When will a woman head the state? A historical gendered analysis of Ghana's fourth republican democracy

*[1]Hardi Shahadu[1] Najatu Umar[2] and Eliasu Mumuni[3]

[1]Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University for Development Studies, Tamale
[2]Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University for Development Studies, Tamale
[3]Department of Communication, Innovation and Technology (CIT), Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University for Development Studies, Tamale-Ghana
Corresponding email: hshahadu@uds.edu.gh

ABSTRACT

In November of 2016, a woman contested for the presidency of the United States of America. She lost, not to a seasoned, but a novice male politician who could comfortably challenge the most disliked American president's title. Why Americans will reject an experienced female politician and elect a novice male politician re-ignites the 'woman question' in contemporary world politics. While the woman question in the 1970s-90s was focused on the women's rights to vote and participate in the state's decision-making processes, the woman question today is whether the world is ready for female leadership at the highest level of the state. Using historical data on women's representation in Ghanaian governance since 1992, the paper reveals that women representation in parliament and ministerial appointments have averaged 11% and 14% respectively and that the NPP has proportionally elected more women (13%) than the NDC (9%) over the period. The results also showed wide regional disparities in elected women parliamentarians, with the greater Accra (20%) and Central (19%) regions recording the highest and the Upper West (3%) and Northern (6%) regions recording the lowest. The historical gender representation analysis, in addition to factors such as the type of presidential system of governance practiced in Ghana, the stability of the country and its democratic institutions, all lead to a conclusion that the chances of a female rising to the post of president in Ghana are very negligible.

Key Words: Women, gender, leadership, elections, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

The 'woman question' in relation to governance, democracy and politics in the nation-state in the 1970s until recent was focused on the issues of participation, inclusion, rights to vote, and universal suffrage, among others (Lovenduski, 2002; Paxton, 2008; Tremblay, 2007). These questions arose as a result of a wider observation that, until the 1970s, the political science literature did not regard gender as a category of political analysis, thereby leading to a common view of women as surrogates of, and inferior to men when it comes to issues of politics and governance (Lovenduski, 2002; Musah, & Gariba, 2013). The result of this notion was that women were regarded as

less politically active, uninterested, and incompetent compared to men. Starting from the 1970s, these male-dominated prevailing views were subject to critical questions, debates and challenges, leading to the birth of a subfield of political studies devoted to the issues of gender and democracy, political participation and representation etc. (Lovenduski, 2002; Paxton, 2008).

Feminists' critiques of mainstream political theory, science and discourse started with the questions of women's rights to vote and participate in the political decision-making processes. These questions did hit at the core of the concepts of political discourse, such as equality, liberty, and individuality, in ways that made it impossible for mainstream political scientists to ignore them any longer (Lovenduski, 2002). Feminism, which provided the central theory or ideology for questioning male dominance of society and intellectual discourses on politics, governance, and democracy, seeks to remove discrimination against women and break down all forms of male dominance in society (Lovenduski, 2002). In the areas of democracy and governance, for instance, feminists' critiques have moved from the simple issue of adding gender as an additional variable of measurement and analysis, often characterized as 'add women and stir', to more complex issues of including women in principle and practice, in the measurements of democracy (Paxton, 2008).

Whilst the question of inclusion appears to have been settled largely through the widening of the universal suffrage to cover women by constitutional reforms, legislative instruments as well as affirmative actions and diversity policies across the first to the third wave democracies, the question of competition and acceptance of female leadership at the highest levels of the state remains contested and unresolved. In principle, it has been argued that democracy may be gendered, but "measures of democracy often fail to include women as

political participants" in practice (Paxton, 2008. p 47). In the contest and competition aspects of democracy, women face the greatest barriers compared to participation and inclusion (IPU, 2020; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Tremblay, 2007). And the higher the authority, power and influence of the position, the more difficult it is for a woman to occupy (Jalalzai, 2008). For instance, between 1945 and 1995, women representatives in parliaments across the world increased from about 3% to 12.7% (Musah & Gariba, 2013).

Similarly, the number of women parliamentarians across the world increased from 11.3% in 1995 to 24.9% in 2020, with significant variations across countries and regions (IPU, 2020). In contrast, from 1960 to 2007, only sixty-two (62) women occupied executive positions in countries across the globe, comprising 37 Prime Ministers and 25 Presidents (Jalalzai, 2008). Ghana's parliament has witnessed moderate growth in the number of females elected as Members of Parliament from the 1960s to date (Musah & Gariba, 2013), even though the first time for a major political party to field a woman as a vice presidential candidate was in the 2020 general elections, no major party has yet elected a woman as a presidential candidate to date.

This paper interrogates the woman question from the standpoints of gender, feminism, political representation and democracy by examining the prospects of a female presidency in the next decade in Ghanaian politics. This paper is situated within feminist political theory and draws on historical data and literature to examine female political representation and leadership at the global level, within the context of Africa, with a special focus on Ghana. The key questions that will be answered in this paper include: a) is Ghana as a country ready now, or will it be ready for female executive leadership in the next decade? b) how has global, African and Ghanaian political representation and

leadership evolved to reflect or address the questions of gender parity, equality, diversity and inclusion?

