



LOCATING THE ALBATROSS IN WOMEN'S
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA

By

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Participation of women in politics in Africa has improved since the 1990s due to:
 - Improvement in women's education
 - Advocacy for democracy
 - Advocacy for human rights
 - Awareness raising
 - Activism (UNESCO, 2017)



Introduction (Cont'd)

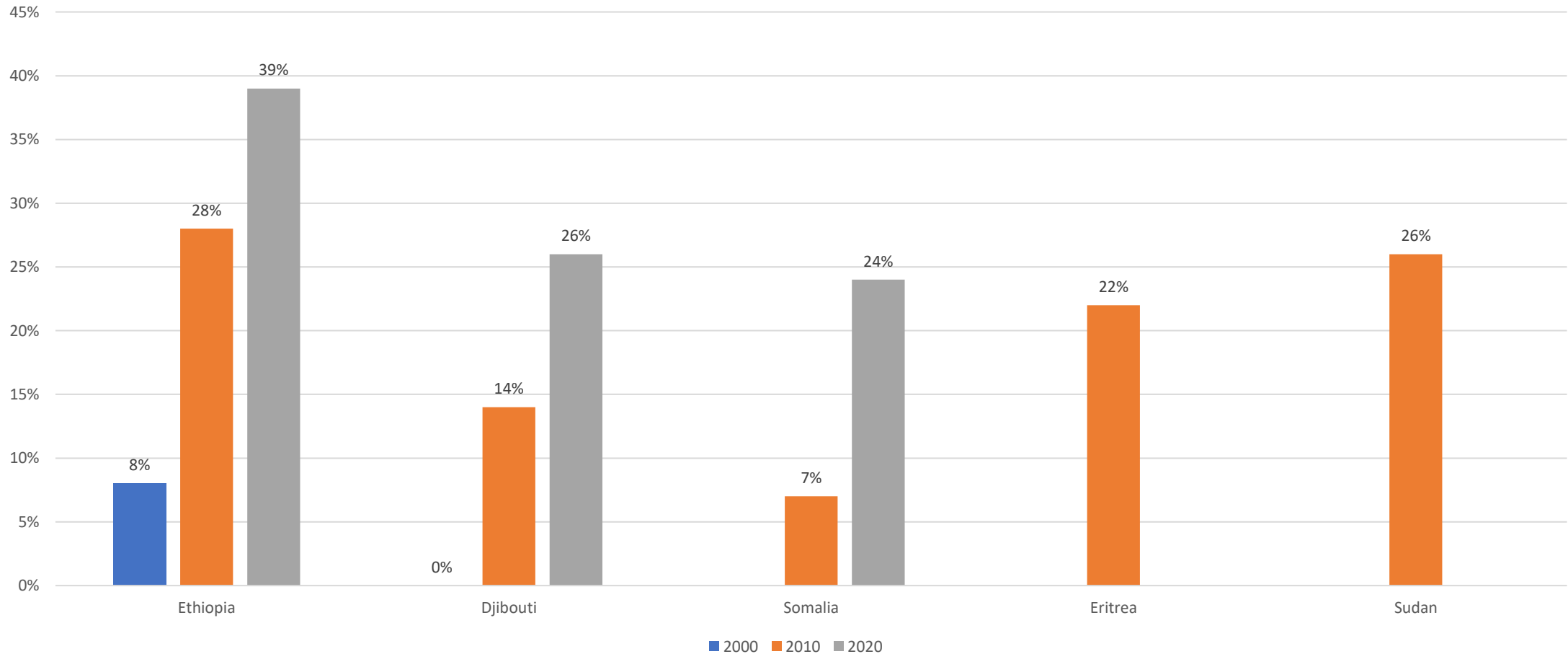
- ❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:
 - 2003: Adoption of protocols on the rights of women
 - 2003: Five women were elected as African Union commissioners
 - 2004: AU Pan African parliament comprising 25% females was headed by a woman
 - 2004: 51 of the 53 AU member countries had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Mutume, 2005)



Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (Horn of Africa)

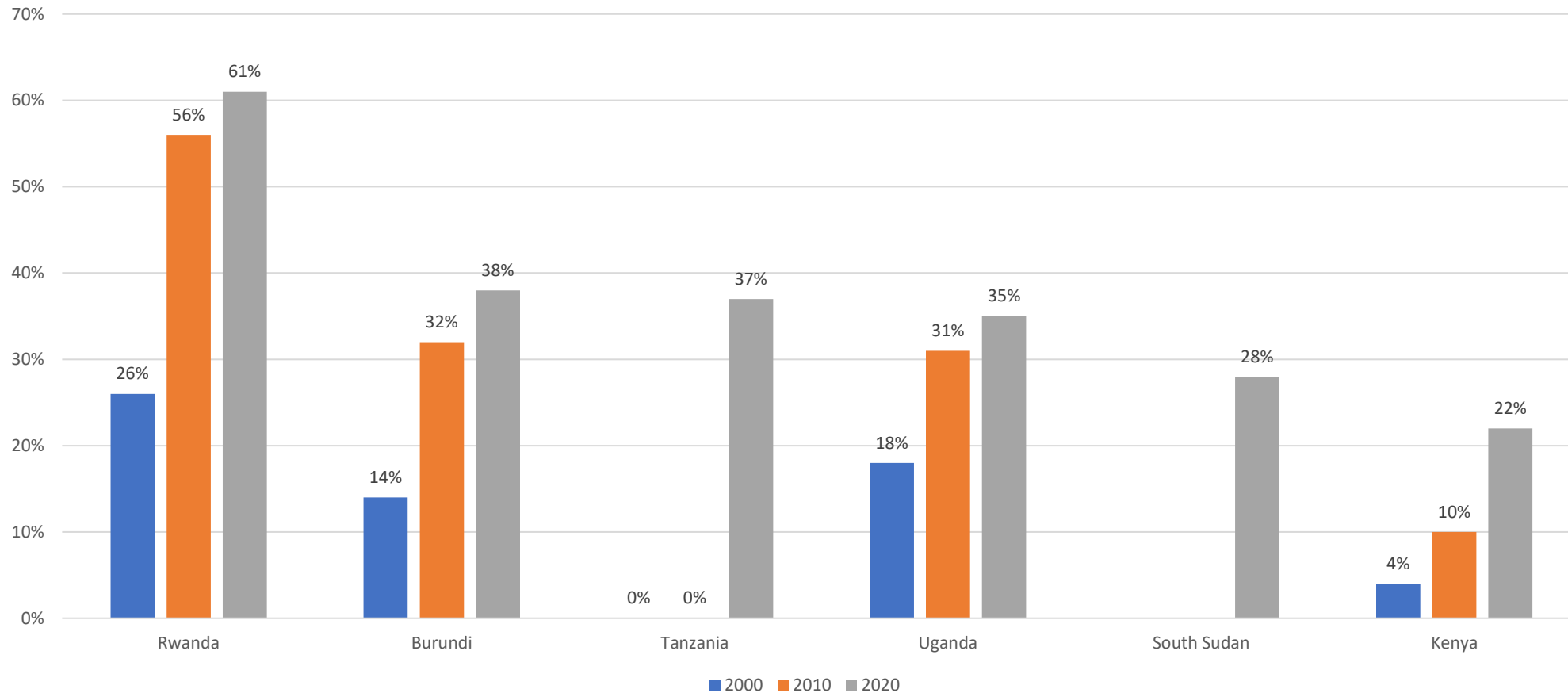




Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (East Africa)

