coalition. That's how it works. How can just one organisation take on a project as big as the Affirmative Action Bill on its own? Such a law will alter the Ghanaian political landscape for a long time. So, I can't imagine one association taking this project upon itself. It is always done through coalitions, always (Mina, DVC, personal communication, August 5, 2020).

Coalition building has been identified as one key strategy women's associations in Ghana employ to achieve their desired goals regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. However, such coalitions are created almost always to pursue particular issues, so once the purpose of the coalition is achieved, it becomes dormant. This echoes Hirschman's discussion on social energy, where the prospect for cooperative action lies dormant but can be mobilised at crucial moments (Hirschman, 1984). On the positive side, coalitions allow small groups to put their resources and efforts together to achieve uncommon goals and give their projects legitimacy and grounding (Tsikata, 2009).

Internationalisation of issues has also been found to be a key strategy adopted by women's associations. This internationalisation according to Tripp (2001) has been facilitated by changing international norms that emphasise respect for women's rights (Tripp, 2001). Geraldine, a member of the DVC and a participant in this study confirmed this by saying that, "the government does not want to look bad in the eyes of the world, once you involve an international actor in an issue, the government is quick to respond" (Geraldine, personal communication, August 3, 2020). A member of the AAC and a participant in the study, Ryan also revealed that "in this era of globalisation, we cannot even afford to pursue issues without bringing in international actors. After all, issues of gender transcend borders". (Ryan, AAC, personal communication, August 12, 2020).

On Thursday, July 23 2020, Akua Denteh, a 90-year-old woman, was suspected to be a witch and was lynched by members of her community at Kafaba in the East Gonja District of the Savannah Region. This gained public attention and

Sisters' Keepers came out with a press release condemning the act and calling on all international human rights actors to do same. Following this, Amnesty International visited the family of the bereaved. Led by its country head, Robert Akoto Amofo, it condemned the act and killing of the 90-year-old lady and linked that to violence against women in Ghana. He said, "What we have gathered here for is something serious not only for her but also women of the community she comes from and women in Ghana who are going through violence or any sort of abuse". He went further to call on the government and its agencies to act on behalf of women. "It is wrong, we do not endorse it in any way as an organisation and we believe it's the responsibility of government, the security agencies, ministry of gender to ensure that the family gets justice for people to believe that our laws work in this country". Mr Amofo further called on the police to warrant that the culprits are arrested and prosecuted to deter others from perpetrating such acts of violence against women in Ghana. He assured the victim's relatives that the organisation would follow the incident to its logical conclusion (*Daily Guide*, 2020).

Peace Medie also records that, activism in the era before independence and immediately after independence largely targeted male leadership of domestic institutions. However, women have organised transnationally for the past two decades, to make known their concerns through the agenda of international institutions such as the UN, AU and ECOWAS, and harness the influence of these agencies to pressure their various governments to pass and enforce laws that are in favour of women (Medie, 2016).

This is confirmed by the primary data collected for this study which indicate that all women's associations in Ghana have international clout. Some have branches in other parts of the world. Sisters' keepers for instance, although a local women's association has branches in both America and Europe. Edna, the Director of African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), also indicated in an interview that aside from their African offices in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, they also have networks in Jamaica and the USA. (Edna, AWLA, personal communication, August 20, 2020). Also, Nancy the President of the North American Women's Association (NAWA) indicated in an interview that, NAWA, though based in Canada, engages in activities towards GEWE in Ghana, mostly by funding activities of women's rights organisations (Nancy, NAWA, personal communication, August 21, 2020).

Others have alliances with other international organisations, either they partner to carry out projects or are financed by them. On the continental level, NETRIGHT has an alliance with the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), and on the global level, it is one of UN Women's major groups on the SDGs. "Last year for instance when Ghana presented its monitoring report on the SDGs to the UN, we were asked to review the report", (Patricia Blankon Akakpo, the Head Programme Manager of NETRIGHT Secretariat, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

Medie (2016) argues that this plea to influential actors in the international system has enabled women's organisations to acquire financial as well as technical assistance, and also provided them with political clout. According to Anna, the

Executive Director of NEWIG for example, the network receives grants from EMpower Foundation and the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) (Anna, NEWIG, personal communication, August 10, 2020).

However, many issues have been identified to emerge from direct donor funding for social movements. First, a substantive number of social movements would choose not to take funding from external donors, for fear of being co-opted and losing their sovereignty (Earle & Pratt, 2009). Furthermore, when donors fund movement activities (either directly or through NGOs), they can unintentionally generate competition for resources. They can also cause certain forms of actions among movements that initiate responses mostly geared towards the needs of donor than to the interests and needs of members (Earle, 2009).