Ghana's fourth republican constitution which was adopted in 1992, provides for a unified presidential system with an elected president with full executive powers responsible for appointing ministers of state (subject to parliamentary approval). The president also has powers to appoint the judiciary, heads of security and law enforcement agencies, and heads of independent states agencies such as the electoral commission, and commission for human rights and administrative justice (CHRAJ) among others. It has been argued somewhere that the powers of the Ghanaian president are just too much, often leading to party-based clientelist appointments devoid of meritocracy (Gyampo & Graham, 2019). The Ghanaian constitution also provides for a unicameral legislature with members elected to represent designated constituents across the country, the number of which has grown from 200 in 1992 to 275 at present. The constitution further requires that majority of state ministers be appointed from the parliament, a provision that can constitute a key barrier to women appointment into the executive arm of government. The point being that, for a parliament that is about 90% male dominated, female representatives are extremely few when an account is being taken of opposition female MPs. For instance, in 2001, Kuffour had only 8 female NPP MPs as against 91 male MPs among whom majority ministers could be appointed. Similarly, Atta Mills had only 4 female NDC MPs in 2009 as against 110 male MPs among whom he appointed majority ministers in fulfilment of the provisions of the constitution.

Like Jalalzai, this paper argues that "gender affects access to executive office in all countries, as politics is reinforced as a masculine domain with men depicted as the norm or 'natural' leaders" (2008, p 206). Using mainly quantitative methods, this paper examines the contexts within which women rise to executive leadership positions in other countries and reviews the Ghanaian context to uncover the potential for female executive leadership in the country now or in the next decade. By so doing, the paper advances the feminists discourses on gender parity, political competition and representation.

Evolution of women in politics and leadership at the global level

Women's leadership as a subject of interest has gained traction in the academic literature, focusing more on what women do or do not do when they assume leadership positions rather than the factors influencing, facilitating or constraining women's access to executive leadership (Jalalzai, 2008). How women rise to occupy executive leadership positions within the context of the nation-state, is largely understudied at the global, regional and country-specific levels, thereby limiting our ability to understand or predict the prospects of women executive leadership in given contexts (Jalalzai, 2008). Recent studies (see Ahmad et al., 2019; Jalalzai, 2008; Tremblay, 2007) have postulated a number of factors that help shape or constrain the ability of women to occupy executive leadership positions within the state. These factors are discussed to provide a conceptual framework for a specific Ghanaian case study which is the focus of this paper.

It is argued first and famous that women chances of executive leadership are higher where executive powers and autonomy are restricted or curtailed (Jalalzai, 2008). In a study of women executives between 1960 and 2007, Jalalzai (2008) discovered that only sixty-two (62) women from forty-nine (49) countries served as national leaders within the study period, with thirteen (13) of the countries experiencing more than one-woman leadership. The study also underscores the point that only twenty-five (25) out of the total number of women leaders served as presidents, with thirty-seven (37) of them serving as prime misters

Secondly, it is argued that institutional arrangements for the selection of leaders into executive positions within a state have an important contribution to understanding women's access to executive power. Here, women are assumed to have higher chances of entering into executive leadership positions in parliamentary systems of governance where Prime Ministers are selected by the party, share power with other elites and are responsible for the legislature. In contrast, in presidential systems where Presidents are elected through popular suffrage and with higher autonomy, the chances of women entering into such executive positions and wielding such executive powers are relatively lower (Jalalzai, 2008). To strengthen her argument on the above hypothesis, Jalalzai (2008, p.211) identified a typology of executive positions based on autonomy and degree of executive powers as follows;

> 1) president with full executive powers; 2) president sharing executive powers with a prime minister he or she appoints; 3) prime minister only removable by the legislature; 4) prime minister removable by a president; and 5) president with minimal powers.

Jalalzai (2008, p. 211) argues further that women are expected to "have little independence, possess few powers, and rarely be elected as strong presidents". Out of eighteen (18) women presidents subject to critical analysis, only eleven (11) were found to have been elected by popular vote, with only five (5) of those being presidents with full executive powers (Jalalzai, 2008). This is particularly significant for this paper because Ghana is practicing a presidential system of government where the president has full and sweeping executive powers (Gyampo & Graham, 2019).

It is argued further in the literature that women may rise to become presidents, wielding executive powers by; a) bypassing popular elections and becoming interim presidents or through succession; b) during political transitions involving independence or transition to democratic governance, among others; c) in contexts of political instability and less institutionalization of governance and; d) where women are affiliated to dominant political groups with familial ties to the elites (Jalalzai, 2008). Among the eighteen (18) women presidents who were studied in detail by Jalalzai (2008), eight (8) of them came from Europe, where there is political stability and the rest (except 1) served as presidents in countries that experienced political instability. Also, with the exception of all the European countries and one in Africa, all remaining nine (9) women presidents had familial ties with the ruling male elites of their countries.

Women executive leadership studies complement the larger gendered studies on political participation, civic rights, and representation (Childs & Krook, 2006; Duerst-Lahti, 2008; O'Brien, 2015). Historically, women had their voting rights restricted in all countries worldwide until 1893, when New Zealand became the first country to give women the right to vote (Baah-Ennunh, Owusu & Kokor, 2005). For instance, in the United States of America, women joined Congress in 1916 but gained the right to vote in 1920 and had 10% parliamentary representation in 1992 (Paxton, Hughes & Painter 2010). Ecuador elected its first female parliamentarian in 1956, and by 1998 it attained 10% parliamentary representation by women(Paxton et al., 2010).

Women representation in the legislature at the global level has more than doubled between 1995 and 2020, where the global average stood at about 25% as against 11% in 1995, and with five (5) countries achieving more than 50% seats held by women in their lower or single house parliaments (IPU, 2020). The top 10 countries with the highest women representation in a single or lower house parliament in 2020 include Rwanda

(61%), Cuba (53%), Bolivia (53%), United Arab Emirates (50%), Mexico (48%), Nicaragua (47%), Sweden (47%), Grenada (47%), Andorra (46%), and South Africa (46%). In 1995, the top 10 list was made up of 8 European countries, which reduced to 2 in 2020 and the countries in which most gains were made for women were Rwanda (+57%), United Arab Emirates (+50%), Andorra (+43%) and Bolivia (+42%). Regionally, the Americas reached the 30% threshold of all houses combined, gaining 19% points between 1995 and 2020, followed by Europe (+17%), MENA (+13%), the Pacific (+13%) and Asia recording the least gain at 7% within the period (IPU, 2020).