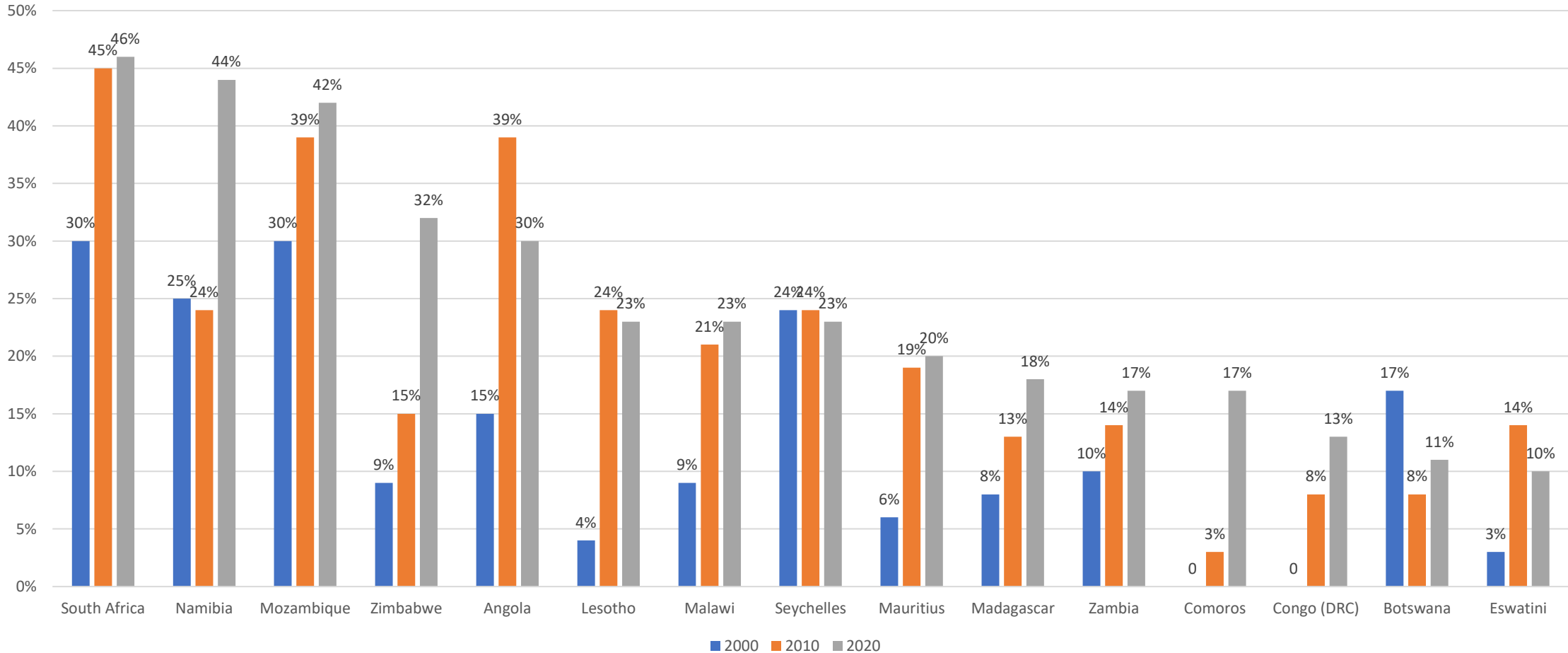




Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (Southern Africa)

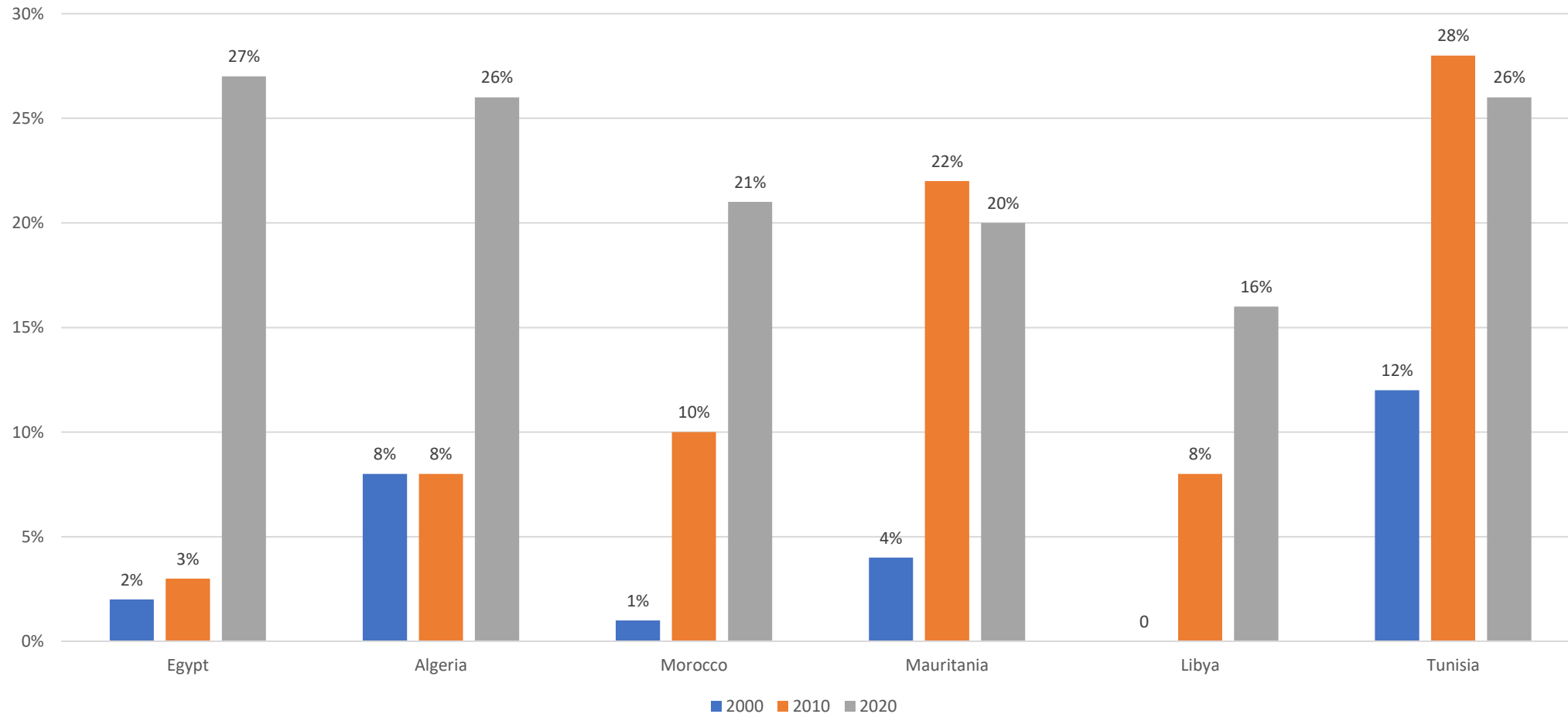




Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (North Africa)

