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**WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN AFRICA:
WHY PROGRESS IN RWANDA AND UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN THE GAMBIA?**

非洲婦女政治參與及政治代表：盧安達與甘比亞的案例比較

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ABSTRACT

Women's political participation and representation is crucial for gender equality to be attained. Politics in the world has always been male dominated for centuries. However, recent decades have seen improvements not only in the Western world but Africa as well, a continent that had occupied the bottom rankings of women's political representation for long. Currently, the leading country in female-dominated parliaments is Rwanda with 63.8% women in its Chamber of Deputies and 38% in the Senate. On the other hand, countries like The Gambia have been lagging behind in women's political participation and representation for decades, and only 9.4% women are presently represented in the country's parliament. This thesis argued that the different levels of national leadership's political will to gender equality in each country is the key determinant of progress in women's political participation and representation in decision-making bodies in both respective countries.

Key Words: Women, Political Participation, Political Representation, Rwanda, The Gambia

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List of Abbreviations

ACDHRS	African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
AFPRC	Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council
AI	Amnesty International
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
AU	African Union
AU SD	African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
BBC	Banjul City Council
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRI	Common Human Rights Institute
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPRW	Convention on the Political Rights of Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations

DPI	Islamic Democratic Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African State
FFRP	Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires, or Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians
FH	Freedom House
FLAG	Female Lawyers Association of The Gambia
GA	General Assembly
GAMCOTRAP	Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children
GGP	Global Gender Gap
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GMC	Gambia Moral Congress
GoG	Government of The Gambia
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPDP	Gambia People's Democratic Party
GR	General Recommendation
GSB	Gambia Bureau of Statistics

HDR	Human Development Report
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KMC	Kanifing Municipal Council
LGA	Local Government Authorities
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDR	Democratic Republican Movement
NA	National Assembly
NADD	National Alliance for Democracy and Development
NCP	National Convention Party
NDAM	National Democratic Action Movement
NDI	National Democratic Institute

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGP	National Gender Policy
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NRP	National Reconciliation Party
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PDC	Centralist Democratic Party
PDOIS	People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism
PDR	Party for Democratic Renewal
PGGD	Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy
PL	Liberal Party
PPC	Party for Progress and Concord
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PR	Proportional Representation
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
PS	Socialist Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party

PSP	Solidarity and Prosperity Party
PSR	Rwandan Socialist Party
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
TANGO	The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia
TSMs	Temporary Special Measures
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UDPR	Democratic Popular Union of Rwanda
UN	United Nations
UNC	United Nations Charter
UNDAW	United Nations Division for the advancement of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWCW	United Nations World Conference on Women
US DS	United State Department of State
WANEP	West African Network of Peacebuilding
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Gender equality and women's empowerment is no longer seen as a radical initiative by gender activists and feminists in the twenty - first century. As a human rights and development issue, it has been studied in theoretical and empirical basis. For decades many scholars have explored gender - related themes and studies, including women's political representation and leadership in public spheres. Works by Tremblay (2008), Markham (2012), Steady (2011), Delvin and Elgie (2008) and Markham (2013) have focused on women representation in decision making in public spheres; impact of women's political representation; obstacles to equal gendered political participation and male domination of parliaments in almost three quarters of the world's parliaments. Other scholars like Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2006) focus on measures to ensure equal political representation of women such as gender quotas. The inequality between men and women have existed for centuries in almost all domains, however, the unequal representation in public decision making remains to be one of the greatest disparity. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008), women have been sidelined over the years in governance structures where decisions of political and legislative priorities are made.

Equal and effective political participation and representation by all is not only a human rights issue but a yardstick for democracy. Even though research has shown that the full enjoyment of women's rights to political participation and representation has a greater link with a nation's economic advancement and democracy, women's full and effective engagement in politics continues to be minimal compared to their male counterparts. Scholars such as Makham (2013)

and Osborn (2012) argued that women's effective political participation and representation could lead to policy changes in critical issues of concern for women and improved living standard. Makham observes that countries with women political leaders often experience higher standards of living with positive developments in education, infrastructure and health, and increased democracy (Makham, 2013).

Women's political representation has significant impact on a country's development, and substantial studies have generally agreed that states with more female parliamentarians have influenced their development endeavors. As Osborn (2012) argue, countries with high women political representation have more policies that addressed women's issues and at the same time gave women more opportunities to control and influence other policy issues. Arguably, women's effective political participation and adequate representation in political institutions could lead to policy changes in critical issues of concern for women. As outlined in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008) survey, women representatives tend to prioritize issues of social and development matters in areas of gender equality, family-related concerns, health and education. This view is further consolidated by the arguments of Bauer and Britton (2006) that women's political participation will lead to their influence over decision making regarding national budgets, policy priorities and ideological direction of government policies.

The full enjoyment of women's right to political participation and representation also contributes to consolidating democracy as popular citizen participation is a basic characteristic of genuine democracy. As argued by Tocqueville, the political essence of citizenship is citizens partaking in the governing process (Tocqueville, 2000 as cited in Nabaneh, 2014). Therefore, a country cannot be considered fully democratic if half of its population is not represented in key decision making bodies. This view is substantiated by Kasse (2004) as she expounded that a country with

half of its population left behind in the formulation and implementation of decisions in public spheres cannot be considered democratic.

Furthermore, Cammisa and Reingold (2004) have shown that women's political participation results in tangible gains for democratic governance such as greater responsiveness to citizens' needs. As reiterated by representatives of world governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, "women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved," (UNDAW, 2007, p.7). The significance of women's political participation and representation was further indicated in the agreed conclusions of the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women; "without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspectives at levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved, and that women's equal participation is a necessary condition for women's and girls' interests to be accounted and is needed to strengthen democracy and promotes its functioning" (UN Women, 2006, paragraph 1).

Nonetheless, women continue to be under-represented in key decision making bodies in most countries in Africa. This is evident in countries like The Gambia where women have traditionally been under-represented in the country's political discourse at decision making level. Therefore, as argued by Nabaneh (2014), revamping the governance framework to include women in the decision making process, especially in matters of local development, is essential.

Although the African continent has fared marginally on women's political participation as fourteen countries have met or exceeded the 30% benchmark for women representation in decision making¹ and the regional average of women's parliamentary representation has doubled within a decade, political participation continues to be a 'men's club' in the continent. While countries in the South and East Africa such as Rwanda, Seychelles and South Africa have been progressing on women's parliamentary representation, countries in the West like The Gambia, Benin, Nigeria and Congo have less than 10% women parliamentarians. Currently, there are only three female Presidents in the continent, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Interim President, Catherine Samba-Panda of the conflict ridden Central African Republic² and the recent addition, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius who was appointed to the presidency by the Mauritius parliament upon former president Kailash Purryag's resignation on the 29th May, 2015 (The News, 2015). At ministerial level, Cape Verde, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Madagascar lead the continent as they exceed the 30% benchmark while others continue to perform poorly.

RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION AND CASE SELECTION

Realizing that no country can develop without the inclusion of its women in the decision making and development process, it is motivating to research a topic related to gender equality and

¹ Women in national parliaments, Inter - Parliamentary Union (2015)

² Central African Republic has a history of civil unrest over the last decade. Violence broke out again in 2013 following a coup of former President François Bozizé leading to his fled of the country. Following the end of Bozize's rule, conflict had intensified between Christians and Muslims leaving the office of Presidency in the hands of Interim President Djotodia who resigned and Alexandre - Ferdinand Nguendet took over. However, on 20th January, Interim President Catherine Samba - Panda was elected by the National Transitional Council to take charge of the country which is seemingly becoming another failed state of the continent. *See* the CIA FactBook 2014 for further details. For detailed account of the conflict, *see* (International Crisis Group, 2013)

politics. Since the enjoyment of human rights by all citizens without discrimination is one of the yardsticks in measuring a country's democratic institutions, thus women's full enjoyment of their right to political participation and representation is essential. The justification of this research is conceived as a result of African women's limited enjoyment of their fundamental human rights, particularly the right to political participation and representation.

Although Rwanda's women parliamentary representation reached 63.8% in 2013, The Gambia on the other hand has continued to poorly perform on gender-equality in politics. It is interesting to undertake research in these two countries because of the different phenomenon of women's political participation and representation in respective countries. As a result, this thesis will focus on Rwanda and The Gambia as case studies in order to analyze the progress and challenges of women's political participation and representation in Africa.

Why Rwanda and The Gambia?

Emanating from a destructive genocide in 1994, Rwanda has progressed over the years on women's political participation and representation. Women's political representation currently stands at 63.8% in the Chamber of Deputies and 38.5% in the Senate (IPU, 2015). Evidence has shown that Rwanda's women's political participation and representation began in 1965 when the first female parliamentarians were elected, but female representation in parliament had been less than 20% until the country was plunged into genocide in 1994 (Powley 2005). Rwanda's significant women's representation took off after the genocide when a new constitution came into being that set aside 30% representation for women in all decision making bodies. According to scholars such as Bauer and Britton (2006), women's progressive political empowerment is due to the legal and institutional reforms initiated by the government after the genocide. Since Rwanda is the shining example of women's political participation and representation in Africa, it

would be interesting to examine the interventions and mechanisms that resulted in the country's political gender parity. Moreover, even though both countries are developing African countries with entrenched socio-cultural values, though not unique to them, Rwanda has enjoyed a higher-level economic development than The Gambia as the UNDP Human Development Report 2014 ranks it 151 while The Gambia ranks 172 out of 187 countries (UNDP, 2014). As scholars have hypothesized that a country's economic development impacts on women's political participation and representation, one could argue that Rwanda is expected to show higher women participation in politics than The Gambia. However, I argue that the progress of gender equality in Rwanda's political landscape should be attributed to the Rwandan leadership's political will that ensued in the post-genocide period.

Gambian women have long been active in politics in the country. However, their political engagement has always been at the surface level as they play the role of being cheerleaders, serving as 'Yai-compins' (literally means heads of ad hoc groups created for mobilization of partisan political support) mobilizing at grassroots level to canvass votes for male candidates. In addition, women have been highly voting in the country's elections as reflected in their turnout (Chant and Touray, 2012). In addition, the demographic statistics has shown that 51% of the country's population are women (Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Furthermore, women have also contributed to the economic development of the country, as they have constituted 84% of the female rate of the country's labor force mostly in the informal sector (Chant and Touray, 2012). Astoundingly, women have been traditionally sidelined in the decision making process of The Gambia as they are grossly under-represented in key decision making institutions such as the parliament and local government councils.

Despite gaining the right to equally participate in politics as men in 1961 (IPU, 1995), women's participatory role has traditionally been voting for male candidates and not women representing themselves. The Gambia is the only country in Africa with a female and the longest serving Vice-President who also doubles as Minister for Women's Affairs since 1996 to date, yet women's parliamentary representation is less than 10%. Though rather slow and un-static, but women's representation is greater at cabinet than elective positions as the current cabinet comprised of five female ministers (including the Vice-President) out of nineteen (19) ministers. They occupy ministerial portfolios such as Basic and Secondary Education, Foreign Affairs, Attorney General and Justice, and Petroleum (Government of The Gambia, 2015). Representation at the National Assembly is still at ebb as women parliamentarians constitute only 9.4% (IPU, 2015). In spite of the significant role women play in the economy particularly in agriculture and the contributions of rural women, the under-representation is more extreme at local government level as there are only 18 women councilors out of 137 councilors (Nabaneh, 2014), one female Governor out of the seven administrative areas (happens for the first time in 2014) and only 7 women Alkalolus (Village heads) out of 1, 807 (Chant and Touray, 2012).

Paradoxically, the under-representation of women in The Gambia's political landscape occurs amid the existence of several international instruments that the country is a party to; legislations and policies that guarantee equality, non-discrimination and promote women's effective political participation and representation. The Gambia committed herself to the International Convention on Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the African Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, AU Solemn Declaration and ECOWAS Protocol on Good

Governance and Democracy and signed and ratified all these legal instruments. In addition, the constitution of The Gambia guarantees equal participation of both men and women in the political affairs of the country without any discrimination.³

According to the Women's Act 2010 of The Gambia, temporary special measures aimed at ensuring *de facto* equality between men and women should be adopted.⁴ Yet, women's political representation in the country's legislature has never reached 15% since they gained the right to political participation. This is because of the limited political will to gender equality to fully implement the laws and policies promoting women's rights including political participation and representation. In spite of the different phenomenon of women's political representation, Rwanda and the Gambia share the following similarities that one would have expected a similar outcome of women's political engagement.

Historical Experience

Rwanda and The Gambia are both former colonies of Western powers. Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1960 while The Gambia was granted independence by Britain in 1965. In both countries, women were granted the right to political participation to vote and contest for elective office almost at the same period, 1960 and 1961 in The Gambia and Rwanda respectively (IPU, 1995). Scholars such as Inglehart and Norris (2003) and Henderson and Jeydel (2003) argued that a country's length of democracy influence women's political participation as countries with long standing democracies tend to have higher women's political participation. Both Rwanda and The Gambia have a recent history of self-rule and limited strong political institutions for the promotion of democracy. In addition, demographic statistics showed

³ See section 26, Constitution of The Gambia (1997)

⁴ See section 15 of the Women's Act of The Gambia (2010)

that both countries have high women population; 51% in The Gambia and 51.8% in Rwanda (Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Institute of Statistic of Rwanda, 2012). With high women population in both countries, the possibility of the similar situation of women's political representation could have been predicted if women were to elect themselves.

Moreover, both Rwanda and The Gambia are developing African countries with low levels of economic development and high women poverty. As scholars have argued that a country's economic development that may impact on women's political participation and representation. Therefore one would have pictured a similar phenomenon of women's political participation in the two countries. However, major attributions to the progressive women's political participation and representation in Rwanda lies on the legal guarantee of quota for women. However, I argue that the leadership's political will resulted to the progress of women's participation and representation in politics.