Whilst the global picture above shows significant gains for women's representation in the legislature across all countries (Helimäki et al., 2023; Studlar & Welch, 1993), there are nonetheless marked differences in terms of the progress being made at the regional and national levels (Campbell & Shorrocks, 2021; Miwa et al., 2022). For instance, the 2020 data shows that the pacific region still has parliaments without women members, and there are still parliaments (single or lower parliamentary chambers in the pacific -3, MENA -3, Americas-1, Asia -1 and Sub-Saharan Africa-1) with fewer than 5% women representation.

Examining the women leadership question from the context of corporate and business leadership, studies have discovered significant shifts whereby women have broken the glass ceiling and entered managerial leadership positions globally (Bureau of Employers' Activities, 2019). Similar studies have demonstrated a shift from the preference of masculinity or male-dominated leadership traits to embrace feminine or less gendered leadership traits (see, Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Feenstra et al., 2023; Powell et al., 2021). Other corporate-gendered studies have examined women in multinational corporations (Frenkel, 2017), critical feminists coaching perspectives (Bierema et al., 2023), gender and innovation

among corporate CEOs (Khushk et al., 2023) and gender gaps in sab-Saharan Africa (Anaya, 2023) among others.

Review of African women in politics and leadership
In Africa, the brouhaha on women's rights in the decision-making process has also been a tough task against patriarchy, poverty and religion. Women in Africa have constantly fallen below the world average in political representation (IPU, 2014). With time there has been an improvement in the number of women legislators in African parliaments. The 21st century witnessed extra feats for Women political leaders. Prominent among these female leaders is Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who was elected as the first female African Executive Head of State in 2005 (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009). In 2012, Malawian Joyce Banda, the then Vice President (2009-April 2012), became President after the demise of President Binguwa Mutharika (Ndlovu and Mutale, 2013). In 2012, South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma became the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (Current Female Leaders, 2015). In 2021, Samia Suluhu Hassan as a vice president, became Tanzanian's first female president after the death of President John Magafuli.

Gender and political representation in Ghana
Opong (2012) asserts that women's efforts in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Ghana are inadequately documented. Women played a vital role during the liberation tussles in then Gold Coast by forging and supporting Kwame Nkrumah, which led to the passage of the legislative instrument for affirmative action in 1959 (Opong, 2012). Allah-Mensah, (2005) affirms that due to the role played by women, Kwame Nkrumah appointed women as deputy ministers and district commissioners. Apusigah et al. (2011) avows with Allah-Mensah (2005) by stating that women's association such as National Federation of Gold Coast Women

(NFGCW) formed in 1953 and other market women and religious groups all worked with CPP and Nkrumah for attaining a successful independence.

Madsen (2014) opines that 31st December Women Movement established during the PNDC era was very influential and assisted to empower women in many activities but burdened with many criticisms such as defending the regime's interest to the detriment of women, monopolizing all platforms created for women's organization. Nonetheless, the movement paved the way for several women to win Assembly elections (Madsen 2014). After 2000 elections in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party government created a new ministry – Ministry of Women and Children Affairs which led to the demise of National Council of Women and Development (Prah, 2004).

MATERIALS AND METHODS
The data for this study is quantitative in nature and it is drawn from multiples secondary sources including parliamentary records, publications of the electoral commission and other reports available on the internet. Our internet search used phrases such as "members elected to Ghana's fourth republican parliament", "Ghana's parliamentary elections results", "members of parliament of Ghana since 1992", "ministerial appointments in Ghana since the fourth republic", "Ghana's state ministers under Rawlings, Kuffuor, Mills, Mahama and Nana-Addo", Ghana's parliamentary elections by gender", "Ghana's ministerial appointments by gender", etc. We reviewed only internet source documents which contained information on either parliamentarians, parliamentary elections or ministerial appointments in Ghana.

The raw quantitative data gathered from these sources was processed using pivot tables which summarized the date into percentages and categorized the data into gender, political party, election year,

appointing regimes among others. The data covers members elected into Ghana's parliament from the 1992 parliamentary and presidential elections to the 2020 elections and ministers of state appointed by the Ghanaian government from 1993 to 2021. The parliamentary election data was also broken down into regions so as to reveal any regional variations in terms of female representation.

Administratively, Ghana currently has sixteen (16) regions and 260 districts. Prior to 2019, the country's administrative regions were 10, but following a referendum in December of 2018, six (6) additional regions were created. The electoral commission of Ghana reported the 2020 general election results using the current regional configurations, but for historical-comparative purposes, we merged the new regional data with the old regions from which they were carved. This was easy because the new regions were created by simply dividing an existing region into two or three regions.

It is noteworthy that Ghana, as a democracy, has never elected a woman as president or vice president since gaining independence in 1957. Women have been appointed as speakers of parliament (1), chief justice (2), electoral commissioner (2) and commissioner of human rights and administrative justice (1), among others. The closest that a woman has come to occupy the highest executive position in the country was during the 2020 general elections when Jane Naana Opoku -Agyemang was chosen as vice-presidential candidate for the NDC. This is not to say women have not contested as presidential or vice-presidential candidates in Ghana's elections before Naana, but these women have been from the minor parties whose chances of winning an election in Ghana are almost down to zero.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents analyses and discusses the data to highlight the historical trends of women's representation in Ghanaian

democracy, mainly through membership in the single-chamber Ghanaian parliament and executive appointments as ministers of state. As the data in table 7.1 shows, the average women representation in Ghana's parliament from 1992 to 2020 parliamentary elections is only eleven percent (11%) as against eighty-nine percent (89%) average for men. Ghana's record of 11% average is far below the global average of 25%, representing the period from 1995 to 2020 (IPU, 2020), almost the same time range. It is interesting to note that whilst the global average moved from 11% in 1995 to 25% in 2020, Ghana's average stands at 11% in 2020, the 1995 average for the globe.