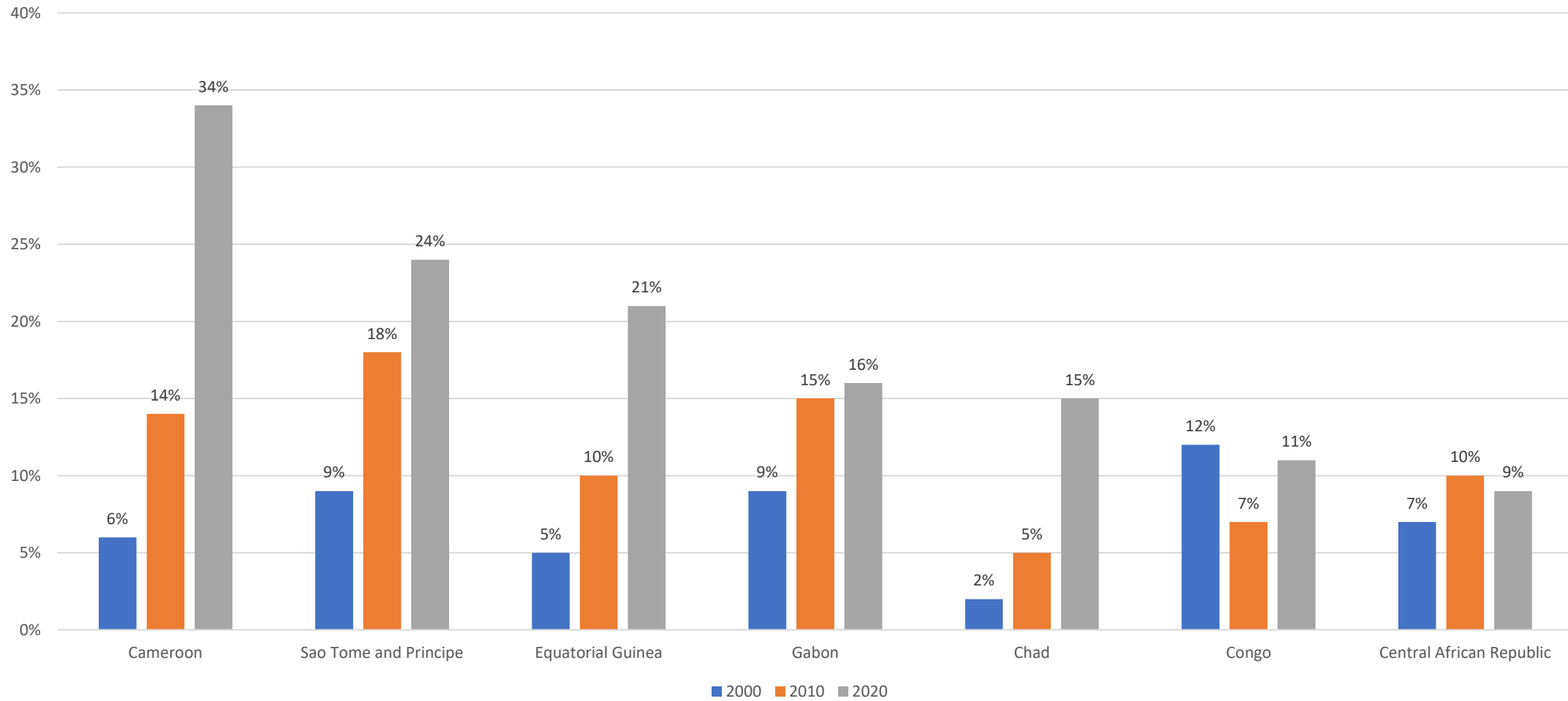




Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (Central Africa)

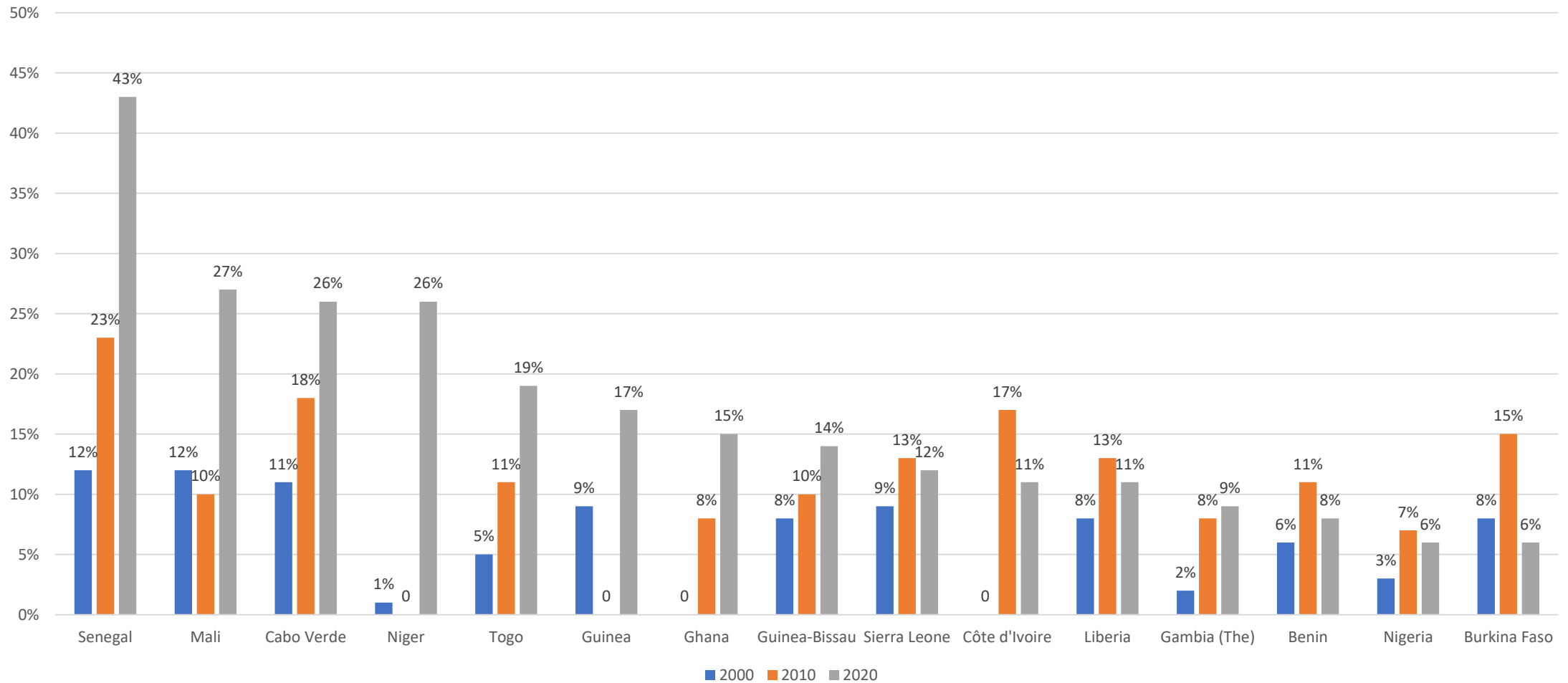




Introduction (Cont'd)

❖ Some examples of progress in Africa:

Trends in the % of women in parliament (West Africa)





Some issues

❖ Issue 1:

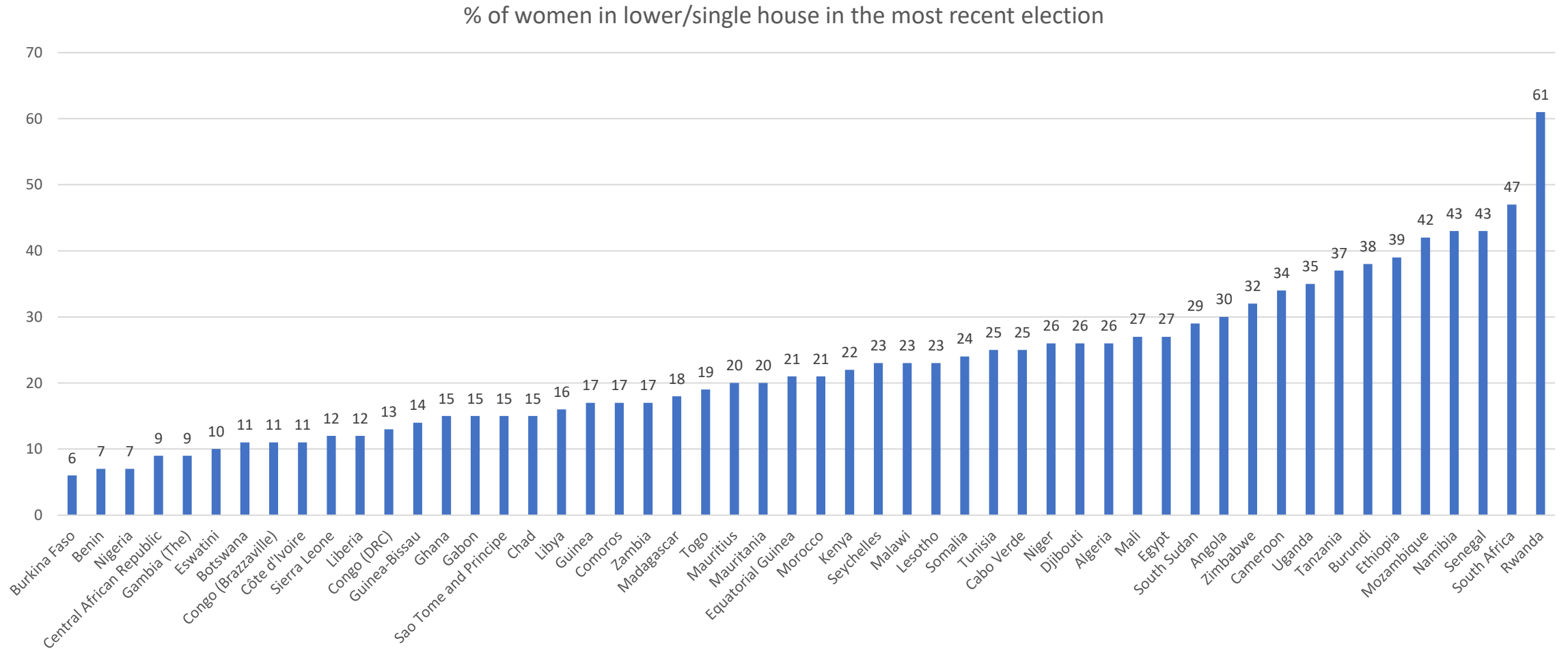
- Progress is far from SDG 5 specifically the focus on “achieving women's equal and effective participation” (Morna, et al., 2021)



Some issues



Issue 2: Variations exist in the level of progress across Africa



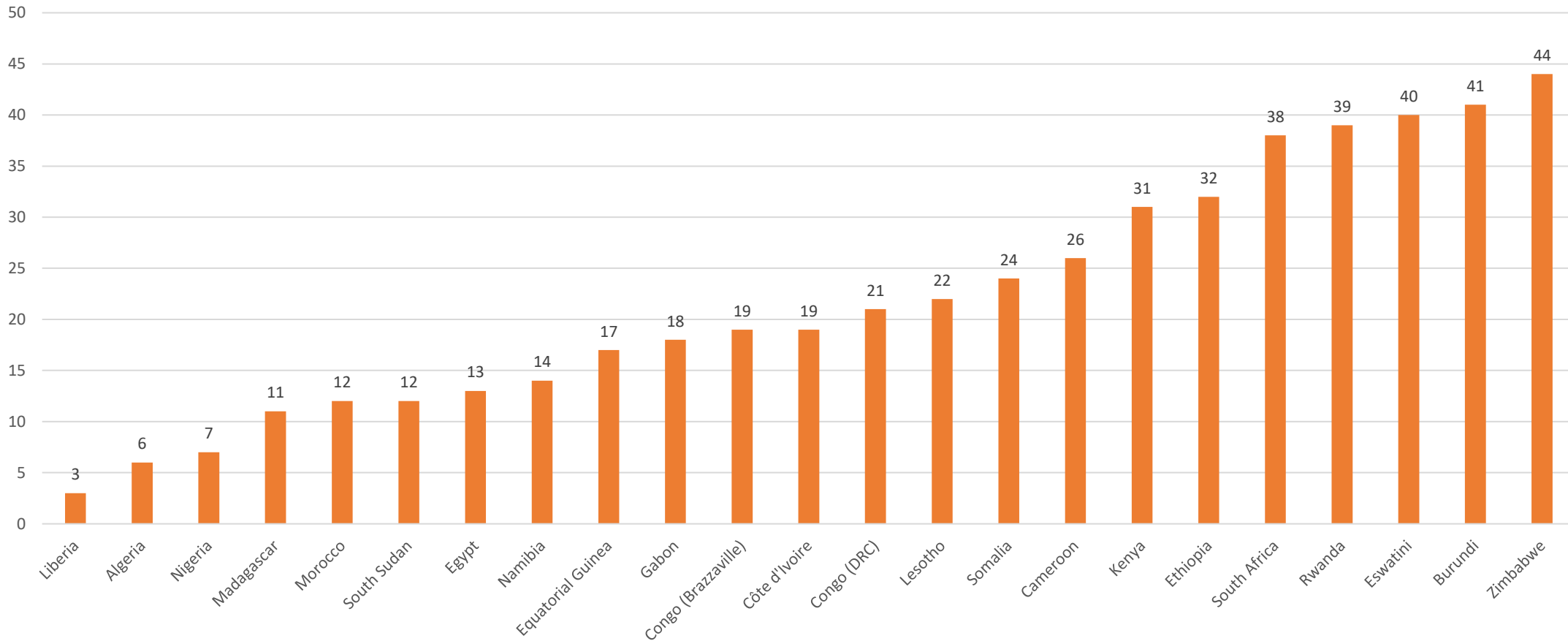


Some issues



Issue 2: Variations exist in the level of progress across Africa

% of women in upper chamber in the most recent election





Some issues

❖ Issue 3: Nigeria and Benin Republic rank low in proportion of women represented in political office despite that:

- Nigeria is the most populous country on the continent (Men =110, 484, 083 (50.6%);
Women = 107, 701, 087 (49.4%))
- Nigeria has the largest economy on the continent
- Nigeria is one of the most diverse countries in the world



Study objectives

1. Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.
2. Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.
3. To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.
4. Derive policy roadmap for improved participation of African women in politics



Literature Review

Extant literature on political participation in Africa which will serve as guide to this current study abound. Susan Markham's (2013), "Women as Agents of Change: Having Voice in Society and Influencing Policy," provides the background to this study. It examines the inherent political potentials of women and how effectively they can play a public role in politics, and contribute to governance and development. She discusses the need for women to be actively involved in the business of political governance. This study, though did not examine the implications of female under-representation in politics for gender equality, it is however relevant in that it provides genuine basis for women's involvement in politics in any context. Stephen Okhonmina and Ikponmwosa Ebomoyi's (2016) "Gender and Political Participation in Africa: The Nigerian Example," and Rodger Owiso and Bright Sefah's (2017), "Actualising Women's Participation in Politics and Governance in Africa: The Case of Kenya and Ghana," elucidate on the disparities women experienced in the democratisation processes across Africa.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

Okhonmina and Ebomoyi chronicle the internal and external dynamics which, over the decades, influenced the nature/pattern of female participation in politics. They provide necessary statistical reports which reveal the under-representation of women in politics. Owiso and Sefah's article, undertakes a critical exploration of the implementation of women's right to participate in governance, and the progress made so far. Though both works did not capture the holistic problems associated with female poor representation in the political landscape, they present the magnitude of gender imbalance and inequity. Carolyn Logan and Michael Bratton's (2006), "The Political Gender Gap in Africa: Similar Attitudes, Different Behaviours," and Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu (2013), *Political Parties in Africa through a Gender Lens*, are insightful.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