Regime Type

Rwanda has a history of political violence even before it gained self-determination. The first political violence began in 1959 through the 'Hutu Revolution' challenging Tutsi domination in the Belgian administration and the tensions continued till 1961 (Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). The violence left about 100,000 Tutsis exiled to neighboring countries as the Hutu majority dominated the country's leadership when Rwanda gained independence in 1962 (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). President Gregoire Kayibanda led government established a one party state in Rwanda until it was overthrown in 1973 in a military coup d'état by Major General Juvenal Habyarimana (Government of Rwanda, 2008). However, Habyarimana also ruled Rwanda with an iron fist, suppressing rights and preventing the exiled Tutsi population from entering Rwanda (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). This led to majority of the

exiled Tutsis in Uganda to form a guerrilla movement dubbed Rwandan Patriotic Front and attacked the country in 1990, leading to a civil war that continued for three years (Mamdani, 2003; Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). The violence climaxed into genocide that claimed about 800,000 lives in 1994.

Following the end of genocide, a transition government by the Rwandan Patriotic Front came into being until 2003, when a new constitution established multi-party democracy in Rwanda and elections held. Since 2003, the RPF has been in power under President Paul Kagame whose government has been considered authoritarian and intolerant to dissent (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2009; Reyntjens, 2010). Opposition parties exist but have limited control in the government as RPF dominate both Senate and Chamber of Deputies and local councils. According to Bertelsmann Stiftung (2012) the long standing opposition party, Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) was dissolved in 2003 and new parties such as Democratic Green Party of Rwanda and the Social Party Imberakuri (PSI) were banned from participating in elections.

Furthermore, aspiring candidate Victoire Ingabire was arrested in 2010 in the bid up to the elections upon her return from the Netherlands, owing to allegations of her having links with the rebel groups in Democratic Republic of Congo (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). Rwanda has been ranked 'not free' according to the 2014 Freedom House global rankings of freedom in the world (Freedom House, 2014).

The Gambia on the other hand, immediately established a multi-party democracy following independence and participation of political parties in the country's political landscape existed. The country was a shining example as longest multiparty democracy in a continent where authoritarian regimes were pervasive (Edie, 2000). Although, The Gambia has multi-party

democracy, the ruling party (People's Progressive Party) has been the dominant party throughout the 29 years of existence of the first republic as the opposition parties were weak (Edie, 2000). According to Edie (2000), there was no change in the electoral system as the opposition has little say in the PPP-controlled government and civil society was weak with no strong independent media, thus making criticisms of government difficult. Nonetheless, the country was considered as one of the most stable in the region with no history of political violence except the aborted coup d'état in 1981.

However, the political history of The Gambia changed with the July 1994 bloodless coup led by the Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh that toppled the government of President Jawara, and placed the country in military rule for two years from 1994 to 1996 (Edie, 2000). Following the end of transition in 1996, The Gambia held elections where the coup military leader turned-civilian, Yahya Jammeh, contested under the ticket of Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) and won. However, scholars such as Edie (2000) regarded the elections as neither free nor fair as the transition government led by Yahya Jammeh organized the process of elections, appointed members of the Provisional Independent Electoral Council who had no autonomy.

A new constitution was adopted in 1997 which restored multi-party democracy in The Gambia and elections held every five years. The Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) was immediately changed and given a new name Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) and registered as a political party after President Jammeh was elected President in 1996 and became Chairman of the party. Since then he has been winning the presidential elections in the country and his party dominates both the parliament and local government councils. However, observers like ECOWAS regarded the recent election of 2011 not democratic as the conditions preceding elections are intimidating and not conducive for the

conduct of free, fair and transparent elections (BBC, 2011). The Commonwealth sent in an observer mission, who stated in its Observer Team report that the election was marred by “abuse of incumbency,” and observers criticized the shortened campaign period of eleven days (US Department of State, 2012). According to the report of the U.S State Department on Human Rights in The Gambia, government’s intimidation of voters and ruling party’s control of the media made Gambian citizens unable to exercise their constitutional rights of peaceful change of their government in the 2011 election (US Department of State, 2012).

The APRC regime has often been criticize by rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as authoritarian and The Gambia has always been rated by Freedom House as ‘not free’ since 2007. Human rights violations are pervasive and the government is intolerant to dissent and opposition is weakened with limited access to the public media.⁵ Over the years, there has been crack down on the opposition members. A prominent Opposition leader of the People’s Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), Mr Halifa Sallah was arrested and imprisoned in Mile 2 prison for treason charges in the beginning of 2009 because of a “witch craft hunt” campaign perpetuated by the government he investigated and exposed in the Gambian independent media (Amnesty International, 2010). He was subsequently released in March after spending weeks in prison and his charges were later dropped by the government (Amnesty International, 2010).

Currently, three members of the opposition United Democratic Party, including its National Treasurer, Mr Amadou Sanneh are serving five years jail term of sedition which they were convicted of in December 2013 (The Point Newspaper, 2013). For scholars like Edie (2000)

⁵ See annual Human Rights country reports on The Gambia by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and U.S Department of States

throughout the history of The Gambia, since independence there has been one - party domination which sustained the incumbent through the use of state resources, suppression of opposition, rigging elections and changing of constitution (Edie, 2000 p.192). Thus, one can conclude that both Rwanda and The Gambia have similar history of authoritarian regime which scholars argued is unfavorable to women's political participation. However, authoritarian Rwanda has demonstrated political will to women's political equality as reflected in the adoption of a gender-sensitive constitution and high female political representation.

Traditional Values on Women's Political Rights

Rwanda and The Gambia like most African countries have entrenched socio-cultural values such as patriarchy that consider women as subordinates to men. In patriarchal societies, women's role is limited to the private sphere and they are ascribed traditional gender roles of home maintainers and caregivers whose 'proper' place is not in the public space. Africa has long had a male-dominant political culture, from its norms, parliamentary settings to societal perception of women's capability to lead in political life. As argued by Bauer and Britton (2006), political participation in Africa is constrained by socio-cultural barriers. The gender-role ideology ascribing women's 'proper' place to be in the homes rather than public sphere limits their political participation. Both Rwanda and The Gambia are not immune to this political culture and as reflected in the limited role women had in governance in both countries in the post-independence period. Thus, one would have expected the similar outcome of women's political representation in both countries to continue.

However, women's role in the Rwandan society changed after the genocide as they constituted 70% of the population in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. Consequently, women

assumed the traditional 'male' role of household heads, financial providers and played a vital role in the economy and rebuilding of Rwanda. Contrary to the traditional pattern of post-conflict situation, women continued with such roles and became incorporated in the transitional government leading to the current high political representation in Rwanda. How Rwanda was able to break the cycle of male-dominated political terrain and emerged as a global leader in women's parliamentary representation in post-genocide period would be interesting to investigate. The Gambia, on the other hand, continues to poorly perform on women's political engagement as the male-dominated political culture still persists.

Legal Framework promoting Women's Political Representation

Rwanda has constitutional quotas for women guaranteeing them 30% representation in all decision-making bodies. Both The Gambia and Rwanda have committed themselves to the International Convention on Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the African Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and AU Solemn Declaration. In addition, the constitution of The Gambia guarantees equal participation of both men and women in the political affairs of the country without any discrimination⁶ and Gambia also signed the ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy. The Women's Act 2010 of The Gambia called for temporary special measures aimed at ensuring *de facto* equality between men and women to be adopted.⁷ There also exists a national gender policy for the advancement of women in The Gambia which recognizes the significance of women's political participation and representation, thereby calling for mechanisms to be in place to address women's poor

⁶ See section 26, Constitution of The Gambia (1997)

⁷ See section 15 of the Women's Act (2010)

representation in politics.

Despite the *de jure* guarantee for political equality in The Gambia, *de facto* equality still remains elusive as women's full enjoyment of their political rights continues to be hindered. Accordingly, it is important to investigate why women are under-represented in The Gambia's political landscape, yet there are legal mechanisms aimed at ensuring their representation as the case in Rwanda. Hence, it seems appropriate to examine whether The Gambia should learn the lessons of Rwanda and demonstrate strong political will to increase women's political representation as the already existing gender-friendly laws are not fully enforced.

Therefore, considering the above similarities and gender parity in the Rwandan parliament as the most progressive in women's political representation in Africa and The Gambia's women under-representation, both countries are important cases to study. This research will help in understanding the major factors that make different progress of gender equality in Rwanda and The Gambia. Additionally, this thesis could serve as an interesting contribution to the existing literature on Rwanda and The Gambia's women's political status in particular, and Africa in general considering the methodological approach and analysis to be employed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Question

In regard to the elaboration mentioned above, this thesis aimed to answer the question: **What are the key factors that make different progress of political gender equality in Rwanda and The Gambia?**

Research Statements

In order to answer the above question, this thesis strives to prove the following research statements:

(1) Different levels of political will of national leadership in Rwanda and The Gambia is the key determining factor that has led to differentiated progress of gender equality in politics in the respective countries;

(2) Women's participation in, and contribution to, the actions of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) during the genocide; the RPF's exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda and the strategy of RPF using gender equality to repress political opposition and thwart criticisms of ethnic discrimination jointly accounted for Rwandan political leadership's high political will for realizing gender equality in post-genocide Rwandan politics;

(3) It is the international instruments promoting women's participation and representation that affect the level of women's political participation and level of women's representation in public decision-making processes.

Research Methodology

a.) Literature Review

This thesis intends to analyze the successes and challenges of women's political participation and representation in Africa with a special focus on Rwanda and The Gambia. In order to critically analyze and explain the major factors for the different outcome of women's political participation and representation in Rwanda and The Gambia, this thesis will apply a literature

review through a qualitative approach. In this method, secondary sources through the existing scholarly literature and studies on women's participation and representation in national politics in both countries will be reviewed. However, certain quantitative data - such as women's parliamentary and cabinet representation, number of women in local governance, female literacy rate, poverty rate and women empowerment indicators relating to Rwanda and The Gambia - will be used. These data will assist in aligning qualitative findings with some quantitative realities. These data will be retrieved from the Inter - Parliamentary Union, United Nations Development Program, World Bank, UN Women, World Economic Forum and other data sources.

b.) Case Studies

The research will also apply case studies approach and Rwanda and The Gambia will be used as cases. Case studies approach as explained by George and Bennett, is "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events," (George and Bennett, 2004 p.5). Since Rwanda is the leading country on women's participation and representation in decision making and The Gambia still lagged behind as women have been traditionally under-represented over several decades, it is imperative to examine the factors that influence the varied phenomenon in both countries.

c.) Document Review

In addition, document review, using national constitutions, policies and international legal instruments relating to women's political rights will be studied. Document analysis method is meant to provide comprehensive understanding of legal and policy frameworks that guarantee and promote women's participation and representation in decision making. Furthermore, it will assist in identifying the inadequacies in the laws and policies in The Gambia. Also, through

document review, the country's full and effective enforcement of the instruments and laws it signed and ratified and how it ensured, or otherwise, women's political participation and representation will be done.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Political Participation

Political participation as defined Conway (2001) refers to citizens' activities aim at influencing government structures and policies, and selection of decision makers. According to Teorell (2006 as cited in Verba and Nie, 1972:2) it is the activities by private citizens mainly to influence government either through selection of personnel or choices made by such personnel. However, a broader definition of the term has been given by Conge (1998) as he defined it as "any action (or inaction) of an individual or a collectivity of individuals which intentionally or unintentionally opposes or supports, changes or maintains some feature(s) of a government or community" (Conge, 1998 p. 246). As explained by Cho and Rudolph (2008) political participation provides mechanisms for citizens to communicate information about their interest, preferences, and needs and generate pressure to respond. For this thesis, political participation is a process in which citizens engage either directly or indirectly in political decision making activities.

In a nutshell, participation exists when citizens take action for themselves or for others in legitimate formal political institutions or decision-making organs where interests and views are articulated. Although Rwanda would have been expected to be intolerant to divergent political participation including that of women because of the perceived authoritarian government, however, women actively participate in Rwandan politics. Through their high representation in parliament, women have led the enactment of gender-friendly laws and important agreements

signed that will impact on women's needs, thus taking part in the governance process. Also, women appointed ministers are engaged in the policy making process and ensure that policies formulated are gendered and these has led to some progress in terms of development of the country as there is increase in female literacy rate, access to health care for women, increase female participation in labor leading to lowering of the gender inequality gap.

Political Representation

Political representation is defined by Sewar as “representation of interests, ideas, values, perspectives, collectively mediated experiences, and corporeal experiences” (Sawer, 2000 p.362). For Rehfeld (2005) political representation arises and is maintained through a set of procedural standards of authorization and accountability often through free and fair elections. Political representation involves actions and activities such as candidate selection, election campaigning and voting leading for an individual or a group elected into public political office or decision making institution and that individual represent oneself or a group's interest.

Political Will

In the context of this research, political will is defined as a determination that generates certain political actions by political actors who are involved in both political benefits and costs. Political will involves intent to undertake an action that may or may not lead to a desired outcome. Political will is a necessary factor for the offering of commitment. The source of political will may stem from personal beliefs, values, ideologies, or experiences. However, political actors' perceived incentives, costs and risks influence the level of actors' political will to commit to gender equality.

Temporary Special Measures

‘Temporary special measures’ is a term used in the CEDAW under article 4 (1) in which state parties are obliged to adopt measures for increased women’s participation and representation in decision making and governance institution. The term ‘special measures’ in its corrective, compensatory, and promotional sense is often equated with the terms ‘affirmative action’, ‘positive action’, ‘positive measures’, ‘reverse discrimination’ and ‘positive discrimination.’⁸ Forms of temporary special measures include quotas for women which are adopted by many countries including Rwanda.

Gender Quotas

Quotas for women as defined by Dahlerup (2005) are a percentage set aside for women in either candidate list, parliamentary assembly, a committee or government. “Quota refers to a numerical reservation for women independent of the competitors’ respective qualification” (Thabane 2006 p.3). According to Dahlerup (2005) quotas are meant to increase women’s representation in political decision making institutions. There are different types of quotas such as reserved seats, constitutional quotas, and voluntary political party quotas.