One of the factors responsible for women's rise to political prominence in a democracy outside the west is conflicts and political instability (Jalalzai, 2008). The Ghanaian parliamentary representation data presented in both figure 7.1 and Table 7.1 provides supporting evidence to the theory that women are more likely to hold significant political positions in democracies that are emerging from conflicts (Jalalzai, 2008). As a stable and peaceful democracy, Ghana's fourth republican state has recorded one of the lowest women's parliamentary representation. The highest growth between the two election cycles was only 3% (between 2012 and 2016). The Ghanaian case is in sharp contrast to Rwanda, which recorded the highest women representation in parliament in the 2020 Inter-Parliamentary Union Report, registering as much as 61% seats held by women in the Rwandan parliament as at 2020. A greater chunk of the growth in women representation in Rwandan parliament took place after the 1994 Rwandan genocide that destabilized the country significantly. Women representation in the Rwandan parliament grew by 57% between 1995 (4%) and 2020 (61%). What this data shows is that, Ghana represents a peaceful and stable democracy without a history of violent civil conflicts but with lower women parliamentary representation whilst Rwanda depicts a democracy that has emerged from violent civil conflict and with the highest women parliamentary representation.

Table 7.1 Gender Representation in Ghana's Parliament from 1992 to 2020

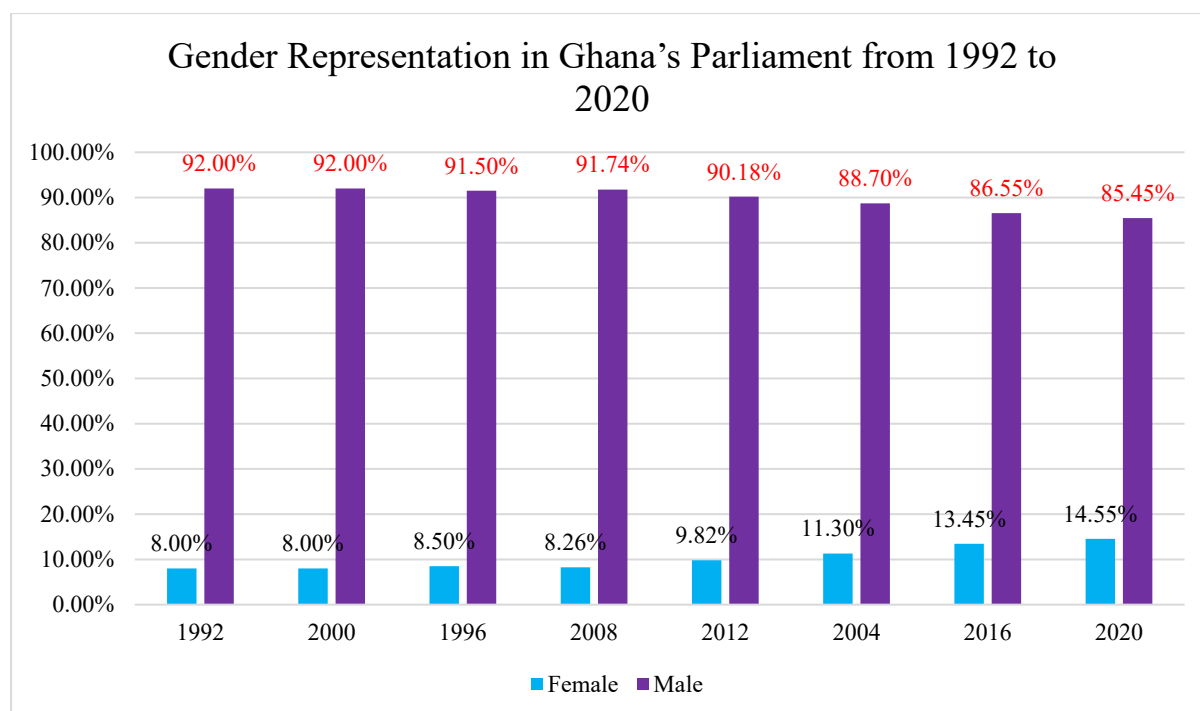| Election Year	Female		Male		Total	
1992	16	8%	184	92%	200	100.00%
1996	17	9%	183	92%	200	100.00%
2000	16	8%	184	92%	200	100.00%
2004	26	11%	204	89%	230	100.00%
2008	19	8%	211	92%	230	100.00%
2012	27	10%	248	90%	275	100.00%
2016	37	13%	238	87%	275	100.00%
2020	40	15%	235	85%	275	100.00%
Grand Total	**198**	**11%**	**1687**	**89%**	**1885**	**100.00%**

Figure 7.1 Gender Representation in Ghana's Parliament from 1992 to 2020

Disaggregating the Ghanaian women's parliamentary representation data into regions also reveals interesting patterns that could not be observed in the general dataset. As can be seen in Table 7.2 below, the data tells us that there are regions that are more or less favourable to female parliamentary candidates. We can see that the regions that are more likely to elect women to represent them in parliament on average are Greater Accra (20%), Central (19%), Volta (11%) and Ashanti (10). In contrast, regions that are less likely to elect women to represent them in parliament on average are Upper West (3%), Northern (6%) Brong Ahafo (7%) and Eastern (7%). The disaggregated regional data shows a pattern that is similar to other regional statistics in the country. For instance, this data is reflective of the regional statistics on education and literacy in the country. The southern regions, especially Greater Accra, Central, Volta and Ashanti have the most literate and educated inhabitants compared to the northern regions, especially the Northern and Upper West regions (Senadza, 2012). Hence, one can say that where education and literacy levels are high, the chances of women being elected to parliament are greater compared to where literacy levels are low.

