


# Sociocultural and Structural Barriers to the Integration of Women into Management Positions in Public Enterprises in East Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya

Bahiga Bashangwa Jocky<sup>1</sup>, Modeste Bahati Lukwebo<sup>2</sup>, Muchiga Zihindula Norbert<sup>3</sup>, Sabine Patricia Mougou Mbenda<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Finance and Accounting, Higher Institute of Commerce of Goma, Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>2</sup>Department of Finance and Accounting, Higher School of Commerce (HEC), Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>3</sup>Department of Political and Administrative Sciences, University of Kinshasa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>4</sup>Department of Management Sciences, University of Yaoundé II, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Email: bahigajocky702@gmail.com

**How to cite this paper:** Jocky, B. B., Lukwebo, M. B., Norbert, M. Z., & Mbenda, S. P. M. (2026). Sociocultural and Structural Barriers to the Integration of Women into Management Positions in Public Enterprises in East Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 16, 152-181.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ajibm.2026.162007>

**Received:** January 8, 2026

**Accepted:** February 11, 2026

**Published:** February 14, 2026

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

This study examines the sociocultural and structural barriers that hinder women's access to leadership positions in state-owned enterprises in five East African countries. Based on qualitative interviews with twelve representatives from political parties, humanitarian initiatives, and former professionals, and using text analysis software, the article identifies patriarchal norms, systemic biases, and institutional weaknesses as the main obstacles. The findings highlight gaps in policy implementation and systemic exclusion that impede women's economic participation. The results indicate that structural barriers such as prejudice and controlled access through male networks are intentionally embedded in the systems. A consensus on patriarchal norms and institutional weaknesses makes change difficult. Women face economic exclusion at a rate of 71%, despite high levels of awareness. While resilience and innovation are present in 54% of women, significant systemic challenges remain, highlighting that empowerment also requires systemic changes.

## Keywords

Women's Leadership, Gender Barriers, Structural Barriers, Sociocultural Obstacles

---

## 1. Introduction

Women in East African countries face systemic obstacles such as weak implementation of equality policies, discrimination, unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion, and an unequal distribution of family responsibilities. These problems are exacerbated by a lack of political will and support systems, despite the existence of international standards promoting change. The authors argue that factors such as gender stereotypes and a lack of professional support constitute a “glass ceiling” that hinders women’s careers. They emphasize that this often forces them to choose between their career and their family life, as revealed by studies in academia and the labor market. Yet, according to several studies, companies with more women in leadership positions are more profitable and demonstrate better financial performance, and their exclusion therefore has a cost. Furthermore, some authors believe that Diverse teams perform better than homogeneous teams (for example, McKinsey & Company, 2020). The reports from & Company establish a link between diversity and profitability, while highlighting that excluding women’s experiences leads to biased risk management. Therefore, excluding women from decision-making bodies (parliaments, cabinets) means that policies do not reflect citizens’ needs, as researchers have demonstrated. It has been emphasized that the underrepresentation of women hinders the “substantive representation” of citizens’ needs. Low representation limits the ability of policies to address women’s specific concerns. According to Charlesworth, a genuine democracy requires an equitable distribution of power, and the exclusion of women from decision-making processes undermines democracy’s potential to shift power dynamics. It highlights how dominant masculinity shapes institutions and policies, often overlooking women’s knowledge and experiences, leading to less effective systems. In “The Invention of Women,” it challenges the imposition of Western gender binaries, indicating that African societies often tend to value age and kinship over gender, thus contributing to the perpetuation of harmful colonial hierarchies. It focuses on South African politics, demonstrating how gendered institutions hinder women’s representation, a crucial element for substantive equality and a robust democracy. The central question addressed in this article is the following: To what extent and in what ways do sociocultural norms and structural inequalities limit women’s access to leadership positions in Kenya, DRC, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, countries of East Africa?

This article on the exclusion of women from leadership positions in East Africa focuses on assessing the economic and governance impacts, analyzing systemic barriers such as biases and policy gaps, and exploring solutions like mentorship. We justify these points by arguing that the underrepresentation of women hinders sustainable development (SDGs), affects economic growth, and impedes fundamental rights such as democracy and equality. The underrepresentation of women in East African countries hinders the SDGs, economic growth, democracy, and human rights by limiting human capital and stifling innovation. This creates unbalanced priorities, particularly in water and health, and perpetuates cycles of pov-

erty due to unequal access to resources and education. It emphasizes that these systemic inequalities require fundamental restructuring rather than mere integration. Appropriate solutions are needed to address cultural challenges. Current policies must be strengthened to better reflect reality. By organizing the study around these goals and reasons, the article offers a comprehensive and evidence-based defense of immediate action regarding women's leadership in East Africa, particularly in the countries under study (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya) where the issue has been little studied by the research community, and work specifically addressing the sociocultural and structural barriers to women's leadership in public enterprises in these countries is rare.

The article is structured in four sections: the first addresses the sociocultural, political and structural obstacles to women's access to management in public enterprises in East Africa. The second section describes the research methodology, the third analyzes the empirical results. The conclusion discusses the managerial implications, the limitations of the study, and suggests avenues for future research.

## **2. The Conceptual Framework of Obstacles to Women's Access to Management in East Africa**

The conceptual framework of the sociocultural obstacles to women's access to management positions in East African public enterprises is structured around four main themes: Ineffective policies and implementation regarding equal opportunities, unconscious bias and systemic discrimination, work-life balance and family responsibilities, and societal norms and lack of support.

### **2.1. Key Concepts to Use for Understanding the Themes**

The glass ceiling describes the invisible barriers that prevent women from accessing high-level positions. In contrast, the sticky floor refers to the situation where women are stuck in low-paying, low-mobility jobs at the beginning of their careers. Gender mainstreaming aims to include gender perspectives in policies, as adopted by the UN in the Beijing Platform for Action (1990-2000). Intersectionality highlights the overlapping of social identities, creating unique experiences of discrimination. Patriarchy refers to a system of male domination that marginalizes women.

### **2.2. African Exploration Obstacles to Women's Access to Management in East Africa**

The insufficient representation of women in policymaking within political institutions and public enterprises leads to the neglect of women's issues, even in the face of initiatives like Agenda 2063. The accumulated intensification of patriarchy by neoliberal development models perpetuates inequalities and exposes women to increased risks, particularly in the face of climate change. Based on these facts, and drawing on intersectionality, multiple forms of discrimination hinder women's

emancipation, calling for a systemic transformation to rectify these injustices. UN Women emphasizes and UN Women emphasizes that gender equality is essential to sustainable development policies, particularly during crises that disproportionately affect women. The World Bank indicates that inequality in women's education hinders economic growth and contributes to population growth. Cooper criticizes current development models for their failure to address the root causes of inequality, calling for a restructuring that goes beyond simply including women. Work-life imbalances hinder the expansion of women-led businesses, and unequal access to resources presents a barrier for them. Male-favoring cultural norms limit women's independence in the labor market while increasing the risk of domestic violence as they gain income. In countries like the DRC, with 67.8 million inhabitants, of which 51% are women, despite articles 5, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the DRC which promote equality, women represent only 7.2% of decision-making positions in Parliament and the government, which is well below the average of sub-Saharan Africa (24%) (Wanyeki, 2005). African women also face inequalities in access to resources such as land, credit, healthcare and education, due to social hierarchy, which limits their participation in economic, political and social activities.

In Burundi, despite a female population of 51%, women are underrepresented in positions of responsibility due to sociocultural barriers. These barriers include low levels of education and limited access to resources, which hinder their access to leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. These cultural norms impede women's participation in public decision-making and impose domestic responsibilities upon them. In Uganda, less than 30% of academic leadership positions in public universities and 36% of positions in the public sphere are held by women. Only 12% of principals in public secondary schools are women, as are 34% of members of the national parliament. These statistics demonstrate that sociocultural barriers, such as gender roles and stereotypes, impede women's advancement to leadership positions. In Tanzania, there is a significant gender disparity in leadership positions, with only 7.7% of public sector managers, 19% in rural schools, and 8% of CEOs being women. This inequality is attributed to sociocultural barriers, including patriarchal customs and limited access to positions of power, as demonstrated by several studies and reports from organizations. The figures reveal the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in Kenya, with only 33.3% in top management roles and 23% in parliamentary seats. This underscores sociocultural barriers, such as gender roles and a lack of political will, hindering women's access despite legal frameworks that promote equality.

These consequences stem from factors such as traditional gender roles that confine women to domestic tasks, the negative perception of assertive women, and the lack of access to predominantly male informal networks, which are nevertheless essential for career advancement (Klasen & Lamanna, 2009; Storberg-Walker & Natt Och Dag, 2017). This harmful phenomenon, where the lack of female representation reinforces stereotypes and limits opportunities for women, includes

barriers such as restricted access to funding and training, as well as the undervaluation of female leadership styles, often caused by patriarchal institutions and outdated traditions that impact women's careers.