In response to this, Patricia said that NETRIGHT does not take corporate funding but mostly depends on women's funds from AWDF, Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, Star Ghana Foundation, Global Affairs Canada and Plan International. The network has also received some form of funding from Global Green Grant, Commonwealth Foundation and USAID. She added that the women's funds like AWDF, Global Fund for Women and Mama Cash offer core funding, but they are unable to give as much money as the others. When asked whether such sponsorships negatively affect the focus of their work, as donors may end up dictating to them what the direction of their work should be, she said;

For NETRIGHT as an organisation what we do is that if we want to go for funding, we make sure it is a projectised funding. We make sure it falls within the issues that we work on, and if it doesn't fall

within our scope of work, we don't go for it. We are a bit too known, so we do not allow people to tell us what to do. If you do that, we won't take your funds, we will reject it. Yes, we need the money, but if it will not suit the purpose for which the network was set up, then there is no point taking it (Patricia, NETRIGHT, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

What this means is that although internationalisation is a key strategy for realising the goals of women's associations, it can negatively affect what they do by shifting their focus to what the international organisation or donor agency wants to achieve, rather than the focus of the association, unless the association remains focused on its core mandate.

Lobbying is also one of the numerous strategies employed by women's associations in Ghana. It is an activity that involves the implementation of interventions that should directly or indirectly affect the process of drafting, implementing or interpreting legislative measures, rules, standards, and more broadly, the action or decision taken by the leading public authorities (Farnel, 1994). Lobbying as a strategy involves numerous actions or tactics which together accomplish a specific political resolution (Binderkrantz, 2005, p. 176). Usually, a messenger of an interest group sends a message to the recipient (policymakers) via a medium, within a certain context and with a certain effect.

De-Bruycker (2014) has identified four variables involved in the lobbying process. These are the messenger, the message, the channel and the target. Using

the DVC and the lobbying tactics it employed to get the Domestic Violence Law passed by parliament, the variables played out in the following way.

The Messenger

The DVC in this case was the messenger. Mahoney (2007) and Servaes and Malikhao (2012) comment that the effectiveness of the messenger is also determined by whether it is a single advocate or a coalition. To them, interest groups, as messengers of lobbying, can further exploit their policy demands by creating coalitions. This is confirmed by what Geraldine, a member of the DVC said,

We had to speak to all the parliamentarians about the Domestic Violence Bill, and time was not on our side. You know, sometimes we had to speak to some particular parliamentarians on several occasions. What helped us was that because we had formed a coalition, there were many of us to do that (Geraldine, DVC, personal communication, August 3, 2020).

As Marie Hojnacki (1997) points out, alliances provide a means for groups to have access to a broad array of policymakers. Through working together, women's associations coordinate and can cover a broader range of lobbying targets.

The Message

The second aspect of the communication process in lobbying is the message. The message of lobbying is the substance of coordinated interests that communicate to policymakers. In this regard, the message was that Ghanaian women suffered various forms of violence, the most alarming one being the serial

killing of the thirty women. A law was therefore needed to protect Ghanaian women. This message was quite brief and straight-forward. A law was needed to protect Ghanaian women from various forms of violence, and parliamentarians had the power to make such a law. The quality of the message that interest groups send to policymakers also plays a key role in lobbying activities. In this regard Geraldine said;

We knew we had a good message. We were sure that each parliamentarian knew at least one woman or girl who had suffered from violence. If not at home, then at the workplace. They could not just deny the substance of our message (Geraldine, DVC, personal communication, August 3, 2020).

The channel

The channel is the medium used by interest groups to disseminate their message to policymakers. These include press releases and direct e-mails. In this case, the DVC used different strategies in various spaces intended to raise support in Ghanaian society. These strategies included media campaigns and public demonstrations and marches. In a public education campaign organised across the nation, the DVC held public meetings in many constituencies, where the constituents signed a petition showing their support for the bill. A copy of this petition which had the signatures of all those constituents who signed it was then deposited into the pigeonholes of the respective MPs (Crawford & Anyidoho, 2013). Mina, who was a member of the DVC said that;

We used every avenue we could. Parliament needed to pass the bill and we were ready to use every available means to our advantage. If they would not avail themselves for us to speak with them concerning the bill, then they would find a petition signed by their constituents in their pigeon holes (Mina, personal communication, August 5, 2020).