It is worth cautioning that the data that is presented in this paper only reflects elected members of parliament for each region of the country. The data would be more meaningful and interesting if compared and contrasted with the number of women parliamentary contestants or candidates across regions but issues of data accessibility made it difficult to include such data in this paper. For instance, we are cautioning readers for the reason that more women may be elected to parliament in the Greater Accra and Central regions because more women are contesting for parliament in those regions, on average. It could also be that more women in proportion, are contesting for parliament in the regions where women's representation in parliament is lower. It would therefore be meaningful to see how the contest versus elected data for women compares across regions and the pattern that such comparison will reveal.

Table 7.2 Regional Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender

Regional Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender						
	Female		**Male**		**Total**	
Greater Accra	45	20%	177	80%	222	100%
Ashanti	31	10%	287	90%	318	100%
Central	31	19%	128	81%	159	100%
Volta	20	11%	159	89%	179	100%
Eastern	17	7%	215	93%	232	100%
Western	16	9%	163	91%	179	100%
Brong Ahafo	13	7%	185	93%	198	100%
Northern	13	6%	201	94%	214	100%
Upper East	10	9%	97	91%	107	100%
Upper West	2	3%	75	97%	77	100%
Grand Total	**198**	**11%**	**1687**	**89%**	**1885**	**100%**

A further disaggregation of the regional data into election year also reveals interesting patterns, as seen in Table 7.3. For instance, a breakdown of the regional data shows that the Upper West has not been represented in parliament by a woman since 2008 and that the Upper East has had a consistent representation by a single woman from 1992 to 2012 (except 2008 where no woman was elected) but experienced a jump from 7% in 2012 to 20% in 2020. The Northern, Brong Ahafo, Western, Ashanti and Eastern regions all show modest growths and declines across the period. However, the Volta, Central and Greater Accra regions have recorded marked growth in the number of women elected to represent them in parliament, especially since 2012.

Table 7.3 Regional Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender and Election Year

Regional Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender and Election Year						
Region/Year	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
Upper West	**2**	**3%**	**75**	**97%**	**77**	**100%**
1992		0%	8	100%	8	100%
1996		0%	8	100%	8	100%
2000	1	13%	7	88%	8	100%
2004	1	10%	9	90%	10	100%
2008		0%	10	100%	10	100%
2012		0%	11	100%	11	100%
2016		0%	11	100%	11	100%
2020		0%	11	100%	11	100%
Upper East	**10**	**9%**	**97**	**91%**	**107**	**100%**
1992	1	8%	11	92%	12	100%

1996	1	8%	11	92%	12	100%
2000	1	8%	11	92%	12	100%
2004	1	8%	12	92%	13	100%
2008		0%	13	100%	13	100%
2012	1	7%	14	93%	15	100%
2016	2	13%	13	87%	15	100%
2020	3	20%	12	80%	15	100%
Brong Ahafo	**13**	**7%**	**185**	**93%**	**198**	**100%**
1992	2	10%	19	90%	21	100%
1996	3	14%	18	86%	21	100%
2000	2	10%	19	90%	21	100%
2004	1	4%	23	96%	24	100%
2008		0%	24	100%	24	100%
2012	2	7%	27	93%	29	100%
2016	2	7%	27	93%	29	100%
2020	1	3%	28	97%	29	100%
Northern	**13**	**6%**	**201**	**94%**	**214**	**100%**
1992		0%	23	100%	23	100%
1996	2	9%	21	91%	23	100%
2000	1	4%	22	96%	23	100%
2004	4	15%	22	85%	26	100%
2008	2	8%	24	92%	26	100%
2012	1	3%	30	97%	31	100%
2016	1	3%	30	97%	31	100%
2020	2	6%	29	94%	31	100%
Western	**16**	**9%**	**163**	**91%**	**179**	**100%**
1992	2	11%	17	89%	19	100%
1996	1	5%	18	95%	19	100%
2000	3	16%	16	84%	19	100%
2004	3	14%	19	86%	22	100%
2008	3	14%	19	86%	22	100%
2012	1	4%	25	96%	26	100%
2016	2	8%	24	92%	26	100%
2020	1	4%	25	96%	26	100%
Eastern	**17**	**7%**	**215**	**93%**	**232**	**100%**
1992	1	4%	24	96%	25	100%
1996	1	4%	25	96%	26	100%
2000		0%	26	100%	26	100%
2004	1	4%	27	96%	28	100%
2008	3	11%	25	89%	28	100%
2012	3	9%	30	91%	33	100%
2016	4	12%	29	88%	33	100%
2020	4	12%	29	88%	33	100%