Reserved Seats

Reserved seats are specific number of seats set aside for women among representatives in parliament either by the constitution or legislation (Dahlerup, 2005). According to Ballington and Matland (2004) reserved seats exist where a certain number of seats are designated for women coming from either regions or political parties as their overall share of the national vote.

⁸ General recommendation No.25, on article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Women, on temporary special measures paragraph 17

Voluntary Quotas

Voluntary quotas are adopted by political parties committed to gender equity where a minimum percentage of candidates, usually 20% to 30%, to be nominated by the party will be women. This is implemented by parties irrespective of a constitutional requirement or national law for women to be included in decision making, though some parties have it in their constitutions and party rules. This type of quota is adopted in some African countries such as South Africa and Senegal.

STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

The structure of the thesis will be divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the research, justifies research and case selection, and lays out the research questions and statements. Also, the research methodology and structure, research limitations, definitions of the working terms on women's political rights will be discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter will be review and critique of the existing literature on women's political participation and representation. The theoretical explanations for women's political empowerment in Rwanda and factors influencing the under-representation in The Gambia are the focus of this chapter.

In the third chapter, the status of women's political participation and representation in Rwanda will be discussed along with the factors that contributed to its progress in advancing women's political rights. The legal and policy framework, institutional and organizational factors, and ideational factors as key determinants of the enhanced women's political rights are the main focus of analysis in this chapter. In addition, the genocide and its influence on women's rights will be discussed. The chapter will end with a brief analysis of the key determinant of progress in women's political status.

The fourth chapter concentrates on women's political participation and representation in The

Gambia. It will examine the factors influencing women's political under-representation in the country's political landscape. In addition, an in-depth analysis of The Gambia's legal and policy framework on women's participation in decision making will be done. The chapter will end with a brief analysis of key determinants to under-representation and measures to bridge the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality in The Gambia.

Chapter five will be comparison and analysis of the overall research question focusing on factors influencing the different outcome of women's political participation and representation in both countries.

In the final chapter, a conclusion will be done and possible lessons to be learnt identified. Also, recommendations for future work suggested on women's political participation and representation in The Gambia and other African countries.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The title of this thesis is on Africa because of the exceedingly women's under-representation in decision making. However, not all African countries are studied owing to time, space and resource constraints, thus some generalization will be made as regards to the challenges impeding women's political rights in Africa. Also, this research adopts a secondary source methodology; relying on studies, empirical articles by scholars, and country reports and documents and some of the information may not be able to be verified.

In addition, conducting a research on this topic would have been more intriguing if the perspectives of potential women interested in politics and organizations promoting women's political rights could be sought. However, due to time, resource constraints and unfavorable political environment for conduct of a research on human rights in African countries, I am not able to conduct interviews or surveys for this research. Nonetheless, legal and policy documents

will be used as primary sources in the analysis.

The aforementioned have outlined the background of this research, identified research questions and statements, define the key terms essential for this thesis. Also, the structure and limitations of this research have been explained. A justification for case selection and methodology of research has been provided. I will now turn to review the existing literature related to women's political under-representation and progress for gender equality in Rwanda and The Gambia.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a review of the existing literature on women's political under-representation will be done. However, it is fitting that in discussing the factors that under-pin progress to women's political representation, a brief synopsis of the status of women in politics is highlighted. Women were granted the right to political participation and representation since 1953 in the first ever convention on women's rights in politics - the United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women (UN, 1953). This global document gave all women of the world the right to participate in the political life of their countries without limitations based on their gender identity (UN, 1953). In addition, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reinforces women's right to political participation as it aims to bridge the existing gap between men and women and ensure no discrimination against women based on their gender. Other international conventions, declarations and policies such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo protocol, 2003), the ECOWAS protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 3: Promoting Gender Equality and Empower Women) all guarantee women's right to political participation and called on governments to put up measures for the enjoyment of this right by women. However, amid the *de jure* guarantee of women's rights to political participation and representation, women are still

struggling to enjoy equal participation and representation in politics. I will now turn to provide a brief account of women's political status and representation.

STATE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL STATUS

It is generally known that a society is built and sustained by varied roles performed by men and women under different situations. However, this reality is usually overshadowed when the roles and positions of one gender are undermined by the other, thus resulting in domination and inequality which hinder progress as effects are usually seen in the political life of such countries. Numerous studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of gender disparity in living patterns. Several scholars such as Cammisa and Reingold (2004), Bauer and Britton (2006), Steady (2011), Osborn (2012), and Markham (2013) have written on the impact of women's political participation and representation.

Women's political participation and representation have an impact in changing socio-cultural norms and stereotypes that perceived women as inferior to men, thus unable to hold high public office. According to Bauer and Britton (2006) the election of women in national parliaments changed the long standing societal perception of women as subordinates to men. This societal change has been reflected in some African countries with high women representation in parliament as gender-friendly laws prohibiting discrimination and stereotypes against women were enacted. As argued by Yoon (2011), increased women representation in the Tanzanian parliament led to the existence of women causes, increase women's participation in parliamentary affairs and debates, better articulation of women's issues, enactment of gender friendly laws and changes in societal perception about women in politics.

Scholars such as Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that for gender equality to be achieved

women's political participation is necessary as women's issues and interest will be addressed if women represent themselves. They indicated that examples have shown women in parliaments representing women's interest and needs such as the case of Sweden. However, for such to take place Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that a critical mass is needed and elimination of factors causing imbalances and societal inequality is crucial. Scholars such as Cammisa and Reingold (2004), Steady (2011), Osborn (2012), and Markham (2013) have shown that women's access to political office have significant impact on a country's socio-economic progress and consolidation of democracy.

Nonetheless, the global women's political representation continues to be at low pace. Bauer and Britton (2006) support this argument as they stated that the political under-representation of women makes society to lose the valuable contribution of 50% of the population and having non-representative policies since women have different needs and priorities from those of men. In addition, the principles of democratic governance include responsiveness to citizens' needs and popular participation. However, Cammisa and Reingold (2004) argued that enhanced women's political participation results in tangible gains for democratic governance such as greater responsiveness to citizens' needs.

As reiterated by representatives of various governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, "women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved," (UNDAW, 2007, p.7). Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that women's political representation can lead to institutional changes as gender ministries, commissions and departments were created to promote

women's rights and monitoring of government women's rights commitments in South Africa, Rwanda and Namibia.

Moreover, women's strategic needs were also addressed through the enacting of gender-friendly legislations, such as land rights, gender-based violence, child care, education, equal pay, health and family acts. These legislations were adopted due to the high women representation in parliament in those countries (Bauer and Britton, 2006).

In spite of the existence of global, regional and sub-regional conventions and policies promoting and guaranteeing equal political participation and representation for both genders discussed earlier, women's representation in political institutions still remains low. According to the Inter - Parliamentary Union, the overall women representation in the world's parliaments is 22.1% for both upper and lower houses combined (IPU, 2015). Thus, women are under-represented palpably in the political sphere as this figure is below the United Nations recommended benchmark of 30% of parliamentary seats to be given to women in all national parliaments in the world. However, the difference varied across geographical locations, religious affiliations, political systems, and even economic groupings, thus affecting the global indicator of women's full participation and representation in politics.

However, some countries in the Nordic have been progressing over the years as women constitute 41.5% in their parliaments (IPU, 2015). The Americas and Africa have also seen some improvements over the years in the representation of the critical mass of their population as women constitute 26.5% and 22.6% in single or lower house parliaments respectively (IPU, 2015). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union dataset, women representation in Europe (excluding Nordic countries) stood at 23.6% in lower houses.

Despite the steady progress on women's parliamentary representation in some regions, Asia has a stunted progress as women only constitute 19.0% of parliamentarian in the region (IPU, 2015). On the other hand, regions such as Arab States and the Pacific are still struggling to improve women's political status as only 18.1% women are represented in parliaments in the Arab states, while the Pacific occupies the bottom in regional ranking with 13.1% women parliamentary representation (IPU, 2015).

According to Bauer and Britton (2006), in spite of socio-cultural issues affecting African countries such as patriarchy and pervasive gender inequality, countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia and Uganda have made strides in women's political participation. Although there is some regional progress in Africa on women's parliamentary representation, however there are only eleven countries in Africa where a woman is Presiding Officer of parliament or head of one of its houses (IPU, 2015). These are Botswana (National Assembly), Equatorial Guinea (Senado), Gabon (Senate), Mauritius (National Assembly), Mozambique (Assembleia da Republica), Rwanda (Chamber of Deputies), South Africa (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces), Swaziland (Senate), Uganda (Parliament), United Republic of Tanzania (Bunge) and Zimbabwe (Senate) (IPU, 2015). While regionally, there is progress on women's political engagement, at national level countries like The Gambia still lagged behind in attaining this gender commitment of equal political participation and representation by all citizens. However, one could argue that the women's political under-representation cannot be attributed to single cause. Thus, as a point of departure it is imperative to analyze the theoretical framework explaining the reasons for poor women's political representation.

EXISTING THEORIES EXPLAINING WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION

The literature on theoretical framework for women's political under-representation could be categorized into four broad variables. Several scholars have argued that modernization theory, political and institutional factors, cultural impediments and women's movements' mobilization and campaign for women's rights influence women's engagement in political sphere.

Modernization Theory

To examine the factors influencing women's political participation and representation, some studies have focused on the modernization theory. According to Inglehart and Norris (2003) modernization theorists argue that industrialization can increase women's access to paid work, representation in management and boards, educational status and thereby increase their political representation.

i. Level of Economic Development

Industrialization leads to improvement in socio-economic conditions such as high educational level, economic growth and enhanced standard of living which are argued by some scholars highly influence women's political participation and representation. Inglehart and Norris (2003) stated that women's occupational and socio-economic development influence their political representation in some countries. However, they expounded that women's access to professional, administrative and managerial occupations determine their political careers (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). Schwindt-Bayer (2005) stated that women's participation in labour force and high economic development determine their representation in parliaments.

As women are traditionally home carers and maintainers, any economic fluctuations directly

impact them because of their responsibility for ensuring family survival. This was reflected in Africa wherein the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank during the 1970s and 1980s impacted on women's rights as there were unequal human development index and this affected women's political participation (Welch, 1995).

Modernization often leads to spread of secular and egalitarian values, thus can increase women's representation in political positions. As argued by Schwindt-Bayer (2005) socio-economic factors strongly influence women's election into parliament as a country's development increases, the rate of women's representation also increases. Duke (1993) argued that women's unemployment status impact on their political participation and representation. According to Schwindt-Bayer (2005), studies have shown that unemployment and fertility rates hinder women's participation in politics.

On the other hand, scholars such as Inglehart and Norris (2003); Kunovich and Paxton (2005) and Tripp and Kang (2008) argue that a country's increased economic development does not fully explain the barriers to women's political representation. This is reflected in some poor African countries where women's parliamentary representation is higher than industrialized nations such as the United States, Canada and United Kingdom. A study by Kunovich and Paxton (2005) substantiated this argument as it found out that women in the United States constitute 46% of the labor force, and 55% of women have access to tertiary education. Yet, only 13% and 14% women were represented in the House and Senate respectively (United Nations, 2000 as cited in Kunovich and Paxton, 2005).

In addition, Tripp and Kang (2008) found gender quotas to have more influence on women's political representation than a country's development status as they argue some of the world's

poorest countries such as Burundi, Mozambique and Tanzania are among the world's highest level of women representation. Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that women's increased educational and professional status does not sufficiently lead to their high political representation even though such conditions facilitate women's empowerment (Inglehart and Norris, 2003 p.131). However, a country's economic status is crucial to women's access to political office as women are often household heads and any adverse economic situation of a country affects them directly because of their concern for the family's daily survival.

ii. Feminization of Poverty

Women's access to economic resources is an important factor in explaining women's political engagement as politics requires finance and women's high poverty rate affects their access to political office. According to Welch (1995) because of feminization of poverty in Africa, it impacts on women's human rights including political participation and representation, thus the low women's representation in African parliaments prior to the 21st century. Henderson and Jeydel (2007) argued that poverty is high among women and this hinders their progress in politics. According to Shvedova (2005) the United Nations statistics reported that 70% of 1.8 billion world's poor are women. Mueller (1988) argued women's economic vulnerability impacts on their political representation as women have marginal income since most of the women live below the poverty line. The study on global women political leaders by Adler (1996) found that the conditions impeding women's progress in political leadership include their economic well-being and social climate.

Poverty among women is an obstacle limiting their opportunity to succeed in the field of politics since women lack the finance to support their candidature. Shvedova (2005) argued that because

of feminization of poverty, women's primary concern will be family survival and this constraint their time for political participation. Matland (1998) argued that women's economic participation and increased education contribute to their high representation in political office. "The more equal women's social standing, the more likely that women are seen as men's equals in the political sphere, and the greater the probability they are represented in equal numbers" (Matland, 1998 p.114).

According to Henderson and Jeydel (2007) women's low socio-economic development impedes their political representation. In the survey on *Equality in Politics: A Survey of Men and Women in Parliaments*, among the impediments women parliamentarians highlighted impede women's courage to stand for political office are socio-economic conditions (IPU, 2008). As argued by Mueller (1988), for women's governance role to be effective, their economic dependency on men should be addressed. Shvedova (2005) supported this view by arguing that eradicating poverty and women's economic empowerment are essential in limiting constraints to under-representation and enhance women's political participation.

iii. Education

Political representation requires some degree of education, capacity and skills to be able to contribute effectively to the debates and better articulate people's interests. However, women often lack the skills and capacity needed for political representation because of the unequal educational level between men and women. Scholars such as Tremblay (2006) and Stevens (2012) argued that women's low educational status hinders their political participation and representation. Women's educational status is argued by scholars such as Leighley (1995); Inglehart and Norris (2003); Kunovich and Paxton (2005) and Tremblay (2006) to highly

influence their participation in politics.

