Ethnic Division and the Substantive Representation of Women

A CASE STUDY ON THE KENYAN CROSS-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CAUCUS

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“It’s a very vicious world, the legislative world. If you stand alone like a lone sheep, the hyenas will eat you. If you walk in a flock, you probably will survive.” – KEWOPA member
ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the Kenyan cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus success at representing women substantively despite ethnic division. The Kenyan case highlights a paradox: the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is successful in a country where politics is shaped by ethnic division, which contradicts existing theories suggesting that the many layers of identity politics would make it difficult for the members to cooperate on a common women’s agenda. The material was collected during ten weeks in Nairobi through interviews with women MPs within the caucus and through observation of meetings, events, and the daily work of the caucus. The findings suggest that women’s issues are perceived as non-political, and non-controversial, which makes it possible for the members to cooperate on a common women’s agenda. Kenya seems to be in an initial stage of gender mainstreaming where the caucus’s members cooperate on women’s fundamental rights, on which they can all agree. It is reasonable to believe that the political parties will develop ideological differences concerning women’s issues as Kenya achieves a certain level of gender equality. The cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus will, according to the findings, be essential to improve the substantive representation of women in the Parliament.

Key words: Substantive representation of women, ethnic division, conflicting loyalties, women’s cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses, women’s issues, Kenya, KEWOPA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CORD – Coalition for Reforms and Democracy
ICC – International Criminal Court
KADU – Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU – Kenya African National Union
KEWOPA – The Kenyan Women Parliamentary Association
KEWOSA – Kenya Women Senators Association
MP – Member of Parliament
ODM – Orange Democratic Movement
TNA – The National Alliance
URP – United Republican Party
Wiper – Wiper Democratic Movement
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................... 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................... 2

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .................................................................................. 3

1. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................. 6
   Research question ............................................................................................................. 7
   Outline .............................................................................................................................. 7

2. KENYA: BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ........................................................... 7
   Political system ................................................................................................................ 7
   Political parties ............................................................................................................... 9
   Representation of women .............................................................................................. 10

3. WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION: THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ......................... 12
   Descriptive and substantive representation .................................................................... 12
   Women’s issues ............................................................................................................... 13
   Women’s caucuses ......................................................................................................... 13
   Understanding conflicting loyalties ............................................................................... 15

4. METHOD ........................................................................................................................ 16
   Materials ......................................................................................................................... 18
   Questioning technique .................................................................................................... 19
   Reflexivity ....................................................................................................................... 20
   Reliability and validity in elite interviewing .................................................................. 21

5. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK ......................................................................................... 22
   Is the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus significant to the substantive
   representation of women? ......................................................................................... 22
   Does the ethnic division significantly affect the work of KEWOPA? ......................... 23
   How is effective substantive representation of women possible within a cross-party
   parliamentary women’s caucus despite ethnic division? .............................................. 24

6. ANALYSIS ....................................................................................................................... 26
   The importance of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus ......................... 26
   The cooperation within the caucus is more effective .................................................. 28
   The perception of women’s issues as non-political ..................................................... 30

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION ........................................................................................ 33

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................... 36
1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing the numbers of women in parliaments became an international priority during the 1990s. In countries transitioning from authoritarian regimes, the under-representation of women was seen as a democratic deficit (Sawer, Freidenvall, Palmieri, 2013, p. 1). Since then, sub-Saharan Africa has seen an unprecedented rise of women in parliaments (Wang, 2013, p. 113). However, the debate has lately changed focus from descriptive representation of women, focusing on the numbers of women in parliaments, to substantive representation of women, focusing on raising women’s issues in the parliament (Browne, 2014, p. 1). To ensure effective representation of women once they are in office, many parliaments around the world have introduced special bodies such as women’s caucuses (Johnson & Josefsson, 2016, p.1). These women’s caucuses are parliamentary groups that support and seek to gain visibility for women’s issues. Despite the increase of women’s caucuses, there is a considerable lack of theorizing about women in parliaments (Wängnerud, 2009, p. 65).

Earlier research suggests that cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses facilitate the representation of women’s concerns in several ways. One important suggestion is that they increase trust across party lines (Sawer, Freidenvall, Palmieri, 2013, p. 6). These results are unexplored in developing countries since most researchers focus on developed countries (Yoon, 2011, p. 84). Theories on substantive representation of women in parliaments usually do not take into account the completely different contexts of developing countries with deep ethnic divisions. One of the most important factors that influence women MPs’ willingness to represent women’s interests is if they have conflicting loyalties. It is believed that if loyalty to the political party and/or ethnic, religious or cultural identity is stronger than to the women’s agenda, it negatively affects the women MPs’ willingness to represent women’s interests, making it difficult for them to cooperate on a common agenda (Browne, 2014, p. 5). Studies from African countries show that ethnic division can make cooperation on a common women’s agenda highly ineffective, suggesting that the uniting power of a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is not enough in a context of great ethnic divisions (Francis, 2009, p. 133).

Yet, the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus in Kenya has successfully pushed for bills seeking to ameliorate the situation for women in the country, and to improve the
substantive representation of women (KEWOPA, 2016). The success of Kenya, an East African country with a deep ethnic division, highlights a paradox. In order to study this paradox, a field study on the Kenyan case was conducted, from in late March until early June 2016, through interviews with women MPs and members of the caucus as well as observation of meetings, parliamentary voting and the daily work of the secretariat. The aim of this study is to investigate this paradox, by studying the Kenyan case. The findings will provide useful information about cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses’ ability to substantively represent women, in countries where ethnic division strongly affects the politics.

Research question
How is effective representation of women possible within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus despite ethnic divisions?

Outline
The outline of this study is as follows: Chapter 2 include brief background information about Kenya’s political system, the effort made to increase the representation of women and the country’s history of ethnic division. This will be followed by chapter 3 where theory and earlier research on women’s representation will be presented. Next, the methodology will be explained in chapter 4. This will be followed by the theoretical framework in chapter 5. Next, the findings will be analyzed in chapter 6. Finally, the findings will be discussed in chapter 7, ending with proposals for further studies on women’s substantive representation in countries with ethnic division.

2. KENYA: BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Political system
Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963 and Jomo Kenyatta became the country’s first president. The democratic power of the people was limited during this time, and when Moi succeeded Kenyatta 15 years later, Kenya officially became a single-party state. This was a highly unpopular decision and the multi-party system was reestablished in 1991 (Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, 2016, p. 3).
The president is both head of government and head of state, and is elected for a five-year term. The president has executive power and appoints the cabinet members with approval from the National Assembly. These members must be chosen from outside the parliament, according to the new constitution of 2010. The members of the National Assembly have the power to dismiss members of the cabinet and the president.