According to Koo (2021), cultural conventions and social prejudices limit women's access to leadership roles. It highlights a lack of information on women in leadership positions in East Africa and a significant disparity between female representation and leadership across Africa.

In other words, the Sustainable Development Goals promote women's involvement in leadership. However, studies show that in Africa, women face obstacles in reaching these leadership positions, which necessitates further research. It is therefore essential to explore women's career paths toward leadership roles in the context of four developing countries.

### **2.3. Women's Access to Positions of Responsibility in Various Public Institutions in Some East African Countries Is Subject to Political and Structural Factors**

Some authors believe that the major obstacles to effective policies in Africa are poverty, unemployment, harmful customs, and cultural opposition. It notes that discriminatory norms deprive women of their rights, limit their access to employment, and result in a heavy burden of unpaid work. It adds that gendered socialization, biases about competence, the disadvantages associated with motherhood, and harassment are persistent barriers to women's access to leadership positions, despite the existence of quotas. It highlights poor law enforcement, corruption, and cultural opposition as the main obstacles to gender equality in Africa. It illustrates how the lack of property rights for women limits their economic empowerment and access to finance, emphasizing the impact of laws. It identifies the "glass ceiling" and "broken ladder" as major barriers, in addition to increased expectations for women.

#### **Justifications and Explanations**

The barriers women face in leadership, linked to patriarchal structures and gender stereotypes, are structural obstacles, such as rigid work environments after maternity leave, a lack of affordable childcare, wage inequality, and gender discrimination. Furthermore, laws are often poorly implemented, and access to justice mechanisms is inadequate, contributing to a culture of impunity. The implementation of gender policies is hampered by a lack of political will, corruption, and cultural resistance, creating a gap between laws and reality. Additionally, the denial of women's property rights limits their economic autonomy and exacerbates inequalities.

In light of these explanations, African nations have solid legal structures, but the effectiveness of these laws is hampered by patriarchal traditions and limited institutional capacities, excluding women from leadership roles despite existing laws.

Women's career progression towards positions of responsibility in these five

East African countries (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya) has been little studied by the research community, and work specifically focusing on the sociocultural and structural obstacles to women's leadership in public enterprises in these countries is rare. The few women who have dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to working alongside men in the DRC and the four other countries mentioned face social statistics that reflect the lived reality of the very people they are supposed to support. Yet, in a constantly evolving society like the DRC, promoting female leadership is more important than ever, and research is needed to induce institutional and societal changes significant across Prejudice and a lack of opportunities hinder women's career advancement. on a global scale (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kabeer, 2012). This is particularly important for changing the representation of marginalized populations, especially women who have suffered oppression, in leadership positions.

In general, women in these five East African countries face oppression and obstacles related to their access to leadership positions (Brescoll, 2016; Eagly et al., 1995; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Increased stress, negative repercussions on mental health, decreased self-confidence, and burnout are all consequences experienced by women at work, victims of sexist expectations. These expectations stem from social pressure that pushes them to downplay their achievements, let their male colleagues take credit for their work, and be completely excluded from professional life. Sexism and gender stereotypes affect 74% of working women (Brescoll, 2016; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Harmful traditional practices against women in Africa stem from patriarchal norms justified by cultural, religious, and social arguments. According to Berg & Denison (2012), these practices contribute to women's suffering and violence. Other authors argue that these traditions, linked to family honor and religious precepts, are not inherently cultural but can be challenged by legislation and changes in social norms. In "The Second Sex," Simone de Beauvoir argues that gender roles are constructed by social norms rather than biology. This underscores the possibility of questioning and transforming these roles. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, certain practices aimed at preserving traditions reinforce rigid gender roles in order to maintain social order. In some tribes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, women cannot speak out in front of men because religious practices relegate them to a passive role, awaiting male decisions. Wollstonecraft (2024) argues that this perception of women's inferiority stems from social conditioning, which positions inequality in education as an obstacle to their rights. Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that prejudice against women in leadership positions stems from a perceived incongruity between traditional female roles and that of a leader. A woman who becomes pregnant out of wedlock is stigmatized and considered immoral, while a man in the same situation does not face the same discrimination. If this woman runs for office, voters fear she will introduce immoral behavior into parliament. Women leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo face prejudices that question their abilities due to a conflict between their gender roles and lead-

ership positions. Practices such as early marriage are maintained by some tribes to preserve family honor, which is linked to female virginity. Religious texts based on morality are used and popularized in Congolese (DRC) societies to perpetuate certain harmful practices, often based on specific interpretations of doctrines. For example, the Law of Moses and the Law of Leviticus prohibit certain sexual behaviors, particularly in the context of Christian African societies, with severe penalties, including the death penalty for adultery. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 describe prohibitions on sexual acts between men, stipulating the death penalty. Furthermore, the commentary on the “silence of women” comes from the New Testament, particularly 1 Corinthians 14: 34 and 1 Timothy 2: 11-14. These teachings influence the behavior of women in the church in some African countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Tanzania. Certain passages forbid women from teaching or exercising authority in the church assembly, calling them to silence and learn with submission. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, parents at a school expressed that they might request a change of class for their children or even change schools altogether if their child is placed in a class taught by a woman. In her essay “The Subjection of Women,” Mill argues that women’s inferior status is due to patriarchal norms, making it a key text in feminism. However, some interpret the biblical verses as contextual, addressing a specific problem of disorder rather than a general prohibition on women’s participation, suggesting they are merely a commandment of silence to maintain order. Walby’s (1998) argument highlights how practices justified by biological and social reasons, such as health and hygiene, have historically served to maintain patriarchy. This system is entrenched in norms that generate gender inequalities, with male domination over women, unequal power relations, and restrictive gender roles, despite evidence to the contrary. The economic exclusion of women is manifested by their overrepresentation in low-wage sectors, limited access to land ownership and credit, and exclusion from economic decision-making, reinforcing their subordinate status. Heise and Seguino highlight the persistent challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies, exacerbated by political and legal obstacles stemming from weak governance and a lack of political will, creating a gap between proclaimed gender equality and reality in some African countries. Harmful practices are not inherent to the culture but are nonetheless damaging, disproportionately affecting women. They manifest as violence against women, such as honor killings and domestic violence. Studies show that patriarchal culture fosters discriminatory behaviors in education, employment, and marriage. To combat the marginalization of women in leadership positions, Congolese state-owned enterprises should adopt diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as equitable hiring practices and mentorship programs. This marginalization is often based on gender stereotypes, despite the recognized benefits of greater female representation, such as improved collaboration, innovation, and profitability. It focused on systemic human rights violations against women, and addressed gender-related barriers to education and empowerment. This association encourages non-tradi-

tional careers, promoting and participating in STEM fields and other non-traditional areas in order to broaden economic prospects and challenge gender norms. It emphasizes the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion, while calling for joint efforts from stakeholders to implement relevant initiatives (Bouchmel et al., 2022; Cross et al., 2019; Guenaga et al., 2022; Lakhali et al., 2024).

### 3. Literature Review

Although there is a lot of empirical data on the obstacles women face at work in general, research on the challenges they face in accessing leadership positions in African countries such as the (DR Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya) remains limited. The research of Eagly et al. (1995) (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007) indicates that it is important to demonstrate how systemic problems such as bias and lack of opportunity hinder women's career advancement, which requires institutional and societal changes. According to these authors, women are often excluded from leadership positions due to bias, as they are evaluated based on their past achievements rather than their future potential, unlike their male counterparts. Furthermore, implicit biases Stereotypes and unequal access to crucial career advancement opportunities, such as large-scale projects and mentorship, create significant barriers that cannot be overcome through individual effort alone, as highlighted (Kyambade et al., 2024; Norberg & Johansson, 2021).