Volta	**20**	**11%**	**159**	**89%**	**179**	**100%**	
1992	1	5%	18	95%	19	100%	
1996		0%	19	100%	19	100%	
2000	1	5%	18	95%	19	100%	
2004	2	9%	20	91%	22	100%	
2008	2	9%	20	91%	22	100%	
2012	4	15%	22	85%	26	100%	
2016	5	19%	21	81%	26	100%	
2020	5	19%	21	81%	26	100%	
Ashanti	**31**	**10%**	**287**	**90%**	**318**	**100%**	
1992	4	12%	29	88%	33	100%	
1996	2	6%	31	94%	33	100%	
2000	2	6%	31	94%	33	100%	
2004	6	15%	33	85%	39	100%	
2008	4	10%	35	90%	39	100%	
2012	3	6%	44	94%	47	100%	
2016	5	11%	42	89%	47	100%	
2020	5	11%	42	89%	47	100%	
Central	**31**	**19%**	**128**	**81%**	**159**	**100%**	
1992	3	17%	15	83%	18	100%	
1996	4	24%	13	76%	17	100%	
2000	4	24%	13	76%	17	100%	
2004	2	11%	17	89%	19	100%	
2008	1	5%	18	95%	19	100%	
2012	5	22%	18	78%	23	100%	
2016	6	26%	17	74%	23	100%	
2020	6	26%	17	74%	23	100%	
Greater Accra	**45**	**20%**	**177**	**80%**	**222**	**100%**	
1992	2	9%	20	91%	22	100%	
1996	3	14%	19	86%	22	100%	
2000	1	5%	21	95%	22	100%	
2004	5	19%	22	81%	27	100%	
2008	4	15%	23	85%	27	100%	
2012	7	21%	27	79%	34	100%	
2016	10	29%	24	71%	34	100%	
2020	13	38%	21	62%	34	100%	
Grand Total	**198**	**11%**	**1687**	**89%**	**1885**	**100%**	

We further broke down the women's representation in Parliament data into political parties to assess the chances of a woman going to parliament based on the political party to which she belongs. As table 7.4 shows, apart from the two major political parties, only the Convention People's Party (CPP) was able to send a woman into the Ghanaian parliament from 1992 to 2020, out of a total of five (5)

members that it had sent to the legislature in the study period. Interestingly, this data shows that no woman has ever been elected to Ghana's parliament, since 1992, as an independent candidate even though thirteen (13) men entered the Ghanaian legislature as independent members during the period.

Looking at the two major political parties in terms of the proportion of women each has sent to the Ghanaian legislature, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), has performed relatively better compared to the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The NPP

sent a total of one hundred and four (104) women to the Ghanaian parliament out of the eight hundred and twenty-nine (829) parliamentarians who were elected on the party ticket in the study period. The NDC on the other hand, sent ninety-three (93) women into parliament as against a total of thousand and twenty-two (1,022) parliamentarians who were elected on the party's ticked during the study period. What this data reveals is that the chances of a woman going to parliament in Ghana are higher with the NPP than the NDC.

Table 7.4 Political Party Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender

Political Party Representation in the Parliament of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992-2020) by Gender						
Political Party		**Female**		**Male**		**Total**
CPP	1	20%	4	80%	5	100%
NPP	104	13%	725	87%	829	100%
NDC	93	9%	929	91%	1022	100%
IND		0%	13	100%	13	100%
PCP		0%	5	100%	5	100%
PNC		0%	11	100%	11	100%
Grand Total	**198**	**11%**	**1687**	**89%**	**1885**	**100%**

Women participation in electoral democracy in a state is either through election or by appointment. Hence, the parliamentary data presented above, which is based on election, needs to be complemented by executive appointments into ministerial positions in order to have a complete picture of gender representation in Ghanaian democracy as a whole. The ministerial appointments data as presented in Table 7.5 indicates that on average, women appointments into ministerial positions in the country stand at 14% as against an average of 11% for women parliamentary representation. This observed difference, though marginal, goes to support the arguments in the literature that women are more likely to be appointed

into higher positions in government than elected (Jalalzai, 2008).

The data as presented below also indicates marked differences across appointing regimes. President Rawlings appointed 6 (14%) women as ministers and deputy ministers out of a total of 43 ministers in his first term of office and 7 (14%) out of 49 ministers in his second term. President Kuffour on the other hand appointed 6 (9% & 8%) women both in his first and second terms out of 64 and 79 ministers respectively. Mills appointed 14 (19%) women out of 73 ministers as President of the republic. President Mahama increased the number to 16 (14%) out of 113 ministers, whilst President Nana Addo

appointed 22 (19%) out of a total of 116 ministers. On a proportional basis, President Mills and Nana Addo appointed the most women into ministerial positions, whilst Kuffuor appointed the least number of women as ministers in his government.

Comparing the ministerial appointment data with the parliamentary representation data by appointing regimes and parliamentary sessions allows us to make additional meaning with the data. From 1993 to 1997, women representation in ministerial appointments stood at 14% as against 8% women parliamentary representation in the same period. Between 1997 and 2001, women ministerial representation stood at 14% against 9% women parliamentary representation for the same period. From 2001 to 2005, women representation in ministerial appointments was 9% compared with 8% women parliamentary representation for the same period. From 2005 to 2009 women ministerial representation was 8% as against 11% for women parliamentary representation for the same period. The 2009-2013 data shows that women ministerial appointments stood at 19% as against 8% for women parliamentary representation. From 2013-2017, women ministers represented 14% against 10% for parliamentary representation. Between 2017 and 2021, women representation in ministerial appointments stood at 19% against 13% for women parliamentary representation for the same period. From 2021 to 2025, women ministerial appointments stand at 19% as against 15% for women parliamentary representation for the same period.

From the above, we can see a clear pattern where women appointments into ministerial positions are always higher than their representation in the elected legislature. The data shows that with the exception of the period between 2005 and 2009, all other comparisons show women appointments as being higher than their elections into parliament. The literature has argued that women's chances of democratic participation and leadership are limited when it comes to open contestation through elections and when the positions are to be held for a fixed-term period (Jalalzai, 2008). The parliamentary position in Ghana is an elected position and is held for a fixed period of four years. Ministerial appointments, on the other hand are done by the President. Ministers serve at the will of the President and can be removed by the President at any time.