Logan and Bratton used public opinion data to explore differences in values, attitudes, and behaviours between men and women in fifteen African states. Their work, which suggest that discriminatory practices may not always be the case against women's participation in politics, thus, open up a lacuna for further research. Kandawasvika-Nhundu examines the nature of and degree to which the policy documents of political parties in 33 African states stimulate gender equality and representation of men and women in political leadership and decision making. The study shows that a significant fraction of political parties' policies in Africa lacked values of gender equality. These works will give credence to the understanding of the problems of female under-representation in politics and the implications of this for future gender balance, equity and mainstreaming.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

Fatile, Olufemi J., Ighodalo, Akhakpe; Igbokwe-Ibeto, Chinyeaka J. & Okpo, Oteh C. (2012, July). Feminism and political participation in Nigeria: An empirical analysis

- Employs descriptive survey (clustered and simple random sampling of 720 respondents from the six geopolitical zones involving questionnaire administration) and direct participation in examining impediments to female political participation in Nigeria
- Paper takes a strangely accusatorial tone against “the present generation of women revolutionaries” (p. 1078)
- What informed women’s electoral behaviour in 2011 general election: not aware of any female candidate, ethnic group affiliation, fact of being a man’s world, direction of husband, women not ripe for position, security situation, men have greater capacity
- Women faced: widespread discrimination from men in voting and allocation of political offices, limitations imposed by corporate culture which considers women as less ambitious, low representation of women at party executive level, inadequate education, lack of finances, maternal challenges and obligations
- Suggestions: establishment of institute for political education of women, allowing more women to access education, women empowerment, more positive attitude by women towards politics,



Literature Review (Cont'd)

Ogbogu, Christiana O. (2012) The role of women in politics and in the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of business and Social Science*, Vol. 3(18)

- Study reports that women in northern Nigeria voted for the first time in 1979; women had been voting in the South since shortly after independence.
- Adopted a survey research design – 700 structured questionnaire administered to randomly selected female politicians, activists, professionals in govt. and political parties across the six geopolitical zones + interviews with 10 purposively selected women occupying key leadership positions and found that 82.8% of respondents were married female participants in politics
- Sampled women reported the following major factors as inhibiting their participation in politics: multiple roles of women finance, patriarchy and other cultural barriers (e.g. restriction of movement, early marriage), exclusion from informal political party network



Literature Review (Cont'd)

- Interviewed women note, however, that women have served as agents of change in government, have been accountable while promoting transparency and good governance, have initiated self-help projects in rural areas, have overseen the emergence of a national policy document on gender, have been striving to have govt. meet 30% quota for female participation in politics
- Strategies adopted by women in breaking barriers to political participation include the following: building networks and partnerships in political parties, setting and pushing agenda for change via alliances, negotiating gender parity and engaging in advocacy for female participation in politics
- Suggestions on way forward: creation of enabling environment, set up legal framework supporting female participation, launch campaigns for female representation in political platforms, economic empowerment through access to education, employment and credit facilities, gender awareness and leadership training for prospective female participants in the political process



Literature Review (Cont'd)

Tripp, A.M. (2017) Women and politics in Africa. Oxford Research Encyclopedias.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.192>

- There was never total equality between men and women in precolonial African society in terms of political governance.
- However, there were clear instances in which women wielded significant power in certain societies.
- According to Tripp there were four manifestations of this: (i) sole rule as queens (ii) joint rule with a king as Queen Mother or Queen Sister (iii) tripartite rule involving King, Queen Mother and Queen Sister (iv) direct or indirect exercise of power by women during rule by Age Set or Group of Elders.
- The advent of Islam and Christianity, followed by colonisation, would later disrupt such arrangements, leaving women almost totally sidelined from the political process until agitations for independence.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

- Even after independence, women participation in politics remained severely limited (mostly under one-party rule) until the 1990s.
- In earlier times, as now, “Authority in the home is not seen in conflict with political authority, as women politicians even today often draw on their roles as mothers to give them added legitimacy to run for office” (p. 1).
- In particular, African political contexts seem to value motherhood far more than it is in the Western world.
- Since 2000, women have been more prominent in African politics, with Rwanda being a notable leader in that regard. Tripp claims, “Rwanda has the highest rate of legislative representation for women in the world, and Africa leads when it comes to women in cabinets and in key cabinet positions, as speakers of the house, quota adoption, and in other areas” (p. 2).
- Ethiopia, Angola, Nigeria and Madagascar had queens/queen regents.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

- Ethiopia: Queen Makeda (also Queen of Sheba/Queen of Saba, circa 1000 BCE. Ruled for about 50 years; founded the Menelik dynasty that ruled until Emperor Haile Selassie's deposition in 1974; also Queen Ahywa (or Sofya), Queen Yodit who founded the Zagwe dynasty; Empress Menen Leben Amede; Empress Taytu Betul (1850-1918); Kandake/Candace Amanirenas; Empress Zauditu (1916-1930) – last Ethiopian empress.
- Algeria: Queen Tin Hinan (4th century Tuareg warrior; Queen Dihiya (Kahina in Arabic)— Amazigh queen warrior
- Tunisia: Queen Zainab Tanfzawit Nafzouia (of Berber dynasty that ruled from 1040 to 1147 CE.
- Nigeria: Queen Amina Sarauniya of Zazzua (Zaria) (c. 1553-1610 CE)
- Angola: Queen Nzinga (1623-1663)
- Madagascar: Queen Rangita (1520-1530), Queen Rafohy (1530-1540), Ranavalona I (1829-1861), Queen Rasoherina (1863-?), Ranavalona II (1868-1883), Ranavalona III (1883-1897) – the last monarch in the territory.
- Prior to the 1990s, research in this area conducted by historians rather than political scientists.



Literature Review (Cont'd)

- **Perspectives from which female political participation has been studied:**
 - Women and political power in the post-conflict era (since (2000)
 - Women's legislative participation in the light of the Rwandan example
 - The impact of legislated and voluntary (political party) women's quotas
 - Comparisons of male and female qualifications for those in legislatures
 - Impact of shift from one-party state to multiparty systems
 - Women's participation in the executive, the courts and similar institutions
 - Historical and contemporary impacts of traditional institutions on women's participation
 - General influence of religion on women's political participation



Theoretical Background

For a better understanding of the thesis of this study, theories of Distributive Justice, Liberal Feminism and Intersectional and Critical Diversity Approach will be utilised. The theory of distributive justice (Carl Knight, 2014) was originally propounded by John Rawls. The theory describes the society as a space where citizens hold equal basic political and economic rights, a place where fairness in the distribution of offices prevail. Liberal feminism, developed in the 1960s, (Code, 2000) supports and promotes the idea of equal rights and opportunities, and also seeks to remove the barriers that push women to the background. Intersectional and Critical Diversity Approach is an inclusive view of gender studies that has to do with the idea of intersecting 'vectors' of power, privilege and oppression, that produce gendered, yet also, and simultaneously raced, classed ... subjects and identities (Longman and De Graeve, 2014).