#### 3.1. Studies on Systemic Barriers to the Advancement of Women

Eagly et al. (1995) and Heilman & Parks-Stamm (2007) have shown that prejudices against women leaders are often amplified in male-dominated fields. This is because leadership roles create a greater "incongruity" with traditional gender roles, which in turn leads to discrimination. Adnane (2021), Kyambade et al. (2024) and Norberg & Johansson (2021) have highlighted the global problem of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. This underrepresentation persists despite women's qualifications and skills and is further exacerbated by a lack of opportunities, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes and inequalities. Evans & Pfister (2021) and Jose & Sivaraman (2023) have shown that women are often overlooked for leadership roles, which deprives organizations of diverse perspectives and reinforces gender inequality. (Player et al., 2019), their research presented in this publication indicated that men are evaluated on their promotion potential, while women are evaluated on their past achievements. This difference in evaluation criteria contributes to the "glass ceiling" effect, hindering women's access to leadership positions. In African public enterprises where women are evaluated on their past achievements, why can't we at least refer to the Christian belief from which Jesus said in a the biblical proverb, "Let he who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her," was used when the scribes and Pharisees, representing the religious authorities of the time, brought a woman accused of adultery to Jesus. They invoked Mosaic Law, which prescribed stoning as the punishment for adultery, and challenged Jesus to apply the law under penalty

of being considered a transgressor. Jesus' response exposed the hypocrisy of the crowd, for they were all sinners themselves and, therefore, unworthy to condemn her (John 8: 7). *Sylvia Walby (1998)* predicted for years that discrimination is often rooted in patriarchal societies where gender roles are rigidly defined, leading to disparities in sectors such as business. Other authors have observed that discrimination and other barriers in the workplace are directly linked to lower earning potential for women and limited access to opportunities, contributing to a significant gender pay gap (*Petrongolo & Ronchi, 2020*). Studies on public universities in Uganda have identified work-life balance challenges and rigid traditional gender roles as significant contributing factors to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, highlighting the role of societal expectations and institutional policies (*Tushabe et al., 2025*). This leads us to say that Traditional patriarchal beliefs, which place women primarily responsible for domestic and family care, continue to be the most widespread factor limiting women's career advancement (*Schwanke, 2013; Sowjanya et al., 2017*). A Harvard Business Review study reveals that women are interrupted more often in meetings. This lack of visibility, particularly in male-dominated sectors, forces them to constantly prove themselves, unlike men who often benefit from automatic credibility. According to Recent studies analysts like Catherine Odimba point out that low female participation remains an "obstacle to parity governance" and testifies to the limitations of current electoral reforms. Studies published in this ResearchGate repository show that implicit and explicit biases lead to discriminatory practices in hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation. Women also face unequal access to large-scale projects, challenging assignments, and senior management mentorship—elements essential for developing their skills and advancing their careers (*Fedorenko et al., 2023; Ryzhov et al., 2020*). Research on the Website of the Multidisciplinary Institute for Digital Publishing (MDPI) allowing users to consult more than 400 specialist journals covering various scientific disciplines (MDI) have confirmed a negative relationship between discriminatory sexist practices and women's career progression, also demonstrating the link between discriminatory practices and limited opportunities for skills development. This leads us to ask the question: are women themselves not the obstacles to sexist discrimination and career progression due to their incompetence in positions of responsibility offered to them in the past? Numerous high-profile public cases have highlighted the disparities in the assessment of skills and behaviors required to access leadership positions, between men and women (*McClellan et al., 2018*). For example, Ellen Pao, a former investment partner at a renowned Silicon Valley venture capital firm, was denied a promotion and subsequently sued her former employer for gender discrimination (*Streitfeld, 2015*). In her complaint, she highlighted the difficult situation of women, who are expected to be more proactive, bolder, and more committed, but who do not receive the same recognition for it. Similar social dynamics are found in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya, where women remain underrepresented in leadership positions

(Bodalina & Mestry, 2022; Sims & Chinta, 2019). Therefore, the promise of an egalitarian society, where all Congolese citizens are equal before the law and entitled to state protection without discrimination based on their origin, social status, or beliefs, is enshrined in the 2006 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the current situation in Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo does not officially show high-profile cases of women being denied promotions for sexist reasons. While widely documented and readily accessible, such incidents are frequent and largely ignored due to systemic barriers, making it difficult to identify individual cases of discrimination when they occur or are reported. The absence of specific cases does not mean the problem does not exist. The absence of official complaints is often justified by the fact that, Victims of discrimination may not come forward for fear of reprisal or due to the ineffectiveness of official complaint systems. This is often the case in situations of workplace discrimination or political exclusion. Furthermore, the lack of documented individual cases means that research often focuses on the structural and systemic barriers that lead to these outcomes rather than on specific individuals who have experienced discrimination. In these countries, women face challenges such as underrepresentation in leadership positions, limited access to financial and land resources, and discriminatory cultural norms that hinder their career advancement into the ideal political and economic spheres. The current situation of women in these countries is rooted in a Eurocentric education system, a legacy of colonialism. This system, focused on formal education, aimed to perpetuate male dominance in paid employment, leadership, politics, governance, and decision-making, thereby fostering gender discrimination in these areas across Africa. To break with these discriminatory trends, Uganda (since 2001) and South Africa (since 1999) have encouraged greater participation of women in political life. Despite this progress, women still comprise only a quarter of the Ugandan Parliament, while the South African Parliament comprises only about a third. Goetz & Hassim (2003) and McEwan (2003) also noted the underrepresentation of women within South African local government structures.

In certain fields, women have demonstrated their incompetence, and several authors have addressed this. Some authors have noted that women leaders in STEM fields in Africa often face stereotypes of incompetence and managerial failure, while others have discussed women leaders in the context of organizational change management, noting the impact of stereotypes on their roles (Belasen, 2017; Ebert et al., 2014). However, Latchanah & Singh (2016) and Singh et al. (2008) have highlighted the difficulties women face in making decisions for their organizations, which can be misinterpreted as incompetence. Furthermore, Kanter (1977) had analyzed women and minorities in companies, providing fundamental work on how structural problems and biases affect leadership roles and invited other authors to examine studies that argue that stereotypes about women's roles, such as viewing them as indecisive or emotional, contribute to their underrepresentation in leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). A study on the

challenges faced by women in leadership positions in Africa highlighted the fact that, despite their increasing presence in these roles, they face specific difficulties often related to their gender. Kryger's work also allows us to better understand these obstacles in African countries (George et al., 2016).

### **3.2. Theoretical Approaches to Women's Visibility in Decision-Making**

There are several approaches to women's participation in decision-making in Africa. The first is the approach based on women's human rights, which asserts that, since women represent approximately half of the African population, they have the right to be represented in decision-making bodies (Fraser, 1990). The second is the critical mass theory, which argues that the representation of women in decision-making bodies would allow them to defend their interests and well-being in a concerted manner (Oliver & Marwell, 1988).

At the political level, feminist theorists who develop a theory of women's influence in Congress on women's issues suggest that women constitute a homogeneous group that must be represented in discussions leading to the development and implementation of policies, because their experiences are unique and different from those of men (Swers, 2020; Young, 1989). This implies that women practice politics differently from men. Feminist theorists also argue that women's interests differ from men's (Pateman, 2005) and that, consequently, they should be represented within institutions so that they can express their views. From a mentorship and role model perspective, feminist theorists argue that female role models will encourage women's involvement and engagement in politics, while equal representation of women and men in politics will allow for the democratization of governance at the national and international levels (Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006).

### **3.3. The Place of African Women in Decision-Making Processes**

Numerous actors in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (PEAF), including non-governmental organizations, women's groups, and individuals, have collaborated in various national, international, and transnational contexts to integrate women and their interests into public affairs. Devlin & Elgie (2008), in particular through efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2030 Agenda (Basu, 2018). Between 1995 and 2005, there was a marked increase in the visibility of women's participation in leadership and decision-making in Africa (Gingrich & Ansell, 2012; Ilesanmi, 2018). They found that the implementation of a gender quota system had led to a significant increase in the number of women participating in public decision-making in Mozambique (34.8%), South Africa (32.8%), Tanzania (30.4%), Uganda, Burundi (30.5%), Rwanda (48.8%), Namibia (26.9%), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Rwanda, for example, has the highest percentage (48.8%) of women represented in Parliament worldwide. In the Congo, women's organizations successfully per-

sueded the government to enshrine the principle of gender parity in the Constitution in 2006. In Burundi, the government established a 30% quota for women in the 2005 Constitution and in the electoral code in 2009. In Mali, Niger, and Cape Verde, priority funding was granted to political parties with strong female representation, thus guaranteeing the appointment of at least 10% women to elected or appointed positions (Krook & O'Brien, 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa, some female parliamentarians were elected thanks to gender quotas, a system of reserved seats (Yoon, 2001).

Despite these efforts and the progress made in some African countries, the degree of women's visibility in decision-making remains highly variable across the continent, ranging from less than 5% in Egypt to more than 40% in South Africa (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Yoon, 2001). Likewise, Bawa & Sanyare (2013) have observed a steady decline in women's participation in public and political life in countries like Ghana. This decline is most likely fueled by ideologies that ignore gender issues and consider the private and domestic sphere as the feminine domain, while the public and political sphere is perceived as the masculine domain.

#### 4. Methodological Approach to the Study

Our mixed-methods approach for this study aims to achieve a holistic understanding that combines statistical data with underlying motivations, providing a comprehensive view of the phenomenon, including exclusion rates and the cultural beliefs surrounding them. It contextualizes the diverse trends across the five countries studied in relation to local cultures and power structures, which is crucial in the varied regions of East Africa. It also helps to uncover experiences often overlooked by surveys, such as implicit biases and inequalities in access. Finally, by triangulating survey and interview data, we can improve the validity of the results and offer a more complete understanding. Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) advocate mixed methods for addressing complex issues and examining diverse perspectives, arguing that this is comparable to using different lenses for a more precise view, particularly in the context of social phenomena. Furthermore, several authors argue that in the field of feminist research, the use of mixed methods is recommended to challenge the historical bias against quantitative data. This allows for the examination of truths that carry power (feminist objectivity) instead of simply dismissing quantitative methods, thus enabling feminist initiatives to benefit from both approaches.