Kenya has a bicameral legislature composed of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly has 349 members, of which 290 are selected through majority vote in single-member constituencies. The 2010 constitution further states that 47 seats in the National Assembly are reserved to women, one from each county. The remaining 12 members are nominated by the biggest political parties in accordance with the election results. There are 67 senators, 47 of whom are elected from each county. (Landguididen, 2016)

**Ethnic division**

The Republic of Kenya is an East African country with a population of 43 million. The Kenyan population is divided between diverse ethnic groups with several sub-groups located in different areas in the country. This division between ethnic groups can seem complex to someone from outside of Kenya and the usual way to simplify it is to mention but the five biggest groups: Kikuyu (22%), Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalenjin (12%) and Kamba (11%), (Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, 2016, p. 1). The political landscape of Kenya is strongly affected by ethnic division (Landguididen, 2016). Party affiliation tend to reflect ethnic division: opposition and ruling parties often represent one or a coalition of ethnic groups. The ethnic politics of Kenya has a long history that goes back to the 60s and the battle over independence. It was a battle between Jomo Kenyatta’s party, KANU, which was associated with two of the biggest groups, Kikuyu and Luo, and Moi’s party, KADU, that was created by a coalition of smaller ethnic groups fearing their domination. (Orvis, 2001, p. 8)

Most political battles during the 60s-80s became a battle between the ethnic or sub-ethnic groups where the politicians got support from people within the same group. President Jomo Kenyatta distributed power and allowed regional autonomy. Moi, who succeeded him after his death in 1978, chose another direction. During the 80s, he centralized the political
power and withdrew autonomy given to regional leaders. This made two regional leaders publicly demand an end to the single-party system in 1990. They got their wish one year later, and Kenya had its first multi-party elections in 1992. (Orvis, 2001, p. 9)

Kenya has had problems with ethnic violence around election season since independence. During the 1992 elections, ethnic violence broke out in the Rift Valley area with thousands of deaths, mostly Kikuyus who were usually opposition voters. Most of the violence was initiated by the regime, according to domestic and international investigations. The battle between ethnic groups over common resources intensified and the opposition became fragmented along ethnic lines. During the elections of 1997, violence broke out again, mainly in the Rift Valley area and outside the town of Mombasa which is situated by the coast. The three ethnic groups Kikuyu, Luo and Kamba, all in opposition, were most affected. President Moi was reelected and the opposition were even more divided than before. (Orvis, 2001, p. 10)

In 2007, disappointment on the electoral process led to fatal post-election violence between different ethnic groups where almost 1500 people lost their lives (Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, 2016, p. 3). The post-election violence of 2007 was a complex conflict between several ethnic groups, but is usually described as a conflict between Kikuyus and Luos, two of the biggest ethnic groups (Rutten & Owuor, 2009, p. 305). The deadly violence led to the ICC investigations, where current Deputy President William Ruto and President Uhuru Kenyatta were investigated for crimes against humanity (ICC, 2012). The case was later dropped due to insufficient evidence (ICC, 2016, Kenyatta Case; Ruto and Sang Case).

Kenya has always been divided into political zones. The political parties have changed names several times, and new parties have emerged, but the core division between the ethnic groups has remained. There have been serious attempts by the intellectual elite to change the political landscape shaped by ethnic division, but with limited results. (Orvis, 2001, p. 10)

**Political parties**

The four most important political parties in Kenya after the 2013 elections are the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), The National Alliance (TNA), the United Republican Party (URP) and the Wiper Democratic Movement (Landguiden, 2016). President Uhuru Kenyatta ran for president under the banner of the TNA, forming Jubilee Alliance with the URP and
some smaller political parties. One ethnic group is dominant in Kenyan politics: the Kikuyus. Kenyatta and all of Kenya’s former presidents have been Kikuyus with the exception of President Moi. Vice President Ruto, the leader of URP, is Kalenjin. Whether there is a distinction between the two parties other than the ethnic group that they represent has been discussed. The ideological differences between the political parties are usually described as very small in Kenya (Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, 2016, p. 4). ODM and Wiper make up in the opposition coalition of CORD, along with several smaller parties (Landguiden, 2016). The ODM party, and party leader Raila Odinga, is associated with the Luo community (Daily Nation, 2014), while Kalonzo Musyoka, party leader of Wiper, is Kamba (Standard Media, 2016). This does not mean that all Kenyans vote for politicians from the same ethnic group; rather, the parties try to attract a broader electorate, but it is an important factor in Kenyan politics.

**Representation of women**

The new constitution of Kenya that was adopted in 2010 was a huge step for the descriptive representation of women in the country. It allowed more women to enter the Parliament through the new quota system. The 2010 Constitution states that there must be “forty-seven women, each elected by the registered voters of the counties, each county constituting a single member constituency” (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, article 81 (b)). The constitution further comprise of a gender principle stating that “not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender” (Constitution of Kenya, 2010, article 27 (8)). At the time of writing, Kenya has not yet fulfilled this obligation stated in the constitution. Women are still underrepresented in the elective bodies. The number of women in the Kenyan Parliament increased rapidly from circa 10% in 2007 to nearly 20% in 2013. The rise is believed to be a result of the introduction of gender quotas and the work of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus (Sida, 2016).

There are a total of 86 women MPs in the Parliament (AMWIK, 2015). In the Senate, 16 seats are allocated to women MPs. These 16 women are nominated by the biggest political parties in accordance with the proportion of seats won. Furthermore, two seats in the senate are reserved for youth representatives and one of them must be a woman. There are also two seats reserved to people with disabilities, and one of them must be a woman as well. At the
time of writing there are a total of 18 women in the senate and they constitute 26% of the senators. This means that all women senators are nominated by their political party and hold reserved seats. (Quota project, 2016)

In the National Assembly, there are 68 women and they constitute 19% of the members (AMWIK, 2015). 47 of these seats are reserved for women representing each county. In addition, there are 290 directly elected members from each single-member constituency at the county level (elections that both men and women can contest), and 12 MPs nominated by the political parties that have to represent youth, people with disabilities and workers where the lists must alternate between men and women candidates. At the time of writing there are 16 elected constituency women, and 5 nominated women MPs that represent the special interests in addition to the 47 women on reserved seats.

The amendment bill, usually called the “two-thirds gender rule”, became a hot topic during the spring of 2016. The bill sought to increase the number of women in Parliament through nominations: in case the number of elected women were not enough to attain the two-thirds gender rule adopted in the Constitution of Kenya, the remaining number of women required had to be nominated (The Constitution of Kenya (amendment) (NO.4) bill, 2015). The amendment bill was tabled on 27 April and 5 May 2016, but the bill did not pass on any of these occasions due to lack of quorum (ISS, 2016). Nevertheless, several bills have been passed in the Kenyan Parliament that seek to improve women’s situation concerning issues such as marriage equality (Marriage Act, 2014), matrimonial property equality (Matrimonial Property Act, 2013), domestic violence (Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, 2015) and the prohibition of female genital mutilation that was adopted in 2011 (IPU, 2013). The Kenyan cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus – KEWOPA – has been an important supporter of these acts as well as for the two-third gender rule (KEWOPA, 2016). KEWOPA was created in 2001 by three women MPs. Today, KEWOPA includes all 86 women members of the Parliament drawn from the National Assembly and the Senate (KEWOPA Strategic Plan 2014-2018, p.10).
3. WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION: THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The following chapter will explain important concepts and earlier research on women’s representation and women’s caucuses.

