



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**WOMEN'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES: THE CASE  
OF MARRIAGE & POLITICS IN KENYA**

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**Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Women,  
Leadership and Governance in Africa of the African Women  
Studies Centre, University of Nairobi**

**2018**

**DECLARATION**

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to all women aspiring and succeeding in their public spaces. It is to show and narrate to them that the journey has been long and they are part of a story that will be told with nostalgia when we actually achieve equity in gender. I also commend the African Women Study Center for the milestone of creating a platform for African women to learn about themselves and to enable them contribute to the governance of their nations.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

It is with great humility and gratitude that I wish to acknowledge the many sources of moral and intellectual encouragement I benefited from while undertaking this study. I thank God for the giving me the grace and patience to come this far. I wish to offer my earnest thanks to my classmates and course supervisors for their astute direction. Professor Wanjiku Kabira without whom I would not have been able to pursue this great course. I thank her for according me the opportunity and support to undertake the study. Second, I remain grateful to Dr. Lanoi Maloy whose help was unmatched and she never tired in her guidance. Many thanks goes out to the staff at the AWCS for their help and comprehension while undertaking this examination. I am also grateful to Richard Mokaya Moseti whose continuous encouragement kept me going to complete this thesis. My mother`s guidance remains unparalleled, my father, Eng. Aineah, made tremendous sacrifices to ensure I registered for this course and for that I am eternally grateful.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AAWORD	Association of African Women for Research and Development
AWSC	African Women Studies Centre
CCGD	Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVAW (K)	Coalition on Violence Against Women – Kenya
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KWPC	Kenya Women`s Political Caucus
LKWV	League of Kenya Women Voters
LSK	Law Society of Kenya
MP	Member of Parliament
MYWO	Maendeleo Ya Wanawake
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
SMS	Short Message Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WPA-K	Women`s Political Alliance of Kenya
WSP-K	Women`s Shadow Parliament – Kenya
ODM	Orange Democratic Party

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis sought to examine a woman politician's private and public spaces and see how the two concepts intertwine in her life. It analyses the impact of one space on the other and the resulting consequences. In addition, it delves into the society's definition and demarcation of public and private spaces and in particular focuses on female politicians and their manifestation of public and private spaces. It goes on to explore the fact that a woman's private space directly impacts her public space. The general objective of the study was to examine the Kenyan state of public and private spaces of women with a focus on politics. The study was guided by the following specific research objectives: to describe the historical context of Kenyan women public and private spaces, to examine the challenges of married women seeking public office in Kenya and to examine selected women politician's response to their public and private spaces. The theoretical framework used was feminist political theory. The theory denotes that patriarchy has power and dominance over women due to anchored societal and state structures that are designed to systematically maintain women in a position of subordination. This theory examines why the dominance of men over women consistently affects women's entry into the public space. The case study method dominated the compilation of data in this thesis with a feminist approach. The methodology in this thesis reviewed case studies using an interdisciplinary approach in reviewing literature for understanding definitions of feminism, women's movements, iconic women in the struggle. This study included a selection of female politicians in Kenya in major positions such as governors, senators, women representatives and member of parliaments. Data was collected using secondary sources such as books, papers, scholarly journals documents and scripts ranging from anthropology, sociology, political science, literature, and film on women's movements and liberations with focus on public and private spaces. Thematic analysis thereby follows a comparison of different perspectives of the writers and finally researcher's response. The key findings were that indeed a woman's private space directly impacts her public space more often than not in a negative manner. The thesis concludes by noting that deliberate efforts need to be made to avoid the double standard of societal judgment on female politicians and work on changing the narrative to provide equal access, opportunity and fighting chance in elections. The investigation recommends that political gatherings ought to create instruments or unique measures to expand the quantity of women's participation in party administration and basic leadership positions. Likewise, they ought to give clear principles to create societal buy in into women leadership to permit important contribution from women in the political parties. Political parties should invest in women programs at the grass root level thereby changing the public narrative on the treatment of women during the "heat" of the political processes in Kenya.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter covers the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives and research questions. It further explains the justification for the study while outlining the scope and the limitations of the study. It introduces the thesis to the reader and gives an overview of what this thesis is about.

### **1.1 Background**

#### **Public and Political Life**

Women's access to leadership is a key component for fair representation to be realized. Equal participation of men and women in political and public affairs makes government and society more accountable and transparent. There are many declarations, documents, memoranda and agreements in government that ratify this position. For instance, article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes the right of every person to take part in government in his or her country. Locally, Articles 27 (8), 81 (b), 97, 90(2: b), 175(c), 177(1: b), and 197(1) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 requires that not more than two thirds of the members of appointive and electives bodies shall be of the same gender. However, structural and societal barriers remain a stumbling block for women in or aspiring to be in public office.

Many times, women's public and private spaces are intimately intertwined. A woman's private space includes her body, her marriage, her personal relationships and her household. Her public space primarily is her professional space. Tamale (2004) states that family life is generally and socially built and is firmly connected to male controlled society, gender/control relations and the simulated private/open qualification. The way

male controlled society characterizes women is to such an extent that their full and healthy presence relies upon getting married, having kids and looking after their family."

In this context, women`s public spaces are those areas where women operate from outside their body and household while their private spaces include their household and their bodies. The private space is an opposite or a complement of the public space (Harbermas, 1989). Society defines a woman primarily by the state of her private space. (Adawo, Gikonyo, Kudu, & Mutoro,2011)) Meaning a woman needs to answer the following questions to define who she is and how much leverage she can command or demand such as 1) Are you married? 2) Do you have children? 3) Are you divorced? 4) Are you considered moral as per the African traditional values? And so forth. Men on the other hand have an unspoken pedestal upon which their private space is left untouched and unmentioned. They are defined by their public space, their professions. (Andrade, 2002) Rarely would a man`s introduction include the title father but a woman would have to answer the rhetorical question about being a mother and thus say,` I am a mother to two beautiful children ` and so on. Note that children are the immediate result of a woman`s body (her private space). The contention in the theory is that women`s private spaces ought not characterize their public space.

Niara Surdakasa (1986) opines that the domains of female and male in African social orders were regularly depicted as partitioned however correlative. She contends that when most scholars thought about "the parcel" of women and men in Africa, they credited to men a "superior" circumstance, a "higher" status. A notion that she feels is not accurate to depict. These better situations were often the public spaces. There was a demarcation and that women belonged to the private space by gender and men belonged

to the public space. As explained by Martin Whyte (2010), one cannot assume that social relations that are favourable for women may result in favourable relations in other spheres. Whyte (2010) states that the absence of relationship between various parts of the part and status of women in respect to men is expected to a great extent to the way that women as a gathering are on a very basic level not quite the same as status and class. This privilege here is the reasoning that framed the assessment and depiction of women throughout the decades and it is both wrong and uncalled for to women.

Structural and societal barriers remain a stumbling block for women in office and those aspiring for office. The implicit assumption by M. Nzomo (2012) is that behind the many decades of concerted efforts to gain access to political leadership has remained that women do not make a significant difference when in leadership. It is this narrative that is being used to fight the implementation of the two thirds gender rule in Kenya and the movement against the constitutionally created women representative positions in parliament.

Various women come in through affirmative action and have earned a seat at the table to contribute to pertinent issues in society, this will on occasion have started from different women positioned in government authorities, since couple of women have won in constituent authoritative issues previously and have the fundamental experience to become conversation starters on these issues. This attempts to alleviate women's obstacles as they should learn at work. Nzomo contends that the evident political nonattendance by women should be understood inside the basic hindrances that women universally and at the national level keep on facing as they look to take part in every aspect of governmental issues. I concentrate on women' investment in legislative issues

and basic leadership all around demonstrate that the playing field has dependably been tilted for men, all the more so in nations, for example, Kenya that are very patriarchal.

Women in general play various roles in the society; as individuals or in the society as a whole. Politics has been known for a long time to be men's affair (Hunt 1989). The game of politics has changed however women are more aggressively and adamantly demanding for a seat at the table despite all negative societal judgments and labels. Women politicians, just like other women, do have roles such as looking after the family and representing the people who elected them. This thesis discusses the status of public and private spaces of women politicians. It investigates new advancements and patterns in women's political support, as far as portrayal, interest and affecting the plan. Every one of these regions of concentrate eventually feature how a woman's private space impacts her open space (political space and aspirations).

Over 10 years after the fact, new understandings of open and political life are developing in view of better approaches for contemplating separation, gender, open life and political cooperation (Kabira 2012). In the midst of political turmoil and change, for instance, ideas, for example, political settlement, state-building, comprehensive popular government, transitional equity and sacred outline are basic for thought, if women are to completely get to open and political life in post-transitional society (Simeen, 2012). Eyben (1979) portrays political strengthening as "individuals' ability to impact strategy, make requests, and demand an explanation from the state foundations that effect upon their lives. This incorporates political portrayal and aggregate activity." When thinking about women's investment in the economy and in political life, strengthening must likewise think about women's entrance and assembly inside formal and casual political

spaces. Women join politics and use their leadership positions largely to advance desired service to their constituents, increase women representation in leadership and decision making tables and to promote improved and sustainable livelihoods for women among other things.

This is connected to the lopsided weight that women carry in providing care duties, which can confine their capacity to get to public and political life. (Kiragu 2006) Their enthusiasm for open air and political life is as it is for the men. This segment breaks down the universal human rights legitimate structure that shapes our reasoning about women' rights inside open and political life. Neighborhood, national and regional performing specialists have used general human rights tenets to progress sexual introduction consistency in law, and these norms plot our cognizance of the responsibilities of states to address sex difference with no attempt at being subtle in political life. The interlaced issues of home life, public life and character are at the center of discussions regarding women's access into public space specifically political life.

In the same vein, I have explored more formal strategies for political collaboration, including the benefit to pick political expertise; the benefit to appreciate political organization; and the ability to affect the political strategy once picked for women. This is important while considering women candidates to guarantee that they have tangible impact in society and control in their respective offices while maintaining a positive narrative once they are chosen to legislative issues.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the numerous efforts by the Kenyan Constitution (2010) to mainstream gender and provide an equitable environment for women to thrive in their social and economic

societies, there still exists social unjust acts against women in governmental issues who confront women purely based on their gender. African culture plays a big part in perpetuating the low status of African women. The African culture in Kenyan communities is largely anchored on patriarchy whose tenets dictate men`s dominance over women. This notion makes it uncomfortable for men when they see women encroaching in their perceived areas (Maloiy, 2016; Tamale, 2004). According to patriarchy, women have no role in society out of their private spaces. They exist to give birth, be wives, mothers and tend to the home. Thus the entry of women into the public spaces where men deem it that they have an inherent and exclusive right to, is met by massive resistance (Chove, 2005). This resistance is exhibited by violent physical attacks on women in the public space, rape (in an effort to subdue them, injure their confidence and self-esteem and to show dominance over them) and negative derogatory narratives pasted upon them. It becomes very hard to shake off these labels once society brands you one and can greatly affect women`s chance at getting into leadership or public office. Despite women having attained the professional requirements needed like degrees and experience, patriarchy has put forward other unspoken qualifications based upon a woman`s private space as requirements to get into office. The major problem this thesis seeks to address is that there is a major gap in legislative and political leadership of women in the country. Women have failed to attain the critical mass so direly needed to be able to make the necessary changes in relation to gender, gender equality and its related tenets in parliament and county assemblies. (NDI Elections Gender Report 2018). The critical mass herein refers to the minimum number of legislatures required to influence or impact change. This thesis examines why this is so, using selected case

studies of women political leaders while analyzing their entry into public spaces and their acceptance and challenges in their private space. It also examines the way the private and public spaces of women in politics intertwine and brings to the surface the direct association between these two spaces on the selected women`s political career and the overall societal buy in into women in leadership. Political speculation has generally been extensively fathomed by three factors: the benefit to pick the political organization of the country, the benefit to be a part in the political activity and the sexual introduction affectability of the political fundamental authority segments (Heung, 2015). There are basic plans inside overall human rights law that anticipate that states will respect, guarantee and fulfill women's rights to political help. The thesis dissected these three segments to integrate advance in women political leadership; to feature where change is expected to better adjust existing practices; and to propose great practices for achieving the objective of gender equity in public and private spaces.

### **1.3 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to prove that marriage is a key component of the private space of women which directly influences their public spaces in politics.

The following are the specific objectives bring that into focus.

#### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

The present study was guided by the following specific research objectives:

- 1) To describe the historical context of Kenyan women in public and private spaces.
- 2) To examine the challenges of married women seeking public office In Kenya face.

- 3) To examine selected Kenyan women politicians' response to societal judgement on their private and public spaces.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The present study was guided by the accompanying examination questions:

- 1) What was the historical context of Kenyan women in public and private spaces?
- 2) What are the challenges married women seeking public office In Kenya face?
- 3) What are selected Kenyan women politicians' response to societal judgement on their private and public spaces?

#### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Many women in their careers break the glass ceiling often dominated by men many times having this question hanging above their heads, "What makes you have the audacity to try and compete with men?" It is not a matter of equity anymore and we have many women mostly mothers who tell their daughters to take a step a back or tone it down a bit in order to be seen as marriageable. That a woman`s private space directly impacts her public space and she is solely judged fairly in the public space upon successfully accomplishing societies` level of private space success which is having a husband, kids and a stable home.

This study is necessary because it brings to light the unspoken and systematic discrimination women have to go through in the political public space while the country`s narrative sings empowerment to women. It sounds the alarm that the reality is not as is perceived in the flamboyant documents ratified, signed and published on women empowerment. The case studies and responses from women in Kenyan politics go to show that even at that level of accomplishment the judgement and hammer still falls on



women as it would on a new female entrant into the public arena who is yet to prove herself.

The study opined that we are yet to demarcate the two spaces for women as we have for men. As a man is never judged by the number of children he has, or how many wives he has or how many affairs he has. These matters have no direct impact on his professional career. A man also does not have to use his private space- body. A woman once married is deemed to belong to the man`s home and no longer part of her father`s home. In seeking political office, she is constantly a displaced individual struggling to create a concrete support base for herself as her birth home consider her to belong to her husband`s home and they too consider that she is not there by right of birth and will remember their people more. Marriage which is a private space has always been a major bone of contention for women politicians as experienced in the 2017 Kenyan general elections by Joyce Laboso of Bomet, Gathoni wa Muchomba of Kiambu and Cecily Mbarire of Embu. It is therefore imperative that this study be conducted in order to unearth what is and recommend what ought to be.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on Kenyan women politicians to prove the hypothesis that society judges women politician`s eligibility for success in politics based on her private space and that a woman politician`s private space directly influences, affects and impacts her public space. Its application of the hypothesis is not universal. The study has also narrowed down to one aspect of the private space – marriage but it acknowledges that there are many factors and topics to consider when discussing the private space.