According to Leighley (1995) people with high educational level stand a higher chance of participating in politics than less-educated people. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) argued that women's educational level impact on their political representation and the increase in women's education contributed to increased representation in most African countries over the years (Tripp, 2001 as cited in Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). According to Henderson and Jeydel (2007) social conditions such as low educational status and inadequate health care are barriers to women's election into political office especially in developing countries. Schwindt-Bayer (2005) indicated that studies have found women's educational status as a barrier to their political engagement and representation.

Conversely, Shvedova (2005) argued that though there is no consistent correlation between women's literacy rates and their political representation, however a minimum educational level is a requirement for candidates' nomination. Adler (1996) and Duke (1993) argued that the educational status of women is a strong determinant of their political participation. The educational level requirement for potential candidates is a barrier to women's election into political office because of limited education and political training among women (Shvedova, 2005).

Political and Institutional Factors

According to Inglehart and Norris (2003) the rules of the game are the key drivers of explaining systemic issues influencing women's political engagements. Institutional and political factors such as electoral system, democratization, gender quotas, incumbency disadvantage and political parties are said to have great influence in determining women's participation and representation

in politics.

i. Electoral systems

In explaining the factors influencing women's representation in elective office, electoral systems are thought to have a high connection with the level of women's representation. Several scholars Matland (1998); Inglehart and Norris (2003); Kunovich and Paxton (2005); Schwindt-Bayer (2005); Bauer and Britton (2006); Henderson and Jeydel (2007) and Karp and Banducci (2008) argue that the system of proportional representation tends to be more favorable to women's election into political office. Scholars argue that in proportional representation, larger share of seats could be given to women as quotas are more easily implemented (Bauer and Britton, 2006). According to Kunovich and Paxton (2005) proportional representation increases women's chance of being elected in parliaments as in such systems, a party's percentage of votes translates to seats in parliament. Closed party list, higher electoral thresholds and district magnitude in the proportional representation system allow women more chances to be represented (Bauer and Britton, 2006). Henderson and Jeydel (2007) argue that studies have found out women's chance to be elected into political office to double in a proportional representation system than in single-majority system.

Bauer and Britton (2006) and Schwindt-Bayer (2005) argued further that the proportional representation system enhances women's political participation more than plurality-majority systems or semi-proportional systems. In the proportional representation system, parties nominate several candidates and women's chances of being nominated increases. Matland (1998) indicated that in the proportional representation system parties' strategy of nominating more candidates contribute to high women's election into parliament as women might be included in

party lists. Usually in proportional representation system, political parties published lists of candidates. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) explained that the publication of party lists can increase women's chances of being nominated as political parties will strive for credibility and being seen as gender-conscious. Furthermore, Duke (1993) expounded that women are more easily to be elected in large-member districts in the proportional representation system than the single-member system. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) supported this argument as they stated that women's chances of being elected are high in proportional representation because of the multimember district system adopted.

According to Bauer and Britton (2006), African countries such as Rwanda, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa all adopted the closed-list proportional representation for parliamentary election. Thus, the impact of proportional representation is reflected in these countries as women parliamentarians have surpassed the United Nations 30% benchmark for women parliamentarians in world legislatures (Bauer and Britton, 2006). Shvedova (2005) argued that Rwanda's high women's political representation is largely due to the constitution reserving 24 seats for women out of the 80 in the lower house and 30% quota requirement for women in the upper house. Though Uganda uses a simple majority system and has also met the 30% benchmark, with women legislatures making up 35.0% of its parliament (IPU, 2015). However, Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that the reserved seats for women contribute in increasing women representation in the Ugandan parliament. According to Henderson and Jeydel (2007) women's nomination in political parties under the majoritarian systems is less likely due to fear of losing seats to male contenders.

On the other hand, political parties in proportional representation systems tend to include women in their party lists in order to broaden their support base (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007). However,

scholars such as Creevey (2006) argue that the dual system of single-member districts and proportional representation have greater influence on women's political representation in Senegal. She argued that women had more seats in the plurality system than the proportional representation system before: although there were no national mandatory quotas, political parties had some form of quota at the party level and selected women among their candidate lists (Creevey, 2006). According to Shvedova (2005) political structures are essential in women's election to parliament. However, this generalization does not apply to all countries as in Russia the weak party system, women's low confidence and political parties marginalization of women contribute to women's low political participation (Shvedova 2005).

Furthermore, gender quota is viewed by analysts, scholars and women's rights activists as the most certain way of increasing women's political representation. Though gender quota may be perceived as discriminatory and violating the principle of fairness, it is an effective form of affirmative action to enhance women's political representation. However, there is a general agreement by most scholars (Schwartz, 2004; Tripp 2004; Kunovich and Paxton, 2005; Powley, 2005; Bauer and Britton, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2006; Henderson and Jeydel, 2007; Bauer, 2008; Delvin and Elgie, 2008; Tripp and Kang, 2008) that quotas highly influence women's opportunity of being elected into political offices.

Implemented in several countries, national or political party quotas have succeeded in electing women into national parliaments. Though it has not successfully led to changing the overall women status and improve their human rights situation, Bauer and Britton (2006) argue that quotas contributed to increasing women's representation in African parliaments. They expounded that countries such as South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia all adopted national quotas while Rwanda and Uganda have reserved seats for women in their legislatures. In Senegal

political parties agreed to have 30% quota reserved for women in their candidates' lists (Bauer and Britton, 2006). Henderson and Jeydel (2007) and Kunovich and Paxton (2005) all supported the argument that the adoption of quotas plays a crucial role in increasing women's political representation.

According to Shvedova (2005) for equal political representation of both genders to be ensured, laws and policies are needed and is a show of commitment for gender balance. However, Schwindt-Bayer (2005) argued that quotas (both national and party ones) will only be effective if properly implemented and enforced and that women's qualification for the candidacy pool increases their chance of representation. In addition, Kunovich and Paxton (2005) argued that legislative appointments can also increase representation of women in parliament. However, legislative appointments could be considered undemocratic (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005) as those appointed will not be elected by majority and might represent the interest of the appointing authority rather than the ordinary citizens.

ii. Democratization Process

There are arguments that regime types also play a role in women's political representation, as democracies tend to be more favorable to women because arbitrary barriers that would have constrained women's political participation would be eliminated through free and fair elections. According to Henderson and Jeydel (2007), democracy plays a role in women's political representation, as newly democratized countries are likely to promote measures that enhance women's engagement in politics. Although the study by Reynolds found no relationship between women's political representation and democracy, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argued that democracy promotes civil liberties, including women's rights to be elected into political offices

(Inglehart and Norris, 2003 p.132).

A country's level of democratization is a strong institutional factor to consider among the variables explaining women's political engagement (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). As argued by Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002), women's contribution to democratization enhances their access to political power. The putative link between democracy and women's high political representation may be found in some African countries, such as The Gambia. Elections in The Gambia are alleged to be not free and fair, since pre-election preparatory processes such as registration of voters and election campaigns are said to be intimidating and not free (BBC, 2011). A case in point is the 2011 presidential election in which the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) failed to send an observer mission to The Gambia owing to the fact that the conditions preceding elections were not favorable for conduct of elections as it has failed to meet up to the minimum standards set out in the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (BBC, 2011). This situation could discourage the educated women who are qualified to run for political offices.

However, Kunovich and Paxton (2005) found that democracy has no significant effect on women's political representation either, as countries such as Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam that were considered less democratic had high women parliamentary representation during the period surveyed (1991 to 1996). In addition, Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) argued that democracy has not improved women's political participation in most African countries including Nigeria.

iii. Political Parties

Though other factors play an important role in influencing women's political representation, political parties play a primary role as they can encourage, support and nominate women to contest for political offices. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) found a greater link between political party support for women and their election into political positions. According to Kunovich and Paxton (2005) proportional representation systems tend to be more favorable to women, but female representation in party bureau does not lead to significant representation of women in legislature in proportional representation party lists. They argued that non-proportional representation party lists with more women in party bureaus influence women's election into parliaments (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005).

This was further substantiated by Inglehart and Norris (2003), who argue that party competition in number and ideological polarization influence women's election into political offices. Political parties have a greater link in the election of women candidates as it is often argued that political parties tend to nominate candidates whom they believe will win election rather than women. Male-dominated political parties may be reluctant to nominate women as political candidates due to the perception that women are not able to attract votes (Paola, Scoppa and Lombardo, 2010). As argued by Shvedova (2005) political parties influence women's election into political office as women do not equally benefit from party resources as men.

According to Henderson and Jeydel (2007) political parties in majoritarian systems are less likely to nominate women because of fear of losing seats to male competitors. As argued by Karp and Banducci (2008), political parties contribute to high women's political participation as they can nominate more women into parliament because women lack the resources to support

their political candidature. For Matland (1998) political parties determine the degree of women's participation in political life. Shvedova (2005) argued that the male-dominated selection and nomination processes are biased against women. In addition, Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) found out that political parties helped integrate women's agenda in the democratization process leading to gender equality in politics in Chile. For Nigeria, their study revealed that due to male dominated unstable ethnic political parties and competition among parties, women lagged behind in political representation (Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, 2002). Scholars such as Caul (1999) argued that women's active participation in internal affairs of political parties at the local level will boost their power in parties, thereby enhancing the chances of their nomination by parties and election into political offices.

Political parties play a crucial role in women's representation in political offices as they serve as the entry point for women to be first selected as candidates and then supported with financial resources for their electoral campaigns. Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that political parties contribute in increasing women's participation as women usually contest for political offices under party ticket. According to Bauer and Britton (2006), in post-independence Africa, democracy was limited on the continent as most countries had one-party system, which led to several coups and conflicts. "Women had an only option of joining the women's wing of the ruling parties or national associations which most often were headed by the first ladies and it was through such mechanisms that women conducted activism to promote women's rights" (Bauer and Britton, 2006).

Kunovich and Paxton (2005) argued that women's presence in party committees can influence their parliamentary representation as political party committees make decisions about what candidates to select and how much support to give them. Women's presence in party elites,

apprenticeship or mentoring of women in parties and female elites advocating for greater representation influence women's selection at party level (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005).

In a study of relationship between political parties and women's political representation in industrialized nations, Carl (1999) found out that parties' ideology and organization may influence their gender sensitivity in putting up rules that promote women's effective political engagement. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) argue that parties in proportional representation systems support women by including them in favourable lists.

On the other hand, parties in the plurality-majority system may improve female candidates' chances of electoral success through financial support for campaigning (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). They argued that women need human and financial capital to contest political office, thus political parties' support is crucial (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). According to Carl (1999), party adoption of quotas signifies acknowledgement of women's under-representation in politics and demonstrate party commitment of promoting women's representation. In addition, Carl (1999) indicated that scholars such as Duverger (1995) and Beckwith (1986: 1992) argued that leftist political parties tend to support women candidates more than right-wing parties (Carl, 1999 p.81). According to Longman (2006), although gender quota is the main influential feature of the high representation of women in Rwanda, political parties played a great role as the party in power (the Rwandan Patriotic Front) appointed women in political offices.

iv. Incumbency Disadvantage

Experience is essential in political office and most often men are elected into political positions because of incumbency advantage. As politics is about interest articulation and expression of people's needs, thus people tend to vote for someone that they know and who has been in the

position representing their interests. According to Thomas and Wilcox (1998) incumbency also affects women's political participation and representation as often women are not incumbents and this gives them tough time in winning elections. As most incumbents in legislatures are male, challenging and defeating them is a factor affecting women's political representation (Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). This is a barrier for women to be elected into higher political office as experience is often seen as credential for one to run for elective portfolio. Therefore, starting from local level could help women get elected into higher political positions such as parliament. Shvedova (2005) argued that political participation should be expanded to grassroots and local level for women's representation to be enhanced. The political experience at local level is important as women could transcend such skills in their bid for parliamentary office because defeating incumbents is a tough challenge for women politicians. According to Duke (1993) the high returns of men as incumbents hinder women's entry to political office. "When the rate of incumbents' re-election decreases, women's chances of being elected in the legislature increases and that studies of United States congress found out that men's high turnover affects women's representation" (Schwindt-Bayer, 2005 p.229).

Cultural Obstacles

i. Patriarchy

Patriarchy, a societal belief that sees men to be the 'natural' household heads and women as subordinates naturally extends to the domain of politics. Patriarchy according to Abeda Sultana (as quoted in Bhasin 2006:3) "refers to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (Sultana, 2010 - 2011). Hooks defines it in a more broader perspective as "patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior

to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence” (Hooks n.d.).

Patriarchy hinders women’s political participation as the treatment of women as minors and second class citizens is justified by society and that a woman needs a man’s permission to undertake any activity in public sphere. In their study Kunovich and Paxton (2005) found out that the cultural perception on women as people not capable to be in leadership positions limit their political representation. They argued that this negative ideology against women still persist in societies where patriarchy is entrenched (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005). Inglehart and Norris (2003) argued that traditional attitudes towards equality between men and women greatly impedes on women’s parliamentary representation.

According to Mueller (1988) for women’s advancement in politics to be realized, there is need to overcome the traditional sex-role socialization process that entrenched patriarchy and undermine equality between men and women. Patriarchal value system militates against women’s progressive political participation as women’s role is traditionally perceived to be ‘working mother’ (Shvedova, 2005). Inglehart and Norris (2003) expounded that women’s reluctance to run for political office is due to cultural influence as societies with traditions that are not receptive to gender equality has low women’s representation. This was further argued by Duke (1993) as he indicated that societal belief of women’s ‘proper’ place to be only in the “private sphere” is an obstacle for women’s political participation.

ii. Gender-Role Ideology

The roles ascribed for women by society confine them to homes because traditionally, women's "proper" place is perceived to be in the home rather than politics. The family responsibilities assigned to women constrain their time due to unequal division of labor at home. According to Shvedova (2005) women's political representation is impeded as women face the constraint of confronting the male-dominated work patterns as parliamentary sitting time tend to be unfavorable to women. Inglehart and Norris (2003) argued that traditional attitude and gender-role are strong forces to women's election into political office. Women are constraint balancing between traditional role of being home maintainers and politics as some parliaments lack the supportive structures for women parliamentarians (Shvedova, 2005).