This research focuses on Sociocultural and structural obstacles to women's access to management positions in East African public enterprises: a comparative study of the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya. We opted for inductive qualitative approach is supported by several key arguments (Wacheux, 1996). It is worth remembering that the choice of a methodological approach depends not only on the state of theoretical knowledge on the subject, but also on the object of study. The text presents several research objectives and the methodological ap-

proaches adapted for each. To allow us to explore women's experiences facing obstacles encountered in institutions in Eastern European countries, phenomenology, particularly interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), is recommended. Furthermore, to understand cultural norms in public enterprises in the DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, ethnography or netnography also appear crucial in order to observe the cultural impact on access in the DRC and Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, etc. If we rely solely on statistics, they can lose their meaning if presented without context, which is often difficult to grasp, thus potentially affecting their relevance to the women concerned in these countries.

Farran (1990) argues that relying solely on statistics in research risks decontextualizing the data, leading to a loss of meaning for the people involved. But let's be clear: quantitative and qualitative approaches are so divergent and constitute distinct fields for understanding the lived reality of women in the political institutions and public enterprises of these Eastern European countries.

Quantitative approaches claim to offer objectivity, but they fail to understand subjective realities. According to Wilhelm Dilthey, "We explain nature, but we do not understand psychic life," arguing that quantitative methods "explain" external phenomena but fail to "understand" the inner and subjective experience of human beings.

The phenomenon of persistent barriers for women to hold positions of responsibility necessitates the development of an appropriate grounded theory to construct theories based on interviews and lived observations in the countries under study. To compare cultural and structural contexts, we conducted a case study for each country, allowing us to integrate elements of previous approaches and reassuring us that we had carried out a systematic analysis in all five countries. These approaches emphasized data condensation, enabling us to summarize extensive texts into meaningful information. We then developed a framework to better understand the experiences highlighted, which is often also crucial. According to the generation of theory from data is a fundamental inductive idea. Furthermore, the importance of linking the results to our initial research question is paramount. Finally, our chosen method is distinguished by its simplicity and systematic approach, making it readily accessible for targeted evaluations. The value of this practical approach for evaluators and researchers lies in its ability to provide an accessible understanding of rich data without complex theories. It emphasizes transparency by establishing clear links between data and conclusions, thereby strengthening the reliability of qualitative research. Finally, this approach is grounded in the participants' realities, aligning with the core values of in-depth qualitative research.

It strongly argues that the research questions "how" and "why" are often addressed through case studies, highlighting their effectiveness for explanatory and exploratory research where variables are not easily controlled. It asserts that qualitative research, including case studies, is appropriate for uncovering meaning and experiences by addressing the "how" and "why" to examine phenomena through the lens of the participants, often guiding initial and exploratory questions that may

evolve. The case study is seen as an adaptable qualitative method for gaining a deeper understanding of particular entities (individuals, programs) in their real-world environment, addressing questions about sophisticated processes. It argues for the importance of in-depth and elaborate descriptions in qualitative research (frequently focused on specific cases), in order to capture lived experiences and contexts, focusing on the questions “how/why”. This aligns perfectly with research that aims to examine “the impact of sociocultural norms and structural inequalities on women’s leadership in East Africa.” It employs purposive sampling, comprising 12 representatives from diverse countries and types of institutions (public sector). A demographic table presents a balance between countries and sectors, with anonymized case studies illustrating the specific challenges faced by the participants, such as cultural resistance or funding biases. This question explores the experiences of women in leadership and those who aspire to be, focusing on their paths, perceptions, and autonomies.

The analysis of the causes of obstacles preventing women from holding positions of responsibility in public institutions focuses on the individual as the central unit. The sampling method, targeted in the five countries studied and employing a reasoned approach, is relevant because it allows for the collection of diverse data from different testimonies and contexts.

Other authors believe that the varied selection of participants and contexts enriches the understanding of phenomena by going beyond simple description, thus fostering theoretical development by integrating diverse experiences and perspectives into social processes, which is essential for qualitative depth. The lack of studies on this obstacle and the lived experience of women in accessing positions of responsibility in the 5 countries studied is a specific geographical contribution that motivated us to adopt an inductive qualitative approach [Wacheux \(1996\)](#). It is worth recalling that the choice of a methodological approach depends not only on the state of theoretical knowledge on the subject, but also on the object of study. The state of knowledge on the question of Sociocultural and structural obstacles to women’s access to management positions in public enterprises in East Africa (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya). is still at the stage of accumulating facts and data. Our study aims to conduct an inductive analysis based on a multiple case study of diverse organizations from five Eastern European countries. This strategy is widely recognized in management science, and more specifically in the field of qualitative research. We chose it because of its relevance to the empirical study of new phenomena, and in particular phenomena that are still little explored. Its particularity lies in the fact that it allows us to understand the phenomenon in its original context, namely (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya). We conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 representatives from different state organizations, structured as follows: 1 Vice-Dean, Public University (Tanzania), Former Chair of the Board of Directors (Tanzania), 1 President of a Civil Society Organization (Public-Private, Burundi), 1 Former Head of Public Enterprises (DRC), 1 Former Board Member (Tanzania), 1 VSLA Coordinator, Public-Private

(Burundi), Former Deputy Director General of Public Enterprises (Kenya), 1 Former Director of Public Primary Schools (Tanzania), 1 Former Director General (Tanzania), 1 Coordinator of the Plus Initiative (Public-Private, DRC), 1 Former Deputy Director General of a Public Enterprise (Kenya), 1 Vice Dean of a University (Tanzania), 1 Former Minister (DRC). These former leaders of major public enterprises from various countries are currently involved in unions in their respective countries and remain key figures when seeking information on gender and the stereotypes they face in their societies. They have created public-private structures bringing together several women for whom they advocate. They wear different hats; sometimes we were directed to see the ADG, but when you meet them, you realize it's the same person, the coordinator of a public-private initiative, with whom you had already conducted interviews. The profiles of the respondents are also diverse. We used relevance-based sampling to select participants for unique experiments, fostering a deep understanding of specific groups. This argument justifies our choice of former civil servants from diversified public companies, who during the interview, when answering the question, called upon other people who were more familiar with the issue in their offices. We were informed by interviews conducted and sometimes by phone or video conference for those who lived far from the capital in each of the five countries under study. Each representative managed a minimum of 70 people, and over several months, we interviewed different groups. Furthermore, it emphasizes that this targeted selection ensures the relevance of the participants' perspectives for the research, which is essential for obtaining meaningful information. It advocates its use in management to explore unique perspectives on complex issues, where traditional samples prove insufficient. It collectively advocates for targeted (and reasonable) sampling in interviews to ensure depth, nuance, and theoretical relevance rather than breadth. According to these authors, the deliberate selection of participants, rather than random selection, allows researchers to gather specific and varied perspectives, essential for answering research questions, which was the case for us. The interviews conducted with the diverse layers of actors involved in the lived experiences were very enlightening. However, during our interviews with people facing this phenomenon of exclusion, we were forced to put the emphasis on theoretical sampling (a type of targeted sampling) where the initial participants guide the selection of others. Someone specifically supports the use of this method to target "hard-to-reach" or sensitive populations. Our approach collectively demonstrates that theoretical sampling has been an integral part of explaining social processes, actions, or interactions through constant comparison and theoretical sampling. This analysis is emergent in the sense that it guided our targeted data collection until we observed theoretical saturation during interviews with stakeholders regarding the exclusion of women from positions of responsibility, thus making it appropriate to explore new and sensitive areas.

The sampling targeted individuals who had held positions of responsibility in public companies in each of the countries studied, who had experienced self-ste-

reotypes, and who had experienced unique experiences of discrimination in the positions they previously held, they are now responsible for public-private initiatives or hold positions of responsibility. We justified this based on our analyses, which we can explain by an example of a scale Likert scale which fits with one of our variables taken into account as (sociocultural): “Traditional gender roles in my community limit women’s political participation.” (From “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”). According to the responses in our questionnaires: One woman responded: “Elders say a woman’s place is in the home; when I ran for municipal office, my husband was publicly humiliated, and people whispered that I wasn’t ‘feminine.’ The scale shows that I agree, but the story reveals the deep-seated cultural shame and family pressure.”