*Descriptive and substantive representation*

In a representative democracy, the elected leaders need to represent the electorate to legitimate their political power. The electorate can be represented in several ways. A dividing line can be drawn between descriptive and substantive representation, as argued by Hanna Pitkin in her famous 1967 work, *The Concept of Representation*. She argues that representation can be divided into two main types: descriptive and substantive. While descriptive representation focuses on *who* the representatives are, substantive representation concentrates on *what* the representatives do. Descriptive representation is defined by the characteristics and the composition of the representatives. Substantive representation on the other hand is defined as the actions of the representatives that correspond to the interest of the electorate. According to Pitkin, substantive representation is the only true type of representation since it means *to act* for representation (Celis et al. 2008 p. 100).

This perception of substantive representation being the essential type of representation is not unchallenged. The fact that several countries have implemented gender quotas that mainly seeks to increase the number of women in parliaments, regardless of their agenda, is a proof of that. Anne Phillips argues that the sex or race of the representatives is just as important as their policies and program. She makes a distinction between “a politics of ideas” and “a politics of presence” where politics of ideas refers to the agenda, and politics of presence refers to the constellation of the representatives (Phillips, 1995, p. 4-5). Phillips believes that the sex of the representatives is of great importance for their actions.

Previous research on the representation of women mainly concerns hindrances to women in entering politics (Wångnerud, 2009, p. 59) and usually presume women to be a homogeneous group, ignoring the important differences between them (Celis et al. 2008, p. 99). Furthermore, studies on women’s representation have mainly focused on Western Europe and North America, paying little attention to developing countries (Pearson, 2008, p. 8). Studies on the African continent have mainly focused on Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and
South Africa (Bauer, 2012, p.376). This study investigates the substantive representation of women in the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus agreeing with Pitkin on the importance of substantive representation of women, while considering the lack of research on the subject. The research question builds on the assumption that women are not a homogeneous group, but that women have several layers of identities other than just being a woman.

Women’s issues
Since this study examines the paradox of substantive representation of women through successful cross-party cooperation on a common agenda, the concept of so-called “women’s issues” or “women’s concerns” should be briefly explained. As already mentioned above, substantive representation of women means acting for women. This implies that there are concerns or issues that are important to women as a group. According to Phillips, this idea is straightforward. Several issues do concern women specifically: for example, child-bearing, sexual harassment and domestic violence (Phillips, 1995, p. 67-68). However, the definition of “women’s issues” is contested and often include a wide range of issues. This study presumes that the best way to get an accurate definition of “women’s issues” in this specific context is by letting the women MPs define it themselves. It is likely that they share the experiences of the female citizens and therefore knows what issues should be defined as “women’s issues” in Kenya (Celis, 2006, p. 87).

Women’s caucuses
A women’s caucus is a group that seeks to gain visibility for “women’s issues”. They usually do not have any formal legislative responsibilities, instead, they conduct outreach activities and lobby for legislation that will improve women’s situation (IPU, 2013, p. 14). Women’s caucuses are not always restricted to women only; they sometimes include men. The aim of women’s caucuses can be to enhance both the “descriptive” and “substantive” representation of women. Earlier research on the substantive representation of women has not focused on gender equality bodies within parliaments, but the subject has gained more attention since the 1990s and 2000s (Sawer, Friedenwall & Palmieri, 2013, p. 1). The theorizing about such parliamentary bodies is scarce, probably because the institutionalization of women’s movements raises skepticism. Women’s movements and
feminism has historically been seen as incompatible with the state (Sawer, Friedenwall & Palmieri, 2013, p. 4). There is, nevertheless, some research on parliamentary women’s caucuses. The Inter-parliamentary Union has collected data on women’s caucuses around the world since 2006 (Sawer, Friedenwall & Palmieri, 2013, p. 4), and several studies on parliamentary women’s caucuses have been made in African countries (Pearson 2008; Francis, 2009; Yoon, 2011; Wang 2012; Vetten et al., 2012; Bauer 2012; Tønnessen & al-Nagar, 2013; Johnson & Josefsson, 2016, i.a.). Earlier research has sought to explain the role of these caucuses but more is needed to fill the gaps.

According to Sawer, Friedenwall and Palmieri, research has hitherto identified three major types of gender-focused parliamentary bodies.

Types:
1. Parliamentary committees or commissions that are constituted under standing orders
2. Cross-party or intra-party women’s caucuses that are constituted more informally by women parliamentarians
3. All-party parliamentary groups that requires a minimum number of members from all parties for approval by a presiding officer
(Sawer, Friedenwall & Palmieri, 2013, p. 2)

This study will focus on the second category. Cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses are created within a parliament with member parliamentarians from different political parties. The caucus seeks to unite members from all political parties, and make them able to push for a common agenda that they can all support. Women’s cross-party parliamentary caucuses can be found all over the world and they are increasing in number. (IPU, 2013, p. 9)
Sawer, Friedenwall and Palmieri present 4 important functions of women’s parliamentary bodies found by earlier researchers, regardless of type.

Functions:
1. Provide a focus and leverage beyond that of individual parliamentarians
2. May promote trust across party lines and facilitate joint action to promote gender equality
3. Serve as an “alternative reference point” for parliamentarians, in other words validating norms that are different from those dominant within the parliament
4. May provide a channel for participation of NGOs in the parliamentary process

These findings might give the impression that all countries with a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus have the favorable conditions necessary for effective cooperation on women’s issues across party lines. According to research from the African context this is not the case. Cooperation within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is far more complex. Several factors must be taken into account. One of the most important factors that influences the effectiveness of such a caucus is if the members have conflicting loyalties (Browne, 2014, p. 5-6). Here follows an explanation of why it is important to understand the African context and the effect of conflicting loyalties.