According to Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) gender ideology constraints women's political participation in Nigeria as women were limited to only private matters. They argued that pre-democratization period in Chile, gender role ideology also limited women's participation in public life hence their marginalization in politics (Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, 2002). Welch (1995) argued that socialization process of women made them to be passive in politics as society believes politics to be a "man's game". Furthermore, Thomas and Wilcox (1998) argued that the fear of losing election discourage potential female candidates as their women colleagues might not vote for them which contributes to their low political representation. According to Duke (1993) traditional limitations of women's role to be home carers and maintainers affect their participation in politics. Women's political engagement may be seen as violation of traditional gender roles and this hinders women's political empowerment (Paola, Scoppa and Lombardo, 2010).

Women's and men's sex role have influence on women's political participation as sexual mores, lifestyles, families and child bearing are factors expected to change the norms of women's status in political life (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). Duke (1993) argues that gender role definition is a great obstacle to women's participation in politics as girls learn passivity which they grow up with as adults because of the societal believe of politics being a 'man's world'. Gender role is argued to be a challenge that women face in their political engagements as even when they enter politics, they hardly succeed because of the inability to balance between reproductive role and politics.

iii. Societal Stereotypes and Violence against Women

Societal discrimination against women and violence perpetuated on them in politics are challenges impeding women's success in politics. This is particularly common in societies where traditional and cultural values are deeply entrenched such as Africa and Asia. According to Welch (1995) socio-cultural barriers impact on women's rights in Africa in spite of provisions for equal treatment and non-discrimination in most African constitutions and global commitments ratified, women still do not enjoy equal rights as men including right to political participation. He argued that systemic discrimination against women is a rule in most societies and unless norms and cultures are changed, overall women's rights enjoyment including political participation will be limited (Welch, 1995). This perspective was further argued by Paola et al. as they argued that electorates' perception of women as incapable policy makers hinder women's political engagement (Paola, Scoppa and Lombardo, 2010).

As argued by Thomas and Wilcox (1998), women candidates faced different treatment when running for political office as gender-based questioning and sexism are often encountered by

women in politics. Inglehart and Norris (2003) argued that culture impacts on women's political reality as democratic values are associated with women successfully elected to office. Thomas and Wilcox (1998) argue that societal attitudes about women such as perceiving women as incapable to hold political office ought to change for their representation in politics to rise.

iv. Religion

Religion is argued to play a great role in influencing women's political engagement because of the misconception that Islam barred women from holding high ranking public offices or leading men. As Adler (1996) argued studies of women in workforce indicated that religious climate influence women's political leadership as socio-religious traditions tend not to support women's equal rights and participation in society (Adler, 1996 p. 141). According to Creevey (2006) women had limited access to political participation in Senegal due to religious leaders' influence on Senegalese government. Some scholars argued that the heavy influence of Islamic leaders on Senegalese politics reinforces patriarchy (Creevey, 2006). However, the phenomenon has changed in Senegal as women constitute over 40% of parliamentarians. Perhaps, one could argue that this is due to political party quota for women that have helped overcome the challenge of patriarchy.

Generally, religion is argued to be a great cultural impediment to women's advancement in politics. Iwanaga (2008) argues that religion has a great role in influencing attitudes and practices of gender inequality in both private and public spheres. As An-Na'im notes that the Islam based Shari'a law disqualifies women from holding high-ranking public office (Thabane, 2006). Islam is a barrier to gender equality including women's political participation and representation (Iwanaga, 2008).

Religions such as Islam define the roles and status of women which is incompatible with power and decision making (Thabane, 2006). Thus, religion plays an integral role in women's low political participation and representation as women are perceived as people "not to be" in the public spheres but rather private life. However, Tripp and Kang (2008) argue that religion will have limited influence on women's election into political office when region is considered as there are high women's political representation in some Muslim countries in Africa and Asia. They argued that considering egalitarian values, Catholicism will have little effect on women's representation in politics (Tripp and Kang, 2008).

Role of Women's Movement

The political activism by women's rights movement has great influence in ensuring equality between men and women including political participation and representation. As argued by scholars Carl (1999); Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002); Bauer and Britton (2006) and Longman (2006), women's movements play a great role in women's political participation and representation. Bauer and Britton (2006) argued that women's organizations play a crucial role in increasing women's political participation and representation as women's movements can exert pressure on political parties to increase women's nomination by parties. According to a study by Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) women's mobilization campaign worked out for women in Chile as it eventually led to improvements in women's political and social participation. They argued that in the pro-democracy campaign in Chile, women formed movements that lobbied for inclusion of their interest in the parliament (Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, 2002). However, the women's movement campaign didn't yield positive impact for Nigeria even with regime change as they couldn't challenge the state-reinforced gender discourse (Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, 2002).

According to Bauer and Britton (2006) contributions of women's organizations in Africa led to the adoption of gender sensitive constitutions and political party quotas such as in South Africa, Mozambique, Rwanda and Namibia. They argued that women organizations' advocacy played key role in electing women to political office in Africa as women in liberation movements in South Africa led to political parties' improvement of women's interaction in transit periods (Bauer and Britton, 2006). As a study by Carl (1999) revealed women's movement increased pressure on political parties contributes to more women representation in parliaments in the industrialized world. Women's movement's advocacy contributed to the Scandinavian's high women representation as it led to the adoption of quotas by political parties (Bauer and Britton, 2006 as cited in Dahlerup, 2004:4).

Furthermore, women's organizations help in increasing women's political representation as they work with political and government institutions for electoral changes to facilitate women's nomination and election (Shvedova 2005). According to Bauer and Britton (2006) the reserved seats for women in Rwanda and Uganda is owed to the crucial role played by women organizations as women mobilized, advocated for political leadership and encouraged political involvement. In Rwanda, women's organization lobbied for addressing women's issues in post-genocide and conceded on the executive and the legislature which contributed to their high representation in parliament (Bauer and Britton, 2006). As argued by Longman (2006) women's active civil society advocacy set the pace for women's political engagement. Bauer and Britton (2006) added that the Rwandan experience happened in Namibia and Mozambique as women's groups worked around increasing women's political leadership.

According to Longman (2006), due to the terrible impact of the genocide on women inspired their struggle for the promotion of women's rights in Rwanda as the genocide left women as

widows and household heads who were expected to rebuild Rwanda.

EXISTING LITERATURE ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN RWANDA AND THE GAMBIA

Factors Influencing the Critical Mass in the Rwandan Parliament

There is considerable literature on women's participation and representation in Rwandan politics. Some scholars have written specifically on women's political representation in the Rwandan parliament, and some discussed Rwanda as case study in cross-country and worldwide studies on women in national legislatures. The high literature on Rwanda could be because of the country being a shining example of women representation in parliament in the world and its use of quotas for increasing women's political engagement as the literature on women's political representation in Africa is limited. However, most of the literature on Rwanda focuses on women's representation in parliament and the quota system introduced in Rwanda. Works by Powley, (2003) Schwartz (2004), Powley (2005), Bauer and Britton (2006), Longman (2006), Burnet (2008), Krook and O'Brien (2010), Coffe (2012), Bauer and Burnet (2013), and Muriaas, Tonnessen and Wang (2013) discussed women's political participation and representation in Rwanda.

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (1995), women's political participation in Rwanda began in 1961 when women were granted the right to vote in the country's election after it was freed from Belgian colonial rule (Powley, 2005). However, women's representation in politics started in 1965 when the first female legislatures were elected into parliament. Though, women were part of the decision making process, their representation in parliament has ever been less than 18% up to the time Rwanda was plunged into genocide in 1994 (Powley, 2005).

After recovering from the genocide, the Rwandan people began a new pace of reconstructing the

country and during the nine years transition period (1994 - 2003), women continued to be represented in parliament through appointment. Surprisingly, women made up 25.7% of representatives in the country's transition parliament (Powley, 2005). As indicated by Powley (2005), following the end of the transition period and adoption of a new constitution in 2003, Rwandan parliament got near parity with 48.8% of women representatives in the lower house. This is due to the political will of the leadership that ensured gender equality and adopting a constitution guaranteeing women's participation in all decision making bodies.

As overwhelmingly agreed upon by many scholars and activists, quota is the surest way of addressing women's under-representation in politics. The critical mass in Rwandan parliament is generally attributed to the 30% quotas set aside for women in the new constitution by many scholars that studied women's political participation and representation in Rwanda. Usually, when nations undergo political transitions, new constitutions and institutional changes take place. The same applies to Rwanda as after emanating from a devastating genocide that claim about 800,000 lives (Bauer and Burnet, 2013), the country strive to build new institutions, governance structures and mechanisms that will promote the equal enjoyment of human rights of all persons without discrimination. First among such mechanisms was the adoption of a new constitution after the end of transition period in 2003 that guarantee equal rights to political participation to both women and men. The new constitution also mandates the enactment of a law for the creation of women's councils at local government level where women participate in grassroots politics (Bauer and Burnet, 2013).

According to Longman (2006); Burnet (2008) and Muriaas, Tonnessen and Wang (2013) post-genocide created an opportunity for women's movement in Rwanda to lobby for protection of women's rights and inclusion of quota for women in the new constitution. During the

transition period, the women's movement in Rwanda mobilizes and engages with officials of the newly created ministry of gender, female legislatures in the transitional parliament and international gender organizations and lobbied to the government for inclusion of quotas for women in the constitution (Powley, 2005).

As argued by Powley (2005) the women's movement effectively organized activities in the post-genocide reconstruction and advised the government on women's political participation and reconciliation. Therefore, the most undoubted explanation for the gender parity in the Rwandan parliament is the quotas given to women in the constitution. Moreover, the commitment towards gender equality of the party in power reflects the status of women's rights in a country. The Rwandan Patriotic Front has been ruling Rwanda since the end of the genocide. According to Powley (2005), the RPF played a key role in the gender-balance parliament through a gender sensitive programme in post-genocide reconstruction. The RPF leadership were exiled in Uganda during the 1959 civil war and having spent years there exposed them to gender equality as Uganda has impressive women's political participation.

Arguably, Rwanda's political will to gender equality stem from the expose of the party in power to gender equality while exiled in Rwanda. Scholars such as Powley (2005) believe in this proposition as she argued the RPF's commitment to gender equality came from the experience of its leadership to the Ugandan initiative of including women in decision making. The RPF when came into power, adopted a similar model of Uganda's reserved seats where women are allocated 30% representation in both Chamber of Deputies and Senate. In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the RPF appointed over 25% women in the parliament during the transition period (Powley, 2005). This argument has been substantiated by Bauer and Burnet (2013) as they indicated that the experience of RPF in Uganda to gender equality commitment

led to progressive gender friendly laws like the classification of rape or sexual violence torture as a serious crime, family and children's rights law amongst others being initiated by the RPF before the adoption of the new constitution in 2003.

Another mechanism that one could argue contributes to women's numerical strength in Rwandan politics is the creation of the national women's councils at grassroots level after the genocide. Through the women's councils, women - only elections are held and women representatives at *cell* levels have automatic seats to the district, sector and province where women hold reserved seats in the country's chamber of deputies (Powley 2005).

Additionally, scholars like Powley (2005) argue that the changing gender role is argued to play a crucial role in the reshaping of women's political participation in Rwanda. Women faced grief situation during the genocide as they undergo sexual violence, lost their properties and livelihoods, and left as widows (Powley 2005). As evidence has shown, the genocide left the Rwandan population with 70% women who assumed important roles as family heads and financial providers and 35% women are household heads in Rwanda (Powley, 2003). Also, one of the reasons for the genocide is owed to discrimination; hence the contribution of a greater percentage of the population cannot be ignored in the political discourse of the country (Powley 2005).

The important role women play in Rwandan society has been emphasized by President Kagame in his speech during the post-genocide parliamentary election in 2003.

“We shall continue to appeal to women to offer themselves as candidates and also to vote for gender sensitive men who will defend and protect their interest. Women's under-representation distances elected representatives from a part of their constituency and, as such, affects the legitimacy of political decisions....increased participation of women in politics

is, therefore, necessary for improved social, economic and political conditions of their families and the entire country.”⁹

Although the genocide influence women’s role in Rwanda society as they assumed traditionally male roles and scholars argued because of such roles and disadvantage of the genocide, they were compensated with positions of leadership; I argue that the political will of the ruling party – RPF to gender equality is the key determinant of the progress of women’s political representation. In conflicts and civil wars, women and children are often disproportionately disadvantaged as they undergo sexual and physical violence, killed and traumatized because of their vulnerability. However, there are countries in Africa that have gone through civil wars such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville) in which women were disproportionately disadvantaged, yet they are among the countries with lowest women’s political representation in Africa. Sierra Leone has 12.4% women representation in Parliament, Liberia 11%, Democratic Republic of Congo 8.9% and Republic of Congo 7.4% (IPU, 2015). Even though Liberia has the first female President in Africa in the person of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, women’s representation at parliamentary level is still low. Thus, the disproportionate consequences of conflict on women in these countries did not reflect in their political status in post-conflict era in such countries.

I argue that the genocide has played a role in women’s political representation but the main factor is the political will of the RPF leadership that mainstreamed gender and included women in decision - making bodies since the aftermath of the genocide. Because of the crucial role women played to the success of the RPF’s halting of the genocide also influences the high political will of the party to gender equality. Although, women were disproportionately affected

⁹ Statement of President Paul Kagame on parliamentary elections in April 2003 in Rwanda

by the genocide, women were also engaged in the killings and the RPF has female among its armed wing since exiled in Uganda. Women greatly contributed to the RPF's defeat of the Hutu militias and ending of the genocide. Therefore, to compensate their efforts, women were appointed in the transitional government council and legislature in the immediate aftermath of the genocide and the RPF included a 30% quota for them in the constitution adopted in 2003. Nonetheless, scholars such as (Hogg, 2009) believe that the high political will of the RPF for inclusion of women in decision-making bodies is a means of the authoritarian regime thwarting any ethnic discussions in the country as giving women representation include both Tutsi and Hutu women, thus claims of sidelining the Hutus in the post-genocide government wouldn't suffice.