The Target

Interest groups target one or more organisations and/or policymakers to influence public policies. The target may be, for example, a policy venue, which may be an agency or a social group that has the power to make decisions on the issue (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010, p. 31). Other examples of lobbying targets include distinct policymakers working within a policy field, such as government officials or parliamentarians. In this case, legislators of the Ghanaian Parliament were the target of the lobby. As lawmakers, they had the right to reject the bill or pass it into law. All the lobbying tactics that the DVC employed as mentioned so far were aimed at getting the parliamentarians to see reasons with the coalition and pass the Domestic Violence Bill into law. Mina said;

Our target was the parliamentarians, so we did not want to lose focus. After all, they are the ones with the power to decide whether or not our dream of having a Domestic Violence Law became a reality. So, although some parliamentarians had issues with aspects of the bill, we could not lose focus. We just had to keep pushing,

and that's what we did. (Mina, DVC, personal communication, August 5, 2020).

The bill was finally passed into law in 2007, the DVC had achieved its objective. Through the DVC, women's associations employed numerous strategies including lobbying as a strategy to get the Domestic Violence Bill passed into law.

To achieve their ends, women's associations in Ghana have also resorted to protest and demonstration. Through this, they can raise public awareness on a particular issue and also call the government to action. "When we demonstrate, it makes the issue gain public attention. This forces the government to at least speak to the issue" (Comfort, a member of the WMC, personal communication, July 5, 2020). Opong (2016) rightly argues that unlike the situation in the 1950s and early years after independence, the multiplicity of associations dedicated to the welfare of women that exist in Ghana today enjoy a rather calm and tolerant political atmosphere that enables them to have a relatively easy means of disseminating information.

Regarding the serial killing of about thirty Ghanaian women, a coalition of women's groups empowered by their gendered networks went on demonstration against the government. Dressed in mourning clothes with red bands around their heads, they marched to the Osu Castle, the seat of government, to protest. They demanded the President and Parliament treat the gruesome murders of women as a national crisis. They also appealed to government to consider the issue as urgent and then allocate all possible resources to embark on an all-inclusive programme aimed at apprehending the perpetrators (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). This

demonstration caught the attention of the presidential candidate of the main opposition party, NPP, John Agyekum Kufuor, who explicitly addressed the matter of the serial killings at various campaign platforms and promised to end the murders when voted for. He won the elections and was sworn in on January 7 2000, and five months later, on May 16, 2001, Charles Quansah, a 36-year-old driver mechanic, confessed to the serial murders (Amoah-Boampong, 2018). On the same issue, Aba, another member of the WMC said,

I can say without hesitation that our march to the seat of government helped us. It made the new government committed to bringing the perpetrators to book, and also helping with the Domestic Violence Bill (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 4, 2020).

Protest and demonstrations have been key strategies for women's associations in the country. Comfort added that;

It is even more rewarding when you demonstrate in an election year. If the government refuses to listen to you, wait and strike when elections are close. That way, if the incumbent refuses to act, you will have the support of the opposition. At other times too, you will be blessed to have both pledging to act on the issue (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

Therefore, the WMC through protest and demonstration pushed the government to end the serial killing of Ghanaian women and also support the Domestic Violence Law to be passed.

This section examined the various strategies that women's associations have employed to achieve their ends. These are the formation of coalitions as seen in the formation of the WMC, the DVC and the AAC. Other strategies identified are coalition building, internationalisation of issues, lobbying and demonstrations and protests. Through a combination of these strategies as well as others not examined here, women's associations in Ghana have made their voices heard.

Achievements of Women's Associations in Ghana

This final section of the chapter addresses the third and last research question. It, therefore, discusses the achievements women's associations in Ghana have to show for the roles they have played in their bid to close the gender gap and empower women in Ghana. The study posits that although there is a long way to go, these achievements are worth analysing as some significant steps have been made.

The first achievement of women's associations in Ghana that the study identifies is their ability to put together the demands of Ghanaian women in a single document, *The Ghanaian Women's Manifesto*. Ghanaian women had, for decades, contended the discrimination they suffered in society. However, their marginalisation came in different forms and at different places and levels. This means that the relegation they suffered was dependent on which part of the country a woman came from, her education, income, religion and place of work, to mention a few. Ghanaian women in their diversity suffered this discrimination in different ways. Consequently, there was no single solution to Ghanaian women's discrimination that would work for all women. When Ghanaian women talked

about discrimination, they meant different things and proposed different solutions. “After engaging with different categories of women, we realised that they experienced discrimination differently and proposed different solutions”, (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