In addition, the case studies focused on representative regions in Kenya (i.e., Rift Valley, Central, North Eastern and Coast). Granted, it is not representative of the whole country. The study was limited to certain counties.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The study has focused on secondary data as politicians are extremely difficult to book a time for an interview which would have granted the study primary sources of data.

### **1.8 Chapter Outline**

The present examination comprises of five parts. Part one subtle elements the foundation information to the theme of research, issue explanation, destinations of the examination, think about legitimization, the Literature Review, hypothetical introduction, consider procedure utilized lastly the section plot. Chapter two covers the History of Kenyan Women and Their Public and Private Spaces in Kenyan Politics. Chapter three covers Case Studies: The Public and Private Spaces Kenyan Women Politicians. Chapter four focuses on Challenges Women Face in Balancing Their Public and Private Spaces. Chapter five outlines the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter takes us through the literature advanced by other scholars on the public and private spaces school of thought. It dissects the meaning as accepted by others and how it applies to the African society. The chapter then goes on to examine women`s private and public space in the country. It dissects the access women have to public space. Further it delves into women`s equal access to public space in relation with cultural barriers and finally assess African marriages in the context of public and private spaces.

#### **2.1 Empirical Review**

Martin Heidegger (1992) contended that it is just in the private circle that one can be one's bona fide self, rather than the unoriginal and personality the of people in general domain. Richard Sennett (1976) however restricted what he saw as the Romantic glorification of the private domain of close relations, rather than people in general circle of activity at a separation. Deleuze and Guattari (2000) considered postmodernism to be testing the conventional split amongst private and open circles, creating rather the supersaturated space of prompt nearness and media-investigation recently free enterprise. In the traditional world, financial life was the privilege of the family, such issues which couldn't be managed by the family alone entered general society domain of the police. Then again, in early current Europe, religion was a vital concern, basic to the support of the state, with the goal that points of interest of private love were fervently and opposed in people in general circle. Correspondingly, sexual conduct was liable to a by and large

concurrent code openly upheld by both formal and casual social control (Dabhoiwala 2012).

In postmodern society, both religion and sex are now generally seen as matters of private choice. It is therefore now a clear indication of the demarcation of private and public spaces in the modern world. We cannot escape it. Hillary Clinton in her 2016 campaign speech at Louisiana reiterated that you have to have a public opinion and a private opinion, a public action and a private action. The whole world cannot be inside your world (Kunovich, 2005).

More relevant to this research is that Suhsani's text emphasizes the political role played by women and women's organizations in Africa and Kenya in particular by exploring how both males and females shared in the African traditional societies' political activities. Through Suhsani's work, we see major efforts by women in organizations to get into state power system. (Okonjo Kamene 1977). The State Power system here refers to the ruling elite class. Similar cases can be drawn from among the Baganda, Ankole, Akan of Uganda and Donga community in Cameroun, where females of the royal lineages shared power with the king and it was common for women to have their own residences, courts, court officials and property. The women often operated their own domains in taxes, judicial and administrative matters and were not pawns of the king. However, the dual sex structure did not give women equal status of participation but did allow women's inclusion, their voice and protests. (Kamene, 1997)

However, despite their presence in the political sphere, women often participate as subjects in activities very different from men. In most cases they are given roles that enhance their 'motherhood' attributes with no emphasis on their actual presence in

decision-making circles. This pattern is most evident in government appointments in African states whenever women are appointed to the cabinet or other high political office. Appointments to political positions reflect the role they play in private spheres as seen in responsibilities given to them, for example, health, education, welfare and women affairs. William Chafe recognizes that participation of women in political processes depends, at least in part, on the presence of group pressure (Chafe, 1970) Chafe recognizes that women's contribution in the political process was through women's organizations. Her work accounts for the progress made by American women in the political, economic and social roles. However, she gives much emphasis on individualism of women's contribution in drawing massive women participation in politics and downplays the role played by the women's organizations the women belonged to. This research will mention the role of the women's organizations in enhancing women's participation in politic

#### *Caroline Moser's Triple Role of Women*

The Moser framework indicated that the triple role of women includes the reproductive, productive and community managing work. (Moser 1989) There are socially defined ideas and practices that determine the roles of men and women in society. The community role refers to women collective work at the community level. The reproductive role is not only limited to the act of giving birth but also the process of maintaining and sustaining a life throughout its childhood. Women engage in many activities that ensure the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force. The productive role refers to women as income earners with a large proportion being in agriculture or informal income. (Moser 1989) There has been evolution of the household thereby upsetting the traditional roles of income in the households. Due to skirmishes, migrations,

civil war, HIV/AIDS pandemic and many other factors, there has emerged a strong and vibrant crop of female headed households who have become de-facto breadwinners. Many women have found themselves getting into politics because as breadwinners, they are now affected by issues of policy, business environments and political stability. It forces them to be involved to be the change in the society that they seek. Marriage in this case is usually a hindering factor for the African woman. Despite the husband being in a position where they are unable to provide, they see the rise of the woman into the public space as a threat to their dominance over the household. The male "public" space is the key to power, privilege, opportunities and wealth. The boundary between the private and the public spaces was designed to limit and control women's access to the resources associated with the public space.(Nemeth 2011) It is important to note that while women are generally restricted to the marginal domestic "private" space, men not only have free and easy access, but they are also dominant in this space. Women's access to the public space, on the other hand, is extremely limited and is controlled by men. Fortunately, some of the unfortunate happenings like war (Mau Mau in Kenya) and disease propelled women into positions of control and autonomy over the household and this gave way to women in leadership and politics (Tamale, 2004). A woman is somewhat pushed into the public sphere as a result of the private circumstance (Chibber, 2004). So aptly put it that in India, as much as women were aware of the opportunities accorded to them by the constitution, they were reluctant in taking them up and preferred to stay complacent in their private spaces. Agarwal (1992) uses Bourdieu's (1990) notion of doxa to suggest that women in India accept the dominant male ideology. This way of reasoning would suggest that rural Indian women are accepting of their position because they do not

question some facets of their life, especially their relationship to men. Most women when asked whether men are responsible for their lack of social mobility, answered in the affirmative. Therefore in the case that a man does not abandon the responsibilities requires of him in the household, would women still want to venture into the public space with the zeal they have when they became de-facto household heads? Of importance is also the fact that which women are more aggressive in the public space; the single mothers or single women or the married ones and why would either group be the dominant group in women in public spaces? Mary Wollstonecraft is regarded as the first feminist and a dominant figure in the public space due to her writing said that the happiest times of her life was when she was married. Her writing success earned invites to the most exclusive of diners and rolls of honor where she was largely usually the only woman and this earned her enough money to afford what many men could not and still in her letters to her sisters and to Joseph Johnson described her as filled with gothic gloom and so stained with tears that one cannot keep from laughing at them. ` She says, ` I am going to bed and for the first time I cannot put out the candle` Why is this so? In the 18th century, a man seen in such light would be perceived by society as complete and the act of acquiring a wife would be seen as an addition to his accomplishments but not really necessary` (Tomkiewics, 1976).

Kenya is one of the African countries that takes affirmative action seriously and has made deliberate effort with the 2/3 gender rule and affirmative action seats for women in the 2010 constitution. Despite the perceived created platform, women still have major impediments in seeking political leadership in Kenya. Majorly, the thesis examines the

public and private spaces of women in politics and the delicate balance between the two while explaining the direct impact one has on the other.

Women keep on experiencing huge separation identified with their investment out in the open and political life in many areas of people in general circle and in every single land district over the world. For instance, The European Commission starting late perceived that, "Over the EU, women are still, as it were, overshadowed by men in spots of obligation in all fields. The reasons behind the under-depiction of women in power and fundamental authority are multifaceted and complex. "There are fundamental breaking points to women' investment out in the open and political life that start from cash related, social and social issues, and from negative hypotheses about women.

One key issue, while conceptualizing the isolation of women inside the private space when all is said and done, women' leadership (Kamau 2010) analysts have been endeavoring to wreck the partition among public and private space. A 2005 IDEA report underlines how broad the societal circle has usually been a territory for men, communicating that men, across finished first in every practical sense all social orders.

A few of the key readings used in this book include:

Prof. Kabira is the Author of the book *Time to harvest*. She is a professor of literature and plays many roles in the struggle of women in the constitutional review process and other women's struggles for liberation. She documents the journey the women have walked in stories, stories which deftly tell the torment that was endured by singular women and their families as they related to what now and again appeared like a mission inconceivable, in their struggle to contribute to gender equality and women



empowerment through constitutional review and other processes. Prof. Kabira and Prof. Kameri-Mbote are the authors of *Gender in electoral politics in Kenya: the unrealized constitutional promise*. She continues to follow up on women representation in the government highlighting that a lot remains to be done.

Shirley explores the views of society on the works and ideologies of Mary Wollstonecraft. It explores what other writers have thought and written on her book- A vindication of women rights. Shirley takes us through Mary`s life in an effort to explain the status and living of a feminist life. A little background on Shirley; Shirley."

Niara Sudarkasa (1938) is an American researcher, teacher, Africanist and anthropologist who holds thirteen privileged degrees, and is the beneficiary of about 100 metro and expert honors. She concentrated on her chips away at "The Status of Women" in Indigenous African Societies and her perspective of people in general and private spaces of women in indigenous social orders. It is noted that most women voters exist in rural setting in Kenya. What we now call the counties and hold majority of the votes. In this regard, it was important to understand their thinking and judgement and how they affect the lives of women politicians who ask for their vote.

Sylvia Tamale is a Ugandan scholar, and human rights extremist. She was the main lady Dean in the Law Faculty at Makerere University, Uganda. Tamale has been a meeting educator and a meeting researcher at the University of Wisconsin. In 2004, she was awarded by a few women associations in Uganda, for her human rights activism. On 28th October 2016, she turned into the primary female speaker to give a scholarly inaugural address at Makerere University. Her address was entitled Nudity, Protests and the Law roused, partially, by the prior in-the-year naked dissent of Stella Nyanzi at the

college. Her works, for example, *When Hens Begin To Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda* (1999); *African Feminism: How Should We Change?* (2006); and *African Sexualities: A Reader and significantly Gender Trauma In Africa: Enhancing Women's Links to Resources* (2011) and more so *Gender Trauma in Africa* (2004) enormously affected the reasoning and bearing of this theory.

### **2.1.1 Entry Into the Public Spaces**

Kenyan legislative issues are, all things considered, familiar and are dependent on help from your faction to the national field. Coalitions in Kenya are formed in perspective of intrinsic supervisors. It is simply implied that for a woman to be successful in the political public space, she has to address her family and that was Charity Ngilu in 2002 (a female `kingpin`) in the development of the NARC government. Kamau N. (2010).

According to Sylvia Tamale (2004, p 51-52.), “Domesticity as an ideology is historically and culturally constructed and is closely linked to patriarchy, gender/power relations and the artificial private/ public distinction. The way patriarchy defines women is such that their full and wholesome existence depends on getting married, producing children and caring for their family.”

The public sphere has largely been defined as the men`s arena while the private sphere has been reserved for women. There are artificial unspoken line and demarcations in roles men and women engage in. hence it was quite the shock when women began boldly venturing into the public sphere and this began with the waves of feminism. (Tamale 2004) Women felt that they had to have more to life than birthing babies and cleaning the household. They wanted to be part of the decision making process. A realm that was traditionally a reserve for men according to Tamale. This notion was upheld in the world

over, from France, to England, to Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Arabia and to Africa. In fact, I would argue that Africa & Arabia were the most progressive in women empowerment than all the mentioned continents in the pre-colonial era. (Nelson, 1974) Women in Africa had their own courts and had direct impacts on decision making in the society. They could influence societal thinking and could punish men in their courts and tribunals. A man could not decline such summon before such a court. Some communities like the Kamba and Giriama in Kenya and the Asante in Ghana were led by women in some of the strongest resistance to colonial rule. Women were revered. In Arabia, men went to war to protect the honor of their women. Women could easily influence decisions in the public sphere by using their private sphere relationships with their husbands or sons. It was the mother of the bride who had the last say on whether her daughter would be married in Arabia during the bride price ceremony before the colonial era. (Nelson 1974)

### **2.2.2 Access to the public space**

Starting now, the dedication of states to secure women's benefit of identical access to open space has not been totally executed. There is continuing with division in law and also state practice that confines women's qualification to full and equal access to open space. For example, social practice in a couple of areas especially rural Kenya, that still require that women have a male guardian or chaperone with no attempt at being subtle in their dominance over the women`s public space. (Valentine 1989). This need can on a very basic level restrict women's help out in the open life. In the African customary society to which Kenya moreover subscribes.

This significantly restricted women's potential for empowerment. It is the new constitution that addressed such matters and gave women the autonomy to be their own persons under the law. In speech on Women's Day Nyatichi Nyasani explained that government did not accord women pensions in the 1950s yet they put in equal work. In private institutions, Kamau (2010). It could take 118 years for men and women to earn the same and achieve the equal pay' status. According to the Global Gender Report (2017), women are underpaid, getting Sh62 per hour compared to men who take home Sh100 for the same period. While the Constitution states that every worker has the right to fair pay, the Global Gender Report shows Kenya lags behind, ranking 63 out of 144 states. It also emerged the gender pay disparity affects women's spending power thereby directly influencing their role in politics. Kenyan politics as is shaped is largely dependent on resources (and hand-outs) during the campaign period. If women do not have resources at their disposal they end up being used only for mobilization and not policy formulation and decision making systematically sidelining them from the top political hierarchy and relegating them to the bottom of the political food-chain (Mitullah, 2003).

Kenyan women may likewise be isolated and barred from open places or administrations. For instance, in provincial Kenya, there is a significant solid partition of open and private spaces: Public spaces are the road and the commercial center where men are found, and the private space (homesteads) is, where women are fundamentally found. (Wanjohi, 2003). Specific market days have been created for entrepreneurship purposes after which women spend the rest of their days farming while men continue to dominate the market

areas. Despite the fact that women are seen in the city, it is regularly not an inviting spot for them, where they can be defenseless and subject to lewd behavior.

### **2.1.3 Women's Equal Access to Public Space in Relation with Cultural Barriers**

Access to public space can be constrained by religious and social variables. Religious denominations, specifically, assume a key part in the advancement of society and social standards with respect to women' part in the public eye and in general society circle. The congregation has assumed an outstanding part in this space, and in the advancement of enactment, open arrangements, projects and administrations in territories relating to women' encountering expanding social and monetary modernization, and additionally that are acquainting protected arrangements with particular the Church and the State, the chain of command of the congregation altogether impacts women' political support and access to general society circle (Morgan,. 2012)

While religious and social hindrances may confine women' entrance to public space, cases exist of women who have prepared inside general society circle around the social imagery of their part as mothers make change out in the open and political areas (Barker-Benfield 1992). Life as a parent gives a space to women' political investment. Society has gravitated towards according women more respect when they can identify with her as a mother. Another case of a development of mothers happened in the Balkans, where women utilized the social imagery of parenthood to challenge their children being drafted into the armed forces. (Chinkin 2013) Women activists from various gatherings in South Lebanon have additionally utilized parenthood as a road for common cooperation amid the season of war in South Lebanon (Rosser, 2005).