**Understanding conflicting loyalties**

It is well known that female parliamentarians do not solely identify themselves as women but are affected by several different identities. This can for example be party affiliation or ethnicity. Research shows that women MPs’ strongest identity is often their party affiliation (Devlin; Elgie, 2008, p.238). They therefore usually lobby for issues concerning women’s interests only if it is consistent with the party line (Browne, 2014, p. 5). One example of this is the South African case where female MPs generally do not push for agendas inconsistent with their party’s ideology. South African women MPs find it difficult to push for gender equality since they experience that their parties barely give any attention to these issues (Francis, 2009, p. 132). Furthermore, the process to choose women to nominate for the seats in South Africa is dominated by men (Vetten et al, 2013, p. 11). This is also the case in Burundi and Tanzania which has led to women MPs’ great loyalty to their party (Yoon, 2011, p.93; Sow,2012, p.24) and in Sudan where the ruling party sets the political and ideological boundaries (Tønnessen & al-Nagar, p. 126). Women MPs’ strong loyalty to their political party might not be an ideological decision but a strategic one. It is, in some cases, the result of the party giving them the position in power. Changing the agenda could cause the politicians to lose their seats in the parliament. The fear of losing political power is greater among women parliamentarians in authoritarian or single-party parliaments, namely in the Sub-Saharan African countries (Browne, 2014, p.5).
Earlier research also shows example of countries on the African continent where women MPs face constraints emanating from other sources, such as their ethnic group, rather than their political party. In some countries, women MPs are more affected by ethnicity than their party’s ideological boundaries. Nigerian women MPs can represent women substantively by pushing for gender issues and new agendas without significant constriction from their party, but they are often affected by the country’s deep ethnic division. They often represent gender issues within the boundaries of the elite and their ethnic group (Domingo et al. 2012, p. 17-18). The same applies to South Africa, where politics is strongly divided along ethnic lines. Both men and women MPs here tend to restrict their politics to the boundaries of the ethnic group. This, according to Suzanne Francis, complicates the situation since the many layers of identity politics make it difficult for South African women MPs from different ethnic groups to cooperate (Francis, 2009, p. 133). In other words, a strong loyalty to the ethnic group might negatively affect women MPs’ ability to cooperate on gender issues in countries where political activities are affected by ethnic divisions according to earlier research. It should also be mentioned that women MPs in some countries do not support gender equality, but are driven by personal beliefs and party affiliation rather than a women’s rights agenda. This is the case for some women MPs in Uganda (Tønnessen och al-Nagar, 2013, p. 123).

It is a consistent finding that common goals across political affiliation and ethnic divides are essential for the ability to pass legislation on women’s issues (Tønnessen & al-Nagar, 2013, p. 123). Solidarity towards other women is of great importance to effectively push for gender issues and can to some extent explain why parliamentarians in some countries better represent women’s interests than in others (Pearsson, 2008, p. 27). This responsibility to other women is strong among the women MPs in Rwanda where gender issues and women’s interests are considered more important than party politics (Devlin & Elgie, 2008, p. 245).

4. METHODOLOGY

This is a field study conducted in Nairobi between the end of March and early June in 2016. This case study is based on different materials, examining both the perception of the women MPs and the concrete results of their actions in the cross-party parliamentary women’s
caucus. I interviewed women MPs and members of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus, as well as observed meetings and events. I was offered a desk at the secretariat office and had the opportunity to observe the daily work of the caucus. They also invited me to the voting on the two-third gender rule in the Parliament and provided me with essential documents.

Case selection
This study will focus on Kenya, a country with ethnic divisions where party affiliation and ethnicity is closely connected (Landguiden, 2016). It is reasonable to believe that when people with a certain party affiliation also share ethnicity, region, language and traditions, it makes cross-party cooperation even more difficult since the MPs have less in common. Examples such as Nigeria and South Africa, as mentioned above, show that too many layers of identity politics could make it difficult for women MPs to cooperate on a common agenda within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus. Still, KEWOPA seems to unite the women MPs and improve the substantive representation of women in Kenya. This paradox can only be fully investigated through close studies on the women MPs’ individual identities, their perception of “women’s issues” and feelings towards other ethnic groups and political parties.

The Kenyan case was selected because it is a country where the results of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus are not consistent with theories on the subject. The findings from the Kenyan case will provide useful information to a research field that has been relatively little investigated, and hopefully increase the interest in substantive representation of women and cross-party-parliamentary women’s caucuses, in countries where ethnic division strongly affects the politics. It might also give guidance to political scientists researching on substantive representation of women in countries characterized by deep ethnic divisions since it will give a hint of what factors that should be further investigated. Of course, ethnic divisions can be very different in different countries and in different parts of the world why this study does not aim to answer how to make these caucuses successful around the world. Since Kenya is a country with a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus and a quota system that is similar to other countries on the continent, it may serve as an example (Quotaproject, 2016). There are no less than 37
women’s parliamentary caucuses in Sub-Saharan Africa and some of them struggle with ethnic division just like Kenya, as has been described in this chapter (IPU database, 2016). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the findings will give important information that can be relevant to other cases in the region. It is important that research findings are used to understand similar cases (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 68).

**Materials**

First, a total of 13 interviews were conducted: 12 respondent interviews with women parliamentarians and one informant interview with the project and communication officer at the KEWOPA secretariat. The respondents are drawn from the biggest political parties and from different seats in both the Senate and the National Assembly to reflect the diversity of KEWOPA members. Furthermore, the number of respondents from each political party and seat is somewhat based on numbers, where big political parties and seats held by many MPs have more respondents represented in this study. There are 4 respondents representing ODM, 4 representing URP, 3 representing Wiper and 1 representing TNA. 12 respondents hold affirmative seats representing a county, 2 represent a constituency and 2 are senators. The respondents were contacted either by chance as they walked by in the Parliament building, in events or meetings organized by KEWOPA, or through the secretariat who made appointments on my behalf. The secretariat suggested women to interview but the final decision was always mine. The KEWOPA secretariat helped me get in contact with both active members such as chairpersons from the four sub-caucuses, as well as with members who might be more skeptical to the relevance of the association.

All respondents agreed to participate in this study and to be recorded. The 12 recorded interviews were then transcribed. The interviews were conducted in English, but since English varies around the world, even in countries where it is the official language, a political science student from Nairobi University helped transcribe and interpret some parts of the interviews. Some of the MPs wished to be anonymous; therefore no names will be mentioned. The respondents have been assigned an identification code, this is further explained in "Appendix I". The identification codes are composed by the first letter of the political party that the respondents represent, and a number between 1-12.
Secondly, the study is based on documents such as KEWOPA’s strategic plan, successful bills initiated and/or pushed by KEWOPA, and the results of the vote on the two-third gender rule stating which MPs voted in favor of the amendment bill and which MPs who did not. These documents are used to support the accuracy of the respondents’ perceptions.

Third, first-person observations from KEWOPA meetings, parliamentary voting on the two-third gender rule and daily coverage of the local news further were used. The KEWOPA secretariat was very accommodating and let me use a desk at their office at all times. Thus, I spent a lot of time at the KEWOPA office and I participated in many events organized by the association. They also made me an entry pass to the parliament building making it possible for me to enter daily without any paperwork.

**Questioning technique**

Semi-structured interviews with open answers were used since it gives the interviewer an opportunity to ask supplementary questions and since they give the respondents time to reflect on given themes (Bryman, 2008, p. 427). The semi-structured interview is suitable for studies where basic information about the subject is already known (Leech, 2002, p. 665). They provide detail, depth and a good insider’s perspective. The questions asked concerned three areas important to the study: the significance of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus to the substantive representation of women, the impact of ethnic division on Kenyan politics and possible explanations to the successful substantive representation of women in KEWOPA.