The launch of *The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana*, after several consultations with different categories of women in the country, however, meant that for once, there was a consensus on how Ghanaian women wanted to end their discrimination. With the Manifesto, Ghana went beyond signing and adopting international protocols aimed at enhancing gender equality, and the gender provisions in the 1992 Republican Constitution, to having its own blueprint of what Ghanaian women want and how they want it. *The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana* has therefore become a collectively owned document that sets out and makes demands to resolve important issues of concern for women in Ghana. For several years to come, *The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana* will serve as a gender checklist and benchmark to assess the outcomes of the progress of women’s participation in different spheres, all thanks to the WMC, comprising women’s associations with support from other social agencies. It is therefore not surprising that Aba expressed her satisfaction in these words;

When we launched the Manifesto, I sighed and said to myself, “this book will for a long way time speak for Ghanaian women”. I knew we had accomplished a big feat (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Aside from the achievement women's associations have made by putting the problems of Ghanaian women together and proposing solutions to these problems to ensure that Ghanaian women enjoy their rights as citizens in *The Women's Manifest for Ghana*, certain specific demands of Ghanaian women as outlined in the document have also been met.

The Manifesto argues that women are very vulnerable when it comes to land usage in the country. They experience discriminatory land practices as wives and female family members. Also, their marital residence limits their interests in family lands. It, therefore, demanded among other things that "women's contributions to the development of farms be recognised and compensated at divorce and on the death of their spouses" (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004, p. 21). Consequently, one of the provisions of the Land Bill, 2019, which was passed on July 23, 2020, makes provisions for the protection of spousal rights to land. The bill mandates that the names of the spouses be included when registering land acquired during the marriage and provides for the assumption that any land acquired during marriage by a partner is co-owned by both spouses (even if it is registered in the name of only one partner). The Bill also requires the consent of both spouses for the transaction of any land acquired during a marriage (*Graphic Online*, 2020). This protects women's right to land in marriage.

Patricia also revealed in an interview that the government's proposal for the Planting for Food and Jobs Programme introduced by the Nana Akuffo Addo led government launched in 2017, provided that fertilizers would be sold to farmers on a credit basis. However, it would be limited to those who owned five acres and

more of farming land. Because her network, NETRIGHT, has worked with women for years, they realised that this policy would not benefit some women farmers because most of them farm on a small-scale basis. NETRIGHT, therefore, contested this proposal. When the Planting for Food and Jobs Policy was finally launched, women who owned small plots of land could also benefit from the fertilizer given on credit by the government, because the number of acres had been drastically reduced. She added that interestingly, the female farmers pay back for the fertilizers after harvests, more than their male counterparts (Patricia Blanson Akakpo, personal communication, August 9, 2020).

The Manifesto also argues that Ghana has no social nor systematic policies and programmes to provide Ghanaians with the accepted lowest standard of service. This is because the country's pre-occupation with macro-economic stability has left social security, social welfare, and human development issues to the background in the action of the state. It contends that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), introduced into the country in the 1980s, for instance, with its privatisation and cost-recovery measures, has turned all social or public goods into supplies that are sold and bought at the market. This has meant that access to such commodities is dependent on one's income, other than his/her needs. The outcome of these have led to just a few improvements in the lives of the ordinary Ghanaian peoples, and women are those who suffer it the most (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004).

In the area of health, this has limited women's access to healthcare. This is alarming because women's biological and physiological make-up makes them more susceptible to certain diseases such as breast cancer than men. Also, women

are at a much higher risk of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases than men. For instance, HIV/AIDS spreads more simply from male to female than from female to male. Again, pregnancy and childbirth are some of the most vulnerable moments of a woman's life. The Manifesto, therefore, demands among other things “that government announce immediately and implement a programme towards a socially agreed package of affordable quality health care ... by 2010” (*The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004, p. 29).

To enhance access to basic health care, therefore, the government introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2006. The NHIS provides access to basic health care with financial coverage. Under the exempt category, pregnant women enjoy free access to health care. This means free access to ante-natal, delivery and post-natal health care services. The NHIS has thus increased Ghanaian women's access to health care, a step further from their social exclusion. Comfort, could not hide her joy when she said;

Of all the demands that the Manifesto made, the provision of affordable health care was one of those that I was particularly concerned about. I mean, why should any woman lose her child or her own life because she cannot afford to go to the hospital? (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

When asked how sure she was that the government came up with the NHIS because it was demanded in the Manifesto and the pressure mounted on the government by the WMC in this regard, she said;

You cannot claim ownership when something is done because it is a collective work. No one organisation can take all the credit for it but I know how hard we worked towards that. We had several consultations with parliamentarians and other key members in government, and we were assured that something would be done. At the end of the day, what really matters to us is that we wanted an intervention that could afford women access to basic health care, and we have it. We are glad that the NHIS covers all citizens, but we are even more glad for the special provisions it makes for women, especially during pregnancy and childbirth. This did not become a reality through our sole effort, but we did contribute to it (Comfort, WMC, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