Additionally, the inclusion of women in decision-making is a strategy of the RPF controlling political liberalization in the country as women are often perceived as a non-critical group who would not challenge an authoritarian regime. Thus, women could support the policies of the government without being opposing to its suppression of political dissent. Nonetheless, an in-depth analysis of why Rwandan's political leaders have high political will to gender equality leading to progress in women's political representation will be discussed in the Rwanda chapter of this thesis.

Women's Political Status in The Gambia: Factors Influencing Under-Representation

Generally, it appears there is no substantial empirical literature on women's participation and representation in decision making in The Gambia. However, there are some country reports that focus on women's political participation in The Gambia such as the fourth and fifth CEDAW periodic reports of States parties. Though scholars such as Hughes and Perfect (2006) has written on the political history of The Gambia, however their work has not focus on women's

participation in national politics. Nonetheless, there are some insights in their work that could be helpful to this research in discussing participation and representation. In their book *“State and Society in The Gambia since Independence (1965- 2012)”* Saine, Ceesay and Sall (2013) discussed gender role, political economy of Gambia and contemporary gender relations. Although, their work has not focus on women’s participation in decision making, the gender relations in soceity has connections with women’s political participation and representation as gender - role ideology influences women’s political status.

Also, Chant and Touray (2012) has produced a working paper on gender in The Gambia which discusses women’s participation in national governance. In their work, Chant and Touray (2012) presented a brief account of women’s political status in post-independence Gambia and underlined the main challenges to women’s political representation. They argued that women’s success in political career is owed to male - biased political culture, gender stereotypes and lack of group solidarity due to class basis and disconnection between women elites who lives in towns and the illiterate majority women in rural Gambia.

Although, there is not much studies on the political participation and representation of women in The Gambia, the study by Nabaneh (2014) focuses specifically on women’s participation and representation in decision making in The Gambia. However, not an empirical study, it has discussed the status of women’s representation in decision-making and explained the factors that contribute to women’s under-representation in national governance. Furthermore, the study highlighted the legal and policy mechanisms promoting women’s political participation and representation that exist in The Gambia. As indicated in the study, the main challenges to women’s realization of their political rights are institutional barriers, women’s low economic status, social impediments such as prevalence of socio-cultural beliefs, masculine model of

politics and women's limited access to education (Nabaneh, 2014). Furthermore, political parties' leadership biased towards women in the selection process is indicated as a strong contributing factor hindering women's representation (Nabaneh 2014). Another study by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies conducted in 2012 found out similar obstacles to women's progress in their political career in The Gambia.

Critique of the Literature

The above literature has attempted to explain women's participation and representation in politics. The existing theories explaining women's under-representation focuses on modernization theory which argues that women's under-representation is due to level of economic and social development of a country. As maintained by Inglehart and Norris (2003) women in highly industrialized countries will have high political representation than agrarian societies as women's participation in labor force and educational status influence their political careers. In addition, feminization of poverty constraint women's time to participate in politics as women's primary concern will be searching for family survival and women's limited resources cannot cater for political campaign and support of candidature. However, modernization theorists argued that industrialization leads to spread of egalitarian values which promotes equal rights for all including women's political rights.

Moreover, the literature also explains the phenomenon of women's low political participation is owed to political and institutional factors as electoral systems such as proportional representation is favourable to women because of district magnitude and political party publication of candidate list. Also, gender quotas are argued to be the most certain way of increasing women's political participation and representation. Furthermore, democratic process which promote egalitarian values and political parties are indicated as crucial factors influencing political representation as

political parties are entry points for potential candidates to contest election through party funding and support. Though, not many scholars subscribe to this argument, incumbency disadvantage is said to limit women's political engagement since most incumbents are men and defeating male incumbents is a tough battle for potential female candidates.

Several scholars attempted to explain the phenomenon of women's political under-representation based on cultural obstacles such as patriarchy, gender-role ideology, discrimination, stereotypes and violence against women. In societies where patriarchy is deeply entrenched, male domination occurs in all realms including politics and women are seen as subordinates and minors whose 'proper' place should be private matters and not public sphere. In addition, women's traditional role of caring and maintaining family constraint on their time for active and meaningful political engagements, thereby resulting to their under-representation in crucial decision making institution.

Arguably, religion is an impediment to women's political participation because of the mis-conceived belief that Islam forbids women's political leadership.

The mobilization and campaign by women's movement and organization is argued by scholars to play an important role in women's political representation. According to scholars, women's movement can exert pressure on political parties to nominate and support women candidates, lobby with government for electoral and institutional changes and push for adoption of quotas for women. Therefore, women's movement cannot be left out in explaining women's under-representation in politics.

However, the literature adopts a general perspective in explaining the issue of women's political engagement. Most of the scholars examined women's political representation either in western industrial democracies or have featured large numbers of developed countries in their worldwide

studies. Though, some scholarly works concentrated on countries with impressive women's political representation in Africa such as Rwanda-the global leader on women's political representation. However, substantial body of the literature on Rwandan women's political representation concentrated on quotas as the primary determinant of the critical mass of women representation in parliament.

The political will of the government to gender equality and factors causing the configurations of the political will are not explored. As I argue that because of the political will of the party in power which arises to diffuse ethnic discussions and marginalization of the Hutu population, is the key determinant of the progress of women's political representation. Therefore, my research will contribute in understanding how political will led to the progress of gender equality in Rwanda and what influences the high political will in a country highly considered authoritarian. Traditionally, authoritarian governments are illiberal and suppress dissent political participation including women. However, for Rwanda because of the genocide influence as it occurred because of discrimination, the RPF have learned a great lesson of what discrimination is, therefore wouldn't want to discriminate the greater segment of the country's population, thus compromised the opportunity cost of political will to gender equality and included women in decision-making institutions.

As the above literature reviewed failed to explore these extra-legal factors, this thesis will thus fill the gap by analyzing how these extra-legal factors helped to progress women's political representation in Rwanda. In addition, in discussing political representation in decision – making bodies, cabinet and local governance levels are crucial as they are part of the indicators for measuring representation. Nonetheless, this aspect of representation of women is not generally studied in Rwanda. Moreover, there is not much empirical studies done in African countries with

gross under-representation of women in politics such as The Gambia and no cross-country analysis of reasons for the poor women's political engagement in Africa exists. Nevertheless, the study by Nabaneh (2014) on women's political status in Gambia will be useful for this thesis in providing insightful perspective on women's participation in national governance in The Gambia.

In view of the above gaps in the literature, this research aims to fill the lapses and examine women's political participation and representation in Rwanda and The Gambia from a multi-perspective approach. The thesis will examine ideational factors such as political will as key determinant and genocide and its influence on women's political representation in Rwanda. As the research statements of the thesis stated, women's participation in, and contribution to, the actions of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) during the genocide; the RPF's exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda and the strategy of RPF using gender equality to repress political opposition and thwart arguments of ethnic discrimination jointly accounted for Rwandan political leadership's high political will for realizing gender equality in post-genocide Rwandan politics. However, these factors were not discussed by scholars in most of the literature reviewed above. Therefore, this research will critically analyze what influences political will and how has it led to Rwanda's progress in women's political participation and representation.

Also, due to the understudied nature of women's participation in politics in The Gambia, this research will explore the challenges to women's progress in participation and representation in decision-making institutions. As stated in the research statement, The Gambia's high patriarchal nature, religious influence, and political intolerance to liberal values have jointly limited the Gambian leadership's political will to improve women's political representation. Thus, it is

imperative to analyze women's political leadership in The Gambia from the extra-legal perspective.

Additionally, this research will highlight the lapses and inadequacies in the laws and policies in order to identify its relation with the low political will that have caused women's under-representation in decision-making bodies. The international instruments that The Gambia is a party to such as the CEDAW calls for adoption of temporary special measures to enhance women's political representation. However, The Gambia is still yet to implement such special measures and the already existing legislations are not fully implemented as women are still being discriminated against in politics due to limited political will which is influence by socio-cultural issues and patriarchy. A rights based perspective will be applied to analyze the *de jure* equality and whether the adoption of quotas for women can result to *de facto* equality between men and women in politics. Lessons from the Rwandan experience will be examined and strategic interventions such as the introduction of quotas discussed and measures of bridging the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* representation of women in politics in The Gambia identified. The next chapter will discuss women's political status in Rwanda beginning with the national and political context of the country.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN RWANDA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Rwanda was a former German colony which was lost to Belgium after the end of First World War in 1919 (Government of Rwanda, 2008). The country became administered by Belgium through direct rule marred by discrimination and favoritism that led to Tutsi aristocracy domination making it volatile for political violence (Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012).

However, political violence broke in 1959 with the “Hutu Revolution” indicating an end to Tutsi domination and heighten ethnic tensions that lasted until 1961 (Mamdani, 2003; Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). Following Rwanda’s independence in 1962, the Hutu majority started to dominate the political landscape and violence continued to develop as the Tutsi population were targeted and over 100,000 Tutsis were exiled to neighboring countries including Uganda (Mamdani 2003; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). The Hutu elites were in power after independence through a one party state led by President Gregoire Kayibanda until 1973 when he was ousted in a coup d’état that brought Major General Juvenal Habyarimana to power and continued tensions in Rwanda (Government of Rwanda, 2008). The Rwandan exiled population whose majority was Tutsis formed a resistance guerilla movement in Uganda dubbed the Rwandan Patriotic Front and attacked the country in 1990 leading to a civil war (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). The civil war continued up to 1993 when an Arusha Peace Agreement was signed in Tanzania for a ceasefire (Mamdani, 2003; Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012).

The Arusha Peace Agreement brought a government based on power sharing and members of the RPF were integrated in the government including the army. However, growing internal violence stalled the Arusha agreement and the shooting of President Habyarimana's airplane on 6 April 1994 culminated into genocide that lasted for 100 days from April to July, 1994 as Tutsi population and moderate Hutus were targeted and massacred resulting to about 800,000 deaths (Mamdani, 2003; Government of Rwanda, 2008; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). As the genocide ended, a 'transitional government' was formed in July 1994 called "Government of National Unity" led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front until 2003.

A new constitution was adopted in May 2003, followed by presidential and parliamentary elections, held in August and September respectively (Burnet 2008; Government of Rwanda, 2008; Burnet, 2011). In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, women constitute 70% of the population and made up 35% of household heads in Rwanda (Powley, 2006). Currently, the Population Reference Bureau and World Bank data set shows that Rwanda has about 11 million people (Population Reference Bureau, 2014; World Bank, 2015). The country's 2012 census report indicates that women comprise 51.8% of the population (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012).

According to the UNDP human development report and World Bank data, Rwanda is a low-income country with \$7.521 billion gross domestic product. The country has 44.9% poverty level and it ranks 151 out of 187 countries in the UNDP Human Development Report 2014 (UNDP, 2014; World Bank, 2015). However, with the aftermath of the genocide girls' access to education increased as World Bank development indicators show that female population in secondary education as of 2012 is 7.4 of 8.0 male population in secondary education. This progress has been attributed to the high number of female representation in politics as reflected

in the views of interviewees of Burnet (2011) who claimed that girls attend school now in Rwanda than in the past. Women's share of the tertiary enrollment as of 2012 is 43.0% and literacy among women age fifteen years and above is 76.9% (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2013). In addition, female participation in labour force surpassed that of male, at 86.5% female to 85.5% male participation (UNDP, 2014).

However, in the UNDP 2013 global inequality index Rwanda ranks 79th position in the World. Notwithstanding its UNDP 2013 ranking, in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report, Rwanda is the only Sub-Saharan African country that made the top ten list with 7th position in terms of best countries that have ability of closing their gender gap (World Economic Forum 2014). Undoubtedly, the high increase in female representation in the country's parliament with 63.8% women in the Chamber of Deputies and 38.5% women appointed in the Senate contributed to its progress of gender inequality ranking in the World Economic Forum.

Political System

Rwanda has a multi-party system and the post genocide 2003 constitution provided for a democratic state governed by the consent of the people and all powers are derive from the people.¹⁰ The country has twelve (12) political parties and the ruling party - Rwandan Patriotic Front has been in power since 2003 under the leadership of President Paul Kagame who has been re-elected in 2010 for another seven-year term (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). The RPF holds majority seats in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, cabinet and at local governance levels. The opposition parties are Centralist Democratic Party (PDC), Democratic Popular Union of Rwanda (UDPR), Islamic Democratic Party (DPI), Liberal Party (PL), Party for Progress and Concord (PPC), Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR), Social Democratic Party

¹⁰ See article 1, 2 & 52, Constitution of Rwanda, 2003

(PSD), Socialist Party (PS), and Solidarity and Prosperity Party (PSP). Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) and Party for Democratic Renewal (PDR) are officially banned by the government from operating as political parties (CIA, 2014).

The Rwandan constitution provides for the three arms of government-the executive, legislature and judiciary who should be separated and independent from one another but complementary to each other.¹¹ The bi-cameral legislature comprises of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies consists of 80 seats (53 members elected by popular vote, 24 women elected by local bodies, 3 selected by youth and disability organizations) who are elected every five years.¹² On the other hand, the Senate has 26 seats (12 members elected by local councils, 8 appointed by the president, 4 appointed by the Political Organizations Forum, 2 represent institutions of higher learning) elected every eight years.¹³

The constitution further provides for decentralization and the country to be divided into Provinces, Districts, Cities, Municipalities, Towns, Sectors and Cells to carry out decentralization at local administrative levels.¹⁴ In addition, the constitution provides for the establishment of an independent National Electoral Commission which is responsible for the preparation and the organization of elections including local, legislative, presidential and referendum.¹⁵

Although Rwanda has a multi-party system and conducts regular elections, the RPF-led government is considered to be intolerant to dissent and suppresses human rights including

¹¹ See article 60, Constitution of Rwanda, 2003

¹² Article 76 & 77

¹³ Article 82

¹⁴ Article 3 & 167

¹⁵ Article 180

freedom of speech (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2009; Reyntjens, 2010). According to the 2014 Freedom House global rankings of 'Freedom in the World', Rwanda ranks 'not free' (Freedom House 2014). Rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have over the years reported on rights violations and the authoritarian nature of the Kagame government. However, the political system of Rwanda has incorporated the voices of women since the post-genocide era, hence their high representation in decision-making bodies.