The validity of qualitative data is determined by the concordance between observations. The researcher’s assumptions and the reality on the ground, thus favoring in-depth, high-quality information over large samples. Sugiyono’s argument is justified by the often-held position of the qualitative research, which focuses on relevant and meaningful data from specific and competent informants in order to understand natural phenomena. This position also justifies the inclusion of the quantitative approach to measuring attitudes/perceptions (e.g., “patriarchy strongly hinders leadership aspirations” on a scale of 1 to 5) for major trends and comparisons between groups.

Finally, we support purposive sampling because the quality of data from targeted individuals is superior to that of a large, often unrepresentative sample, which is crucial for sensitive topics. The study sample, composed of individuals with diverse profiles and advanced degrees, was constructed according to the principle of theoretical saturation, which indicates that approximately 7 to 12 interviews are sufficient to reach this point. In this case, saturation was reached after 21 interviews. A structured interview guide based on five main themes was used for data collection.

#### **4.1. Prototype of the Semi-Directive Maintenance and Upkeep Guide**

Theme 1. Gender inequalities, mental and family load.

Theme 2. Discrimination in hiring and promotion.

Theme 3. Gender stereotypes, lack of training and skills.

Theme 4. Lack of self-confidence, absence of female leadership role models.

Theme 5. Challenges in reconciling professional and personal life.

**Source:** authors of literature.

The interview data was collected with the permission of our Research Laboratory at the University of Kinshasa. We requested interviews with representatives from various organizations, sometimes in person and sometimes via videoconference with the assistance of representatives from 5 countries. (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya) Between August and November 2023 and October and November 2025, several Representatives were reluctant to participate, despite

our network of intermediaries. Data analysis used a thematic approach with Tropes to enhance research validity. We combined verbatim interviews with Tropes and Japs software analysis to obtain the results. Yin emphasizes that such a strategy of triangulating data analysis tools increases both the internal and external validity of the research. To effectively guide our interviews, we took every precaution to avoid bias and to prevent the imposition of pre-existing categories or theoretical structures that could distort the complexity of our interviewees' experiences. We highlighted the key elements of our questions related to the various topics that formed the basis of our conversations with all participants. We opted for an inductive approach to understand the lived human experience of women in each country studied, as described by the participants themselves. All of this was achieved by acknowledging our capacity to attribute meaning. Our argument rests on the idea that, qualitative research should focus on the meanings constructed by the participants, and not solely on the theoretical constructs developed by the researcher. This author emphasized the importance of reflexivity, which compels the researcher to analyze how their own conceptual frameworks affect their interpretation, thus reducing the risk of imposing meaning and honoring the perspective of the other. Our understanding of the interviewees' statements was based on the semantic "knots" and interpretive frameworks of the speaker, as revealed in their discourse. It was thanks to this ethical behavioral framework that we were able to identify structures, while acknowledging the subjectivity and reflexivity of our interviewees. This was essential for an ethical and impartial understanding, as it restores interpretive power to the participant. In this context, we became active participants in our own knowledge by adopting a reflective attitude that took into account the experiences of our interlocutors, thus following a kind of tradition of reflective practice, Philippe Carré (2000), in his work "Self-Directed Learning in Adult Education."

#### **4.2. Links between Ethics and Bias**

Ethical consent is strengthened by reflexivity, where the researcher acknowledges their own position and helps the participant to give more informed consent. Awareness of biases improves listening skills and facilitates the analysis of interactions.

### **5. Results of Empirical Surveys and Discussion**

The research question posed in this article was: Why do women not have access to positions of responsibility in political institutions and public enterprises in East African countries?

The results (**Table 1**) show that sociocultural causes limiting women's access to leadership positions in East Africa include patriarchal norms, negative stereotypes, male resistance to power sharing, and structural barriers such as a lack of mentorship and funding.

**Table 1.** Summary interviews conducted.

Interviewees	Sex	Age	Level of education	Maintenance code	Interview duration
R1	F	42	Advanced level	Former minister (DRC)	35 min
R2	F	47	Advanced level	President of the OSC (Public Burundi)	40 min
R3	F	51	Dr. Pr.	Former public sector manager (DRC)	35 min
R4	F	35	Advanced level	Former CA member eses plques (Uganda)	35 min
R5	F	44	Advanced level	Former (ADG public sector Tanzania)	40 min
R6	F	36	Advanced level	VSLA coordinator (Public-private-Burundi)	45 min
R7	F	53	Dr	Former board member, public establishment (Kenya)	35 min
R8	F	55	Advanced level	Former director of basic schools (Public-Tanzania)	35 min
R9	F	44	Advanced level	Former PCA (Public establishment-Tanzania)	40 min
R10	F	36	Dr	Coordo initiative plus (Public-private) DRC	45 min
R11	F	53	Advanced level	Former ADG public establishment (Kenya)	35 min
12	F	55	Dr. Pr.	Vice-dean, public university (Tanzania)	35 min
<b>Total</b>					<b>445 minutes</b>

Source: authors in the field.

### 5.1. Structural/Organizational Issues (Corporate Culture, Mentoring and Networking, Promotion and Pay Gaps, Leadership Development)

Our findings from East Africa (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya), like those of several studies conducted in European countries, [Eagly and Karau \(2002\)](#), affirm that cultural norms, unconscious biases and structural barriers disadvantage women in African countries, hindering their access to leadership positions due to gender expectations. Consequently, our findings show that companies in the five East African countries studied are in a situation where fewer women hold decision-making roles. Policies have completely ignored women's need for promotion to positions of responsibility. Gender inequality persists, and companies are losing women's leadership skills. A respondent OSC (Women's Civil Society) (Burundi). One interviewee from our sample stated, and we quote, "Stereotypes about women in Burundian society associate them with traditional roles and negatively influence the perception of our abilities. These biases lead to unfair judgments about our capacity to hold positions of responsibility and can reduce our performance and career advancement." The VSLA Coordinator (Community Initiative, Burundi) considered stereotypes/prejudices against women as "a mechanism that creates inequalities despite their competence. Leadership qualities are often seen as masculine, while women are perceived as altruistic. This leads to prejudice and biased evaluations, even if women are qualified. Traditional

roles reinforce these gender expectations.” When the same question was posed to the Coordinator of the PLUS Initiative (Humanitarian, DRC), she replied, and we quote, “Consequences arise from this perception of us as women, creating a cycle where behaviors become perceived as innate traits. Confirming negative stereotypes about women affects our confidence, harming our performance. This leads to discrimination at work, reinforcing our inferior position.” Our successes as women are often attributed to luck, while our failures reveal a lack of competence. Stereotypes limit the roles of women and men, reinforcing prejudice and discrimination in work environments.

In addition to organizational cultures in predominantly male fields, such as engineering, informal networks and unconscious biases are exploited to hinder women’s advancement to leadership positions.

Indeed, for the respondent asked about the question “Factors such as masculine cultures, inequalities and lack of access to networks and training limit women’s access to positions of responsibility in East Africa” in a Tanzanian university education company Vice-Dean, University (Tanzania) Specializing in university teaching, this complexity is explained by the multiplicity of masculine cultures that reinforce the idea that “men should be leaders and women caregivers, making female leadership difficult.” This creates patriarchal systems where men hold power, and women face obstacles in accessing resources. Power inequalities and systemic constraints favor men and exclude women. According to Former Deputy Director General of a Public Enterprise (Kenya): “To combat stereotypes and biases, we must always advocate for inclusive mentoring and networking.” As for the former Board Member of Public Enterprises (Uganda): “Our institutions must succeed in implementing gender policies, promoting flexible workplaces, and valuing diverse leadership styles.” Here in Tanzania, marginalized women face challenges including a lack of access to influential networks and training, leading to inequality. Excluding us from patronage networks, subjecting us to resource scarcity, and burdening us with heavy domestic responsibilities worsens our professional situation (Former Director of Basic Schools, Tanzania). These results show that the quality of institutions influences corporate governance. Indeed, the Former President of the Political Party (Tanzania) The woman we interviewed from our sample stated, with supporting data, that in 2023, women held only 31% of decision-making positions in Tanzania’s public administration, despite promises of gender equality. Forms of abuse, such as defamation, discourage women from engaging politically by perpetuating stereotypes about their behavior. Furthermore, fear of community reactions and family obligations limit our ambitions as women for leadership roles. Since entering politics, we have observed that a woman in politics is often the target of gossip about her morality and leadership abilities, with doubts cast on her capacity to manage her family and criticism of her professional relationships. These social attacks can discourage not only the targeted woman but also other potential candidates, highlighting the high personal cost associated with challenging traditional gender roles in leadership. The

10th respondent A former Minister of Humanitarian Affairs (DRC) responded, and we quote: “Women are severely underrepresented in politics in the DRC, holding only 12.8% of the seats in the National Assembly. Despite representing 48.5% of the working population, we are predominantly employed in precarious jobs, limiting our economic independence. Furthermore, those who engage in politics face various forms of harassment, stereotypes, and psychological violence, often without institutional support, as confirmed by the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs and the United Nations Mission in the DRC.”