Regarding education, the number of male enrolments is higher than that of females. Also, at all levels of education, more girls drop out of school compared to boys, due to factors including poverty, early marriage and pregnancy. The Manifesto, therefore, demands among other things that, the “government remove cost-sharing fees at primary and secondary school levels” (*The Women’s Manifesto for Ghana*, 2004, p. 30). The introduction of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to increase female enrolment in schools, a school feeding programme to help maintain the rate of female students, and a free Senior High School Education in 2016, by the government meet this particular demand of the Manifesto. “There is no doubt that these educational interventions have increased female enrolment in school. I think the government deserves to be commended”,

(Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020). In response to how she could attribute these to the demands in the Manifesto. she said;

As you may be aware, we were not the first to make such demands.

Other several organisations had worked and continue to work in this

regard. I am also aware that the government made commitments in this regard somewhere in the 1990s as it was part of the government's development plan in the educational sector. All we are saying is that we added our voice through the Manifesto, and shortly afterwards we saw results. If our efforts contributed in any way to this outcome, then I think it is not out of place to count it among our achievements (Aba, WMC, personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Another major achievement of women's associations in Ghana that this study considers is the Domestic Violence Law. As suggested by Adomako (2008); Fallon (2008); Tsikata (2009) and Crawford and Anyidoho (2013), the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill into law in 2007 was largely attributed to the vibrant campaign conducted by the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) which comprises a coalition of Civil Society Organisations, mainly women's movements. Although the law still leaves much to be desired in terms of implementation, women's associations in Ghana must be appreciated for calling others on board to work on a law that protects women against violence. It has not prevented society from perpetrating violence against women, but it has ensured that there is an existing law

that allows women to seek redress for the violence they suffer. When asked why such acts still exist in the face of the law, Geraldine, a member of the DVC said;

These days, men are very cautious in abusing their wives and children. They know that if they do so, they risk being caught by the long arm of the law. Of course, you will always find miscreants and unscrupulous people who have no regard for people or the law, but it does not mean that the law is not protecting our dear women and children (Geraldine, DVC, personal communication, August 3, 2020).

Finally, the study discusses the success of women's associations in Ghana in playing a key role in putting together the Affirmative Action Bill. To end the marginalisation of Ghanaian women in the public spheres, especially in politics and governance, the Affirmative Action Bill Coalition, comprising a team of 21 members including LAWA, NETRIGHT and ABANTU for Development, as well as representatives from political parties and other civil society organisations, aims to secure a good place for Ghanaian women in the public sphere.

Although the AABC has not yet been able to push for the passing of the Affirmative Action Bill into law, it needs to be commended for the effort so far. The push for an affirmative action law in Ghana has come this far as a result of the unrelenting effort from women's groups, including FIDA-Ghana, African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), Female MPs, Alliance for Women in Media, NETRIGHT and ABANTU For Development, complemented by the efforts of other CSOs who consider women's marginalisation as injustice and violation of

their inherent human rights (Ako-Nai & Obamamoye, 2018). The study thus acknowledges the efforts made in that regard so far. Maud, a member of the AAC who also participated in the study said;

When a new government assumes power in 2021 after the 2020 General Elections in December, we will push harder for the passage of the bill. With the 2020 general elections soon to take place, it is difficult to get parliamentarians to listen to us now. However, after the elections when a new parliament resumes its work, we'll do our best to get it passed. It must not sit on the docket of parliament for this long. We need the Affirmative Action Bill to work as a law (Maud, AAC, personal communication, August 15, 2020).

This section has discussed the achievements women's associations have made in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana. Although there is still a long way to go in terms of what these associations can offer, the study counted the following achievements. The launch of *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, the introduction of the spousal protection rights in the new Land Bill in favour of women, the introduction of the NHIS to ensure access to basic health care especially during pregnancy and childbirth, and the introduction of FCUBE, school feeding programme and free SHS, to increase female enrolment in schools. Others are the Domestic Violence Law to protect girls and women against violence and the effort to secure a forty percent quota for women in the public sphere in the Affirmative Action Bill which awaits passage into law.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter presented and analysed the data gathered. The data were analysed in line with the three research questions that guided the study. The chapter was divided into three sections with each tackling one of the objectives of the study. The first section examined the roles of women's associations in Ghana that feed into the global efforts of achieving gender equality and empowering women. Four targets of the SDG Five were adopted for this purpose. It was observed that women's associations in Ghana are playing key roles towards these targets but do so largely through coalitions comprising women's associations and other social actors.