In Kenya, the mothers of political prisoners in 1992 demonstrated at what is today called `Freedom Corner` (at Uhuru Park- Nairobi Central Business District) for the release of their sons. (Wanjohi, 2003). They used nakedness to bring attention to their plight. In the African culture, that was very serious (seeing the nakedness of an old woman) so much so that even the police could not disperse them. Due to this bold move, these mothers carved out a place for women in the second liberation struggle of Kenya that is, the struggle for abolition of section 2(a) of the then Kenyan constitution and the establishment of multiparty system against the wishes of the then sitting president – Daniel Moi. Women like Ida Odinga, Monica Wamwere, Wanjiru Kihoro, Micere Mugo and many others cemented their existence in the struggle thereby cementing the narrative that women could deliver in their public political space. Due to the fact that they participated in the liberation struggle, they gave women a voice in participating in the 1992. The result was a win from a few women aspirants like Martha Karua.

### ***Women's Effective Participation***

Affirmative Action gives women the platform to venture into the public space without facing the numerous hurdles and challenges faced in an election. It gives women the opportunity that some would never have been accorded without it. The platform enable women acquire confidence to lead and boldly step out into the public space. It gives women a chance to show case their leadership skills and this enables them seek elective posts in the next election cycle after nomination as we have seen in the case of Millie Odhiambo, Cecily Mbarire and Martha Wangari Just to mention but a few. The Kenya Constitution has provided affirmative action provisions, articles 27(8), 81 and, 100, to address the issue of women's marginalization in the political arena and other forms of

leadership at all levels. Unfortunately, eight years since the promulgation of the Constitution, provisions on women's political leadership, are yet to be realized in letter and in spirit. And, as the 2017 General Elections, the realignments of mainstream political parties including Jubilee, CORD, NASA, Wiper and, Amani Congress, among others, seems oblivious of their role in promoting the constitutional provisions on women's political leadership. In addition, there is no legislation to implement the constitutional gender principle in the National Assembly and the Senate as the Duale Bill on the 2/3rds gender rule did not pass. The major proposition was to have the 2/3rds gender rule implemented progressively (without a timeline). This was rejected by women based on the argument that there were no distinct parameters to measure the said progress.

Although selecting women to office is a crucial stage of warranting women political venture, it is also important to ensure that women have a say once they have been elected or selected/ nominated. When women are involved as political spear headers, the country is full of expectations that there will be development and improvement of lives. Studies demonstrate that women's' political ambitions often brings significant inclusion of laws that includes more responses to people's needs expanded collaboration crosswise over gathering and ethnic lines; and more maintenance of peace and stability.

According to Dorman (2006) the socio-cultural nature of our traditional communities has made family/community/tribal/lineage ties become deeply embedded in the concept of our social responsibilities. Kenya's leadership is rife with this trait-Right from our president whose father was Kenya's first president to the head of Opposition Raila Odinga whose father was Vice President of the country. Many political personalities and dynasties in Kenya are passed on patrilineal and this systematically excludes women

from leadership. The private space of their homes impacts their decisions and lives in the public space. There are however a few exceptions with women like Rachel Shebesh and Cecily Mbarire whose fathers nurtured them into politics but that is not the norm. They are exceptions. Political pioneers are not excluded from this wonder, which underscores the support framework. All things considered, the political pioneers are likewise stood up to by this strain to seem honest of the predicament of their family relationship, which at last influences their being characterized as 'great pioneers' (Wrong, 2009).

Keeping in mind the end goal to guarantee that women have a solid voice, it is important to secure adequate representation of women inside choice bodies. For instance, women' parliamentary gatherings ought to be built up and fortified with a specific end goal to increase women' voices. In coming together, women can effectively shape the plans of the parliament and law. In Sri Lanka, the Netherlands Democratic Institute has joined hands with women holding government positions to differentiate non fanatic matters by coordinating, triggering the drafting and underwriting the step to improve the involvement of women in politics. Therefore, it is important that elements for political preparation are created for women, such as coming up with viable voting public; reinforcing political imperatives on women' political engagement; fortifying the legal frameworks in light of responsibility measures; and considering majority rule organizations responsible to women and to meeting duties regarding women' rights.

### ***Political Transition***

Women' cooperation in public space and political life is especially essential for thought in the midst of political change, as these minutes open doors for positive improvements in gender balance and consummation oppression women, yet they can likewise deliver



negative reaction against women' human rights. This segment features how political advances can influence the status of women in the public arena and influence women' entrance to open and political life, incorporating into post-struggle changes, and advances to vote based system and to liberal market economy.

There is huge variance in how women' rights are tended to in the midst of political progress and in how women take an interest in these changes, and various elements may clarify the variety. The nearness of solid women' rights advocates in common society in collusion with women' associations can impact building open doors for women' rights and influencing for libertarian change. Governments and political gatherings that are thoughtful to gender equity are critical keeping in mind the end goal to maintain a strategic distance from the risk of incapable tokenism. The existence of women in marriage greatly affects their position in the public space as discussed in chapter five of this thesis. The status and place of marriage greatly affects the outcome of the election and her acceptance into the realms of the electorate `s favorite. Marriage determines whether she will be deemed worthy in the eyes of her voters.(Struber 2010) It gives her a place of belonging outside of her father`s home. I will also analyse the reception of voters to female candidates with regards to their paternal and maternal homes. What comes out is that the baseline measure used is anchored in patriarchy. That a woman is defined by being from her father`s or husband`s home.

## **2.2 Marriage in The Context Of Public & Private Spaces**

In Africa, there is protection from women's political interest on account of winning gender standards scrutinizing women's capacity to lead. For instance, women might be underrepresented in governmental issues as a result of observations that they are less

qualified or don't have adequate initiative abilities. Women are additionally still in charge of the dominant part of childcare and family unit undertakings in numerous nations. Women confront various obstacles while thinking about their support in political life. (Forbes 2018)

Marriage is an institution regulating sex, reproduction and family relations. (Amakiri, 2013). The definition of marriage may vary according to various cultures but it is fundamentally where personal, sexual and intimate relationships take place. In the African context and culture, this is usually between two people of opposite gender. It may also be between one man and multiple women and in some rare cases or setting, one woman and multiple men. This was called polygamy and polyandry respectively. Polygamy is the more common accepted marriage practice across Africa with countries like Kenya placing it in its constitution as a legally accepted type of marriage. Sex is a critical factor that decides the meaning of who is a decent/compelling political pioneer in Kenya (Nzomo, 2003a). Numerous researchers approach the topic of administration contrasts amongst men and women through the social develop of gender, or qualities related with manliness and womanliness, and what we consider as far as authority normally falls inside 'manly' attributes. The result of having women wanting to get into the public space is largely attributed to feminism.

Feminism remains a controversial topic in Africa (Maloiy, 2016). This is because there is the rampant belief that women will give up their significant role as mothers if they take up feminist values (Ardnt 2002; Maloiy, 2016). There is the belief that feminism is western and does not apply to African women (Maloiy,2016). That it does not dovetail with African values, communal culture and consensus. (Azodo,1997; Mekegwe,2008)

Profiling the examples of these women is important in trying to distinguish the impact of the private space on the public space of women politicians. It is vital to practically examine the reality on the ground as it is told from the women who experience it first hand in order to fully comprehend the veracity of the matter. It is imperative that we explore women`s experiences in order to understand the status of women within that given society.

The question according to Parvin (2018) has always been how to enhance meaningful participation of citizens in an ever changing democracy. Meaningful participation in my opinion would require decorum and issue based politics. Judging the candidates (women included) based on their job descriptions when elected. The issues of their private space will not translate into better service delivery and this argument that I seek to advance; that the women`s private space is a direct determinant of their success in the public space, which I believe with the provided case studies and history of women in politics proves this hypothesis to be true. It is due to this fact that the role, scope and voter turn-out of women has consistently been below that of men since independence. This has relegated women to being very proactive in forming underground movements in their women groups spurring get economic activity. However, they are never given the platform to be part of the decisions that affect these very activities they are doing.

The entry of women into the public spaces has indeed faced some challenges, top of which are the deeply embedded patriarchal practices and undemocratic institutions and policy frameworks (Nzomo 2012). Lack of awareness in matters of gender and civic education have also contributed that is why women have a 52% population hold and a 55% voter turn-out threshold but still do not ensure that women are voted for during

elections. The patriarchal narrative skews them towards electing a man more than a woman because they too believe that a woman should confine herself to the private space. Many times you find that fellow women are appalled at the thought of women joining the “rough world” of politics because their husbands will be mocked for having an unvirtuous woman for a wife. They demean them in society and label them as immoral, uncouth and without standing in society. Some of these women conform to set standard of what they perceive to be a ‘good’ woman. For example, in the 2013 general election for the position of member of county assembly for Nairobi county, candidate Rachel Kamweru publicly admitted in a conference I attended on Women Candidates which I attended- the road to the general election-organized by the Republican Institute (after the election) to having hired a man to campaign with as her husband so that the women vote could label her a single woman out to get their husbands. (She later won the election). This act takes away the women’s vote from the female candidate vying. This is so deeply entrenched that you will find women being used by other male candidate or council of elders to create a negative narrative against a female candidate and propagate it throughout the election thus eventually often costing her the election. In some cases, the husband will be mocked for not being able to ‘control’ his wife. The power of the women’s vote is strong as evidenced in Kiambu county in the 2017 general elections. The then incumbent governor – William Kabogo dished out hand outs to women in the market. He used sex as a criteria for the amounts women would get. Prostitutes got the highest amount because in his words ‘they did a lot of work’. Single mothers followed and he provided them with inner wear as in his opinion, they could not afford. Married women and single mothers came in last. (Nation Newspaper, 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2014). Women

felt greatly disrespected by this act and decided to vote him out during the election. Indeed he was ousted by the now incumbent Ferdinand Waititu. This goes to prove that if women could have the necessary information about women empowerment, they could easily support their own to positions of power and prevent attacks on their private space. William Kabogo once went on Radio to attack women representative Sabina Chege. He was quoted to have said, ‘that who has given birth, should concentrate on giving birth and not interfere with serious people who are in the business of development.’ (Kameme Radio, News Byte July 2016). The tone of his statement was derogatory; that the role of a woman was just to sit at home and give birth. It implies that Sabina should not involve herself with politics as it was a preserve of people not distracted by things like child birth that is men. Once again an unwarranted attack on the public persona of Sabina based on her private space.

### **2.3 Feminist Political Theory**

This thesis is anchored on the feminist political theory. The theory states that patriarchy has power and dominance over women due to anchored societal and state structures that are designed to systematically maintain women in a position of subordination. (Starmarski 2015) This theory examines why this is so. Women's feminist political theory sees women and their situation as central to political examination. It dissects why that in every practical sense each and every known society men appear to have more power and advantage than women, and how this can be changed. It is in this way an associated with speculation, which hopes to appreciate society remembering the ultimate objective to test and change it; its goal isn't process data, however discovering that can be used to coordinate and instruct women' dissident political practice. (Sapiro 1992). The goal of

feminist politics is to end the dominance of women through continuous and persistent critique and implementing deliberate endeavours to transform institutions and theories (societal narratives) that support the dominance of men over women.(E. Tucker). The feminist political theory is a theory that exists within the feminist theory and the political theory and intertwines the two to question political matters using a feminist lens.

Likewise, Feminist political theory exhibits the routes in which governmental issues, comprehended as power relations, is available in our regular daily existences. One could sensibly depict women's activist hypothesis all in all as a sort of political reasoning. What regularly recognizes women's activist political hypothesis from women's liberation extensively is the particular examination of the state and its part in the proliferation or reviewing of gender imbalance. Feminist political theory is a various subfield of women's activism. (Watson 2013) suggests that the theory works towards three principle objectives:

- To comprehend and study the part of gender in how political theory is expectedly interpreted;
- To re-case and re-verbalize ordinary political theory in light of women's activist issues (particularly gender fairness); and
- To bolster political science assuming and seeking after gender uniformity.

The most critical aspect of the feminist political theory is that is it seeks to broaden and enlarge the scope of what is political for women. There is a famed feminist slogan `the political is personal. ` It means that for women, the politics is a private affair. It seems to rotate around the private space of women before it can emerge itself amongst the public in the public sphere. Women's activist political hypothesis includes an expansive extent

of methodologies. It covers with related regions, women's activist law/women's activist lawful theories; women's activist political theory; female-focused experimental research in political science; and women's activist research techniques (women's activist strategy) for use in political science, and sociology. What every now and again recognizes women's activist political hypothesis from women's liberation comprehensively is the particular examination of the state and its part in the multiplication or changing of gender disparity? (McAfee, 2014). Notwithstanding being wide and multidisciplinary, the field is moderately new, characteristically inventive, and as yet growing; the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy clarifies that "women's activist political logic fills in as a field for growing new standards, practices, and defences for how political establishments and practices ought to be composed and remade assortment of fields in the elements of governmental issues.

Sylvia Tamale (2004) looks to bring into clear concentration the connection between the "assets issue" and the more extensive dangerous set up of African family life. This imperative linkage is frequently overlooked or even disregarded. The way that women' lives are characterized by the philosophy of home life, that their unwaged beneficial and conceptive work in the local field is unacknowledged, underestimated and undetectable in financial matters insights, to a great extent clarifies their asset less status and focuses to some radical methods for handling the issue. Now how does this translate to factors affecting women in politics? The argument is that due to the systemic practice of subordination, practices of patriarchy and domestication of women, women lack the resource base and psychological support of fellow women in their attempt to step into the public space of politics.

The feminist political theory argues that while a woman's financial status has a direction on her enthusiasm for governmental issues and political movement the effect of a lady's position in the family cannot be denied. To additionally emphasize the contention above," Women must have a presence self-governing of the family - families, which Hartmann (1981) noted (maybe resounding Aristotle), are as yet the circle of male strength. For whatever length of time that women are limited to the home and they don't have a personality autonomous of the family unit, their levels of financial and political interest will fundamentally be lower than those of men since they cannot be in general society space.

Women are not adornments to be exchanged marriage but rather individuals meriting some principal rights as men. They ought to have training comparable to their position in the public eye. Feminism is a tag that not many want to carry but firmly believe in. Feminism was as vilified in the 18th century as it is in the 21st century. In fact in today's society men feel like there is institutionalized sexism against them. (Ralph 1951) Thus, acceptance and uptake of feminist ideologies of women empowerment remain at an all-time low.