## 5.2. Political and Systemic Issues (Positive Action and Policies, Implicit Biases, Work-Life Balance Policies)

Similar to much research conducted in Eastern European countries (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya), our findings show that women are perceived as less competent in leadership because of the roles assigned to them by society, Alice Eagly and Steven Karau (2002). The same question was asked of the interviewee (DRC), and she revealed that Sexist stereotypes hinder women’s leadership identity. Schwanke (2013) and others show how stereotypes and prejudices in male environments. This author’s idea then aligns with that of the interviewee from the DRC, who stated that societal roles have an impact on leadership in her country. For “Former head of a public company (Tanzania)”, stereotypes and prejudices in male-dominated environments hold women back. The frequent use of the word “stereotype” in our interviewees’ discourse, such as “misogyny” (hatred of women), highlights the underrepresentation of women despite policies that fail to shift attitudes toward female leadership. We have run for office several times, but few women are elected due to sexist and discriminatory prejudices.

What interests us in this speech or response from the interviewees is the context and importance of repeated words, and not just the quantity, because, as some authors argue, repetition signals importance, coherence, or persuasive aims, supported by evidence and textual interpretation, and the establishment of a link between frequency and meaning for understanding the phenomenon. In a work entitled “Cohesion in English” published (1976), it is specified that one must not be content with simply analyzing or transcribing/describing the content of not the discourse of the interviewees (what was said) but rather consider how it was said (linguistic/discursive analysis). Besides Ruqaiya Hasan, along with MAK Halliday, defines cohesion as a semantic system of language that creates texture in discourse. These women expressed regret and weariness with the stereotypes they face in their societies; clearly, they are demanding change. The question remains: should eligible women be barred from running for office due to prejudice, sexism, and discrimination? These elections are controlled by a network of men, making them difficult to access. We must train inclusive leaders and develop policies that promote work-life balance.

To help women overcome this ethical rejection of injustice, creating sponsorship and mentorship programs is also essential. Women are underrepresented de-

spite policies, but without a change in attitudes. Our East African institutions require a comprehensive cultural shift to change mindsets. The brain drain affects East African institutions, hindering innovation and diversity. It is crucial for policymakers to understand that ineffective policies exacerbate disparities and jeopardize gender equality, generating conflict.

According to the former Speaker of the National Assembly, the Independent National Commission responsible for overseeing elections is always led by men from the political and administrative spheres; a woman has never held the position of chair. We tried to apply, but we were always declared unsuccessful, regardless of our efforts. When men deem it appropriate to appoint us to a political position during a reshuffle, they accuse us of incompetence and level other accusations to denigrate the image of women. You might even be accused of collaborating with rebels or the opposition to justify your removal from office. The term in political office is very short due to these allegations of ineffectiveness. The men defend their colleagues and political party allies, or perhaps they simply studied together at the University of Kinshasa.

Gender equality policies exist in East Africa to facilitate access to positions of responsibility, but their implementation remains limited, leading to discrimination. How can you explain this phenomenon?

The question having been asked as a former board member of a public institution (Kenya), you notice that there is a serious gap between gender equality policies and their implementation is significant. These policies are limited in Kenya and stem from deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, poor enforcement, and a lack of political will, despite the existence of progressive laws and regional commitments. This can be seen in discrimination rooted in cultural stereotypes that favor male leaders, inequitable structures such as unequal access to education and resources, and structural governance issues.

Why do societal norms in Kenya favour male leadership and why is the commitment of leaders insufficient, thus hindering women's participation in both politics and business?

Former Board Member of Public Establishments (Kenya), she responded, and we quote: "These are all obstacles to women's presence in politics and business. Leaders often tend to limit themselves to policy rhetoric without allocating resources or making real changes. This allows deeply entrenched societal structures to continue favoring male supremacy."

## 6. Results of the Empirical Research

After analysis with the Tropes software, we generated the table below which shows the frequency at which theme A co-occurs with theme B (e.g., "Questioning power structures" (97%) appears with "Power dynamics" (91%) in 85% of relevant texts). Next Percentages (73%, 98%, etc.) represent the frequency of occurrence of a theme in all of our qualitative data, and not its co-occurrence. The meaning given or the best interpretation of this result is to understand that a higher percentage

means that the theme appeared in a larger part of the dataset (e.g., in more interviews or documents), which indicates that it is a major and frequently discussed topic. This suggests that the theme is an important part of the narrative or experience being studied, making it a crucial finding. The data allowed us to prioritize the themes for further analysis, prompting us to explore the most frequent ones first. This explains the strongest links (high presence of these themes), such as female leadership (98%) and challenging power structures (97%). This shows a very strong co-occurrence (for example, more than 90% of the time these themes appear, they do so together), because leadership challenges inherently involve questioning power. As for the Power dynamics (91%) and access control (89%): These elements are deeply linked; networks (control) are power dynamics. Systemic biases (91%) and institutional weaknesses (73%) often lead to institutional failures. For moderate relationships, such as women's economic empowerment with (71%) and political/legal obstacles (81%), we interpret this to mean that the obstacles directly hinder economic empowerment and that the lowest (but still important) is the Resilience-Innovation-Motivation (54%): This theme may appear less frequently overall, but it is crucial to overcoming other problems, appearing in narratives about how women cope. (Table 2)

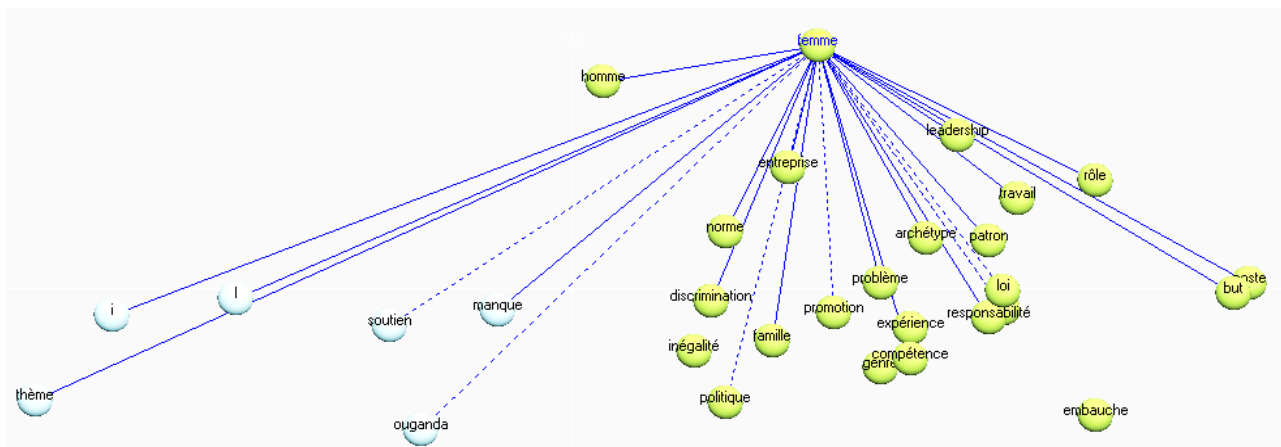
**Table 2.** Factor loadings.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
Weak institutions, lack of infrastructure	0.735			0.459
Economic empowerment as a foundation	0.716			0.482
Resilience_Inovation_motivated_by_necessity.	0.542			0.669
Political and legal obstacles		0.810		0.420
Cultural and patriarchal norms		0.731		0.425
Questioning power structures			0.979	0.002
Women's leadership building				0.981
Power dynamics				0.919
Access control				0.892
Systemic Bias				0.916

Note. The rotation method used is promax.

**Figure 1** represents the concentration of relationships between actors. It allows for a visual comparison of the weight of relationships between the main references. The X-axis (horizontal) indicates the actor/acted ratio (from left to right). The Y-axis (vertical) indicates the concentration of relationships for each displayed reference. The lines indicate the relationships between the selected variable and the other displayed references. A dashed line indicates an infrequent relationship. Only references with a large number of relationships are represented on the

graph. The graphs are hypertext, meaning that each element displays the relevant variable; simply click on it. In practice, qualitative data analysis argues that coding and categorizing data (like our themes) forms the basis for identifying patterns, even if you quantify them, (Flick, 2022) and that for content analysis, the frequency and patterns in the text (which Tropes calculates) reveal underlying meanings, validating theme counts (Krippendorff, 2018). That is why we can afford to refine the statements of (Dalkin et al., 2021) who highlight how the software helps to visualize the complex relationships between codes (themes) in the form of networks, going beyond simple counts to show the structure.