The second section found that the democratic political terrain that exists in Ghana today makes it possible for women's associations to employ several strategies including coalition building, internationalisation, lobbying and protest and demonstration to achieve their set goals. The achievements of women's associations in Ghana as identified in the third section are the launch of *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, the protection of women's rights in the new land law and the introduction of the NHIS to facilitate women's access to basic healthcare. Others include the FCUBE, school feeding programme and free SHS to increase female enrolment in school, the Domestic Violence Law to protect women against violence and the Affirmative Action Bill to secure a forty percent quota for Ghanaian women in the government sector. These achievements notwithstanding, the study concludes that there is still a long way to go as Ghanaian women continue to face discrimination and suffer violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarises the study, its findings and main conclusions. It also offers recommendations for the consideration of state and non-state actors alike in bridging the global gender gap and empowering women, as well as recommendations for future researchers. This study has aimed to assess how the roles of women's associations in Ghana contribute to the global efforts of bridging the gender gap and empowering women.

Summary of the Study

To achieve the aim, the study set out three objectives. The first was to examine how the roles of women's associations in Ghana feed into global efforts towards achieving gender equality and empowering women. The second aimed at examining the strategies women's associations in Ghana employ to bridge the gender gap and empower women. Finally, the third aim assessed the achievements of women's associations towards bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana. To provide responses to the research questions, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with a total of 20 participants from eight women's associations and three coalitions. The officials from the women's associations included Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT Secretariat), African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA), Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG), North American Women's Association (NAWA), Executive Women's Network (EWN), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Mbaasem Foundation

and Sisters' Keepers. Officials from the Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC), the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) and the Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC), were also interviewed.

The study also examined relevant literature in the area of gender and women's movements' ranging from secondary texts, scholarly and online portal articles, periodicals and organisational reports as well as interviews granted by members of some women's movements and the coalitions. A descriptive case study research design was employed to conduct the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. The purposive sampling technique allowed the researcher to sample participants based on their qualities, contributions, knowledge and expertise gained from working with the women's associations and coalitions under study. The content analysis approach was used to analyse the data from the participants. This approach allowed the researcher to analyse the data in line with the established global developmental paradigm associated with GEWE.

Key Findings

The study found that although women's associations in Ghana are playing key roles that feed into global efforts towards GEWE, most of these activities have been possible through the creation of coalitions with other active social agents like the media, civil society organisations and political parties. Women's associations have always broadened the membership of such coalitions to include other organisations to pursue issues on a national scale.

Further, the study demonstrated that these coalitions are created when the need arises for collective efforts to pursue a particular agenda, and last as long as

the issue is being pursued. Once the purpose for which they were created is achieved, they become dormant. Hence, new coalitions are formed whenever the need arises to pursue issues on a national scale.

Also, the study found that on their own, women's associations have not made significant national and global impacts. These impacts have been limited to the beneficiaries of their empowerment programmes and not the Ghanaian women populace in general. This means that if a particular association operates in one district, its activities affect those in that particular district and sometimes extends to those in nearby towns. This limits their work to their areas of operation rather than on a national scale.

Regarding the strategies they employ, the study found that the democratic political terrain in the country makes it possible for women's associations to employ numerous strategies including coalition building, internationalisation, lobbying, and protest and demonstration, to achieve their ends. However, the strategies they employ are influenced by the issue at hand, such that they do not stick to particular strategies but combine as many as necessary to pursue an issue.

As regards their achievements, the study counted the launch of *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, the protection of women's rights in the new land law and the introduction of the NHIS to facilitate women's access to basic healthcare. Others include the FCUBE, school feeding programme and free SHS to increase female enrolment in school, the Domestic Violence Law to protect women against violence, and the Affirmative Action Bill which aims to secure a forty percent quota for Ghanaian women in the public sector.

Conclusions

The roles of women's associations as non-state actors in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in Ghana plays a key role in ensuring gender equality and empowering women worldwide. Whenever they realised it was not possible through their singular efforts, they partnered with other active societal agents like civil society organisations and the media to make it happen. On the part of the government, due to the sensitivity of women's issues around the world, and the pressure that is mounted on the government to fight gender inequality and empower women by the UN, AU and ECOWAS, all successive governments since 2000 show their commitments by signing unto international protocols in that regard and talk about their commitment to this course. On the ground, however, this seems more of rhetoric than reality. The Affirmative Action Bill that continues to lie dormant in parliament awaiting approval is a classic example.