The Feminist political theory aims to understand the nature of inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relation and sexuality while generally providing a critique of social relations, much of Feminist theory also focuses on analysing gender inequality and the promotion of rights, interests and issues (Rosser, 2005). Themes explored in this thread of Feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression and patriarchy in politics. Most of these vices are directed to the women's private space. In today's world, the Kenyan society has come up



with a term “toxic feminism”. This term has been coined by Kenyan blogger Cyprian Nyakundi as he passionately advocates for the `rights` of the boy child. The term has quickly gained traction and is currently being used all over social media (Facebook and Twitter) to describe the activist tenets of Kenyan feminism. This term is being commonly used to silence women who have decided to speak out against patriarchal vices in the society. Women who stand out publicly as feminists have faced ridicule and mockery for being associated with feminism. In fact, men who marry such women are equally mocked and cautioned as having a disaster waiting to happen. On social media, the men have declared that they want wives like their mothers to stay for thirty to fifty years in marriage and never walked out amidst cheating scandals and physical violence episodes which they term as trivial and minor issues. What they do not understand is that it is these issues that depressed women into an unhappy secluded private space. They could not venture out into public spaces due to this dominance almost “slavery” kind of relationships which defined their day to day lives and it has been the wish of many mothers to have their daughters live a life different from that which they suffered through.

#### **2.4 Marriage in the African Context**

Domesticity is an ideology that is historically and culturally constructed and embedded in African Societies (Tamale 2004). It defines the confines of public and private spaces and is closely linked to patriarchy, gender and power relations. Patriarchy defines women as having their existence dependent on marriage, having children and caring for their families. It does not provide for women`s participation in the public arena. The domestic roles of mother, wife and homemaker are the key tenets of a woman`s identity in Africa.

In fact, the concept of domesticity has been indoctrinated into the values of African women so much that it defines her self-identity. She accepts herself as a person belonging in the private space and does not belong to the public space, so much so that other women bash women who get into politics and help men create the negative narratives exhibited in this thesis like in the case of Sabina Chege, Millie Odhiambo and others.

The Matrimonial Property Act, 2013, is an Act of Parliament that accommodates rights and obligations of spouses in connection to wedding property and for associated purposes. It started on sixteenth January 2014 and supplanted the Married Women Property Act of 1882 which was beforehand material in Kenya in issues concerning division of wedding property after the disintegration of a marriage. Section 8 provides for division of matrimonial property at the disintegration of a polygamous marriage. The Marriage Act 2014 (Kenyan Constitution 2010) goes on to fully acknowledge polygamy as a form of marriage.

The reasons for marriage in the African context were for procreation, to cement community relationships, to cement positions of power, for sexual satisfaction and for companionship. In this setting, women were faced with the position of being subordinates. They toiled in the fields, bore the brunt of multiple pregnancies, had close to zero rights over their bodies sexually and could not choose their preferred choice of a spouse. Women were a negotiated commodity whose ownership belonged to her father who transferred his rights over her to the designated husband (Amakiri, 2013)

John Stuart Mill (1869) in 'The subjection of Women' argued that the legal subordination of one sex to another – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human

improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a system of perfect equality, admitting no power and privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other. This was in the year 1869 (the 19<sup>th</sup> Century). Mill advanced that marriage was supposed to be a friendship, an understanding, one of care and love and affection. He did not agree with the treatment of women at the time. He developed great affection for his wife and treated her as his equal. He even developed his book with tremendous input from her. His premise was right although not well received in Europe at the time. It was the same with African marriages. The women did not have a deep intimate relationship with their husbands due to the nature of the marriage.

Marriage in Africa was a communal affair (Dingani 2017). No one married in secret unless it was an elopement. Ties and bonds were created during marriage. Societal classes were upheld in marital unions. Peasants married peasants. The bourgeoisie married the bourgeoisie. Structure and procedure were followed to conclude the formalisation of a marriage. (Boyer 1978) Spies were at times sent to the home of the intended spouse to find out `discrepancies` (barrenness, witchcraft, night running etc.) in the home they were to marry into. There was a negotiated price (dowry) placed on the girl to be married conducted by the senior male elders. Many times, women had no say in this negotiation. (Kondemo 2011) They were not invited to the negotiating table. The men did not care whether the women had consented to the marriage or not. They did not value the opinion of women. It was the height of patriarchy. Some men even used their daughters to offset debts. Women were glorified assets in African marriages. (Ruggles 2015)

Roles in the African marriage were clearly defined. Men were household heads, household spokespersons, defenders of the family, family disciplinarians, and family breadwinners. Women on the other hand were domestic workers, care givers, life givers (carrying pregnancies and giving birth), respectful and submissive to their husbands. (Chelsey, 2017)

Dissolution of marriage in the African context was rare but it could happen in the following instances; infidelity, barrenness, perceived curses on the spouse and others. Most of the time, it was the women who bore the brunt of these accusations (Okiya 2016). The African traditional culture had harsh sentences to be meted out on the women in such instances. Some included being stoned to death, being expelled from the community and others. There was always this notion that has persisted to date, that the success of an African marriage depended on the will of the woman. Her perseverance, her humility, her hard work, her struggle and her children. (Maluleke 2012) The scale here was and still is unfairly tipped, placing the woman at a disadvantage. In essence, marriage for the African woman was a form of slavery. It was defined by mandatory labor and no rights to speak out and be heard. The African context of marriage was anchored on patriarchy. It propagated male dominance. (Seznat 2013) It did not have room for women in the public space. Women were a reserve of the private space. Their work was to support their husbands flourish in the public space. (Shadahah, 2011). It was uncouth and immoral for a woman to push for her voice to be heard amongst men. In such an instance, her husband was called upon to `discipline` her.

The African Marriage brought up women to act as if they were weak, emotional, docile – a traditional prejudice. If society tried equality, we would see that there were benefits for

individual women. They would be free of the unhappiness of being told what to do by men. And there would be benefits for society at large – it would double the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity. The ideas and potential of half the population would be liberated, producing a great effect on human development.

## **2.5 Marriage & Politics in the Kenyan Context**

Kenya's political context has been heavily shaped by historical domestic tensions and contestation associated with centralisation and abuse of power, high levels of corruption and a more than two decades long process of constitutional review and post-election violence. The approval of the new constitution in 2010 and relatively peaceful elections in March 2013 are milestones constituting steps forward in Kenya's transition from political crisis. Wambui Otieno's very public burial case was another instance that highlighted the space of women in Kenyan marriages. Wambui Otieno like the above mentioned politicians herein surrendered her rights of being an indigenous resident after her marriage to an outsider. During the five months that the burial issue dominated the headlines, Wambui found herself castigated by the presiding High Court judge for her testimony, vilified by national politicians and the press, and rendered a folk villain for over the Luo community. How a widow could experience such an ordeal in contemporary Kenya, why there was no effective feminist challenge? (Stamp 1991). Wambui Otieno severally made her case but the discrimination she faced even from the judge was unjust. The political big wigs looked on from a distance as Otieno's family took her apart (Ratele, 2006). It was a highly politically charged trial. The men were keen not to set a precedent where women could challenge her marital home members and get away with it. She had to be put in her place- that of subordination.

There is much hand-wringing on the state of the Kenyan family. Divorce and marital breakdown is on the rise. Today, stories abound of couples that break up on a whim, even before the ink on their marriage certificates has dried. (The Standard May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017) In fact, a recent nationwide survey by Infotrak showed that about three-quarters (74.4 per cent) of respondents said that today's couples take marriage as a joke. What is uncontested is that as soon as there was an economic imperative, the most powerful and wealthy men aimed to have as many wives as possible and enjoyed much higher reproductive success than their poorer male counterparts who were more often expended as warriors. Kenyan politicians (male) are especially fond of this. They marry from different villages or clans to consolidate their votes. It is perceived that the women married to these politicians would persuade them or influence allocation of resources to their village. It is prestigious to seem to have the direct ear of the honourable member through his wife. It was a source of pride for the village and the girl's parents. This notion was used in the 2017 Kirinyaga gubernatorial campaign by Hon. Ann Waiguru, a candidate at the time. It was rumoured that she was a mistress to the Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. So much so that the president had to declare in a public rally that he had nothing to do with her romantically. The voters were not convinced though. This was costing her the female voters who do not condone anyone who does not uphold the sanctity of marriage in the Christian context (monogamy). Soon, her campaign staff coined the narrative that stated that it is a privilege to have the ear of the president therefore Kirinyaga County will never be left behind in developmental matters. All their problems would be sorted immediately as they had direct access to the hub of resource allocation in the country. She was also labelled as the president's 'pretty young thing' -

‘Minji minji’ in Kikuyu to mean green fresh peas while her opponent was labelled old dried up peas- ‘Ndengu’. This narrative stuck and went on to win her the race. Ann Waiguru became one of the three first female governors in the country.

Anthropologist George P Murdoch (1965) documented 1,231 pre-modern societies in his 1965 ethnographic atlas, of which 186 were monogamous, 1,041 were polygynous to some degree, and just four were polyandrous (where a woman could have multiple husbands). If a society has a few rich men and virtually no rich women, polygyny would be supported by a coalition of both rich men and virtually all women. The wealthy men can naturally monopolise a large number of partners, and women (who are almost all poor, relative to men) “would prefer to be the n-th wife of a rich man than marry a poor man monogamously”, de la Croix and Mariani (2012) argue. The cost for women, in this set-up, is jealousy and competition for resources between co-wives, but women would rather endure the bickering than be destitute. It is a rational choice.

Women confront an absence of experience and information. Political gatherings may maintain a strategic distance from female applicants since they accompany less battle assets and connections to powerful voting public. An absence of learning can likewise prompt women being disregarded. For instance, an absence of attention to women's rights and obligations can conflict with women as hopefuls and individuals from political bodies. We have had many women who are ignorant of the political process of nominations. They rely on the goodwill of established politicians to promise them that they will be nominated without any guarantee despite working very hard for the campaign. Most of these promises are usually falsehoods and leave women out of the political decision making table. In other cases, such men ask for intimate relationships to

secure a nomination into government, parliament or senate. On the other hand, female politicians face a huge hurdle in their marriages. Unlike other women, they experience long hours of work, nightly meetings and busy weekends. They are not able to give the time to the family that an otherwise 8-5 working woman or housewife would have. The chances of having an understanding husband who would step in to fill the gap is very low. These women (female politicians) are expected to still fully run the household with no gaps or hitches which are inevitably expected in a political career. The men themselves are not able to be home all the time and are given a free pass for being busy. Why women can't be accorded the same understanding is not logical. Some men would like for their wives to serve them food and not anybody else. This can be tricky to accomplish especially when one is out of town or bound by political duties. Kenyan politics is defined by political coalitions which are ever seeking support across all ethnic divides in the country. This means a lot of campaigns and one has to attend to prove party loyalty, failure to which, the base support for the said member will start weaning.

Women may likewise encounter boundaries because of the idea of the political framework. Government political frameworks can assume a vital part in either keeping up or undermining sex imbalance around the in Kenya. Political parties create an unsafe environment for women when they do not back them for a nomination ticket. Knowing the hostile conditions politics create for women, they should provide incentives to encourage women to get into politics. They need discounted nomination fees, funding for campaigns and material support where the party sends its heavy hitters to drum up support for the female candidate.



Female nominated members have faced discrimination in their various elected bodies. The men have been feeling like they were awarded or handed these positions as a result of tokenism. They many times lack respect for these women and often look at who are they married to? They many times assume that the women got into those positions as a result of being married to a powerful male politician. Kenya has among the lowest female political representation in the region as women have struggled to make gains in the face of violence, intimidation and sexism.

Women hold about 22 percent of seats in parliament since an August 2017 election, up from 19 percent in 2013, according to figures from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), but these are mostly in nominated, rather than elected, positions. This has been detrimental to the image of women who demand a platform in the public space. A concept referred to as `Add Women & Stir`.

### ***The Gap***

In highlighting the literature review in this chapter explains the demarcation between a woman`s private and public space. The texts have explained the position of a woman in the African context with a special focus on marriage and how a women is viewed once married. The missing link in the literature review is the linkage between the place of woman in the African marriage and its influence on the Kenyan political landscape. What this thesis seeks to present is the influence between marriage and politics in Africa. It explains through the responses of Kenyan female politicians the impact of marriage in entry to the political arena. Through the case studies it provides new light into the difference between high level boardroom meetings on affirmative action and the societal narrative on accepting women as equal and capable leaders.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT OF KENYAN WOMEN IN THEIR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPACES**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides the historic context of Kenyan women in their private and public spaces since the pre-colonial period and their impacts on the public and private spaces of women. This chronology of history enables us to understand the status quo and whether things are better or worse as time has gone by. It also provides the platform upon which we examine case studies as they are a product of this historical transition in the political arena.

#### **3.1 Pre-Colonial Times**

According to Tamale (2004) in Africa, the process of separating the public/private spheres preceded colonization but it was precipitated, consolidated and reinforced by colonial practices and policies which were enforced ruthlessly. In the case where there had been a blurred distinction between public and private life, colonial structures and policies focused on creating a clear distinction that perceived men as public actors and women as private performers.

The history of Kenyan women in politics has been a long one punctuated with many struggles. The women did not tire as Prof. Wanjiku Kabira explains in her book – *Time for Harvest* (2012). The struggle for women`s emancipation began in the 1800s as colonization set in. It was imperative for the colonialist to impose power over the African by dividing and ruling them. Women`s rights were further stripped by the onset of colonialism. Men exercised patriarchy more in the colonial era than before and thus had

total control over women. This made work easier for the white man. He controlled the women through their husbands. (S. and Lambert P. 2010).

Women were confined to their private spaces. Their homes and homesteads were their areas operation and all their activities were dedicated towards this. They nurtured children, took care of the home, tended to their husbands and ploughed the fields for subsistence use. Women were not to challenge men. They were to be obedient, submissive and unquestioning. Men on the other hand made up the community army, council of elders and the hunting team. They wielded power over their homesteads. ( Tamale 2004) .They spoke for the women and children in their homesteads. A woman`s opinion was never sought. She was never consulted. She was to be seen but not to be heard.