The interviews started with some basic questions about the respondent’s background and the questions gradually got more complex towards the end, a very common technique to put the respondents at ease (Weinberg, 1996, p.85). If the respondents partly answered my questions before the questions were asked, I briefly restated what the respondent had already said, a good technique to show that I had paid attention (Leech, 2002, p.666). Since I used semi-structured interviews, I also asked non-scripted questions when needed. I avoided “presuming questions” by letting the respondents first state what they thought of a matter and then ask questions according to their answer (Leech, 2002, p. 666). For example, I never asked why women MPs can cooperate on women’s issues before I asked if they do. To make sure that no important information was left out, I asked, “Is there anything you’d like to
add?” in the end of the interviews. Asking this question is also a way to give the respondents a feeling of satisfaction, allowing them to bring up related issues that they find important that might not necessary have any relevance to the study.

The length of the interviews were around 20 minutes, as MPs might not always have much time to spare. Even though some of the interviews were shorter, the questions asked were nearly the same in all interviews. Short answers to the most important questions were prioritized over more detailed answers when the respondents had tight schedules to make sure all interviews gave relevant information.

**Reflexivity**

The researcher’s personal identities affects the ability to obtain valuable information and build trust (Ortbals & Rincker, 2009, p. 287). I do believe that my identity as a young female political science student with noticeable roots from the African continent had a great impact on my success. Research from Latin America shows that being a white woman usually gives access to desirable information but that it is hard to build trust with the respondents which is needed to get sensitive information (Sundberg, 2003, p. 184). There are similar findings from the African continent (Ortbals & Rincker, 2009, p. 289). The respondents were all women and it was clear that they identified with me to some extent. They often told me how happy and impressed they were about the subject of my bachelor’s thesis, talking about their own time as a political science student. Following is an illustrative quote caught on record in the end of one of the interviews.

“…I want to say that you are doing a good thesis. I’m also doing my masters and my thesis is on women empowerment…” (5.U.)

Even though I was perceived as more “white” than “black”, people on the streets talking about me as the “mzungu”, I was not completely an outsider. Building trust was never a problem. Being white is often an indicator of class, but the fact that the respondents were MPs, whereas I was simply a university student broke those barriers. I did my best to treat the respondents with my greatest respect admitting their high positions in the society. I do believe that my appearance has helped me a lot during the field study giving me more honest replies to my questions since the respondents believed that I “know what it’s like
here in Africa”, as they put it. I became especially close to the secretariat, with whom I spent a lot of time. As already mentioned they made me an entrance pass to the parliament, helped book meetings and took me to all kind of events with important politicians.

Reliability and validity in elite interviewing

The researcher’s identities will affect the reliability – how consistent the results are if the tests are repeated with the same instruments – and validity – how appropriate the measuring instrument is to study what is to be studied – of the research (Berry, 2002, p. 679). Trust between the researcher and the respondents may give more valid answers, but it might be hard to get the same results for a researcher with other identities and experiences. Achieving validity and reliability in “elite interviewing”, such as interviews with parliamentarians, requires careful preparation. Not only must the researcher ask good questions, the researcher must also know how to ask the questions. A good interviewer makes the interview seem like a conversation between old friends (Berry, 2002, p. 679). I therefore emphasized eye contact with the respondents, and I tried to make the questions sound as natural as possible trying not to look too much at my papers. Being able to record the interviews was therefore of great importance, something I would not have been able to do without the respondents’ trust.

Open-ended questions are always a risk to the validity and reliability of the study. When conducting the interviews, I therefore used methods to minimize that risk. Since politicians might have strong political tendencies to make KEWOPA’s work sound more successful, or the cooperation with rival political parties worse than it really is, this study is based on multiple sources. MPs might want to exaggerate their role in politics, and for this reason I used other sources to verify the facts. I also asked questions not only about the respondents’ own party’s role in KEWOPA, but also about the other’s in order to understand their relationship to each other. MPs might be very passionate about certain issues, and time might be limited, so I prepared additional questions to bring the respondents back to the subject in case they focused too much on issues irrelevant to my study. These probes were also useful to compel the respondent to better develop their answers. I made sure to learn as much as possible about the subject and the country-specific context before I went to
Nairobi in order to ask the right questions and to prevent the respondents’ eventual exaggerations from affecting the results.

The fact that the respondents knew that my study had to do with KEWOPA might have encouraged them to talk about women’s issues more than if this had not been stated. KEWOPA helped book some of the interviews and I had to summarize the study for the respondents to agree to an interview. However, they did not know that focus would be on ethnic division and cross-party cooperation.

5. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The research question was assessed through interviews with members, documents and observations. The following chapter presents the analytical framework making it possible to analyze the materials, in order to answer the research question. In order to answer how effective substantive representation of women is possible within the caucus despite ethnic division, it is necessary to first examine whether the caucus actually is significant to the substantive representation of women and if the ethnic division significantly affects the work of KEWOPA the way it affects Kenyan politics in general. Thereafter, it is possible to move on to the research question, “How is effective representation of women possible within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus despite ethnic divisions?”. 

Is the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus significant to the substantive representation of women?

There are reasons to believe that the caucus is indeed of significance to the substantive representation of women because of the members’ successful fight for bills seeking to improve women’s situation in Kenya. Significance to the substantive representation of women will be understood as KEWOPA’s ability to help encourage women MPs to push for women’s issues in the parliament. That can be through capacity building, by creating a platform for the members to discuss these issues, or facilitating the members’ work for improved substantive representation of women in other ways. Following is a plan for how the caucus’ significance to the substantive representation of women will be studied.
The interviews:
The KEWOPA members’ own perception of the caucus’s importance to the substantive representation of women is essential to understanding the respondents’ willingness to cooperate across party lines. This will be studied through interviews. If KEWOPA encourages the members to represent women substantively, the first step would be to make them aware of, and interested in, women’s issues. Therefore, questions about the respondents’ interest in these issues will be asked. If KEWOPA is successful, their members should be the ones pushing for women’s issues in the Parliament and the members should think of KEWOPA as the main champion for these issues. Thus, the respondents will be asked who fights for women’s issues in the Kenyan parliament. KEWOPA should also successfully give the members the tools they need to represent women substantively. Thus, the members should mention KEWOPA’s capacity building as important to their work. Furthermore, KEWOPA should be seen as indispensable in the fight for the substantive representation of women; the respondents will therefore be asked what it would be like if the caucus did not exist.

Documents:
KEWOPA and its members should successfully initiate and push for bills improving the situation of women. Members should be influenced by the association to vote in favor for bills seeking to improve the situation of women in accordance with KEWOPA’s values.

Observations:
KEWOPA members should attend the KEWOPA meetings and other events concerning women’s issues, and they should be willing to talk about and to lobby for women’s concerns in the parliament. They are willing to participate in this study.

Does the ethnic division significantly affect the work of KEWOPA?
Earlier research and Kenya’s violent past shows that ethnic divisions do affect Kenyan politics. The question is, first of all, if this is still the case. Second, does the ethnic division affect the cross-party cooperation within KEWOPA the same way that it affects Kenyan politics in general? It is important to study whether the caucus facilitates cross-party cooperation in order to answer the research question. The ethnic division’s effect on the work of KEWOPA will be understood as situations where the member MPs’ work is
significantly affected by ethnic divisions. Following is a presentation of how this will be studied.