Generally, internally generated fund, usually the dues from members of the associations, is not enough to pursue women's issues in Ghana. Therefore, most of the activities of these women's associations are funded by international women funds such as AWDF, Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, or donor agencies including Global Affairs Canada, Plan International, Empower Foundation, Global Green Grant, Commonwealth Foundation and USAID. The implication of this is that if these funds stop coming forth, the associations will be handicapped in carrying out their roles. Consequently, their continuous pursuance of GEWE issues is dependent on the continuous flow of such funds.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations are made. First, to the state and women's associations, and then to researchers concerning the areas that could be explored for further research.

Recommendations to the State and Women's Associations

Since *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana* has documented the needs of Ghanaian women and how these needs can be met, the government should adopt it as a long-term national development blueprint towards ensuring GEWE in the country. This way, there is a high tendency that such development plans will benefit most Ghanaian women due to the several consultations that were held with different categories of women and other key individuals and organisations, before the drafting of the Manifesto.

Because the state has signed and adopted several international protocols and development agenda geared towards GEWE, in addition to those provided in the 1992 Republican Constitution, the government should also be committed to delivering the demands of such mandates.

Furthermore, because of the potential of women's associations in bridging the gender gap and empowering women, the government should partner them to do more, and not pay mere lip service to the course.

Since most achievements of women's associations have been made possible through coalitions with other societal agents, it is important to keep such coalitions active even after the purpose of the coalition is realised. This way, it will be easier

to pursue other issues in the future with the same coalition, rather than creating new ones every time the need arises.

It has also been identified by the study that the activities of women's associations in Ghana are largely funded by donor agencies, and if these agencies stop funding their projects, it will be difficult for them to embark on any significant activity. Women's associations should therefore endeavour to find new ways of generating their own income so they do not become overly dependent on financial help from international agencies to fund their activities.

Precisely because empowerment is not something that can be done for, or to someone, Ghanaian women and girls should be encouraged to stand on their own and demand that they are treated equally and with respect. The days when they waited for the government and other non-state actors to come to their aid are long gone. It is their responsibility to ensure that they enjoy every right of theirs as citizens, and that is exactly what they must do.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study set out to assess how the roles of women's associations in Ghana contribute to the global efforts of bridging the gender gap and empowering women. In the course of this study, it is clear that certain themes and areas are important issues where further research would be worthwhile.

The primary data indicate that most of the impacts women's associations have made on a national level, and in a broader sense on the global level have been possible through the formation of coalitions with other active social agents. It is

therefore recommended that further studies are conducted on the extent to which such coalitions have aided the fight towards GEWE in Ghana.

Another area that could be considered for further research is the relationship that exists between the state and non-state actors in fighting against gender equality and empowering women in Ghana.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A

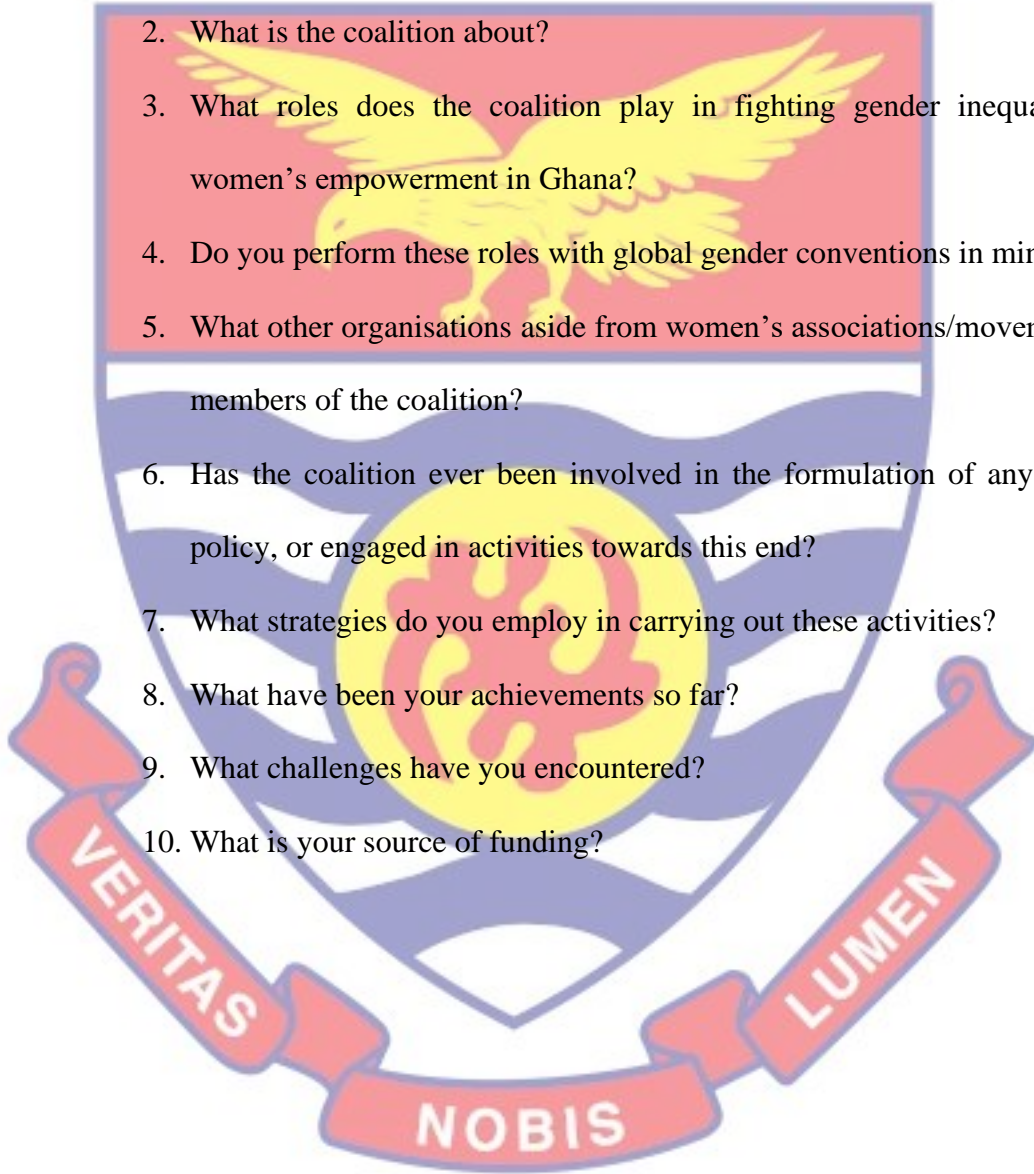
Interview Guide for Members of the Women's Associations.