The place of women and young women was to develop the family arrive, harvest, care for the children and to essentially watch over the property and watch out for their life partners. Young women were associated to be home creators and cultivators` (Tamale, 2004). In some communities, women had their own court where they summoned men who had wronged them and they punished them for their sins. The curses of women were powerful, their voices were powerful and their blessing was a necessity for good omen. This slowly changed as the colonialists and the missionaries set in. This was exemplified through the appointment of Wangu Wa Makeri as the first female chief in 1901 through to 1909. She resisted male centric structures of culture and convention, and rose to an impressive pioneer who is said to have conveyed improvement and peace to her group. She was important because she is still used as cautionary tale to date amongst Gikuyu women. Makeri had to resign after she engaged in the famous Kibata dance which was a

male warrior`s traditional dance. The men were outraged. Men caution their wives against being like her as she was strong-willed and quite prominent and dominant in the public sphere, an area which men believed was reserved for them. (S. and Lambert P. 2010) Today`s society terms that as a bad thing. In fact, marriage sounds more and more like an audition process today with the ratio between men and women increasing, men seem to have set out conditions to be met for women to fulfill before being considered for marriage. Strong-willed women are considered a headache. Men no longer encourage women to break new ground or glass ceilings; that emasculates them (Mitullah, W. 2003)

### **3.2 Colonial Period**

The 1920s saw the role of women become increasingly visible in the political space (what was termed as the public space.) Women, drove by Mary Nyanjiru, straightforwardly went up against the colonial government in requesting the arrival of Harry Thuku (McFarland, 2005). Mary challenged the men when she felt they were not taking action on the matter of the arrest of Harry Thuku. She famously told them, `Give me the trouser and I will give you the skirt`. (The Standard, February 2012). From 1929-1932, British Protestant teachers crusaded against the act of female genital mutilation (FGM). This severely invaded women`s private spaces. They sought to control women in their private spaces. Although it has since been established that FGM is a medically banned practice, at the time it was deemed a beautiful African tradition.(Thomas Lynn 1998) The issue of FGM turned into a point of convergence of the autonomy development against British pioneer administer, and a trial of unwaveringness—either to the Christian places of worship of the ministers, or to the Kikuyu Central Association, the relationship of the Kikuyu individuals.

The colonial government was also not supportive at all of women`s empowerment and visibility of women in the public space. In the year 1921, an order was issued to the governing council to preserve all civil posts for men in any of His Majesty`s possessions overseas (Wanjohi, N. G. 2003). This decision gave men direct advantage over women in matters governance and policy formulation. Decisions and laws were made about their lives and they were not accorded a seat at the table. This continued until the year 1946 where women started taking up menial jobs in civil service, largely typing and cleaning (S. and Lambert P.2010). As much as these jobs were done in the public space, they were not really valued. They were despised as they seemed not to contribute towards any development. Since these jobs did not have any direct contribution to policy and decision making, they were seen as an extension of the private space duties and life. More often than not these women were accorded no respect in the course of dispensing their duties and faced cases of sexual harassment from the male officials. This is because these men still had that mentality that a woman could not be defined into anything beyond their private space roles. They simply had no space to accommodate them in the public arena.

In 1943 Kericho Spinning and Weaving Centre or school was started.(WDSC 2006). The training was to keep the women busy making their own socks, pullovers, blankets and towels which are necessities for any home in Africa (Kanogo T. 2005). This clearly demarcated the women`s public space. It was a statement to the women that even their entrance to the public space would be confined to private space duties that had been then commercialized. It was that of vocational training (mainly nursing and teaching). While men took on more professional courses like engineering and medicine and government work. The year 1948 saw a rise of welfare exercises and courses for women. It is

essential to take note of that notwithstanding when women were urged by men to wander into people in general space it was to better their private space abilities. What this meant was that there was a systematic subordination of women whereby no one woman was well-equipped or skilled to take up leadership and influence policy in this setting. It was seen prudent to have women together under one umbrella. Hence, in 1951 Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO) was formed as a coordinating organization for the increasing number of clubs in the country (Chitere, 1994). The organization was also to voice concerns and aspirations of women and could help influence public policy on matters of concern to women. This was to somehow resist the white women's influence over them. 1945-1959 saw the wives of prominent white men begin philanthropic welfare activities in a bid to teach the black women appropriate white people culture and mannerisms to be good housekeepers for the new breed of African men in the civil service. (S. and Lambert P. 2010). The women issues were not the issues of African women in Kenya thus they had to come together to discuss their issues and organise themselves in their own way (Ndeda Mildred 1999).

From 1952-1960 women participated in the Mau Mau rebellion (Kamau N 2010). Women assumed a huge part in the disobedience, going up against the colonial government, regular citizens and lobbyist parts. One lady, Muthoni wa Kirima, even rose to the position of field-marshal. This period was marked as the period of the state of emergency. Women played a considerably more critical part on the non-military personnel front. They were significant individuals from the "latent wing," which gave supplies and insight data to Mau contenders (Chitere P.O 1994). Women were involved in the Mau Councils, which settled on essential choices about the disobedience, and in

addition the High Courts, which rebuffed rebels for transgressing Mau rules. It is imperative to note that women here were breaking out of their perceived private space. It is important to note that during the times of crisis, men were not keen on subordinating women; instead, they looked at them as comrade in arms. This balance of power would soon end after the war. In 1954 Kamiti Detention Camp was opened on the edges of Nairobi (Kamau N. 2010). Through the span of the Emergency Period, roughly 8,000 women were kept, the greater part of them at Kamiti (Anderson, 2005). A recovery plot was propelled at Kamiti, intended to make women more resigned and confined. While different recovery exercises occurred in every one of the camps, the program at Kamiti was gender particular. Women participated in exercises, for example, weaving, cleanliness preparing, cooking, welfare, education, civics and planting. This was once again a demarcation by the white man that defined women`s private spaces as their public spaces (Kamau N. 2010). Women in this era found it hard to navigate public and private spaces. Most public spaces were entered into and defined by means of education. At this time, girl child education was not a priority. Thereby we had men dominating the work force and building the economy while dominating the public space while women lagged behind in their private spaces.

Few women were able to penetrate these barriers like Sarah Sarai Thara who joined the Aga Khan clinic in the 1930s as the first African nurse practitioner at the predominantly Asian institution. Her commitment to women and gender issues became more pronounced when she joined the Nairobi Municipality as a social worker. She crisscrossed Pumwani, Kaloleni and most of Nairobi`s poorer neighborhoods initiating welfare programs for women and children. She advocated modern healthcare and

nutrition and continued to vehemently fight against female genital mutilation. Her agenda was to get women into the public space as equal workers of equal capability as men in development and leadership. Instead of agitating the colonial establishment to let her and other African women to join the East African Women`s League which had a predominantly white membership, she defiantly created her own version- the African women`s league with the aim of promoting African women`s interests. Like an African Rosa Parks, Sarai completely refused to ride on Nairobi`s racially segregated public buses. She instead acquired a bicycle which had a baby basket to ride around the city. She would not tire in her quest for social equity for Kenyan women against the colonial government.

### **3.3 Post Independence**

February 1961 saw the Kenya African Women's League forward names of two African women — Margaret Kenyatta, the daughter of establishing President Jomo Kenyatta, and Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao, a social specialist to the pilgrim senator for selection to the Legislative Council. Or maybe, the congressperson picked Mrs Abwao, making her the essential African woman to sit in the LEGCO (Kabira,2012). Writing about Mrs Abwao ventures her as momentous lady; a principled backer for women' rights, opportunity warrior and pioneer with an unstoppable soul to succeed. Indeed, even before independence, Mrs Abwao was instrumental in the battle for attaining equal rights amongst women and men.(Daily Nation 2010 ) That is the reason she would be engaged with the association of Kenya African women course in 1962 at Limuru. Coming when the provincial government was actualizing a plan to "Africanise" government employments, the significant point of the meeting, the first of its kind, was to enable



women "to get up to speed," to empower them advantage from the program. Women`s bodies like the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) were formed in 1964 primarily aimed at coordinating and strengthening the women's movement.(Drucilla 1995) There continued to be continued and concerted efforts by women to venture into the public space through various awareness conferences as documented below. They tried to send a specific message that: Gender inequality is a global concern (Mitullah W 2003). Women and men, on average, have similar capabilities and talents and should, therefore, be treated and rewarded equally ideally. When this does not happen, injustices crop up. Kenya, like many other nations keep struggling with the issue of creating, maintaining and sustaining gender equity and mainstreaming issues. Gender mainstreaming is the general population arrangement idea of surveying distinctive ramifications for men and women in any arranged approach activity. Gender mainstreaming started in 1975 in the Third World Conference on women held in Nairobi, Kenya. In the year 1975, United Women Declaration in Mexico saw the Kenya government`s response to this international requirement strengthen and revitalize MYWO and to create government national machinery for women, namely, the Women`s Bureau whose mandate was to register and coordinate the activities of all women`s groups in the country–groups that women had themselves created out of their own initiative. MYWO, on the other hand, increased its membership and linkage at the grass roots level.

The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) had a significant role in highlighting and publicizing the essential part of women in the monetary and social improvement of their nations and groups. the United Nations research leading up to the decade stated that women made up more than half the world`s population, perform two

thirds of its work yet receive a tenth of all worldly income. The decade focused on achieving goals laid out by the 1975 World Plan Of Action for the implementation of the objectives of the International women`s year. In the closing speech of the decade, Leticia Shahani, the secretary general of the world conference ending the decade said that the decade has caused the invisible majority of the humankind – the women- to be more visible on the global scene. The 1970s saw the introduction of a weakened version of equity with the primary objective of increasing women`s productivity. Women`s low income was thought to be a result of underdevelopment and not subordination. It is against this background that feminist perspectives like those of Caroline Moser were developed and advanced. According to Caroline Moser (year?), the needs of women and men in planning are inherently different. This translates to different economic benefits should gender needs not be incorporated in the planning process of policy making. The women in development approach adopted by USAID had the rationale that women are an undiscovered asset that can give a financial commitment to advancement (Omtatah. 2008). It was on this basis that money bringing projects for women became popular. Over the years, researchers highlighted the fact that there was need to focus on gender and development. Gender-aware approaches focused on the manner in which gender relationships are socially constructed due to the fact that males and women play differently to the society in terms of roles. The relationship between men and women was and has been systematically subordinated. In this light, feminists saw it best to package this concept as one of needs and as Moser puts it `strategic and practical needs` which justified the differences between men and women. Moser`s goal was to free women from subordination and enable them to accomplish equity, value and strengthening. It has been

noted with concern that authorities responsible for gender planning are consistently reluctant in recognizing gender as an important planning issue. Majority of decision makers are predominantly male and gender blind in orientation. This means that a lot of interventions on gender in the third world take a bottom up approach where change begins from the community level after donor interventions through programs or community based organizations. Numerous women's activist essayists have centered featuring the complexities of sex divisions in particular financial settings, instead of to indicate how such complexities can be streamlined with the goal that methodological instruments might be produced empowering professionals to make an interpretation of gender mindfulness into training. There were women who acknowledged the status quo and tried to lead women into the public political space by example. Women such as Muthoni Likimani who contested for Member of Parliament position for Bahati Constituency in the 1974 general elections. Although she was unsuccessful, she underscored the necessity of women's participation in her book 'Passbook Number F 47927'. Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai too led by example in mobilizing a self-reliant movement dubbed the green belt movement that rapidly gained notoriety so much so that the government felt that she was anti-establishment and trying to upset the already state-controlled Maendeleo Ya Wanawake national organization as she documents in her book- - Unbowed. Wangari put up a spirited fight to consistently encourage women to come out to the public space more so in politics and to stand their ground when they believe in something.

In 1977 Professor Wangari Maathai formed the Green Belt Movement, a non-profit association that planned to advance preservation of nature and in the meantime women'

rights. She attempted to enhance women' jobs by expanding their entrance to assets, for example, clean water and kindling for cooking; the development is additionally known to include women in planting trees.(Ngunjiri 2010). Wangari Maathai was trying to carve out a niche for women in the public space through the environment. The green belt was highly politicised and women started pulling put once a false narrative was framed that Maathai was using it to front her own political agenda parallel to MYWO (Tamale, 2004). It is through this platform that Wangari launched herself into the public political space. She famously said it was one thing to understand women issues but entirely another thing to do something about them.

The year 1985 saw the formation of The Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA- Kenya). Lawful Rights Education for women and participating in Public Interest Litigation to challenge discrimination and legal bias against women as women were losing many cases in court as exhibited by Wambui Otieno`s case over the rights to bury her husband. She lost the case in a public debacle of a case and was discriminated by the judge for presenting her case before the court in the first place. (Stamp 1991)

The 1987 merger of MYWO with the decision and just political gathering KANU implied that the administration co-selected or controlled women`s associations as they felt that the women movement was becoming too strong (Mitullah W. 2003). They were a force to reckon with. They had firmly stepped into the public and political arena and had influence on over half the nation`s population.

### **3.4 Post 2010- The New Constitution**

In August 2010 there was promulgation of the new Kenyan constitution, an extremely dynamic lawful and political instrument that accommodated governmental policy

regarding minorities in society as well as ensured the entrenchment of the two thirds gender rule, access to equal opportunity for women and men, uniformity of rights and obligations in approach measure; and evacuated all types of separation in both lawful and social practice (IPU 2011). The standard of Affirmative Action is obviously installed in the Bill of Rights. In any case, the recipe accommodated achieving this in key political establishments uncovers an inadequacy. The equation for the structure of Parliament does not signify the 30% minimum amount limit required in the recently made Senate and reconstituted National Assembly. The joined portion quality of assigned, held and corresponding portrayal situates just ensures women 13.5% of the National Assembly seats and 26% of Senate Seats.

The constitution stipulates that there will be a Women's Representative MP chose from every region – accordingly ensuring at least 47 women MPs in the National Assembly bringing provisional aggregate number of MPs to 347. Many have argued that the women representatives should sit at the senate which befits their jurisdiction. At the same time, it has been noted with utmost concern that many bills against the livelihoods and well-being of women are passed in parliament because women lack the numbers to oppose the said bills hence the rationale to have them in parliament as opposed to senate. Still, with the 47 numbers and negligible number of duly elected women members of parliament and female nominated members, women still have not garnered enough numbers to pass certain bills. Case in point is the Chepkonga and the Duale Bill on the 2/3rds majority (Kabira, 2012).

The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill 2015 proposed by Mr Chepkonga obliges the correction of Article 81 (b) of the Constitution with the objective that the gender rule

is expert powerfully, setting aside the five-year due date. This would have implied that there is no certain course of events for usage for the 2/3rds run the show. The Two Third Gender Laws (Correction Bill) 2015 on the other hand hopes to adjust diverse laws to offer effect to Article 100 of the Constitution. This is for purposes behind propelling depiction in Parliament of women, youth, and ethnic minorities for elective and picked positions. The Two Thirds Gender Rule Laws (Amendment) Bill was proposed by a Technical Working Group under the specialist of the Attorney-General. It suits redresses to five Acts; the Political Parties Act, the Elections Act, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act and the National Gender and Equality Act, to impel parties, the representative commission and locale governments to think about interests of specific vested gatherings (Adawo, , Gikonyo, Kudu, R.M and Mutoro O. 2011).