**Figure 1.** Justification through research and graphical presentation of our variables.

### Scenario Presentation (Example)

In our scenario concerning women in the local context of our studied countries (DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya), qualitative data revealed a widespread questioning of power structures (97%), strongly linked to [unclear]. Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), in their work, support the integration of qualitative and quantitative data for a more complete understanding, proposing concepts such as convergent or explanatory sequential models, where the qualitative data clarifies the quantitative data and vice versa, Julie Sandelowski emphasizes the importance of “mixing” methods for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This method involves several steps, for which we used, for example, coding and categorization, which allowed us to transcribe interviews. Open-ended survey responses were systematically examined and coded into themes or variables corresponding to the provided list (e.g., “Institutional Weaknesses,” “Women’s Economic Empowerment”), despite being qualitative. Next, software analysis (Tropes), a text analysis program, allowed us to analyze the frequency and co-occurrence of these codes, keywords, or semantic relationships within the text. This software enabled us to convert the data between the two. The software also allowed us to count the frequency of occurrence of a specific theme or code, thus converting the qualitative observation into a frequency count. To present the scenario, the counts and frequencies were presented as quantitative results, such as the percentages provided

in the statement, which represent the prevalence or importance of each theme within the dataset. In Africa, women face numerous obstacles that limit their access to positions of responsibility in companies. These obstacles are structural, cultural, and individual, which raises the question: what mechanisms can be implemented in African public enterprises to address this problem?

## 7. Conclusion

Deep and interlocking structural barriers Rooted in patriarchy, systemic biases, and deeply entrenched power dynamics (highlighted by 73% to 98% of the findings), these factors massively impede women's leadership and economic empowerment, despite individual resilience (54%) and some progress in challenging norms. Efforts must shift from individual-level support to policy-driven systemic transformation, as male-controlled institutions and networks actively block women's advancement. The data reveal a systemic and widespread crisis where women face overwhelming structural, cultural, and political resistance that prevents them from achieving equality—resistance that far outweighs their individual strength and requires a radical overhaul of power structures, not just incremental changes. Our results show that public enterprises in the five countries studied must implement mandatory training sessions on unconscious bias and leadership seminars that challenge traditional gender roles while promoting positive representation of women in leadership positions, with the active involvement of male leaders as supporters (male allies). They should encourage and recognize women leaders who excel within the company and the sector to normalize female presence in leadership positions and inspire others. Initiatives should be developed that encourage men to position themselves as champions of gender equality by actively supporting, guiding, and mentoring their female colleagues. As part of inclusive talent management, public enterprises in the five countries studied are encouraged to implement a recruitment process based on anonymous CV review and the use of diverse interview panels to minimize bias in the recruitment process. We are implementing a promotion system based on transparent and meritocratic criteria, with specific targets for female representation at all management levels. By adopting family-oriented policies and establishing formal, gender-fair measures such as paid parental leave, childcare assistance, and flexible work arrangements, we can rebalance the burden of unpaid work. Effective mentoring and tutoring programs, along with specific training, coaching, and career transition opportunities for women, strengthen leadership.

## 8. Specific and Concrete Managerial Recommendations for Boards

State-owned enterprises in East Africa in the countries under study must collect gender-disaggregated information, set quantifiable diversity goals (such as achieving 30% female representation in leadership positions by setting timeframes and holding senior managers accountable for achieving these goals).

## 9. Strategic Advice Recommended to Boards

Incorporate a gender perspective on gender equality into all aspects of strategic planning, including climate governance and investment choices, to ensure women's voices are paramount. Enhance governance by establishing independent diversity and inclusion committees, setting term limits for directors, and ensuring periodic evaluations of gender equality actions. Collaboration is fostered through partnerships with universities, government entities (such as the EAC), and women's groups to broaden support and disseminate best practices.

Through a combination of political reform, cultural change, and strong leadership involvement, state-owned enterprises in the East African countries studied are able to systematically eliminate barriers and integrate women into leadership positions. In doing so, they would unleash talent and foster broader economic growth, in line with national and international development goals.

## 10. Limits and Perspectives of the Research

This comparative study, while rich in insights, has limitations, notably the comparability of data between countries (we encountered a potential bias) and access to sensitive data from public enterprises. Nevertheless, this study suggests exploring intersectionality, policy effectiveness, youth perspectives, and digital solutions, while highlighting sociocultural norms and structural barriers influencing leadership development in East Africa. For example, regarding intersectionality, (Masai women in Kenya compared to Luba women in the DRC). For Policy Effectiveness: Comparison of the influence of quotas (such as the success of Rwanda), proactive measures and mentoring programs in various contexts.

Availability of information: Problems in obtaining comparative and accurate data on the DRC (conflict zones) or public enterprises linked to the private sector.

Variety of methods: Standardization of qualitative (interviews in Swahili/Lingala) and quantitative (surveys) data across various legal/political frameworks.

Definition of the term "responsibility": Definitions vary from country to country (for example, between ministerial and senior management levels).

Danger of overgeneralization: it was important or crucial for us to avoid a uniform approach to "East African culture" and to take into account national particularities (such as the history of Burundi compared to the effervescence of Kenya).

Funding and security: The logistical and security challenges, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi where we had difficulty accessing occupied areas, meant that a risk was inevitable.

Why this study is important? This study addresses essential needs by examining different contexts (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya) and focusing on both political and economic roles. It proposes more nuanced solutions than simple "empowerment" strategies for East Africa.

## Data Availability Statement

The study data is not available due to restrictions imposed by representatives of

organizations.

## Conflicts of Interest

We declare that we have no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, writing and/or publication.

## References

- Adnane, S. (2021). *Women's Economic Participation and the Impact of Regulatory Barriers*. World Bank.  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/57e815c5-e875-5778-9b32-3a64917b37e5/download>
- Basu, A. (2018). *Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms* (2nd ed). Routledge.
- Bawa, S., & Sanyare, F. (2013). Women's Participation and Representation in Politics: Perspectives from Ghana. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 36, 282-291.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2012.757620>
- Belasen, A. T. (2017). *Women in Management: A Framework for Sustainable Work-Life Integration*. Routledge.  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315474571/women-management-alan-belasen>
- Berg, R. C., & Denison, E. (2012). Does Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Affect Women's Sexual Functioning? A Systematic Review of the Sexual Consequences of FGM/C. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 9, 41-56.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-011-0048-z>
- Bodalina, K. N., & Mestry, R. (2022). A Case Study of the Experiences of Women Leaders in Senior Leadership Positions in the Education District Offices. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50, 452-468.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220940320>
- Bouchmel, I., El Ouakdi, J., Ftiti, Z., Louhichi, W., & Omri, A. (2022). The Mediating Effect of Corporate Innovation on the Relationship between Gender Diversity and Firm Performance. *Management International*, 26, Article 102.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1088439ar>
- Brescoll, V. L. (2016). Leading with Their Hearts? How Gender Stereotypes of Emotion Lead to Biased Evaluations of Female Leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27, 415-428.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.02.005>
- Campbell, D. E., & Wolbrecht, C. (2006). See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents. *The Journal of Politics*, 68, 233-247.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00402.x>
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Wise Publications.
- Cross, M., Lee, S., Bridgman, H., Thapa, D. K., Cleary, M., & Kornhaber, R. (2019). Benefits, Barriers and Enablers of Mentoring Female Health Academics: An Integrative Review. *PLOS ONE*, 14, e0215319. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215319>
- Dalkin, S., Forster, N., Hodgson, P., Lhussier, M., & Carr, S. M. (2021). Using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS; NVivo) to Assist in the Complex Process of Realist Theory Generation, Refinement and Testing. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 24, 123-134.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1803528>
- Devlin, C., & Elgie, R. (2008). The Effect of Increased Women's Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *61*, 237-254.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsn007>
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice toward Female Leaders. *Psychological Review*, *109*, 573-598.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.109.3.573>
- Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the Effectiveness of Leaders: A Meta-Analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 125-145.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.1.125>
- Ebert, I. D., Steffens, M. C., & Kroth, A. (2014). Warm, but Maybe Not So Competent?—Contemporary Implicit Stereotypes of Women and Men in Germany. *Sex Roles*, *70*, 359-375. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0369-5>
- Evans, A. B., & Pfister, G. U. (2021). Women in Sports Leadership: A Systematic Narrative Review. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *56*, 317-342.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690220911842>
- Fedorenko, Z. P., Mikhailovich, Y. I., Goulak, L. O., Ryzhov, A. Y., Gorokh, Y. L., & Soumkina, O. V. (2023). Incidence and Long-Term Effects of Treatment of Malignant Germ Cell Neoplasms in Ukraine. *Experimental Oncology*, *42*, 66-74.  
<https://doi.org/10.32471/exp-oncology.2312-8852.vol-42-no-1.14235>
- Flick, U. (2022). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*.  
<https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5409482&publisher=FZ7200>
- Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*, 56-80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>
- George, G., Corbishley, C., Khayesi, J. N. O., Haas, M. R., & Tihanyi, L. (2016). Bringing Africa in: Promising Directions for Management Research. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*, 377-393. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.4002>
- Gingrich, J., & Ansell, B. (2012). Preferences in Context: Micro Preferences, Macro Contexts, and the Demand for Social Policy. *Comparative Political Studies*, *45*, 1624-1654.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012463904>
- Goetz, A.M., & Hassim, S. (2003). *No Shortcuts to Power: African Women in Politics and Policy Making* (Vol. 3). Zed Books.  
[https://books.google.com/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=y1OaR-Yxe7vgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=Goetz,+A.+M.,+%26+Hassim,+S.+\(2003\).+No+shortcuts+to+power:+African+women+in+politics+and+policy+making.+London:+Zed+Books.&ots=8Y6C6XrSXy&sig=Ji6wth--M\\_4Uz9EAfy4vkqbW3l4](https://books.google.com/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=y1OaR-Yxe7vgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=Goetz,+A.+M.,+%26+Hassim,+S.+(2003).+No+shortcuts+to+power:+African+women+in+politics+and+policy+making.+London:+Zed+Books.&ots=8Y6C6XrSXy&sig=Ji6wth--M_4Uz9EAfy4vkqbW3l4)
- Guenaga, M., Eguíluz, A., Garaizar, P., & Mimenza, A. (2022). The Impact of Female Role Models Leading a Group Mentoring Program to Promote STEM Vocations among Young Girls. *Sustainability*, *14*, Article 1420. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031420>
- Heilman, M. E., & Parks-Stamm, E. J. (2007). Gender Stereotypes in the Workplace: Obstacles to Women's Career Progress. *Advances in Group Processes*, *24*, 47-77.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0882-6145\(07\)24003-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0882-6145(07)24003-2)
- Ilesanmi, O. O. (2018). Women's Visibility in Decision Making Processes in Africa—Progress, Challenges, and Way Forward. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *3*, Article 38.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00038>
- Jose, I., & Sivaraman, S. (2023). Gender Inequality and Gender Gap: An Overview of the Indian Scenario. *Gender Issues*, *40*, 232-254.