1. Kindly state your name, the association you are a member of, and your position in the association.
2. What is your association about?
3. Does your association engage in activities towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Ghana?
4. What roles does your association perform in this regard?
5. Do you perform these roles with global gender conventions in mind?
6. In what ways do these roles complement global efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment?
7. What other organisations within or outside the country do you collaborate with to achieve this end?
8. Has your association ever been involved in the formulation of any national policy, or engaged in activities towards this end?
9. What strategies do you employ in carrying out these activities?
10. What have been your achievements so far?
11. What challenges have you encountered?
12. What is your source of funding?

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Members of the Coalitions.

1. Kindly state your name, the coalition you are a member of, and your position in the coalition.
2. What is the coalition about?
3. What roles does the coalition play in fighting gender inequality and women's empowerment in Ghana?
4. Do you perform these roles with global gender conventions in mind?
5. What other organisations aside from women's associations/movements are members of the coalition?
6. Has the coalition ever been involved in the formulation of any national policy, or engaged in activities towards this end?
7. What strategies do you employ in carrying out these activities?
8. What have been your achievements so far?
9. What challenges have you encountered?
10. What is your source of funding?



Appendix C

Respondents for In-depth Interviews

Aba, Member, Women's Manifesto Coalition. Interviewed, 20-07-2020.

Adelaide, Member, Sisters' Keepers. Interviewed, 02-08-2020.

Catherine, Member, Network of Women in Growth. Interviewed, 30-07-2020.

Comfort, Member, Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC). Interviewed, 20-07-2020.

Cynthia, Member, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Interviewed, 07-08-2020.

Edna, Director, African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA). Interviewed, 20-08-2020.

Emma, Member of the Executive Board, Executive Women's Network (EWN). Interviewed, 30-08-2020.

Geraldine, Member, Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC). Interviewed, 03-08-2020.

Gifty, Welfare Director, Sisters' Keepers. Interviewed, 02-08-2020.

Grace, Member, African Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA). Interviewed, 10-07-2020.

Margaret, Acting National General Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Interviewed, 22-08-2020.

Maud, Member, Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC). Interviewed, 14-08-2020.

Mina, Member, Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC). Interviewed, 05-08-2020.

Nancy, North American Women's Association (NAWA). Interviewed, 21-08-2020.

Sandra. Member, Network of Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT). Interviewed, 16-07-2020.

Sita, Director of Empowerment, North American Women's Association (NAWA). Interviewed, 21-08-2020.

Tina, Programme Officer, Mbaasem Foundation. Interviewed, 05-08-2020.

Anna, Director, Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG). Interviewed, 10-08-2020.

Patricia, Head Programme Manager, Network of Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT). Interviewed, 09-08-2020.

Ryan, Member, Affirmative Action Coalition (AAC). Interviewed, 12-08-2020.