Mr Duale tabled the Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) (No 4) Bill, 2015 in the National Assembly and moved a development on Thursday to reduce its dispersion period from 14 days to four days, in an offer to brisk track the same. (IPU 2011) The Bill set apart by Mr Duale yet beginning from the Attorney-General hopes to ensure that legislative approach with respect to minorities in the public eye is recognized in both the National Assembly and the Senate through a best up arrangement of people picked. Among others, it recommends that the people will's personality chose for extraordinary seats should serve for a most outrageous of two terms. It gives that any person who is decided to any House of parliament or regulatory social gathering by technique for determination should acknowledge such a task to a most outrageous of two terms. Moreover, the task of the seats will be done moderately on the preface of the amount of seats won by a political social event with a particular true objective to ensure the

reinforcing through assignment will be spread to numerous people (Kabira , 2012). In July 2011 FIDA-K together with a couple of different women NGOs, went to court to challenge and keep up as unlawful the course of action of judges to the Supreme Court. The Kenyan high court in 2017 ruled that their national assembly, senate and office of the attorney general enact the gender rule in 60 days failure to which the petitioner can petition the high court under Article 23(1) to have the chief justice advice the president to dissolve parliament. This helps in forcing parliament and the executive arm of government to implement it. In having the 2/3rds gender rule implemented, we will increase the number of women accessing the public space in a respected and revered right thereby changing the negative narrative against women leadership thus making it normal in the long run to have women contest for elections and have them referred to as candidate not necessarily female candidates.

The effect of this is to increase the turn-over of women into leadership and parliament as many women benefit from the affirmative action seats. Examples of the same are: Daisy Nyongesa, Lesuuda Naisula, Beatrice Elachi, Rachel Shebesh, Cecil Mbarire just to mention but a few. These were women who were nominated into parliament and thereafter were duly elected to parliament or are currently contesting for parliamentary positions. The constitution provided that every county assembly shall consist of members elected by voters in each ward and a number of special seat members. More often than not, these special seats are allocated to women to balance up the gender equation. It is a milestone that it has become the norm to have women included in each constituted body although the calibre of women included has been brought to question a phenomenon often referred to as ‘Add women and stir’ but it is the hope of the women movement that

bringing more women out to the political public space will eventually create a crop of competent professional women of a sizable number into the public space such that the details of their private space will no longer be a measure of qualification for public office. It has been proven that many times when women are in leadership they are able to influence policy positively and include the Moser Framework in planning and formulation of policy.

The constitution has proven to be a platform for introducing women into leadership from the grassroots levels where the county boards stipulate for a women representative across all boards formulated across the county all the way up to the national government. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 has made colossal picks up in affecting women authority to improve things. 2014 Kenya's Parliament passed a bill enabling men to wed different spouses. In parliament, the proposed 2014 polygamy charge had at first given a life partner the benefit to veto the spouse's choice, yet male people from parliament vanquished party divisions to push through a substance that dropped this stipulation. This goes to show how much men want to use their public space to determine women`s private spaces and exert authority over them. It has been mentioned that men are not held to the same standard as women in the public space and many times their private spaces remain just that: private. It is my opinion that as long as men keep dictating what goes on in women`s public space, we will continue to confine women to their private spaces. The men will continue to have both the carrot and the stick where they dictate the qualifications for women to get into the public space, set the societal narrative on the same and control whether it will negative and positive thereby using patriarchy to fight



the quest for gender equity and sort of create a kind of gate pass to the political public space by trying to maintain it as a men's club.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter examined the history of women in politics since the pre-colonial period and their impacts on the public and private spaces of women. This chronology of history enables us to understand the status quo and whether things are better or worse as time has gone by. It also provides the platform upon which we examine case studies as they are a product of this historical transition in the political arena. The chapter further focuses on the literature review detailing past studies related to women private and public spaces through politics. The chapter finally looks at theoretical review by studying the feminist theory and relating it to this study. The next chapter looks through the methodological framework applied by the study on Kenyan women politics and their public and private spaces.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This being an examination about and on women, it used a feminist methodology. The feminist method approach requires the specialist to ponder the way toward doing examination, and gives the analyst the energy of naming those parts of women's lives that are not generally named when all is said in done sociology inquire about. Naming, in inquire about, is the thing that decides or characterizes the quality and estimation of what is named, while in the meantime denying reality and incentive to what is never named, never expressed, what has no name (Du Bois, 1983).

#### **4.1 Research Design**

The case study method dominated the compilation of data in this thesis. The case study research method involves an up-close, in-depth and detailed examination of the subject of study as well as its related contextual conditions.(Harrison 2017). Case study methods involves simply observing what happened to or reconstructing the case history or a single or group of participants. In the case study approach, the researcher identifies the topic and closely analyses it while taking notes and focus the analyses in identifying one or two problems (in this case marriage and politics) and seeks to present the best case analysis and solution of the problem with reference to the subject of study. The methodology in this project paper was to use an interdisciplinary approach in reviewing literature for understanding definitions of feminism, women's movements, iconic women in the struggle. Contextual investigations that examine a solitary case or single issue, as opposed to contemplates that look for speculations through relative examination or the accumulation of an expansive number of occasions. Robson (2002: 177) alludes to a case

as 'the circumstance, individual, gathering, or whatever it is that one is keen on'. Major emphasis has been put on archival researches this formed the basis of unearthing and analyzing the case studies presented.

#### **4.2 Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected using secondary sources such as books, papers, scholarly journals documents and contents extending from human studies, social science, political science, writing, and film on women`s movements and liberations with focus on public and private spaces using a feminist lens. The contextual investigation approach is utilized as a part of this exploration to light up women' encounters, taking a gander at their own encounters as opposed to searching for speculations. They offered a rich comprehension of the occasions that shape contemporary culture's depiction of woman's rights and the road travelled thus far.

#### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Data collected during the research process led to a detailed analysis with a few thematic areas. Politics was the main area of analysis. Kenyan women`s participation in the political arena was widely examined and discussed in this thesis. I saw it pertinent to begin with a history of the Kenyan women`s political journey at first I provided a background and introduction on the status quo. What exactly women`s private and public spaces are. The major issue that was discussed in the selected cases studies mainly touched on their marriages as measures of excellence and the attacks they faced due to their marital statuses or situations. It also delves wide into the analysis of societal judgement on women in politics. I later give my own response on the same and my recommendation on the way forward in having equity of treatment in the public spaces more so in politics. The analysis has been backed by a comparison of different

perspectives of the writers and finally researcher's response. The analysis is done in the order of assessing some prominent female politicians in Kenya and documenting their responses to society's view and judgement of women in politics. It then looks at the challenges these women face and draws up conclusions and recommendation from the analysed texts. Some of the writers borrowed from include Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Sylvia Rosila Tamale, Shirley Jean Abbott Tomkiewicz and Neira Surdakasa. These writers highlighted the roles of domesticity and patriarchy and their manifestation in the lives of African (Kenyan) women. Prof Kabira's works gave a unique perspective on the roles and places of women leading up to the making of the constitution and post 2010- the implementation era. All these texts contribute to the contextualization of private and public spaces of women and have proved valuable in the analysis of data in this text. What guided me to the selection of these texts was the fact that most writers were African and provided deep understanding of women's public and private spaces in the African context. Their discussion on the place and status of women in the African society greatly contributed to building the core of this thesis. Further, their discussions on marriage in the African setting and its impact on politics really gave an insight in explaining the issues of marriage in this thesis. In explaining the history of women and their entry into the public space, I analysed texts from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century all through to the present time thereby demonstrating women's transitions and acceptance over time into the public space.

#### **4.4 Validity of the Data**

Having collected secondary data, the validity of the data was verified by the authors and publishing houses before being offered to the public as primary sources of information

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the research methodology, target population, data collection instruments and data analysis used in this study. The next chapter looked into detail four case studies of Kenyan women politician in the public limelight by showing how their private lives influence their public spaces.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines marriage as a key component of the private space out of the many aspects of the private space and its impact on the woman`s political life (public space). It gives a founding insight on marriage in the African context and how women experience marriage as opposed to men. It then analyses the impact of marriage in the public space while looking at the Kenyan political context. Further, it examines the challenges women face while seeking political office in their various birth and marital communities and compares with what it cost to seek elective office while not being officially married. It goes on to give context to this argument by examining the selected case studies of 1 female governor, 2 women representatives and 5 female members of parliament. The chapter concluded with an analyses of the discussed aspects of marriage and public spaces in politics.

#### **5.1 Demographic Data on the Women Politicians Analysed Herein**

This section provides basic information who these women are, their names, their places of birth, their places of marriage, their education levels, their professional careers and their dates of birth. The women are further used in the analysis of these thesis to provide context to the concept of public and private spaces.

##### ***Dr. Joyce Laboso***

Born on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1960, Dr. Joyce Cheronno Laboso is the second Governor of Bomet County. She is 57 years of age. She is the former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya. She defeated Isaac Ruto in the August 8, 2017 General Elections,

and took office on August 22, 2017. She is married with three sons, but dropped her husband's last name. Joyce Laboso was elected to the Parliament of Kenya to represent the Sotik Constituency in a by-election held on September 25, 2008. She succeeded her sister, Lorna Laboso, who died in a plane crash. A nominee of the Orange Democratic Movement, she beat 11 other contestants after she garnered 23,880 with a vote margin of 10,000 over her closest challenger, retired Brigadier Alexander Sitienei (a former aide to Daniel arap Moi) who received 13,843 votes. She is the ACP Co-president of the ACP–EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. She worked as a Lecturer in the Department of Language and Linguistics at Egerton University and served as a Commissioner of the National Commission on Gender and Development. Laboso one of three first female governors in Kenya, along with Charity Ngilu and Anne Waiguru on the Jubilee Party ticket. She attended the University of Hull, University of Reading, Paul Verlain University, Kenyatta University and Kenya High School. She speaks English and French fluently

Source: *(The Rise And Rise Of Dr. Joyce Laboso – Edwin Makiche, Standard Media 2013, County Government Of Bomet Official Website)*

### ***Cecily Mbarire***

Cecily Mutitu Mbarire (born 26 December 1972), is a Kenyan politician currently 45 years of age. She belongs to the Party of National Unity and was elected to represent the Runyenjes Constituency in the National Assembly of Kenya since the Kenyan parliamentary election, 2007. She was formerly a nominated member of parliament through SDP- Social Democratic Party which belong to Charity Ngilu at the time. She was also a student leader at Egerton University which she attended and got suspended for

fighting for student rights and she reached out to Charity Ngilu for help. Ngilu later helped her get reinstated back to school and she supported Ngilu in her 1997 presidential bid and that was her entry into Kenyan national politics. Cecily is married to Denis Akaa from Teso with whom they have three children. She was a student at the University of Nairobi, Post-Graduate Diploma in Gender and Development Studies, Undergraduate student at Egerton University, Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) and a secondary school Student at Sacred Heart Kyeni Girls High School Embu. Cecily started her professional career by being Programme Coordinator – Youth Agenda in 1996 – 2002. In the years 2005 – 2007 she was appointed Assistant Minister for Transport and she later moved on to assistant minister for tourism between the years 2008 – 2013. An ardent support of women in politics, she was selected secretary of Kenya Women Parliamentary Association from 2002 – March 2013.

Sources: (*Information Cradle Kenya, 10<sup>th</sup> Kenyan Parliamentary Hansard*)

### ***Millie Odhiambo***

Millie Odhiambo was born in 1966. She is the Member of Parliament for Suba North constituency. She is a member of Orange Democratic Movement and a coalition member of Coalition for Reforms and Democracy. Millie Odhiambo has received the YWCA Democracy Award and the Eve woman of the year for human rights and gender. Her political tipping point came when she served as a delegate at the Bomas of Kenya, during the constitutional drafting process. She attended St. Francis Rangala for her primary education and later joined Limuru Girls for her secondary education. She joined the University of Nairobi for a Bachelors Degree in Law specializing in Human Rights, Humanitarian Law, Governance, Women's rights; Child Rights. She has a Masters



Degree in Public Interest Law on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law from the New York University. Since 31st August 2017 Millie Member of Parliament for Suba North constituency. She was initially the Executive Director of The Cradle. Millie Odhiambo has been a member of Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Co-operatives since 2013. In 2009 she was a Member of Equal Opportunities Committee and between 2009 – 2013, she was a member of Committee on Powers and Privileges – (National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act). Since the year 2008, she has been a member of Kenya Women Parliamentary Association, advancing the engendering of the Kenyan parliament.

Sources: (*Information Cradle, Mzalendo Kenya, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> Kenyan Parliamentary Hansard* )

### ***Charity Kathambi Chepkwony***

She was a member of the URP- United Republican Party in Njoro Constituency. She went on to vie for chairperson of the party in Nakuru County which she won. She vied for the Member of Parliament position in the year 2013 in Njoro and came in second. She later joined the Jubilee Party when it was formed and vied for the same seat in 2017 and won. She was appointed board member of the Kenya Literature Bureau in the year 2014 a position which she resigned to contest for the parliamentary seat in 2017.

Hon. Charity Kathambi Chepkwony is the first female Member of Parliament for Njoro Constituency. She made her debut in politics running for parliament in Njoro in 2013, where she finished second. As a young mother in an inter-ethnic marriage, this was definitely no average feat. All manner of propaganda was thrown her way as questions were raised about her age, gender and ethnic background. Resources were also a

challenge as she was running against male candidates with serious financial muscle. Although many times she was reduced to tears in the face of all these challenges, none of it came as a surprise. Being a beneficiary of NDI's USAID-funded leadership training, Hon. Chepkwony was adequately prepared for what to expect as a woman running for office. She credits the training for giving her the confidence that she needed to run and equipping her with skills to plan and manage her campaign, handle the media and develop her brand. Hon. Chepkwony was not deterred by her loss in 2013 and resolved to continue working with the community. She was subsequently appointed as the national director of the Kenya Literature Bureau and used her proximity to the leadership to advocate for development projects in her constituency. The 2017 general election found a much better-prepared candidate. She had a wealth of experience from 2013, which she utilized to beat her competitors and easily win the party primaries. The general elections were no different as she defeated five independent male candidates – a number of whom had defected from her party following defeat in the primaries. As the Member of Parliament for Njoro Constituency, Hon. Chepkwony has her eyes focused on three agenda items: addressing the water problem at the national level and by extension in her constituency; advocating for an improved road network in all parts of the country and supporting women and youth empowerment projects. Hon. Chepkwony is already making her presence felt in the National Assembly as a member of the Departmental Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and as vice secretary of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association.

Sources: *(NDI Female Candidates Profile, Nation Newspaper- May 2017, Official Website Of The National Assembly Of Kenya.)*

### *Esther Passaris*

Esther Muthoni Passaris OGW (born 20 October 1964) is a Kenyan social entrepreneur, philanthropist and politician. She is the Nairobi County women representative in the bicameral Kenyan parliament and a member of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) Political Party. In 2013, she ran for Member of Parliament for women's representative for Nairobi County, on the Kenya National Congress political party ticket, but lost to Rachel Shebesh. She later won the seat in the 2017 general elections. She is regarded as one of the most well-known female public figures in Kenyan business and politics.