STATUS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Rwanda, like most African countries, granted women the right to political participation as the same with men at the dawn of independence. Women gain the right to universal suffrage to vote and stand for political office in 1961 with the exception of the Office of the President, which was later removed by the 1978 Rwandan constitution (IPU, 1995). For scholars such as Schwartz (2004), the participation of women in leadership structures in Rwanda dated back to pre – colonial times. She argued that women played traditional leadership roles as chiefs ruling on behalf of the King in several parts of the country and served as advisers in decision making (Schwartz, 2004). However, aside from the traditional role, the representation of women in formal politics began in 1965 in the country's first legislature after independence (Powley 2005).

Women in Parliament

Legislative institutions are important political bodies for balancing power among the three arms of government because they serve as entry points of national laws, policies and programs. Legislative power and influence directs a society's positions from politics, economic advancement and cultural matters. Since members of legislative institutions determine government allocations of resources and opportunities, therefore it is crucial for gender parity to

be ensured in parliament. Women's representation in the Rwandan parliament started low in post-independence period, like in most African countries. In the first legislature of Rwanda, only three women were elected out of 64 seats. Perhaps, one could argue this is due to the cultural barriers in Africa as women are considered subordinates to men and the society positioned their roles in private sphere as home maintainers and carers.

Also, because of the one-party state in Rwanda very few women were in leadership positions until the situation started to change in 1991 when multi-party system was legalized. Consequently, the minimal representation of women in the Rwandan parliament in the first three decades after independence as the total women representation was 6.3% of the 64 member legislature, which was called National Development Council in 1981 (IPU, 1995). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, following the increase of the council's membership to 70, women representation rose to 12.9% in 1983 and 17.1% in 1988 parliaments. However, following the civil war that erupted in 1990 and continued up to 1993, women parliamentary representation decreased to 4.3% in 1994 because of collapse of constitutional institutions (IPU, 1995).

As the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide left the Rwandan population with 70% women, they immediately assumed traditionally 'male' roles of household heads and contributed in the economy and politics of the country. Such roles arguably led to their current critical mass in the political landscape as they couldn't be ignored in the development process of the country because of the significance role they played in rebuilding Rwanda (Burnet, 2008; Bauer and Burnet, 2013; Powley, 2005).

As the transition government was constituted, eight (8) women were appointed out of 70 seats in the first post-genocide 'transitional national parliament' constituting 11.4% of representatives (Delvin and Elgie, 2008). The political representation of more than half of the country's

population started to gain momentum in the post-genocide transitional government as women appointment in the Chamber of Deputies reached 17.1% in 1997 and further rose to 25.7% in 2000 (Burnet, 2008; Delvin and Elgie, 2008; Powley, 2005).

Although women's political representation advanced in the transition government, the critical mass took off in 2003 with legal and institutional reforms instituted by the government (Powley, 2005; Bauer, 2008). The corner stone to the increased representation of more than half of the population in Rwandan politics is the new constitution adopted in 2003 that allocates at least 30% quota for women in all decision making structures of the country.¹⁶ The dramatic increase of women in the country's legislature started in the first post-genocide elections. With the adoption of quota system, the country broke away from the usual trend in Africa as parliamentary representation got near parity with 48.8% women got elected in the Chamber of Deputies in the 2003 legislative elections (IPU, 2003). This increase was even surpassed when women representation in the lower house reached 56.3% in 2008 and women appointed in the Senate further rose to 38.5% in 2011 (IPU, 2012). As the pattern in Africa, a region with entrenched socio-cultural barriers that underpin women's equal enjoyment of their human rights, sustaining progress of political representation in Rwanda would be expected to be difficult. Interestingly, a decade later Rwanda is still able to consolidate the gains registered in women's political representation when 63.8% women were elected in the Chamber of Deputies and 38.5% appointed in the Senate in 2013-making it the world's number one female-dominated house (IPU, 2013).

Although women's access to decision making bodies has dramatically increased in Rwanda, it is crucial to note that women's leadership positions within the legislature is also critical. As Karam

¹⁶ See article 9 (4) of constitution of Rwanda (2003)

and Lovenduski (2005) argued that women's representation in parliaments should extend beyond numbers and include positions of leadership within parliament in order for women to command greater influence and represent women's needs. Nonetheless, no woman has ever been Presiding Officer of Parliament in the history of Rwandan legislature until 2008 when the Chamber of Deputies has a female speaker who still holds the position (IPU, 2015). However, in the parliamentary committees women have been highly represented since the country gained female dominated house. Thus, Rwandan women enjoy equal representation as men in parliamentary politics.

Women in Ministerial Positions

At the ministerial level, women have been represented in key ministerial positions. Cabinet as executive arm of government is more policy oriented than political. However, women holders of top executive positions are critical for gauging their political power with government. Thus, women accessing such institutions do not only increase legitimacy of such institutions but accord women opportunity of power to determine policies that are gendered and address women's needs. The portfolio of Prime Minister is the second most powerful person in the Rwandan cabinet. Prior to the genocide, Mrs Agathe Uwilingimana of the opposition MDR party, who some argue was a victim of the civil war in Rwanda, was appointed the first female Prime Minister in 1993 (Burnet, 2008). Although women were under-represented in cabinet before the genocide, in the 'transitional government' the Rwandan Patriotic Front appointed women in its cabinet and in 2000 women held 13% of ministerial posts (IPU, 2012).

With the adoption of a gender sensitive constitution in 2003 that allocate at least 30% of women representation in all decision making bodies, women representation in cabinet rose to 35.7% in 2005. Nonetheless, a decrease was seen in 2008 with 16.7% women ministers, however the rate

further increased as 32.0% of the appointed ministers were women in 2012 (IPU, 2012). Perhaps the high number of women elected in the Senate in 2011 has spurred the significant rise in female appointment in the cabinet again in 2012. As ministerial positions and leadership in state executive institutions are exceptionally critical in measuring women's advancement in public life, the rate of women ministers further increased in Rwanda to 39.3% in 2014 (IPU, 2014). Though the women's access to ministerial positions is crucial, women should not only be given ministerial portfolios that reflect their ascribed *femine roles* such as Health, Education, Gender and Family Promotion or Social Affairs but critical positions such as Foreign Affairs, Justice, Security, Finance and Economic Affairs as well.

According to Delvin and Elgie (2008) women held key ministries in Rwanda including Ministries of Gender and Family Promotion, Education, Science, Technology and Research, Economic Planning and Cooperation, and a female Minister was also appointed in the Office of the President. Powley (2003) also notes that Rwanda has made women visible through appointment of women in key positions such as Ministries of Justice and Land, Resettlement and Environment. Women are also highly represented in the Judiciary as women constitute 43% of Judges in the Supreme Court and 30.8% of High Court Judges in Rwanda (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2013). When women access ministerial positions, they ensure gender-responsive budgeting and mainstreaming of women's needs in different sectors as female needs are different from that of male. Thus, it is crucial that women are represented in cabinet for incorporation of women's needs and concerns in development and policy programs.

Women in Local Governance

At the micro-level, women have been represented in decision making organs from the provincial to *cell* level. Women representation in local governance began in the post-genocide period with the new decentralization process in place. Realizing that women have been traditionally excluded in the local governance, Rwanda's decentralization process in post-genocide period factored the important role women could play in the development process, thus included their representation in all administrative structures from the lowest level-*cells* to national level. In March 1999, Rwanda held *cell* and *sector* elections as a first step to the national decentralization policy (International Crisis Group, 2001). Women's representation in local governance took off with the 1999 *cell* elections in which women won 13.7% of seats.

According to the International Crisis Group (2001), the *cell* and sector polls were followed by the first ever local government elections in the history of Rwanda held on the 6th March in 2001. In the higher local governance structures such as district councils, women are highly represented as at least half of the local government council members must be women.¹⁷ With the introduction of triple balloting system in 2001, women are guaranteed a minimum of 20% representation in district level leadership (Powley, 2006). This initiative gave rise to their representation at the district level as women made up 27% of those elected in the 2001 district elections (Powley, 2003). The constitution of Rwanda guarantees the establishment of women's councils, which operate parallel to the general local council. Through these structures, women access political power as the head of women's council hold reserved seats in the general local councils.

¹⁷ See Kauzya (2007), Discussion Paper on Political Decentralization in Africa: Experiences of Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa

However, representation at the Mayoral positions was limited as only 5 women were elected out of 106 Mayors (Powley, 2003). As women gained more confidence and experience in the women-only election system, there is significant increase of their representation at local governance level. Currently, women made up 10% of Mayors, 16.7% of Vice-Mayors for Economic Affairs, 83.6% Vice-Mayors for Social Affairs and there are 40% women Governors in Rwanda (Government of Rwanda, 2014). At District level, women comprised of 43% of district councils, 6.7% District Executive Secretaries, 45% of Sector Councils and 43.9% of Village Councils (Government of Rwanda, 2014). As Powley (2003) argued the process of representation is providing space for women who would not have been in the political arena. Therefore, the mechanisms instituted by the Rwandan government after the tragic genocide such as the women's councils and triple balloting system is enhancing representation in decision making at local governance level.

Table 1: Parliamentary Composition of Women in Rwanda from 1965 – 2015

Year	Lower or single House (Chamber of Deputies)			Upper House or Senate (Senate)		
	Seats	No. of Women	% of Women	Seats	No. of Women	% of Women
1965	47	3	6.3%	---	---	---
1981	64	4	6.3%	---	---	---
1983	70	9	12.9%	---	---	---
1988	70	12	17.1%	---	---	---
1994	70	3	4.3%	---	---	---
1997	70	12	17.1%	---	---	---
2000	70	18	25.7%	---	---	---
2001	74	19	25.7%	---	---	---
2003	80	39	48.8%	20	6	30.0%
2004	80	39	48.8%	26	9	34.6%
2008	80	45	56.3%	26	9	34.6%
2011	80	45	56.3%	26	10	38.5%
2012	80	45	56.3%	26	10	38.5%
2015	80	51	63.8%	26	10	38.5%

Source: Inter- Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliaments 1945-1995: Worldwide Statistical Survey*, Geneva (1995); Inter - Parliamentary Union “Women in national parliaments” webpage accessed here <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> on April 23rd, 2015; Burnet (2008); Delvin and Elgie (2008) and Powley (2005)

--- Senate doesn’t exist prior to 2003 as the bicameral legislature began after the post-genocide ‘transitional government’ ended and the new constitution established the Senate

Table 2: Cabinet Composition of Women in Rwanda from 2000 – 2014

Appointment Year	Total Ministers	Number of Women	% of Women
2000	*	?	13%
2003	?	?	35.7%
2005	28	10	35.7%
2008	18	3	16.7%
2010	24	8	33.3%
2012	25	8	32.0%
2014	28	11	39.3%

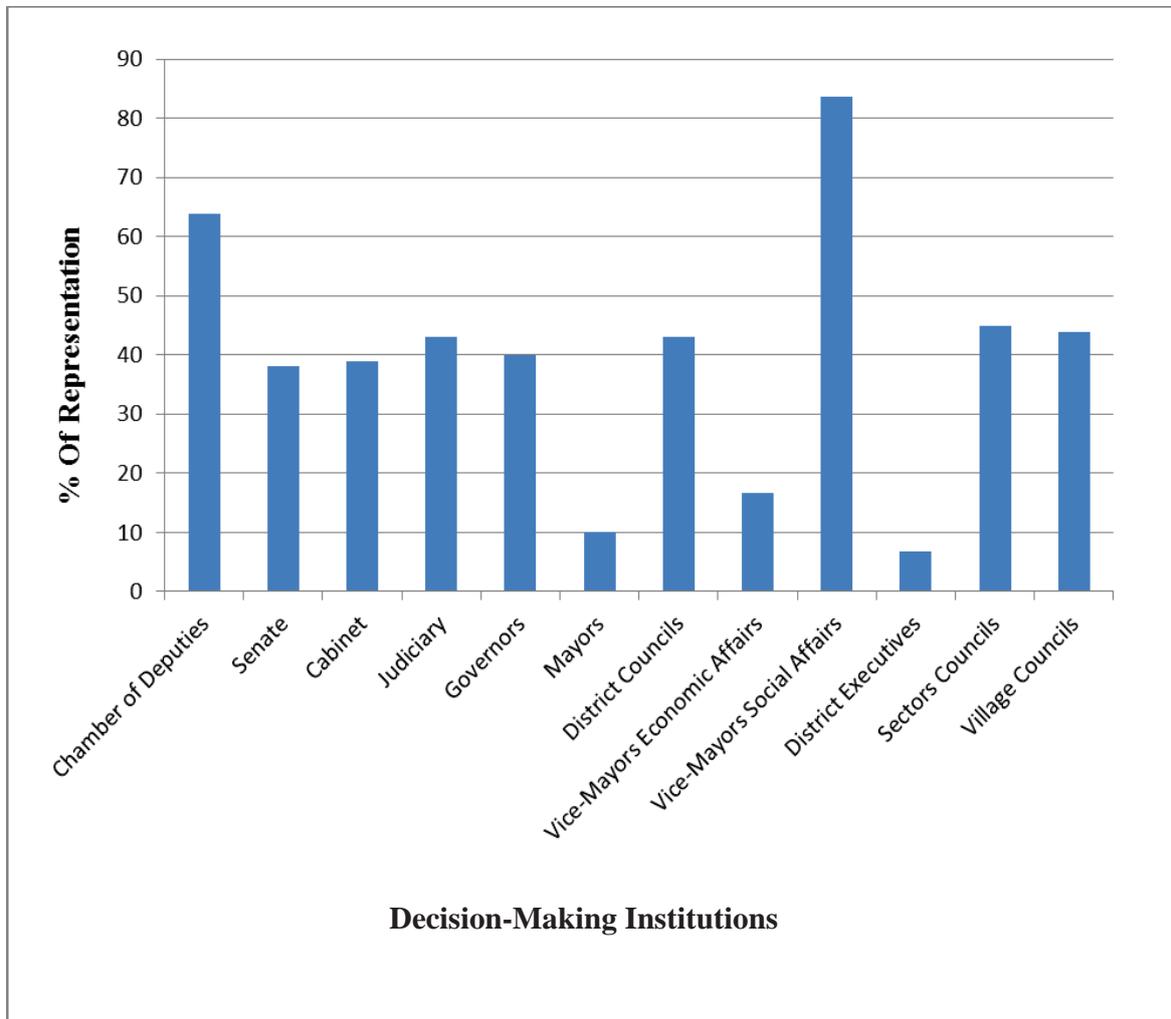
Source: Inter - Parliamentary Union, Map of “Women in Politics”, situations as of March 2000, 2003, 1st January 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014

? Means the data for number of ministerial posts held by women is not available

*The IPU map of “women in politics” in 2000 did not provide the data for total number of cabinet posts and those held by women as only the % is provided. The % of posts women held in 2003 is provided by IPU.