Table 7.5 Gender Representation in Ministerial Appointments in Ghana from 1993 to 2021
Gender Representation in Ministerial Appointments in Ghana from 1993 to 2021

Appointing Regime	Appointing President	Female		Male		Total	
1993-1997	J. J. Rawlings	6	13.95%	37	86.05%	43	100%
1997-2001	J. J. Rawlings	7	14.29%	42	85.71%	49	100%
2001-2005	J. A. Kufuor	6	9.38%	58	90.63%	64	100%
2005-2009	J. A. Kufuor	6	7.59%	73	92.41%	79	100%
2009-2013	J. E A Mills	14	19.18%	59	80.82%	73	100%
2013-2017	J. D. Mahama	16	14.16%	97	85.84%	113	100%
2017-2021	Akuffo-Addo	22	18.97%	94	81.03%	116	100%
Grand Total		**77**	**14.34%**	**460**	**85.66%**	**537**	**100%**

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to interrogate the question of what chances are there for a female to occupy the executive position of president in Ghana in the near future. Based on the electoral data of female legislative assembly members as well as female ministerial appointments and the review of literature on the female executive presidency for Africa and globally, we can conclude that the chances of a woman being elected to office as President of Ghana is very marginal and unlikely to happen within a decade from now.

In her groundbreaking work, Jalalzai (2008) theorized, among others, that women are more likely to hold executive presidential positions when;

a) they have relatively more constrained powers, reflective of fragmented executive power arrangements.

b) they are selected and share powers with other executives, especially under a unified parliamentary system of government where a prime minister is appointed by and answers to the parliament;

c) they are chosen as interim leaders and successors thereby bypassing popular elections;

d) a country has a history of violent conflicts and political instability, reflective of weaker political institutionalization.

To advance our argument in this conclusion, we examined the Ghanaian context vis a vis, the four-hypothesis stated above. First of all, Ghana practices a unified presidential system with a President who is elected by popular suffrage for a fixed term and who has considerable powers granted under the constitution. The fact that the Ghanaian presidency is an elective position with a high concentration of powers means that it is generally regarded as a masculine position, thereby reducing the chances of women occupying it. And this is clearly reflected in the parliamentary elections and ministerial appointments data presented in the preceding section. Because parliamentary positions are elective positions with almost no control by the executive, women representation in the Ghanaian parliament has been very marginal compared to that of ministerial appointments in the same country or average figures for other parliaments across the world. Despite the fact that female ministerial appointments have been relatively higher compared to parliamentary elections, the Ghanaian data still demonstrate that the country's political and governance landscape is still male-dominated with less than 20% and 16% average women representations in the Ghanaian executive ministerial appointments and parliamentary elections over the past three decades.

It is also theorized that women are most likely to hold executive positions within a state where they are elected or appointed to share powers with other executives, especially under a parliamentary system of governance where the Prime Minister is chosen by, and answerable to the parliament. Here too, the chances of a woman rising to the position of Prime Minister through parliamentary selection is non-existence since Ghana is practicing a unified presidential system of government. Besides that, the data on women's representation in the Ghanaian parliament in the fourth republic is very marginal as discussed above. More so, it is worth noting that the history of parliamentary leadership itself has not been favourable to women as compared to men. For instance, of all the 13 speakers of parliament of Ghana since the formation of the Ghanaian legislative assembly in 1951, who are voted by the members of parliament, 12 have been men and only 1 was a woman. Finally, Prime Ministers are usually the leaders of the majority party in parliament, but since the beginning of the fourth republican parliament, no woman has ever been made

a majority or minority leader in the Ghanaian parliament by any political party.

The third theory worth interrogating in relation to the Ghanaian context is that women are more likely to assume the executive presidency as interim or succession leaders without the use of the ballot. We can argue that, herein, lies the higher likelihood of a woman ascending to the post of president in Ghana. This is because should a woman get the chance to occupy the post of vice president, she would automatically ascend to the post of president in the case of death or incapacitation of the president of the country. When we examine the literature on female executive leaders in Africa in particular, we see that the continent has had only 11 females rise to the post of presidents or prime ministers, from 1960 to date. Out of this number, 8 occupied the post of Prime Ministers who were appointed and could be removed by the sitting president of the time and 3 succeeded as Presidents upon the demise of a sitting male president (Guinea-Bissau-1984, Malawi-2013 and Tanzania-2021). Only one female executive leader of an African state was elected as President in a unified presidential system of governance by the people of Liberia in 2005.

Finally, it is theorized that women chances of assuming the highest executive position in a state are higher within states that are emerging from violent civil conflicts and political instability (Jalalzai, 2008). As a country, Ghana has been peaceful with stable democracy without any significant national violent civil conflicts in its short history. Hence, for a Ghanaian woman to rise to the position of president in the country, riding on the back of violent civil conflict or political instability, is highly unlikely in the near future. Liberia and Rwanda are classical examples where women rise to political prominence has been made possible as a result of the country's history of violent conflicts and

political instability. For instance, Liberia is the only country with a unified presidential system of government in Africa in which a woman contested and was elected into the position of President, whilst Rwanda is the only African country in which women constitute 61% of the members of its parliament.

In addition to interrogating the above hypothesis in relation to the context of Ghana in order to determine the chances of a female presidency in Ghana, we need to underscore the point that the NDC's choice of a female vice-presidential candidate may have been born out of political expediency and desire to profit from the gender divide in the country more than a planned attempt to advance the course of women in the leadership of the state. The first reason was that the selected candidate was not a seasoned or career politician who could nurse the ambition of vying to lead the party and the country upon the expiration of her vice presidency. More seasoned and ambitious career female politicians within the party were bypassed in the selection of the retired professor. Second, Jane Naan Opoku-Agyeman is far advanced in age and more likely was chosen to retire with the presidential candidate.

In conclusion, therefore, we can say that the case of Ghana, as presented in this paper appears to indicate that though the gender struggles for inclusion, equality and participation when it comes to the right to vote, may have succeeded universally, the gender war for the right to be voted for, is far from being won and may extend towards the end of the twenty-first century or even beyond.