The interviews:
The respondents’ initial choice of political party should be affected by ethnic division. Thus, questions about the respondents’ choice of party will be asked. The respondents will also be asked about their identities. They should have a strong loyalty to the ethnic group; it might even be their strongest loyalty. The respondents might, for example, mostly get votes from a specific ethnic group. They might also have initiated or supported bills to mitigate the tensions between the groups. This division should make it difficult for the respondents to cooperate with other ethnic groups, both within and outside of KEWOPA. Thus, questions about the culture of cooperation within KEWOPA, and within the parliament, will be asked. The members will further be asked whether the cross-party cooperation within KEWOPA differs from the cross-party cooperation in the Kenyan Parliament in general. The respondents should mention the ethnic division in the interviews, stating that it affects their work as MPs.

Observations:
The MPs and the secretariat might mention the ethnic group or region of MPs and colleagues, assuming that it is relevant to how they will act in the parliament, in their daily conversations.

How is effective substantive representation of women possible within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus despite ethnic division?
The information about the caucus’s significance to the substantive representation of women, and the ethnic division’s effect on politics within the Kenyan Parliament and within KEWOPA, will be essential in order to answer the research question. Furthermore, earlier research on women’s substantive representation in countries with ethnic division on the African continent suggests some factors that might be of importance to the KEWOPA member’s willingness to cooperate on a common women’s agenda. The impact of these factors and other relevant information will be closely analyzed as follows.
The interviews:
The member MPs are undoubtedly the ones with best insight in their own organization. Therefore, they might have some ideas of why they are able to cooperate within the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus. Questions about the MPs’ strongest identities will be of great importance since earlier research about conflicting loyalties in Africa suggests that a stronger loyalty to women’s issues and a less strong loyalty to the political party and ethnic group might facilitate the cooperation on a common women’s agenda. Questions about party lines and ideology will be asked as earlier research suggests that one obstacle to effective substantive representation of women is that the political parties do not give any attention to these issues, and that the MP’s strong loyalty to the political party therefore makes it hard for them to push for women’s issues. More information about the political parties’ role is essential. The respondents will also be asked if the Kenyan Parliament has a culture of cooperation across the party and ethnic lines that might help explain why they can cooperate also within KEWOPA. Furthermore, one group might have enough influence to set the agenda in KEWOPA, meaning that its success is not a result of good cooperation but about dominance. Thus, the respondents will be asked who can influence the agenda.

Observations:
Observations from KEWOPA meetings and other events might give important information about the MPs’ relations to each other and to women’s issues that might be of importance when examining why they can cooperate. Furthermore, it might give useful information about how the members discuss women’s issues and set the agenda.

The research question is complex and requires a detailed analysis of all materials collected from the field study. The analysis will hopefully shed light on the paradox of substantive representation of women within cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses in countries characterized by ethnic division.
6. ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the information collected as described above will be analyzed. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research question.

The importance of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus

All MPs in this study claim to have a significant interest in women’s issues. When asked which issue is the most important to push for in the Parliament 9 respondents mentioned women’s issues. Many of the MPs state that they have become even more interested in women’s issues because of their membership in KEWOPA, even if many of them were interested in women’s issues long before they came into politics. Some of the MPs on affirmative seats seemed to feel obliged to care about women’s issues because of their seat. They thought they had to be interested in women’s issues because of their affirmative seat. Other MPs on affirmative seat said that they represented “everybody”, their “people” or their “county”. The respondents made clear that to them, women’s issues are both a question of descriptive and substantive representation of women. Women’s issues means improving the life of women in all periods of life and in all sectors.

The respondents mentioned some important roles of KEWOPA and underlined that the association is indispensable to the women MPs and to the representation of women. First, Many mentioned the importance of the capacity building program held by KEWOPA for all new women entering the parliament. KEWOPA gave them the tools they needed to be successful parliamentarians and good representatives for women.

KEWOPA, I would say, is a body that has helped capacity build us as members. Especially when we come to the Parliament for the very first time we need a lot of training. (5.U.)

Second, they underlined the importance of a united voice of women MPs that KEWOPA gives them. If the women parliamentarians were not brought together, they would not be able to successfully push for women’s issues. KEWOPA is seen as the united voice of all women parliamentarians and the members support each other’s bills.

If KEWOPA did not exist, I think the women’s agenda could not have been coordinated the way it is now. (12.O.)
It would be a very big difference in the absence of KEWOPA because we wouldn’t have a single united voice as women parliamentarians. (9.O.)

Third, the respondents say KEWOPA is a force that makes sure that women’s issues are always pushed in the parliament. It brings a constant gender lens to the work in the parliament. They concluded that the women MPs and KEWOPA are the ones that foremost push for gender equality. Some respondents said they believed that women best articulate their own interests.

You need a body like KEWOPA to keep reminding that we have to push the women’s issues /.../. (9.O.)

/.../ we scrutinize legislative proposals from a gender lens. So that obviously makes you a bit more aware/.../. (11.T.)

The interviews show that the women parliamentarians, independent of political party and seat, believe that the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is essential in the fight for the substantive representation of women. KEWOPA unites them, capacity-builds them and reminds them to always analyze politics through a gender-sensitive lens. Documents such as bills on marriage, matrimonial property and domestic violence seeking to improve women’s situation has successfully been pushed by KEWOPA according to their website (KEWOPA, 2016). One example of a bill initiated by a KEWOPA member is the Reproductive Health Care Bill initiated by Hon. Senator Judith Sijeny that is clearly addressing women’s concerns.

Another useful document proving that the women MPs are united and actually vote as a block is a summarize of which parliamentarians who voted in favor for and who voted against the two-third gender bill on 5 May, made and given to me by the KEWOPA secretariat. None of the MPs that voted against the bill or abstained were KEWOPA members. This supports the statements that the women MPs vote as a block, and that they vote for bills that serve to improve the situation of women in their country. I personally attended the voting in the Parliament at both occasions, and I saw the big disappointment among the women MPs, and several of the male MPs as well, when the amendment bill was
not adopted. A relevant question to ask is whether the knowledge about lists like this one being made might have an effect on voting results. It cannot be excluded that members may not want to vote against the official standpoint of KEWOPA if it would anger the other women MPs. That would be yet another way in which KEWOPA influences the women MPs to push for gender equality.

Furthermore, I observed that women MPs turned up for the meetings. Some turned up more often than others and some meetings were not as crowded as they could have been. Some members stated in the interviews that they did not always have the time to go to the meetings, but that they nevertheless supported KEWOPA. Most members seemed interested in discussing women’s issues. I also saw several try to convince their male party colleagues to vote in favor of the two-third gender bill. They were also very quick to agree to participate in my study. Many of them were asked by chance as they walked by in the Parliament and the interview were mostly made on the spot. The findings are very convincing: the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is significant to the substantive representation of women.