Methods

- **Research design:** Mixed-methods of data collection; survey and face-to-face interviews
- **Study location:** Selected cities in Nigeria and Republic of Benin
- **Study population:** adult women aged 18+; nationals of Nigeria and Republic of Benin
- **Sampling:** Purposive, snowball and random sampling techniques.
- **Research instruments:** Structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews
- **Data analysis:** SPSS (quantitative), Nvivo (qualitative). Univariate/bivariate analyses for quantitative. Thematic analysis for qualitative



Results

Number of respondents who completed the survey questionnaire by study location

Location	F	%
Enugu	103	25.60%
Ibadan	115	28.60%
Kaduna	88	21.90%
Bohichon	96	23.90%
Total	402	100



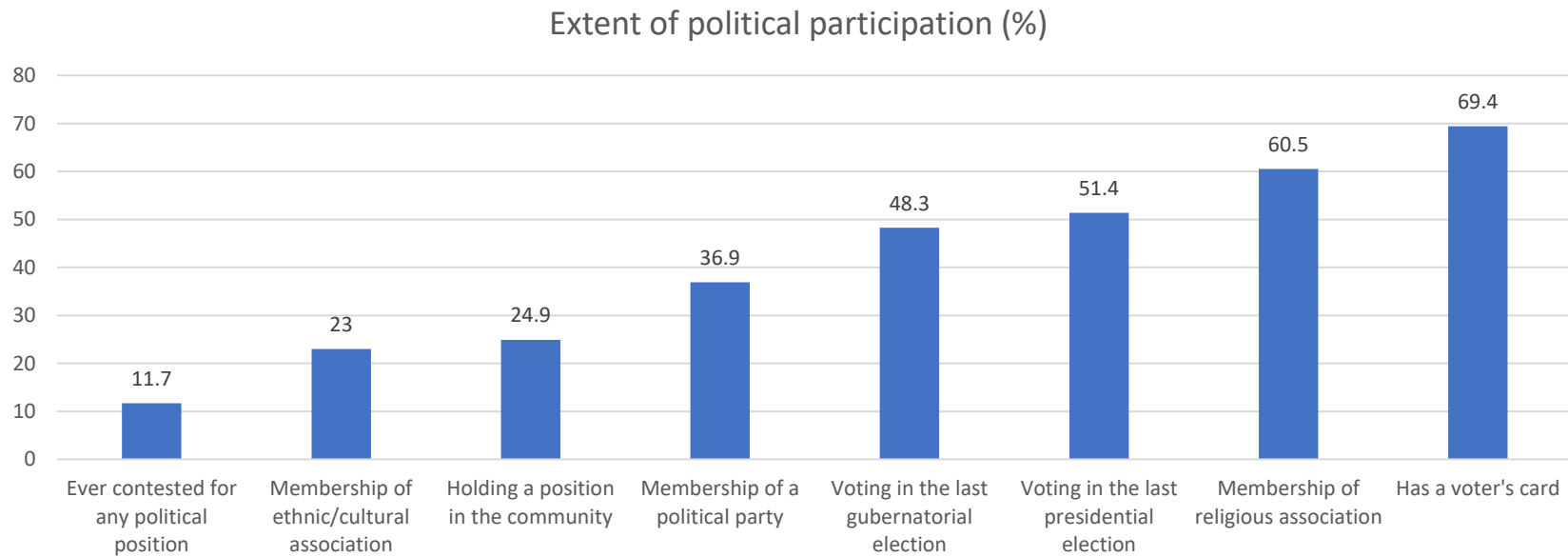
Results (Cont'd)

		Study Locations				Total
		Enugu	Ibadan	Kaduna	Bohichon	
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	90 (28.1%)	103 (32.2%)	51 (15.9%)	76 (23.8%)	320
	Islam	11 (15.7%)	11 (15.7%)	37 (52.9%)	11 (15.7%)	70
	Others	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (100.0%)	9
Marital Status	Single	35 (23.3%)	10 (6.7%)	13 (8.7%)	92 (61.3%)	150
	Married	64 (27.5%)	98 (42.1%)	68 (29.2%)	3 (1.3%)	233
	Separated	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3
	Divorced	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	4 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5
	Widowed	3 (30.0%)	6 (60.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10
Type of Marriages	Monogamous	70 (27.2%)	102 (39.7%)	42 (16.3%)	43 (16.3%)	257
	Polygamous	9 (23.1%)	6 (15.4%)	22 (56.4%)	2 (5.1)	39
	Polyandrous	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2
Ethnic Affiliations	Hausa	14 (25.9%)	3 (5.6%)	37 (68.5%)	0 (0.0%)	54
	Igbo	85 (80.2%)	13 (12.3%)	7 (6.6%)	1 (0.9%)	106
	Yoruba	1 (0.9%)	94 (87.9%)	5 (4.7%)	7 (6.5%)	107
	Adja	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (100.0%)	13
	Fon	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	43 (100.0%)	43
	Others	2 (2.8%)	5 (6.9%)	34 (47.2%)	31 (43.1%)	72



Results (Cont'd)

Some indicators of political participation



- Women constitute the crowd in religious associations but not political ones
- Over two-thirds of women have a voter's card, but they hardly contest for positions.
- This shows that there is a limit to their participation- they can vote but not contest. What are the barriers?



Results (Cont'd)

- The understanding of “political participation” vary.
- The majority emphasized getting involved, being a member and being appointed as a leader. Only few emphasize contesting for positions

Themes	Understanding of political participation. Some quotes from interviews
Activism	“It’s a way of making, fighting for our nation”
Awareness and getting involved	“It is when you are fully in politics and hold a political office in political corridor”
Awareness and getting involved	“Political Participation means to willing be part of the political process of a state or community even a country”
Awareness and getting involved	“To beware of political activities and also be involved”
Awareness and getting involved	“When you are fully in politics..... To join any party and to fully participate in politics in election period”
Awareness and getting involved	“It simply means getting involved at every stage of politics, joining a political party, creating awareness, get your permanent voters card and making sure your vote counts. it is not someone who is physically active in politics, people do get it wrong. People think that to be physically active is until you are vying for an office or being in political organization”
Awareness and getting involved	“It means for one to be involved in politics that is to help in knowing what is happening in the society and how to control it and how to support it, for things to be ok.”
Awareness and getting involved	“Different levels. Political participation, you talk of where we start from. Where you are told to get your cards, if you don’t have your cards, you will not be able to go to school. Your voters card, then from there, there is another level. Another level of some people coming to knock on your door, asking you to come for political meeting because they think, ok we need more numbers, it’s about numbers. Then this level that I am now, where you’re actually involved in the....the party I belong to now, the PDP, once you’re a member of NEC, that’s the highest decision-making body, you’re there forever. Even when you have to go to another party and come back, I did that. In 2019, I was in ADC, I was the State Women Leader, Oyo State, for Africa Democratic Congress. But once you’re back, you’re back. That’s PDP. So once you belong to the NEC.”
Elections/Leadership	“Carrying out the civic responsibility within the society as a politician and doing the same in the society as a community leader when appointed to a position”
Elections/leadership	“Based on my own understanding, it has to do with somebody who decides to get involved in politics by contesting for a particular position.... To engage in politics is to contest for a political office either in the local government, state government or at the federal level. There are many positions people do contest for at these three levels, to engage is to vie for one and win.”
Elections/leadership	“To participate in politics {reasons} is for you to make out your time to join the politics. Well actually, you must have leaders. So these politics, they’re for leadership. So I believe that they’re coming out to make the society good.”
Elections/Leadership	“My understanding of political participation is to join politics and become a leader or support a leader of choice during elections”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

SEVEN BROAD BARRIERS WERE IDENTIFIED

1. CULTURE OF PATRIARCHY
2. FINANCE
3. FAMILY/MARRIAGE
4. RELIGION
5. GENDER DISCRIMINATION/MARGINALIZATION
6. POLITICAL STRUCTURE
7. FEAR AND STIGMATIZATION

The complexity of these barriers stems from their interrelatedness. For example, the culture of patriarchy affects marriage, perception of women's work, and consequently gender disparity in terms of wealth accumulation.

See the next slide for an example of complexity of the barriers.