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-023-09313-5>
- Kabeer, N. (2012). *Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusive Growth*. Labor Markets.
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. Basic Books.  
[https://books.google.com/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=zuZ3HEi4dXIC&oi=fnd&pg=PA381&dq=Kanter,+R.+M.+\(1977\).+Men+and+women+of+the+corporation.+New+York:+Basic+Books.&ots=vGwlIhXzIS&sig=2h5w8Pyd-QqRvfcCXuhM3VPTVPpA](https://books.google.com/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=zuZ3HEi4dXIC&oi=fnd&pg=PA381&dq=Kanter,+R.+M.+(1977).+Men+and+women+of+the+corporation.+New+York:+Basic+Books.&ots=vGwlIhXzIS&sig=2h5w8Pyd-QqRvfcCXuhM3VPTVPpA)
- Klasen, S., & Lamanna, F. (2009). The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education and Employment on Economic Growth: New Evidence for a Panel of Countries. *Feminist Economics*, 15, 91-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700902893106>
- Koo, E. (2021). A Pluralistic Insight on Care Value: Exuding from Sharing Gift of Unpaid Work at Home. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28, 1413-1425.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12652>
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781>
- Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2010). The Politics of Group Representation: Quotas for Women and Minorities Worldwide. *Comparative Politics*, 42, 253-272.  
<https://doi.org/10.5129/001041510x12911363509639>
- Kunovich, S., & Paxton, P. (2005). Pathways to Power: The Role of Political Parties in Women's National Political Representation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111, 505-552. <https://doi.org/10.1086/444445>
- Kyambade, M., Mugambwa, J., Namuddu, R., & Namatovu, A. (2024). Socially Responsible Leadership and Employee's Work Passion in Public Universities in Uganda: The Mediating Effect of Psychological Safety. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2024.2312976>
- Lakhal, F., Hamrouni, A., Jilani, I., Mahjoub, I., & Benkraiem, R. (2024). The Power of Inclusion: Does Leadership Gender Diversity Promote Corporate and Green Innovation? *Research in International Business and Finance*, 67, Article ID: 102128.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ribaf.2023.102128>
- Latchanah, C., & Singh, S. (2016). An Investigation of the Challenges Faced by Women When Progressing into Leadership Positions: A Case of the IT Division at Barclays Africa Technology (Trading as ABSA). *Journal of Management & Administration*, No. 1, 36-71.
- Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope Careers: An Alternate Explanation for the "Opt-Out" Revolution. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 19, 106-123.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2005.15841962>
- McClellan, E. J., Martin, S. R., Emich, K. J., & Woodruff, C. T. (2018). The Social Consequences of Voice: An Examination of Voice Type and Gender on Status and Subsequent Leader Emergence. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61, 1869-1891.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.0148>
- McEwan, C. (2003). 'Bringing Government to the People': Women, Local Governance and Community Participation in South Africa. *Geoforum*, 34, 469-481.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0016-7185\(03\)00050-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0016-7185(03)00050-2)
- McKinsey & Company (2020). *Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters*. McKinsey and Company, US Design Center.
- Norberg, C., & Johansson, M. (2021). "Women and "Ideal" Women": The Representation of Women in the Construction Industry. *Gender Issues*, 38, 1-24.

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-020-09257-0>
- Oliver, P. E., & Marwell, G. (1988). The Paradox of Group Size in Collective Action: A Theory of the Critical Mass. II. *American Sociological Review*, *53*, 1-8.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2095728>
- Pateman, C. (2005). Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship. In G. Bock, & S. James (Eds.), *Beyond Equality and Difference* (pp. 22-35). Routledge.  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203982266-9/equality-difference-subordination-politics-motherhood-women-citizenship-carole-pateman>
- Petrongolo, B., & Ronchi, M. (2020). Gender Gaps and the Structure of Local Labor Markets. *Labour Economics*, *64*, Article ID: 101819.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101819>
- Player, A., Randsley de Moura, G., Leite, A. C., Abrams, D., & Tresh, F. (2019). Overlooked Leadership Potential: The Preference for Leadership Potential in Job Candidates Who Are Men vs. Women. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, Article 755.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00755>
- Ryzhov, A., Bray, F., Ferlay, J., Fedorenko, Z., Goulak, L., Gorokh, Y. et al. (2020). Recent Cancer Incidence Trends in Ukraine and Short-Term Predictions to 2022. *Cancer Epidemiology*, *65*, Article ID: 101663. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.canep.2019.101663>
- Schwanke, D. (2013). Barriers for Women to Positions of Power: How Societal and Corporate Structures, Perceptions of Leadership and Discrimination Restrict Women's Advancement to Authority. *Earth Common Journal*, *3*, 15-28.  
<https://doi.org/10.31542/j.ecj.125>
- Sims, R. L., & Chinta, R. (2019). The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Ambition in the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Drive for Female Nascent Entrepreneurs. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *35*, 76-91.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/gm-09-2019-0158>
- Singh, V., Terjesen, S., & Vinnicombe, S. (2008). Newly Appointed Directors in the Boardroom. *European Management Journal*, *26*, 48-58.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2007.10.002>
- Sowjanya, K., Krishna, S., & Rao, IN (2017). Impact of Gender Discrimination on Talent Management. *International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research*, *4*, 1172-1178.
- Storberg-Walker, J., & Natt Och Dag, K. (2017). Creativity in Theorizing for Women and Leadership: A Multi-Paradigm Perspective. In S. R. Madsen (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership* (pp. 65-84). Edward Elgar Publishing.  
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785363863.00012>
- Streitfeld, D. (2015). Ellen Pao loses Silicon Valley bias case against Kleiner Perkins (p. 27). *New York Times*.
- Swers, M. L. (2020). *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress*. University of Chicago Press.
- Tushabe, M., Kyambade, M., Namatovu, A., & Oyella, S. (2025). Advancing Gender Diversity in Leadership: The Role of Work-Life Balance and Gender Participation in Ugandan Public Universities. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *11*, Article ID: 2486553.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2486553>
- Wacheux, F. (1996). *Qualitative Research Methods in Management*.  
<https://ideas.repec.org/p/hal/journal/hal-00157140.html>
- Walby, S. (1998). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Wiley-Blackwell.

- Wanyeki, L. M. (2005). *The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET): Experiences of Feminist Continental Organising*.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48726046>
- Wollstonecraft, M. (2024). A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. In T. Ball, R. Dagger, D. I. O'Neill, & J. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *Ideals and Ideologies* (pp. 411-416). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003263562-64>
- Yoon, M. Y. (2001). Democratization and Women's Legislative Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Democratization*, 8, 169-190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714000199>
- Young, I. M. (1989). Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship. *Ethics*, 99, 250-274. <https://doi.org/10.1086/293065>