**The cooperation within the caucus is more effective**

To nine of the respondents the popularity of the political party among their “people” in their counties or “on the ground” was crucial for their initial choice of political party. Four out of these nine respondents also said that ideology was important. No differences can be found between parties nor between opposition and ruling parties. The ethnic divides do apparently still shape the political affiliations. This has been the case since independence from Britain and the respondents seem to be well aware of the situation.

You see in Kenya, people align themselves so that they become tribal parties. /…/ It is not that I have to choose the party I want, no. It depends on the people on the ground. Where you see that your people align, the party your people like, you go there. (1.U.)

In KEWOPA the cross-party and cross-ethnic cooperation works well, they said. Some of the respondents did not seem to think that there is a culture of cooperation between the parties in the Kenyan Parliament, while others thought that the cooperation between the parties is
good outside of KEWOPA as well, but they seemed to mean cooperation on women’s issues specifically. The fact that they find it easier to cooperate within KEWOPA and on women’s issues specifically is essential to the research question and will be further discussed in next section.

I think there’s been very, honestly, very little engagement between the political parties outside KEWOPA in this parliament. (1.O.)

Really, it’s different from how we deal with things in KEWOPA. (7.U.)

One of the respondents wanted to underline that she has friends from other political parties as if to say that the division between different ethnicities is not as deep as it might appear, even if it does affect the work of the parliamentarians. Nevertheless, the political parties do not seem to have a culture of cooperation in the Parliament and the question is if it is only because of the clash between ethnicities or if ideological differences also plays a part. As many as eight respondents said that there is a big difference in ideology between the parties. Ideology thus is another layer of identity that divides the ethnic groups. Surprisingly, only two respondents said that the ideological difference is negligible. The difference between the parties in Kenya is usually described as very small (Landguiden, 2016).

Wow. In fact [laughs] there is a… can I say a big gap? (12.O)

The interviews are convincing: ethnic division has a large impact on the Kenyan politics. One of the respondents even thought that ethnic division in politics was the most important issue to push for in the Parliament and therefore wanted to change the constitution allowing rotating presidency so that all regions would be represented by the president at some point. According to the material I’ve studied, the ethnic division affects the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus differently within KEWOPA than within the Parliament in general. In KEWOPA, members try to leave their differences aside. According to the interviews, they have no problem cooperating across party lines in KEWOPA. Nevertheless, it is clear that even if the members try their best to overcome ethnic division, it still affects the daily work in the Parliament as well as in KEWOPA. Observations from the KEWOPA
secretariat and the Parliament buildings show that KEWOPA members and staff on a few occasions mentioned the ethnicity of persons and discussed how the ethnicity might affect their ability to cooperate without knowing that it was the very subject of my field study. This suggests that KEWOPA successfully improves the substantive representation of women even though ethnic division affects the political parties’ ability to cooperate supports the idea of the Kenyan case highlighting a paradox. In the next chapter, this paradox will be examined seeking an explanation to KEWOPA’s unexpected success.

**The perception of women’s issues as non-political**

The respondents have stated that KEWOPA is significant to the substantive representation of women, which is supported by the documents and observations. The question is how this is possible since previous research suggests that deep ethnic divisions should restrict a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus ability to push for a common agenda. Therefore, the members’ ability to cooperate must be further investigated in order to conclude why effective substantive representation is possible within KEWOPA.

All respondents affirmed that they have no difficulties cooperating within KEWOPA. Observations from the meetings supports this result. The members seem to agree on KEWOPA’s values and vision. The respondents all stated that neither political affiliation nor ethnic group constrained their work within the association. They all also believed that all ethnic groups had the same influence over KEWOPA’s agenda.

I think we are equally involved across the regions. (4.W.)

At the same time many respondents perceived the ideological differences as big, and the ethnic division clearly affects the work of the parliament. When asked why the members can cooperate effectively despite representing different political parties, regions and ethnic groups they all had the same answer: in KEWOPA all that matters is that they are all women.

When we are in KEWOPA we are all women. We leave our differences aside. Whether you are from which party or from which region, from which tribe, that doesn’t count. We are there as women. So we articulate issues in that manner. As women. (8.W.)
As was shortly mentioned in the previous section, the Kenyan Parliament does not seem to have a culture of cooperation between political parties. Still, several respondents said that the political parties are able to cooperate on women’s issues also outside of KEWOPA. One important conclusion can be drawn from these findings – women’s issues are different from other issues. The members can cooperate within KEWOPA because they cooperate on women’s issues. So what makes women’s issues different? Several respondents explained that they leave their party affiliations aside within KEWOPA. Women’s issues are, in other words, not seen as a political matter. Women’s issues are not “real politics”.

I think the ideological differences comes in now when you look at it at the national level. We only come to differ when it comes to the real politics. (5.U.)

Even though several respondents perceived the difference between the political parties as big, almost all of them said that all political parties share their perception of what women’s issues are. Women’s issues are, in other words, not a subject for ideological nor ethnic division. The political party, which also represents an ethnic group, does not constrain the work of the KEWOPA members simply because women’s issues are not political nor controversial. Thus, a strong loyalty to both women and the ethnic group is not contradictory.

According to the interviews many members felt that they mainly represent women, but even those who said that they mainly represent other groups claimed to have no problems cooperating on women’s issues in KEWOPA. Given Kenya’s history of post-election ethnic violence and the MPs’ choice to run for the party that is the most popular one in their region, it could be assumed that most women MPs do also have a strong loyalty to their ethnic group. Many of the women sit on reserved seats because of the regulations in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. This may of course, as found by earlier researchers, make women MPs feel obliged to represent women even if they might feel a stronger connection to their region and ethnic group. It is therefore questionable if the loyalty to women has to be the strongest loyalty to make it possible for the members to cooperate, if there is no conflict between the party line and the vision of KEWOPA. A strong loyalty to women is, of course, important since members need to attend the meetings and to actively push for
women’s issues. But it does not seem as if their loyalty to women has to be the very strongest loyalty, as suggested by previous research.

The finding that women’s issues are not perceived as a political matter evokes a question: Why are not women’s issues perceived as a political matter? Many different examples of how women should be empowered were mentioned during the interviews and it became clear that the members accept the other members’ perception of what women’s issues are. The respondents all seemed to think that women’s issues can be any issue affecting women in all different stages of life, in both the private and public sphere. There are different practices in different regions when it comes to women’s issues, and the political parties do not always agree on issues concerning women. One MP mentioned female genital mutilation as an example (4.W.). But even if the members have slightly different ideas of how women should be empowered, they all seem to focus on their common goals within KEWOPA. Their goals can be seen as fundamental. One example is the two-third gender rule that sought to bring more women into Parliament which can be seen as the first step in the struggle for equality in the Parliament and in the country. One of the respondents explained it this way:

I think this is something new that is emerging. The need to have more women involvement has not been a priority for men and men have been dominant in leadership circles. So now looking at what is happening worldwide and looking at the fact that where women participate people’s lives are better, I don’t know whether to use the word reluctantly, but slowly they are becoming aware and also embracing the need to have women taking part. (4.W.)