Passaris was born in the coastal city of Mombasa to a Greek father and a Kenyan Kikuyu mother. She attended the Aga Khan Academies for her primary and secondary education. She enrolled in the Advanced Management Program course at Strathmore Business School, a program that was conducted in December 2006 between Strathmore University and the University of Navarra. She also has a Diploma in Law from the University of London. In October 2017, Passaris graduated from the United States International University Africa, in Nairobi, with a BSc International Business Administration. Through her Adopt a Light organization, Passaris has signed a deal with Nairobi city authorities in order to: "Restore decrepit street lighting in exchange for advertising rights on the lampposts." Passaris has two children with Kenyan businessman Pius Ngugi. In 2003, she filed a lawsuit against Ngugi for a breach of promise to marry, demanding a monthly allowance of KSh 200,000 (US\$2,000), and a car to take their children to and from school.

Sources: (*Business Daily Africa- April Issue 2015, the Star Newspaper- June 2018, Chapter 6- World Bank Publications- Access to Justice, Nairobi Standard Digital Media June 2018.*)

### *Sabina Chege*

Sabina Wanjiru Chege is a Kenyan politician and the Women representative for Murang'a County. She was re-elected to that position in August 2017 on Jubilee political party ticket. She is the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, in the Parliament of Kenya. She attended Mugoiri Girls Secondary School and later went on to the University of Nairobi to studies Bachelors of Education. She also holds a Master's Degree in Communication studies. She was born in the year 1972 and was recently married in a polygamous setting to Maina Gathito. Sabina Chege is a woman of many talents and used to be an actor at Kenya National Theatre. She served as a radio presenter for many years where she addressed development and women issues. Transforming people is her passion. It is during her time in school that she got a job at Kameme FM, a popular Kikuyu radio station, as a presenter from 2000-2005, a position she says afforded her a chance to understand politics straight from the grassroots level. After graduating in 2005, she would later leave her job as a presenter, for a Managerial position at World Space Africa, a communications firm, until 2007. Sabina Chege moved to Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) as a controller of commercial radio services. She joined politics in 2013 and won the Murang'a women rep seat on a TNA ticket. In 2017, she was re-elected on a Jubilee Party ticket. Hon. Sabina was, at one time, engaged to famous Kikuyu Benga Music sensation, John De' Matthew (Ndemethiu). So deep was what they had, that the singer featured her in his hit single 'Njata Yakwa' (My star). Sabina, now a mother of three, is married to Maina Gathitu, former Kenya Dairy Board boss as a second wife with whom they have one child. Interestingly, she was once Hon Amos Kimunya's wife and together they sired the first two children

Sources: (*Standard Digital Media June 2017, Nation Newspaper May 2013*)

### ***Peris Tobiko***

Peris Tobiko is a Kenyan politician. She was born on 16th November 1968. She is a Member of Parliament for Kajiado East constituency in Kajiado county. She was also a member of The National Alliance (TNA) She was elected the first female Maasai member of parliament in 2013 in a historic win even after elders had "cursed" her for defying the patriarchal norms of her community . She was re-elected for a second term as MP for Kajiado East in August 2017. She was an undergraduate Student of University of Nairobi(B.A. Political Science). She attended secondary school as a student of Moi High School – Kabarak (A Levels). Previously she had joined Secondary School Student of Moi Girls High School, Isinya for her O Levels. For her primary education, she was a pupil of Mashuru Primary School, Kajiado. Professionally, Tobiko has been a Benefits Manager at National Social Security Fund (NSSF), a Director of National Museum of Kenya and a Chairman of Tanathi Water Services.

Sources: ( *The Star October 2017, Standard Media march 2018*)

### ***Alice Wahome***

Alice Muthoni Wahome is a Kenyan politician. Wahome won the seat as Member of Parliament for the Kandara Constituency when she was elected in the March 2013 general elections. Wahome has publicly supported health initiatives. Wahome attended the University of Nairobi. She did he undergraduate as a student of University of Nairobi, Bachelor's Degree in Law. She was a secondary School Student of Siakago High School, secondary school Student of Bishop Gatimu Ngandu Girls High school and a Primary School Student of Karumu Primary School. She is a member of Kenya Women Political

Alliance and Co-Founder, National Women Steering Committee ( NWSC). In 2013, she became a member of the Jubilee Alliance. She was formerly of the party of national unity (TNA). Her committee memberships in parliament include:

2013: Member of Procedure and House Rules Committee

2013: Member of Departmental Committee on Administration and National Security

She served in her professional capacity in the following posts:

2011-2013: Vice-Chairperson, Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD – Kenya).

2006 – 2010: Director Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD -Kenya).

2003-2006: Director, Retirement Benefits Authority (RBA).

2000-2001: Committee Member of the Family Court in Kenya

1999-2000: Vice Chairperson, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya.

1999-2000: Council Member of The Law Society of Kenya (LSK).

Sources: (*Kenya Politicians September 2016, the star newspaper October 2016, Kenya Women Parliamentary Association Publication September 2016*)

## **5.2 Challenges Facing Women Seeking Elective Office at their Home of Birth**

Society has created a societal narrative that married women do not have any rights or sense of belonging to their paternal homes; but their fathers have provided their identity for majority of their lives. This is at the heart of the woman's private space because it is unorthodox and unfair that a woman is expected to give up the home that she has known for the better part of her life at the time of marriage. The fact that society also no longer

considers a married woman a child of their home is further abandonment. Condemning a woman from participating in her home areas affairs is more intrusive on her private space because at the end of the day, those are her people, those are the ones who have raised her. She should have every right to be with them and be at the decision making table.

Dr Joyce Cherono Laboso, 56, got into politics by mere chance. Prior to her joining politics, she was a lecturer at Egerton University, going about her daily business of teaching. On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 things changed radically. As fate would have it, her elder sister former Sotik MP Lorna Laboso perished in a plane crash, pushing Joyce into the unfamiliar territory of politics. That fateful day, she was in a supermarket when her husband called her with the tragic news. And just like that, her life changed. Her sister left a huge vacuum and the party wanted her to fill it. Given that she was a new entrant into the political field, she did not envision herself stepping into Lorna's big shoes but after much convincing from the party, she took a step of faith. And that is how the humble girl from Sotik found herself in the murky world of politics. Though she was a new comer, her star started to shine immediately she joined Parliament. Within a few years, she rose to be Kenya's first female Deputy Speaker.

Dr. Laboso blamed her opponents in the Bomet gubernatorial 2017 race of utilizing "messy and obsolete" strategies by saying she is unfit as she is married to an outsider. (The Standard, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2017) She said they want to eliminate her from the race in Kalenjin land by arguing her loyalty is divided because she is married to a Luo, Edwin Abonyo, a former manager with Finlay's. This was clearly a private space matter but is

was lorded over her so much as a qualification for her to be respected in the public space (politics and elections).

Dr. Laboso said it is unfortunate that some of her male rivals resorted to “cheap” issues such as her marriage in their campaigns.(Nation Newspaper June, 2017) She said it is only the manifesto, track record and one’s ability to persuade the electorate that will determine who wins. In the campaign trail for the Governor’s seat, one of the weapons her opponents were using against her was the fact that she is married to one Mr Obonyo. Many a times in rallies, she was booed by hostile youth who labelled her an outsider. Tired of the tirade, one day she told them off at a funeral: “I have not broken a record by getting married to a non-Kalenjin. I am not the first from Bomet. Give me a break,” she was quoted in the media during a public rally. And she thundered on: “Yes! Obonyo is my name and it belongs to my husband. That will not stop me from vying for Governorship.” (Star Newspaper 2017). With that powerful message, she silenced her detractors for good. This was after she had been forced to drop her husband’s name in the year 2008 as her detractors were using her name against her in the campaign claiming that she was not a Kalenjin. It took a lot of explaining to mention that she was the former Member of Parliament’s sisters Laboso only that she was married to a Luo hence the easier strategy was to drop the name Obonyo. In my opinion, men would never be held to such accounts even if they had married an outsider from a different county. The Late Hon Nicholas Biwott also hailed from the Kalenjin nation. He married a white woman who was not an indigenous member of the Kalenjin nation and it was never an issue in his political life. No one even mentioned it. The question remains, why did the Kalenjin society demand that Hon Laboso apologize for the same thing that Hon Biwott did? It is



this double standard that this thesis seeks to unearth and analyze. Dr. Laboso went on to win the gubernatorial race in Bomet County with a 54% popular margin (IEBC Electoral Results 2017). Soon after her win, it then emerged that her son may be homosexual. (The Standard, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018) This story made rounds in the media after her son posted pictures on the social media platform- Instagram, of him on a date with a young man. Quickly questions surfaced on the parenting skills of Hon. Laboso. Critics questioned the values she would teach their children in the county as if she had ‘taught’ her son to be homosexual if at all he was. The African society is skewed to believe that a child who is a disgrace to society belongs to the mother and one who is a success belongs to the father and is owned by the community. This demarcation in itself is an attack on the private space of a woman and this unfair attack is used to justify her performance in the public space. Tamale (2004) opines that a woman`s success in the African context is attached to her success in domesticity – as a wife and as a mother therefore in that context, Laboso was deemed to have fallen short of society`s measure of success because your children`s success is attached to your success as an individual more so as a woman.

Hon Millie Odhiambo Mabona too faced similar challenges. Millie Grace Akoth Odhiambo Mabona is a graduate of The University of Nairobi -School of Law has worked as a lawyer and women and children rights activist. The CRADLE is one of the MP`s dream come true. She founded the organization that promotes the rights of children since 1997. Millie received the YWCA Democracy Award and the Eve woman of the year for human rights and gender. Her political tipping point came when she served as a delegate at the Bomas of Kenya, during the constitutional drafting process. ODM party nominated her to Parliament 2008 and she clinched the Mbita seat in the 2013 and 2017

election. Her marital home is in Zimbabwe. She is married to Mr. Mabona. She sought elective office in her home of birth- Mbita Constituency. The major campaign narrative her opponents used against her was that she was a married woman who had a home in Zimbabwe. She had no rights to seek office at her home of birth to carry constituency resources to -another country. She also vied in area (Nyanza) that had not elected a female member of parliament for over 40 years. It took the intervention of Dr. Joyce Laboso who attended a burial in Mbita and addressed the crowd. She mocked them for rejecting their own child.(Millie Odhiambo`s Speech at KEWOPA`s Mentorship Training 2018 ) She said that those were practices of the past and women were nowadays elected in their homes of birth and she was a classic example having been elected as a member of parliament in Bomet County. The effect of that endorsement was instantaneous. It spread like wild fire across the constituency that electing a woman was part of women empowerment and they were being left behind. The female vote rallied behind Millie Mabona to ensure that their candidate was one of the few women at the helm of power. That solidified her position in first place in the race. She has gone on to retain the seat in the 2017 general election. Millie has many times faced the wrath of patriarchy in the politics. In the 2013 Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party primaries, rowdy youths burnt her house as they claimed she was not born in that village. Millie was born in another village within the same constituency but built her house in another village. They kept referring to her as a stranger. The youths protested violently. They tried to ambush her car but she got information beforehand and used another route. Their position was that she had not sought blessings from their village council of elders and would hence be uncontrollable. They found that to be disrespectful to the patriarchal pecking

order. As defiant as she is, she did not let that stop her. She went on to clinch the seat. While in parliament, she is a vehement defender of the opposition. During one serious altercation between members of parliament during the controversial security laws amendment bill on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 2015, Millie removed her underwear and threw it at male parliamentarians causing a public uproar. Many labelled her uncouth and immoral. In a Facebook post on her official page, she later explained that when men want to bring down a woman, they unleash her nakedness upon her as it is an absolute shame in the African tradition to see the nakedness of an older woman. Thus her male counterparts tried to undress her in the commotion, so she 'finished' the job for them. She stated that no man will ever shame her using her nakedness as she was fearfully and wonderfully made. She silenced her detractors and blurred the lines between public and private space. (Standard Digital Media 2015). In effect, this cemented the negative narrative that the realms of politics are not a place for 'well placed' women, 'well mannered' women. This act gave ammunition to detractors who framed the narrative that women in politics are not morally upright. This narrative has been used over and over again to prevent women from venturing into the public space especially into the political sphere.

Embu Governor Martin Wambora claimed that former Runyenjes MP Cecily Mbarire should not be voted in to replace him in the year 2017 as she was married outside the county - Cecily Mbarire, Runyenjes MP since 2007, is married to Denis Apaa who hails from western Kenya (Teso). The Member of Parliament's husband was dragged in to the Embu county politics. This is the realm of her private space. Embu Governor Martin Wambora was apparently telling residents not to support his political opponent for she is

married to someone who is not from the county. According to The Star Newspaper, Wambora said voting for Runyenjes MP Cecily Mbarire as the county governor would see their resources lost. Wambora further claimed that Cecily Mbarire had surrendered her rights of being an indigenous resident after her marriage to an outsider. Cecily Mbarire fired back terming the governor's statements as petty, selfish, desperate and immature. This was a very brutal move as we can see, the Governor was creating a societal narrative that married women do not have any rights or sense of belonging to their paternal homes; but their fathers have provided their identity for majority of their lives.

### **5.3 Challenges Facing Women Seeking Elective Office at their Marital Homes**

Alice Muthoni Wahome is a Kenyan legislator. Hon. Wahome won the seat as Member of Parliament for the Kandara Constituency when she was chosen in the March 2013 general elections. She retained her seat in the 2017 general elections. Alice was birthed in Nyeri and married in Murangà county. She faced hostility from the people of Kandara Constituency who labelled her an outsider`.

In her words, in the Citizen Television interview on the segment 'Strength Of A Woman', Alice knew it was going to be a tough battle but the campaign trail was far more than she expected. Rowdy youths sent by her opponent kept attacking her at her rallies. They wanted to deny her the chance to campaign and sell her ideas to the community. There were frequent cases of meetings ending abruptly due to the ambushes. She would run for her dear life. Many times they attempted to undress her knowing that she would be shamed beyond measure and considered dishonorable if they saw her nakedness. This

was the core of her private space. A woman's body, her vagina and her womb are the most inner most settings of her private space. It is her private space that they used to attack her public space.

To further the assault on her persona, they printed and distributed condoms in her name and told the people that they were gifts from her. This was devastating considering sex is a taboo topic in rural Kenya and in the African culture and setting. Had it been proven true, it would automatically deny her the much needed votes to win the election.

Another such example is Charity Kathambi Chepkwony – Member of Parliament for Njoro who faced such challenges. Her county of birth is Meru. She is married to a Kalenjin who hails from Njoro Constituency in the Rift Valley. She faced a myriad of challenges due to the fact that she was not originally born and bred in Njoro. There was the suggestion that it is better to give the seat to an indigenously bred person who had a deep background on their problems and understood their pertinent issues. The people argued that someone who had experienced problems with them throughout the years was prone to be better at service delivery than someone who heard of what happened. They felt that the empathy level may not be the same. Hon. Charity was able to convince them that she had been a resident of the area for a while and she was able to understand their issues. She roped in her husband and declared that what the people felt she did not understand her husband would explain to her and guide her through the thought process.