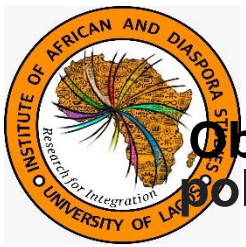


Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

❖ A typical example of complexity of the barriers:

“Selfishness on the part of the leaders is responsible. Thank God for the type of women in politics now; we do not yield easily anymore. In fact, that is the crux of the meeting going on at the moment. We are saying that out of the 33 local governments, women must have between 10 and 15 but they are insisting on giving us three. Women bear the burden in politics. We cannot keep quiet. It's a faulty template that operates across board; the same thing obtains in Abuja. For instance, I was invited to a program in Abuja with the theme "Women in politics" The different tribes, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and all others were represented at the meeting. There were lots of people there. I made it clear in my own contribution that in the next political dispensation a woman should be considered for the office of vice president. Why should it be man all the time? A woman should be the vice but because they don't trust us women they don't give it to us. why no trust? Back in the days our mothers were shouted down and they complied and a lot of women were dissuaded from participating by their husbands. Thank God that the churches and mosques are now sensitizing the women about politics. I was invited to a church to speak to the youth about participation in politics. The women are being encouraged to stamp their presence on the scene, unlike before when if a woman is chosen as a leader, gets home and tells the husband who says there is nothing of such it's an excuse for sleeping around and shunning the responsibility of taking care of the children. That has been a problem. The leaders, on the other hand, pose the question "hope your husband will not say we are sleeping with you?" There had been an instance that some husband had slapped a leader”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

1. CULTURE OF PATRIARCHY

- “...men don't recognize women in anything they're doing...they feel women cannot handle any post... they intimidate the women...To be accepted as a female in politics you have to have the backing or support of an influential male politician. They could assassinate ... male politicians fear that female politicians may want to expose their corrupt and evil practices”
- “The first thing is culture, culture makes men feel they are superior to women. It makes men feel they are the head and women should just play a kind of secondary role. In Nigeria, people believe that if women participate in politics, she will dominate and the men are afraid because they don't want women to be equal to them. That's why they don't put women in positions of leadership”
- “Women face various challenges starting from the husband, family and society cum community they leave in. Some people will say how can a woman be part of politics in the midst of men that she cannot be clean nor have integrity. They would describe the woman as one who is living unholy life by mingling with men”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in Selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

1. CULTURE OF PATRIARCHY (cont'd)

- “..... the cultural belief system has purposely designed African system to be patriarchal thereby projecting women to be subordinate and the religious doctrine which revalidated it during the colonial era”
- “It is lack of boldness to take the risk by the women and marginalization on the side of the men especially in the north here where women are not totally allowed to lead.”
- “...It's societal perceptions that make women look irresponsible when you invest in politics, especially the single ladies and this always leads to sexual harassment from all these political lords mentioned earlier and the lady in question may feel uncomfortable and quit”
- “When you look at the African society generally, the place of a woman has always been that of a subtle partner, culturally, religiously, they do not have a level playing field against the men. Religion puts them as that submissive partner; culture is also saying you are not at par with your husband or with the men so you have to take that lower seat. So you cannot discuss politics at the apex level without even considering from the household level.....I place priority on the male child against the female child. She will grow knowing that the male child has always been given that priority, that position. Psychologically, she would grow with that feeling that the man is superior. When they grow, the ability to come out and participate fully with the men is already diminished by that psychological training”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

2. FINANCE

- “One is the issue of financing. Politics these days is driven by money. For example, the people who win primary election to contest at different party platforms, they spend a lot of money to get themselves voted by the delegates. How many women have such resources? “
- “It is so because women have seen leadership as business for the men and others who wish to join politics are not rich.”
- “The challenge is money, politics in Nigeria is not a child's play and it involves money.”
- “The major one is financial problem, even with the sustainable development goals report. Women are more financially handicapped than men. Then, when women contest or participate in politics is difficult getting support from their counterparts.”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

3. FAMILY/MARRIAGE

- **Women are shy, they are always feeling shy and they always engage in their house chores. That's one of the things that prevent them from participating in politics. For Some, their husband doesn't allow them**
- **“Marriage is a barrier, you know as married women for example, when you don't have much support from your husband, It will be very difficult for you to participate in politics.**
- **“As a married woman, before you take care of home, manage your matrimony, it's not easy. And what...the challenges you face as a woman is, you know your men. You know men, for their own habit, they like cheating. They like to toss about women because they believe that the mentality of some women is to give what they have to get what they want..... you know men have ego. And they use that ego any time any day, anywhere. Immediately they spot a woman in the politics, they nod, they know what they're going to do.....”**



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

4. GENDER DISCRIMINATION/MARGINALIZATION

- **“It is the work of the men who redesigned everything, they marginalized us and they don't give us the room to carry out our responsibility as women. They feel we are not equal to the task or we can't do what is expected. Just as you know, sometimes they will just look down on women and that's just it.”**
- **“For me I see it as gender discrimination. This idea of women stereotype that, women cannot do what men can do. Even as women we don't really encourage ourselves, in terms of creating awareness that women should support women. What happened in the national assembly women cannot lobby to be part of the decision-making process.”**
- **“Because of the marginalization taking place everywhere, with the perception that, women should not lead as preached by the leading religions such as Christianity and Islam, even in traditional religion.”**



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

5. RELIGION

- **“Another one in the north here is religion, it is believed that when women go into politics, they are usually perceived as ungodly and they see these set of women as ones who have gone out of the doctrine of their religion.”**
- **“I will say lack of orientation for some especially those who are deep in religion.”**



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

6. POLITICAL STRUCTURE

- **“.....the interest of the ‘power that be’ in the political Arena. Sometimes, you will see a young lady willing to participate in politics and the people in the political arena, I mean the Godfathers who have candidates they have interest to hold certain positions in the society and the position would have been penciled down for the persons, they will never allow you to be”**
- **“.....Even those colleagues, those people that are in political power, whatever the stupid meeting they want to do, they do it in the midnight. And it's very difficult for any woman to attend such meetings. I mean I think you get me. Would you sneak out of your husband's house in the midnight and say, ah I want to go for a meeting in the midnight?”**

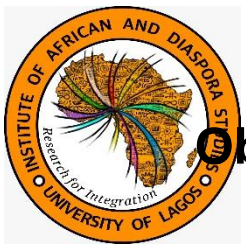


Results (Cont'd)

Objective 1: Identify the complexity of barriers against African women's participation in the political process in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities

7. POLITICAL STRUCTURE

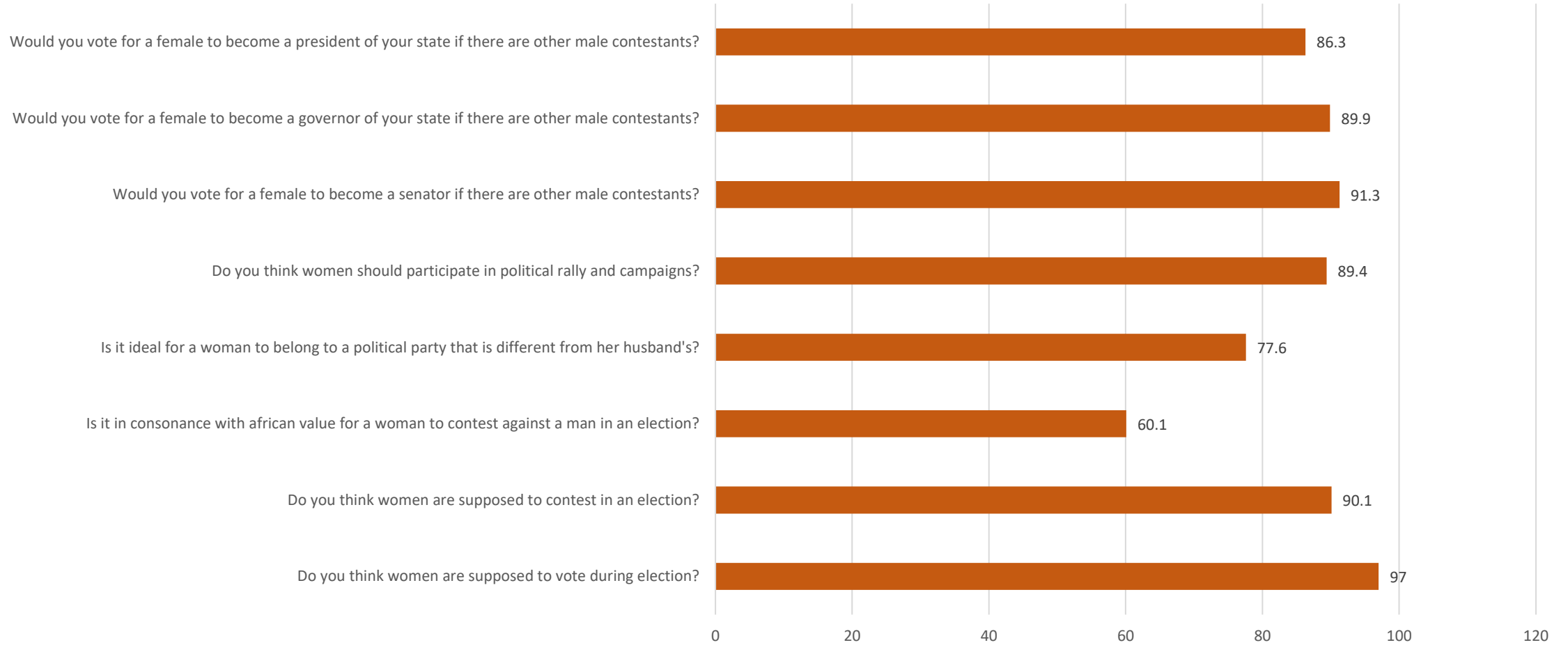
- “Women often have fears and face intimidation... Women suffer stigmatization in politics”
- “Women face fear in politics”
- “Women face name calling in politics and sometimes, death threats.”
- “Women face inferiority complex if not enlightened about politics.”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

Perception/attitudes toward women in politics (% that answered "yes")





Results (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

- **The qualitative interviews show that women have positive attitude towards women in politics.**
- **But the societal perception of Nigerian politics is negative, and anyone who joins it is perceived in similar light.**
- **The level of political activism is high among women**
- **Some women try to moderate between holding on to the traditional values and embracing women in politics**



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WOMEN IN POLITICS?

- “I think of them as people of low integrity, because politicians generally lie and commit different atrocities to get to office and I think a woman who joins them too will be in the same shoe.”
- “They are the strong women who don’t listen to the nonsense people are saying in the society and offices they hold are the best across the government levels.”
- “What I think about them is that they’re capable if they’re being given a chance. They will be capable of whatever post that is being given to them.”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WOMEN WHO CONTEST AGAINST MEN FOR POLITICAL POSITIONS?

- “The women who contest against Men are women of confidence, because it takes a certain level of confidence to challenge a man over a position in the African male dominated society.”
- “They are the women who are highly enlightened and not brainwashed by religious belief systems. With them coming out and slugging it out with men, the future is bright for the women and we will get there.”
- “I love them because they have the boldness. Because women are being intimidated and we say no. That that thing they feel they (men) can handle, we the women, we can still handle it better than them.”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Interrogate public perceptions and societal attitudes towards women in politics and their political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

SHOULD WOMEN BELONG TO A DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTY FROM THEIR HUSBANDS?

- “Yes and that is the only way for the women to be free because political meetings can come up anytime and the husband will be aware of this compared to the notice coming from other political party.”
- “Yes, they can and this has nothing to do with their marriage. Marriage is family affairs and politics is public affairs which will later shape what the family will be through government’s policy. Besides, the constitution give us the right as individuals and marriage rights can not supersede the constitution.”
- “Actually yes, because many atimes, the party that the husband belongs to, might not be the one that they want because they will like to go for the best.”



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 3: To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

1. Government

- The government encourage women to register for voter's card.
- Government provide funding support to women through local governments for political mobilization
- However, there is a limit. The support given by government officials is to encourage women to vote for them
- In many states, men have migrated to other states for economic reasons. The women are more eligible to vote. Hence, the support provided by government is to encourage them to vote, not necessarily to allow them reach top echelon in the political leadership.

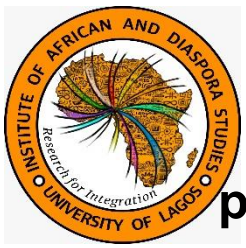


Results (Cont'd)

Objective 3: To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

2. Religion

- Religious organisations have played mixed roles.
- While some religious leaders hold on to the traditional doctrines, other advocate women participation in politics.
- Religious institutions have more negative impacts in northern Nigeria as the doctrine of women subordination is still being preached.
- Killings in some parts of Nigeria are politically motivated. Hence, some religious leaders are desisting from commenting on politics or encouraging political activities in church to avoid mass murder during church services.



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 3: To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

3. Education

- Education is blurring the negative impacts of culture and religion.
- Education comes with civilization and allows women to challenge the culture of patriarchy.
- “Education is really opening the way for women. Once you go to school, you will begin to reason differently and politics will inspire you”

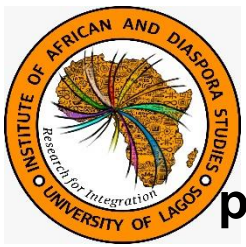


Results (Cont'd)

Objective 3: To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

4. Traditional rulers

- **The role of traditional rulers is informed by culture and religion. Hence, the roles vary across locations. For example, traditional rulers in the South-East encourage women in politics, but the reverse is the case in the north.**
- **“...Even if they (traditional rulers) will encourage, that's not in the north because our traditional leaders always emerged from religious background, that is why Emir has meaning in Islam” (Interviewee from Northern Nigeria)**
- **“I'm not going to lie to you. Like in my political service, when I was coming out, I had an encounter with two traditional men and they were supportive.” (Interviewee from southern Nig)**



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 3: To examine the roles of social institutions generally and female organisations particularly in African women's political participation in selected Nigerian & Benin Republic cities.

5. Media and private organizations

- There are NGOs who advocate for gender equality and women politics
- They go around street-by-street campaigning against female genital mutilation, partner abuse, etc.
- Radio and television stations also advocate for women participation in politics.
- During political campaigns and rally in southern Nigeria, you will see more women than men. But in the north, it is the opposite.



Results (Cont'd)

Objective 4: Derive policy roadmap for improved participation of African women in politics

- **Creation of more awareness**
- **Laws against gender-based discrimination should be enacted**
- **Encouragement of mass female participation in politics**
- **Funding support for female education**
- **Constitutions stipulating higher percentage of women for political offices**



CONCLUSION

- **There has been an improvement in female political participation in Africa**
- **Women are getting involved in politics, but there is a limit to their growth in politics**
- **Perennial culture of patriarchy and money-bag politics constitute barriers to women's growth in politics**
- **Education up to tertiary level is challenging while the dominant culture is perceived as gender-biased**
- **Spatial variation exists. Southern Nigeria is making more progress than Benin Republic and Northern Nigeria in terms of women's participation in politics**



Field-Trip Pictures: Ibadan





Field-Trip Pictures: Ibadan





Field-Trip Pictures: Enugu





Second Year Plan

1. Fieldwork in Ghana and Burkina Faso: September – October
2. South Africa and Kenya: November – December
3. Transcription and translation: January – February
4. Evaluation of fieldwork: March – April
5. Call for Submission for edited Volume – May
6. Stakeholders' Workshop – June
7. Formal Analysis – July
8. Peer Review of article submission - August.
9. Premiere of the documentary - September
10. Closing workshop – October
11. Report Writing – November