The respondents might find it possible to cooperate on a common agenda within KEWOPA because the caucus push for women’s fundamental rights on which it is possible for all members to agree. To improve the substantive representation of women, KEWOPA strives to unite women parliamentarians from all the political parties around policy issues concerning women’s rights that they can all support. The vision of KEWOPA is not controversial.

Women and men are equitably represented in Parliament and decision making in public and private spheres to promote sustainable development. (KEWOPA Strategic Plan 2014-2018, 2014, p. 8)
Furthermore, good leadership within the caucus seems to be essential to form a well-organized cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus. During the interviews it appeared that the members expect great commitment from the chairs and the secretariat. Even if a few of the respondents thought that KEWOPA could do more to support its members, it seems as if the caucus is well organized. To simplify the gathering of members to the meetings, KEWOPA has formed four sub-caucuses responding to the different seats in the National Assembly and the Senate. They are “Caucus 47” for the 47 women representatives, “KEWOSA” for the women MPs of the Senate, “G16” for the elected single constituency members and “The Nominated Members Caucus”.¹ The chairs for each sub-caucus is elected democratically by its members and the results seem to be accepted by all. The respondents did not perceive any ethnic group or political party to have more power over the agenda. It is clear that KEWOPA is important to the women MPs’ ability to effectively represent women’s substantive representation of women. Most respondents said that KEWOPA enhances their interest in women’s issues and reminds them to always fight for gender equality. They underlined the importance of the capacity building program and the fact that KEWOPA support their bills. Even if some of the respondents thought that the parties cooperate well on women’s issues outside of KEWOPA as well, they all agreed that the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus is of great importance to the women parliamentarians and to the representation of women.

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The aim of this study has been to investigate a paradox in the research field of substantive representation of women. Earlier research suggests that the chances for effective representation of women within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus are limited in countries with deep ethnic divisions. However, this study shows that Kenya, a country where few studies have been conducted, is a successful case despite unfavorable circumstances. In this concluding chapter, the explanations and the implications of the findings will be discussed. Finally, suggestions on further research will be presented.

¹ Phone contact with Jared Nyakeri, Project and Communication Officer
The results of this study suggests that Kenya has a well working cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus that successfully enhances the substantive representation of women in the Parliament, mainly because women’s issues are not perceived as political matters. The respondents’ strong loyalty to women as a group as well as to their ethnic group is not seen as contradictory. As already stated, earlier research suggests that too many layers of identity politics would make it too difficult for members to cooperate within a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus. The findings in this study however suggests that it is not a question of how many layers of identities the members possess, or which loyalty is their strongest, but the perception of women’s issues as non-political and non-controversial that matters. The respondents claim that the interest in women’s issues among male MPs is relatively new and that the parties now have to take these issues into consideration because of the 2010 Constitution. Hence, the explanation why women’s issues are perceived as non-political might be that the fight for gender equality is still in an initial stage in Kenya. Women’s issues recently became a question for the Parliament and women MPs have to stick together in order to push for women’s fundamental rights, such as being adequately represented in the Parliament or improving the reproductive health. These kind of issues are supposedly relatively easy to agree on regardless of party affiliation and ethnicity. The political parties might not yet have adopted a party position concerning these issues. As women gain more power and get more support from men, they might no longer have to vote as a block in order to make bills pass. Instead, they could afford to address their ideological differences. After all, women are not a homogeneous group. Thus, women’s issues might become an ideological matter, where women from different parties in Kenya have different opinions, in the future. By then, gender equality will hopefully be mainstreamed in the Parliament and a high level of substantive representation of women achieved. Thus, their different opinions of how to best represent women will not affect the substantive representation of women in the Parliament considerably. These differences should not be seen as a hindrance to the substantive representation of women, but as an indicator of the high level of gender mainstreaming that has been achieved. It indicates that women’s issues draws attention and that gender issues has become part of the agenda within parties with a wide range of different ideologies.
The findings will hopefully make political scientists, women’s movements and parliamentarians rethink what is possible for a women’s cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus to achieve in countries with deep ethnic divisions. The findings show that the clash between the ethnic groups does not per se indicate that a caucus could not successfully improve the substantive representation of women. What is important is the members’ perception of women’s issues, their commitment to the women’s cause and a well-organized caucus with skilled democratically elected leaders. With this knowledge, the negative effects of ethnic divisions might be handled and mitigated. The positive effects of a cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus shown in this study suggests that these caucuses should also be implemented in countries with less favorable conditions. All countries do of course have their own specific setting and history that has to be considered when implementing such a caucus, but the findings in this study show that even if ethnic division might seem as a hindrance to successful implementation of a women’s caucus it is not necessarily a hindrance at all. In order to decrease the gap between theory and empirics in the research field of substantive representation of women, there is a need for more theorizing about cross-party parliamentary women’s caucuses in countries with deep ethnic divisions. Further research should focus on developing countries, especially countries who has not been studied before. Research revealing how the members’ perception of women’s issues, and how effectively they can cooperate, changes over time as gender equality gets mainstreamed is desirable.
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APPENDIX I: IDENTIFICATION CODES

All respondents have been assigned an identification code in order to preserve their anonymity. The respondents’ identification codes conclude a number between 1-12 and the letter O, T, U or W indicating their party affiliation.

O = Orange Democratic Movement
T = The National Alliance
U = United Republican Party
W = Wiper Democratic Movement

Identification codes and dates for the interviews:

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APPENDIX II: QUESTIONS

Following are some examples of the questions asked in the interviews. The questions follow three major themes of importance to answer the two premises and the research question. Note that this is not the questioning order.

Identity

- Who would you say that you mainly represent?

Significance of the cross-party parliamentary women’s caucus on the substantive representation of women:

- What political issues do you find most important to push for in the parliament?
- Who push for women’s issues in the Kenyan parliament?
- How interested in women’s issues are you?
- When did you become interested in women’s issues?
- What are women’s issues to you?
- Has your interest in women’s issues changed in anyway because of KEWOPA?
- How does your membership in KEWOPA affect you as an MP?
- Would you say that you are active in the decision-making in KEWOPA?
- If KEWOPA did not exist what would be the main difference in the Kenyan parliament?

Impact of ethnic division on Kenyan politics:

- How did you decide what party to belong to?
- Kenyan politics is said to be divided along regional lines and ethnic groups, how do different ethnic groups cooperate in KEWOPA?
- In KEWOPA there are members from different political parties. How effective is the cooperation over the party lines in the association?
- Do [political parties and ethnic groups] cooperate outside of KEWOPA?
Explanations to the successful substantive representation of women:

- Why can members from different political parties and ethnic groups cooperate within KEWOPA?
- Do your party share your perception of what women’s issues are?
- Do the other parties share your perception of what women’s issues are?
- How big or small is the ideological difference between the political parties in Kenya according to you?
- Who decide what issues to push for in KEWOPA?
- Do you think that there is any political party or any group that push more for women’s issues than other political parties?
- Is there any group in KEWOPA that is more active in decision-making or that usually gets their will through?