Competing Interests
There is no known competing interest on this paper.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, A., Mahmood, Q. K., Saud, M.,

Airlangga, U., Territory, I. C., Dalam, J. D., & Java, E. (2019). Women in Democracy : The political participation of women Perempuan dalam Demokrasi : Partisipasi politik perempuan. *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan, Dan Politik*, *32*(2), 114–122.

Allah-Mensah, B. (2005). *Women in politics and public life in Ghana.* https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/02989.pdf

Anaya, E. R. (2023). Exploring the paradox of gender preferred leadership in Kenya: a GLOBE study on gender egalitarianism and women in leadership. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *38*(7), 855–876. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-03-2022-0107

Apusigah, A. A., Tsikata, D., & Mukhopadyay, M. M. (2011). Women's Rights Organizations and Funding Regimes in Ghana. Pathways of Women's Empowerment RPC (West Africa Hub) and the Centre for Gender Equality and Advocacy (CEGENSA).

Baah-Ennumh, T. Y., Owusu, S. E., & Kokor, J. Y. (2005). Participation of women in local governance in Ghana: a case study of Ashanti region. Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana), 25(1), 95-107.

Bierema, L. L., Sim, E., He, W., & Cox, A. B. (2023). Double jeopardy: the paradox and promise of coaching women leaders from a critical feminist perspective. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *38*(2), 255–271. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2022-0239

Blake-Beard, S., Shapiro, M., & Ingols, C. (2020). Feminine? Masculine? Androgynous leadership as a necessity

in COVID-19. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *35*(7/8), 607–617. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2020-0222

Bureau of Employers' Activities. (2019). *Women in business and management: the business case for change.* International Labour Organization (ILO). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_700953.pdf

Campbell, R., & Shorrocks, R. (2021). Finally rising with the tide? Gender and the vote in the 2019 British Elections. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, *31*(4), 488–507. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2021.1968412

Childs, S., & Krook, M. L. (2006). Gender and politics: The state of the art. *Politics*, *26*(1), 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00247.x

Current Female Leaders, (2015).*Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership.* Retrieved from www.world current female leaders.

Duerst-Lahti, G. (2008). Gender ideology: Masculinism and feminalism. In *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology.* https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755910.008

Feenstra, S., Stoker, J. I., Lammers, J., & Garretsen, H. (2023). Managerial stereotypes over time: the rise of feminine leadership. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *38*(6), 770–783. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-10-2022-0331

Frenkel, M. (2017). Gendering the MNC. In *Multinational Corporations and Organization Theory: Post Millennium Perspectives* (Vol. 49, pp. 357–388). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0733-558X20160000049012

Gyampo, R. E. V, & Graham, E. (2019). Reviewing the extensive appointment powers of the president as solution to winner-takes-all politics in Ghana. *Ghana Social Science Journal, 14*(2), 35–51.

Helimäki, T., Sipinen, J., Söderlund, P., & von Schoultz, Å. (2023). Voting for a woman: ideology and gendered candidate choice in Finland. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2023.2189726

IPU. (2020). Women in parliament: 1995–2020. *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)*, 1–24.

Jalalzai, F. (2008). Women Rule: Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling. *Politics and Gender, 4*(2), 205–231. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X08000317

Khushk, A., Zengtian, Z., & Hui, Y. (2023). Role of female leadership in corporate innovation: a systematic literature review. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 38*(3), 287–304. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-01-2022-0028

Lovenduski, J. (2002). Gender and Politics. In M. Hawkesworth, MaryKogan (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* (Volume 1, pp. 603–615). Taylor & Francis.

Miwa, H., Happo, M., & Odaka, K. (2022). Are voters less persuaded by female than by male politicians' statements? A survey experiment in Japan. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 32*(2), 429–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2020.1817043

Musah, B. I. & Gariba, I. (2013). Women and Political Decision Making : Perspectives from Ghana ' s Parliament. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences, 5*(3), 443–476.

Ndlovu, S., & Mutale, S. B. (2013). Emerging Trends in Women's Participation in Politics in Africa. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research, 3*(11), 72–79.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2001). Cultural Obstacles to Equal Representation. *Journal of Democracy, 12*(3), 126–140. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2001.0054

O'Brien, D. Z. (2015). Rising to the Top: Gender, Political Performance, and Party Leadership in Parliamentary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science, 59*(4), 1022–1039. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12173

Opong, A. K. (2012). *Rewriting women into Ghanaian history: 1950-1966*. University of Ghana.

Paxton, P. (2008). Gendering democracy. In G. Goertz & A. G. Mazur (Eds.), *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology* (pp. 47–70). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755910.003

Paxton, P., Hughes, M. M., & Painter, M. A. (2010). Growth in women's political representation: A longitudinal exploration of

democracy, electoral system and gender quotas. *European Journal of Political Research*, *49*(1), 25–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2009.01886.x

Powell, G. N., Butterfield, D. A., & Jiang, X. (2021). The "good manager" over five decades: towards an androgynous profile? *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *36*(6), 714–730. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-01-2021-0023

Prah, M. (2004). Chasing Illusions and Realising Visions: Reflections on Ghana's Feminist Experience. *Gender Activism and Studies in Africa*. Darkar: Codesria, 3(Gender series), 27–40.

Senadza, B. (2012). Education inequality in Ghana: gender and spatial dimensions. *Journal of Economic Studies*, *39*(6), 724–739. https://doi.org/10.1108/01443581211274647

Studlar, D. T., & Welch, S. (1993). A giant step for womankind? Women candidates and the 1992 general election. *British Elections and Parties Yearbook*, *3*(1), 216–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/13689889308412933

Tremblay, M. (2007). Democracy, Representation, and Women: A Comparative Analysis. *Democratization*, *14*(4), 533–553. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701398261