#### **5.4 Challenges Facing Women Seeking Elective Office Whose Home of Birth is also their Marital Home.**

After outmaneuvering her illiterate father three times by the age of 18 to escape his plans to make her a child bride, Peris Tobiko decided the only way to protect other Maasai girls

in Kenya from harmful traditions was to become a leader. She made national headlines when she was elected to parliament in 2013 - the first woman from her conservative Maasai community to win a seat - despite elders performing a death curse on anyone who dared vote for her. Tobiko's two daughters were beaten up in their college car park after her 2013 victory by a group of young men who told them: "Your mother should not come for our seat", she revealed in a KTN interview. The elders said it was against tradition for women to eye leadership positions and threatened to put a curse on anyone who supported her bid. Ms Tobiko had earlier decamped from ODM and joined TNA after officials in that party told her that a woman's candidature would not sell in Maasai land. She was told to contest for the women representative position, but she was so determined to go to Parliament that she opted to decamp from the Orange party.

Ms. Tobiko's case shows that women have to work twice as hard to get half of what men have. The ideal situation is to have your marital community also be your community of birth then the issue of resource transfer does not arise but just because one is a woman, other narratives are framed against her. The electorate now looks at issues of birth; how many children have? They even go further to ask how many male children does she have? What type of reputation do both her homes have and so forth? It is an unending cycle of challenges for women.

### **5.5 The Effect of not Being Officially Married While Seeking Public Office**

It was understood that politics was for unmarried, barren women who were untameable domestically and a nuisance to society.(Joys 2011) The above cases prove that even with the `perfect` home women still faced discrimination for venturing into what was defined as a men`s arena-politics. The private space is used through any means to attack the

public space of women in politics. Even when a woman passes all societal private space qualifications; married, with children and still the political detractors had to pry on her nakedness. This goes to prove that a woman's private space directly impacts her public space. Such a case is exhibited in the case of Murang'a Woman Representative Sabina Wanjiru Chege moved to clear the air by announcing that she only has one husband after winning the August 8th, 2017 election while collecting her certificate. Ms Chege, who won her second term as the county MP, said that she was happily married to one man. While receiving her certificate from the county returning officer at Murang'a University, she said bad things have been said about her in social media. (Public Speech via K24 news August 2017). During the campaigns, social media was awash with propaganda that she raised money for her campaigns in dubious ways.

She was accused of husband snatching, an allegation that was rubbished by the man's close family members. (Standard Digital Media 2015) This is another exhibition of how the woman politician's private space directly affects her electability. It was society's business to know who she had married and why so as to measure whether they would give her their vote. This was especially sensitive with the women's vote. She was branded a husband snatcher and this touched the core of many women's values. She had to work against these claims and clarify her position as a woman in a polygamous setting. Her husband even did the prominent spousal parade as a show of solidarity to her and changed the narrative to one of a love story and we all know that everyone loves a love story.

The other side of the coin is that no one is looking at the man's decision to take a second wife against the wishes of the first wife. It is this narrative that labelled Sabina a husband

snatcher or a mistress but what do we call the man who decides to take up a mistress or have an extra marital affair. Of course there will be arguments that the law allows the man to be polygamous under the Kenyan constitution 2010 but before a second marriage is officially formalised, an affair is what is taking place. I would opine that the negative connotation put to 'mistresses should be extended to men. The question should be why Sabina's marriage would be such a pertinent issue that would almost cost her the women's vote in the election. Is it not her private space? Yet society made it such a pertinent issue. It is quite unfortunate the lengths Sabina Chege had to go to clear the air on her marital status and remove the tag 'husband snatcher'. Male politicians are not subjected to same scrutiny on their private spaces in fact having more women seems to earn you more votes as you are deemed a 'stud'.

The unofficially married tag has haunted young women mostly. The society always wants to place a man on your arm to ratify a woman as a serious candidate. There is a perceived notion that an unattached woman will end up being 'auctioned' amongst the men and she will not concentrate on public service and delivery to the constituents. This notion was used to attack Nairobi Women Representative Esther Passaris in a live television interview by Miguna Miguna hosted by Jeff Koinange. Miguna accused her of stating that she would go a sex holiday in Mauritius if the Orange Democratic Movement won the 2007 general elections. He called her a bimbo for having such thinking. What Miguna implied was that Ms. Esther not capable of handling leadership positions, that her mind was too preoccupied with trivial things like vacations, beauty and sex. This cemented a narrative that has been haunting women for a long time in an interview watched by



almost half the country leading up to a general election. The fact that Ms. Esther is also unofficially married did not make the narrative any better.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

There is always a looming expectation from society on women to be consistently better than men. This is despite retrogressive traditions, clannism, brutality, financial debilitation are on the whole obstructions that keep women from aggressive legislative issues. These are some case studies of women who have faced such barrier and have been judged by society based on these issues. Women have to work twice as hard to get half of what men can attain or access. The argument is that men are not put on the same pedestal; they seem to have an unspoken executive privilege where their private lives are not mentioned and are considered off limits. I further opine that to eventually achieve equity amongst the genders in leadership, women should be judged on the same issues as men and be privy to the `unspoken code of relations and conduct` that men accord each other. Moser argues that there is no reason why gender should be the organizing principle of social division of labor apart from in child birth. Her premise dictates that gender roles should be different but equal. Unlike men, women have no clear separation between work and leisure; they end working to provide leisure (cooking, cleaning etc.) This implies that there is no demarcation of the private space form the public space. The lines are blurred. The women discussed herein have often had to be subject to the triple roles of women. Despite politics being a full time job for men with little time left for family, female politicians have to carry the political burden of being consistently busy while still tending to the household, being a mother and in some cases a wife. Geographical background is one of the major factors influencing the public space and therefore societal opinions of women politician. This has genuine ramifications for wedded women. When women get

married, they are said to have a place with the spouse's body electorate. In circumstances where the couple has dwelled in urban areas for quite a long time, the lady is viewed as an outsider in her significant other's home region, yet she is not really acknowledged in her home of birth. As political pioneers where topographical depiction is given much criticalness, as is in Kenya. This is a factor that has is unspoken of. The common underlying factor in this chapter emerges that whether married or unmarried, the societal scale is tipped to favor men in the public space and a negative narrative is connoted upon any woman who gets into the political arena. The economic evolution of the woman upsets the traditional institution of marriage. This goes to prove the theory herein used (feminist political theory) which dictates that men endeavor to exercise dominance over women and have their existence, economic and political activities define their activities. Here, by defining a woman in terms of her parochial or marital home we exert patriarchy and male dominance over women

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This thesis has discussed the overall information on the issue of women access in political and public life. This thesis has outlined the historical chronology of women's status of their public and private spaces. It has discussed the influence of selected women politicians on their public and private spaces and their response to the same. It has further investigated the problem relating to women and strengthening in line with the status as accepted residents in different political structures and at various degrees of politics (national, commonplace, around the world). It has dissected marriage as an important aspect of the private space that affects women's entry into the public space. This finishing up area considers some key issues that have been talked about in the previous chapters.

When debating the Beth Mugo Affirmative action bill, the Right. Hon. Raila Odinga aptly put it as follows:

“Gender equality is a human rights issue. All men and women are born equal and they should be given equal opportunities by the society in order to realise their potential. Of course the Bible talks of women having been moulded from a man's rib. I think that is part of Jewish mythology, which has no place in modern society...we have not provided equal opportunities for men and women in this country by insisting that women must compete on equal basis with men. It is like asking two people to run 100 meters race and you put one competitor 50 meters ahead and then demand they compete equally. That is

an unfair contest. Countries that have embraced affirmative action have experienced faster economic development because by doing so you unleash a lot of energies and human resources”

(Parliamentary Hansard, April 12<sup>th</sup> 2000)

This was one of the best ways to simply put it to the Kenyan legislature that a lot needs to be done to enable women freely access the public space.

### **6.1 Summary of the Findings**

Tamale (2004) opines that patriarchy provides an artificial line which demarcates the private space from the public and secludes women to the private space. This is why the African society, more so Kenya in this context find it hard to accept female politicians. The story that many female politicians have is that of struggle as exhibited in this thesis. Many of them chimed into politics without the financial muscle that men had. They relied on the goodwill of the voters. Men on the other hand are always prepared financially and always have the societal narrative on their side to enable them create a winning campaign narrative.

Patriarchy defines women in terms of domesticity (S. Tamale 2004). It creates the public space as the locus of socially valued activities (business and politics) and defines it as a male arena. In most cases, women are usually not great enthusiasts of joining politics because men make it so difficult for them. Most women are usually the only female candidate amongst several men. Wavinya Ndeti former Machakos town MP was the only female candidate against 18 men for the same position when she first made it to parliament for example. This already shows that men are not afraid to declare their

interest in politics. They make a decision and go for it. Women have a longer process. Their private space directly impacts their public space. She first seeks her husband's support, then her children's, then her husband has to prepare her in laws for the journey she is about to take lest they brand her a prostitute and so forth. This is why marriage is such a pertinent issue in women's politics and its impacts have largely been discussed in this thesis. A man has no such bureaucracies. In fact the wife is usually informed as a courtesy not consulted and she is not part of the final decision of whether he should vie or not. There are certain private space issues that are prominent in deciding the acceptance of women into politics. Her marital status and how many children she has are major determining factors. It does not matter how many degrees she has and how many qualifications she has attained for the job. Her private space 'success' is her major qualification. Millie Odhiambo had to fight these issues as she was initially unmarried and still does not have children. Her fierce nature has made people term her as a mad woman, a not normal woman hence they give her a pass. It is important to note that when men want to console themselves about having women amongst their midst they term her a man. A term that is often given to Charity Ngilu, the first female governor of Kitui County. Her zeal and tenacity is respected across the political divide and it is said that it can only be equated to that of a man. This being said creates the narrative that she is as strong as a man and has a free pass to navigate the men's world without being seen as a woman. Why must this be the case? The question becomes that why must this metamorphosis of thought and labelling take place in the voters' minds? Being a woman is feminine it is not manly or it is not being a man. Is it so hard for society to conceive that a woman can be a leader?

The feminist political theory reiterates the fact that the systematic subordination of women by state and society is entrenched in the practices of patriarchy. As we analyse the cases of the highlighted female politicians, we see a trend in the role that patriarchy has to play. The identity crises faced by the women as to their birth homes and marital homes is as a result of patriarchy. It is entrenched in patriarchy that women have to be in chaperoned by men and hence their identity is defined by their fathers or husbands. There is no gap where women can just exist on their own as citizens who define their own being. Society appends them a man to be able to relate with them as seen in the case of Laboso, Charity, Cecily, Millie and others.

The first objective which describes the historical context of Kenyan women's public and private spaces tells the story of women's transition from the private space into the public space. As evidenced in chapter three, they had to fight for their space in the public space realms they enjoy today. It worth noting however, that when the struggle was at its heights in the Mau Mau war and the 1992 struggle for multi- partyism, the women were seen as equal to the men and vital to the liberation of the country. Just after the struggles were won, the men rewarded themselves with many governmental positions leaving women once again ``out ` in the cold to begin another war- that of recognition and a seat at the decision table. It is against this background that women sought to seek the mandate to represent the people and the highest levels of governance so that they can be able to make their own demands and fight for the space of women. The process of seeking for this representation often coincided with the ongoing of their lives i.e. marriage and thus a tricky and delicate balance had to achieve.

The selected case studies of women show that marriage many times is an inhibiting factor towards the entry into the public political space for women but without the title of a marriage appended to your identity, women again have extreme difficulty identifying with voters who feel she doesn't belong or that there is something wrong with her hence no one wants her. Chapter 5 has illustrated the challenges married women face during their political journeys. The bottom line remains that the sin is not to be married, the sin – to society- is to simply be a woman. In their own responses, the women have aptly put forth that they are to be judged on their professional experiences and capability to serve the people but that is not often the scale through which society measures their capacity to deliver to them.

In case study of Kenya, it is often believed that women in politics (feminists) cannot sustain a household. The men have often categorized such women as `a headache they would not want in the house`. Those married to such women are often told that they should leave their activism at the doorstep when entering the house. Matters have been made worse by having most Kenyan female icons as divorcees such as Prof. Waangari Maathai, Hon. Martha Karua, Gina Din Kariuki, Nairobi Women Representative Esther Passaris and her predecessor Rachel Shebesh just to mention but a few. These women have dual lives where they actively advocate for women empowerment and women's rights in the public sphere but have to suffer derogatory patriarchal practices and subordination in the house hold.

This thesis shows that noteworthy progress has been made to upgrade women's depiction, collaboration and ability to affect the inspiration inside formal political methodology over all zones. In any case, the possibility of 'political life' must be reached out to show that

various parts of individual life, and life in the private circle, can dynamically be grasped to be 'political'. Second, conceptualization of public space ought to include the acknowledgment of new and propelling spaces in the new and contemporary circles. New types of progress for access to public and political life are rising, and these new sorts of correspondence are making new systems for political practice. This thesis has looked through the historic context of public and private spaces of women in Kenya, the case studies of the challenges of marriage on seeking elective office and the impact of private space on the public space. The major lessons learnt are that the suppression of women's entry to the political space is a collective societal narrative that is perpetuated by patriarchy and is negatively skewed against women. As a nation, we need to get a multi-scalar way to deal with oversight watching out for abuse of women straight forwardly and in political life. This is particularly sure in the significance of the women's change to help equal consistency in gender presentation.

## **6.2 Recommendations of the Study**

In view of the discoveries of the examination, the accompanying suggestions can be made:

- Develop a comprehensive media strategy aimed at building community spaces and attitudes for women in leadership.

In today's society, media is the effective way of ensuring effective dissemination of information. There are various types of media; print, journal, television and social media. Social media is arguably the most effective. With ignorance, lack of awareness and political apathy as the major issues that propagate the status quo of systematic patriarchy and dominance over women, it is imperative that use of media be employed to effectively



change that narrative and create an informed republic that does not use women's private space to lock them out of the public space especially the political arena.

- Encourage women involvement in Political party affairs

Political parties are the gate keepers to women's advancement to power and access to political leadership. They are the vehicles by which politicians ascend to power. They frame the narrative on many political issues in the country. They also participate in policy formulation and are a sure way of reaching the public through their grassroots mechanisms. Having women at the helm of decision making will enable the parties support their own candidate and thereby dispel the negative narrative formed against women in the public space.

- Address the structural and systemic discrimination that has affected women by using a multipronged strategy.

This includes the constitution of committees, policy formulation, enforcement of gender principles ratified by government in international agreements, skills and capacity building ,mentorships and devolved women's empowerment. This will ensure that women are well equipped to deal with the brutality of having their private space impact their public space and work towards having the country at large participate in this process.

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