NB: Data for cabinet composition prior to 2000 is not available as most of those years Rwanda was in military rule and civil conflict

Figure 1: Current Status of Women’s Representation in Decision-Making Institutions



Source: Report on the Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of General Assembly (2000), Government of Rwanda (2014). Accessed here:

http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/rwanda_review_beijing20.ashx

THE GENOCIDE AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN RWANDA

The devastating genocide of 1994 that lasted for 100 days has undoubtedly impacted on women's role in Rwandan society. Women were disproportionately affected by the genocide because of its gendered nature as they were subjected to sexual assault, rape and torture, and they survived as widows losing their properties and livelihoods (Powley, 2005). According to Hogg (2009), the Hutu extremist ideology of the genocide targeted Tutsi women and portrayed them as seductresses who could entrap Hutu men, thus marriage or any association with Tutsi women was forbidden. Because of such ideology, rape was perpetuated against Tutsi women as it was used as a weapon of humiliation to the entire Tutsi population (Hogg, 2009).

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, 70% of Rwandan population were female and 35% of household heads were women (Powley, 2005). As indicated by Powley (2005), women being the majority of the population who lost livelihoods and properties and faced with a devastated country, immediately assumed the traditionally 'male' roles and played a crucial role in rebuilding Rwanda. Women were active in the economy, served as financial providers and provided shelter for about 500,000 orphans (Hogg, 2009; Powley, 2005). In addition, women also play a key role in reconciliation efforts in post-conflict Rwanda. According to Powley (2005) the genocide enabled women to develop skills that they wouldn't have acquired and think of themselves differently, thereby contributing significantly to the productive capacity of the country. Consequently, because of the changing gender role in Rwandan society and crucial contributions of women in reconstructing the country, they couldn't be ignored in the governance process of Rwanda and were included women in the "transitional government" by RPF.

As argued by scholars such as Longman (2006) the terrible impact of the genocide on women and societal discrimination they encountered inspired their struggle for promotion of their rights

in Rwanda. He expoused that because of how the genocide disproportionately effect on women, they needed to be in positions of power to address women's human rights (Longman, 2006). Additionally, the genocide contributed in garnering more 'solidarity' among women's organizations and Rwandan women in general as women formed an umbrella organization-Pro-Femmes and together with FFRP lobbied and advocated for women's rights in general irrespective of ethnicity. Therefore, because of the changing gender roles arising from the genocide in Rwanda, it contributed to these factors that led to the progress of gender equality in Rwanda.

Furthermore, the genocide destroyed the political structure of Rwanda as the politicians in the previous government were killed and discredited, the RPF assumed leadership role in post-genocide period. Because of the changes in power structure, a new political landscape was reconfigured in Rwanda and the 70% women population created a new window of opportunity for women's inclusion in politics. Generally, women are considered less controversial, thus the RPF considered them in the new government as the political reality in Rwanda gave them the opportunity to be included in decision-making positions because women did not posed any threat to the sustenance of the RPF government. Because of the high women population and changes in their societal role, together with the reconfiguration of existing power structure that arosed because of the genocide, the political reality of the country led to high women's representation. However, the genocide is not a major factor but has influenced the national leadership's political will to gender equality which is the key determinant of progress in political participation and representation.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

From the tables shown above, it is evident that women's political representation started to gain momentum in Rwanda in the post-genocide period and that representation is much greater at legislature than other levels. However, it is worthy to note that the increased representation doesn't happen out of a miracle but owed to a lot of factors and mechanisms including political will of the Rwandan leadership as key determinant of progress.

Normative Factors

a) Configuration of Political Will in Rwanda

The key contributing factor to Rwanda's progress in women's political participation and representation in decision making is the Rwandan leadership's political will to gender equality. As ideational factors often influence each other, the Rwandan case is different as other ideational factors such as patriarchy and cultural values did not influence on the leadership's political will to gender equality. In spite of the highly patriarchal nature of African politics that one would have expected to impede on the leadership's political will to gender equality, the Rwanda Patriotic Front was able to break away from this norm and demonstrated strong political will to gender equality in the aftermath of the genocide.

However, one would tend to ask why an authoritarian government like the RPF demonstrates political will to gender equality as often authoritarian governments suppresses liberal views including women's rights and inclusion of divergent views in the political landscape. Nonetheless, the RPF's political will has reflected in the several mechanisms instituted by the government in order to increase women's political participation and representation. The

Rwandan Patriotic Front has been in power since the immediate aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda. Since then the government had showed strong political will to gender equality which led to the progress of gender equality including women's participation and representation in decision-making institutions. Arguably, because of the RPF gender sensitive programme in post-genocide reconstruction led to the progress of women's representation in politics. However, a crucial question one tend to ask is how does the RPF generated political will to equality and why it showed strong political will to gender equality.

Key among the factors that caused the Rwandan political will is the RPF leadership's exposure to gender equality in Uganda, a country that has impressive women's political participation and representation since the early 1990s. The RPF leadership were exiled in Uganda during the 1959 civil war. While exiled in Uganda, the RPF has been working closely with the national resistance movement in Uganda under the leadership of President Yoweri Museveni who initiated political liberalization reforms including women's rights upon gaining power in 1986. Having spent several years in Uganda and getting connection with a government that promotes women's political representation, the RPF got exposed to gender equality and learned lessons from Uganda. Consequently, as the RPF gained experience on gender equality and became conscious of the need for women's inclusion in governance, it supported women's representation in politics in Rwanda.

According to scholars such as Powley (2005), the RPF's political will to gender equality came from the experience of its leadership to the Ugandan initiative of including women in decision-making. Upon acceding to power immediately the genocide halted, the RPF party included women in the 'transitionl government' as more women were appointed in the cabinet and legislature. The RPF adopted a similar model of Uganda's reserved seats where women are

allocated 30% representation in both Chamber of Deputies and Senate. Additionally, Bauer and Burnet (2013) also agrees with the argument that the experience of RPF in Uganda led to the leadership's political will to gender equality.

Although some scholars argued that the resultant effect of conflict on women caused the high increase in their numbers in decision-making in Rwanda, however, this does not necessarily be the case as the effect of conflict on women in other countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville) did not accordingly led to increase in their political participation and representation because women are still under-represented in political decision-making bodies including parliament in such countries. Therefore, the genocide's disproportionate effects on women in Rwanda changed their roles in the society in the aftermath of the genocide by enhancing their participation in social sphere as heads of households, economic providers among others but doesn't automatically led to their high participation in political sphere. The key factor to the progress of women in Rwandan politics is the political will of the RPF leadership that mainstreamed gender and included women in decision - making bodies since the aftermath of the genocide.

Another important factor that caused the political leadership's political will to gender equality is the crucial role women played in RPF's actions during the civil war and successful ending of the genocide. Women were part of the RPF's armed and political wing since exiled in Uganda and when the civil war broke in Rwanda, they were engaged in the killings and effectively participated in the RPF halting of the genocide in 1994. Accordingly, to compensate their efforts, the RPF appointed them in the transitional government council and legislature in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. The RPF's Commission of Finance during its resistance movement was appointed as first female minister of Women's Affairs when a new ministry responsible for

gender was established after the genocide. Other women who were also part of the RPF's political and armed wing were appointed in the Senate and others included in the RPF party list to contest for parliamentary elections.

Furthermore, the Rwandan leadership's desire to use the inclusion of women in decision-making as a strategy to control political liberalization in the country contributed to the configuration of its political will to gender equality. Often authoritarian governments do not allow any political participation by another group of society including women because of such regimes' intolerance to divergent and dissenting opinion. Interestingly, Rwanda which is perceived to have an authoritarian government and its leadership suppresses opposition and dissenting views, have demonstrated will for women's political participation and representation. However, this is because women are often perceived as a non-critical group who doesn't actively challenge any leadership and even if included in decision-making bodies will align with the ruling party and support its policies without being critical to its suppression of political dissent. However, this perception of women does not generally apply in all situations as there strong women politicians in Africa who are challenging the male dominated political terrain and driving policy changes in their countries.

The leadership's inclusion of women is a strategy for exclusion of ethno-political dissent. According to Hogg (2009) the RPF's inclusion of women in decision-making bodies is based on the assumption that the 'nonethnic woman representative' will have a different relationship to politics, hence women's greater representation will 'better' the post-conflict political climate. The RPF often justify its promotion of fundamental principles and equality of all Rwandans through the promotion of women's greater representation in decision-making institutions. However, equality does not necessarily exist as other issues of fundamental principles and

political liberalization are restricted by the government. As Powley notes "...although Rwanda's constitution is progressive in terms of equal rights, gender equality and women's representation, it is limiting in other important ways; specific concerns have been raised about restrictions on freedom of speech around issues of ethnicity," (Powley, 2005 p.155). Thus, since the inclusion of women in decision-making institutions does not disrupt the RPF's agenda, it poses no risk to the leadership's desire of controlling dissenting views, therefore the manifestation of strong political will to gender equality.

Moreover, the genocide in Rwanda arises from discrimination as the Tutsi population was being discriminated in the governance process during the Habriyama regime which eventually led to a civil war that climaxed into genocide. Thus, the RPF who once belong to the discriminated group (Tutsi) knew what it meant to be discriminated and how discrimination of a particular group of society could lead to resistance and violence, thus included women in decision-making. However, the inclusion of women is meant to divert attention from arguments of non-ethnic pluralism in the Tutsi dominated government as when women are guaranteed rights to political representation it will be perceived that both Tutsi and Hutu women are represented in the political landscape. Scholars such as Powley (2003) argue that the Rwandan leadership's political will to include women in decision making is a way of authoritarian RPF shifting attention from absence of ethnic pluralism in its government. When the RPF gained power it 'publicly demonstrated a strong commitment to expanding rights and representation of women in decision making' (Longman, 2006 p.141) as it appointed ten women in the 'transitional government parliament' and this figure rose to 25.7% before the 2003 constitution that guarantee women's representation was adopted. However, the inclusion of women in representative positions has been alongside

intolerance to ethno-political dissent and denial of ethnic discrimination as increase women's representation have been use by the leadership to justify equality of all Rwandans.

Nonetheless, the above factors have jointly caused the configuration of political will to gender equaulity in Rwanda and subsequently contributed to the increase representation of women in decion-making institutions since the post-genocide period. However, it is essential to analyze how has political will led to the progress of women's participation and representation in Rwanda's political landscape.

As the aforementioned argument has shown the factors that caused the configuration of Rwandan leadership's political will to gender equality, it is prudent now to the justification of how political will has been the key determinant to progress in women's political representation. The Rwandan Patriotic Front leadership's demonstrated political will to gender equality in the post-genocide period, I argue is the key contributing factor that increased women's representation in decision-making bodies. Although women were represented in parliament prior to the genodice, however it is was when RPF acceded to power in the aftermath of the genocide that women numbers in parliament and cabinet started to rise. Upon successfully ending the genocide and gaining the power of leadership, the RPF showed commitment to women's inclusion in the governance processes of the country by appointing ten women in the 'transitional government parliament'.

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide before a new constitution was adopted in 2003, the appointed women in parliament had reached over 25% (Powley, 2005). In post-genocide reconstruction period before the adoption of 2003 gender sensitive constitution, Rwandan leadership enacted progressive gender friendly laws such as review of post-genocide prosecution guidelines that classified rape and sexual torture as serious crimes (1996), law extending rights

for pregnant and breast-feeding mother in work place (1997) and Protection of Child Violence law (2001). These laws afforded women certain rights and addressed issues that affected them prior to the genocide such as system gender-based violence and security in work place.

Additionally, in 2003 the RPF-led 'transitional government' supported the inclusion of women in decision-making institutions by adopting a constitution that guarantees at least 30% of positions to women in all decision-making bodies in Rwanda. Although voters might lack the choice of candidates in reserved seats, the leadership's will led to the adoption of a constitutional quota guaranteeing women 30% representation in governance. This significantly contributed to the increase in number of women elected in the Rwandan parliament as the 2003 parliamentary election got women near parity in the legislature with 48.8% representation in the Chamber of Deputies. Also, because quotas can only be effective when implementation process is clear and mechanisms for its enforcement put in place, the RPF-led government instituted several mechanisms for smooth implementation of the constitutional gender quota. Such mechanisms included the innovative electoral system of triple balloting and establishment of women's councils that promoted and encouraged women's political engagement, thereby having more women interested in politics with enhanced their confidence to contest for elective political office in Rwanda.

Moreover, the RPF party instituted a gender quota at party level for women guaranteeing women 30% nomination in the party list for elections. Through this party quota, the RPF encouraged, supported and nominated women to contest for legislative and local council elections. Consequently, more women got the chance to be elected in decision-making positions because of such measures by the RPF, thereby increase their numbers in the political landscape. Because of the RPF will to increase women's representation through such mechanisms, more women enter

the political terrain. In 2003 women appointed in cabinet by the RPF's leadership rose to 35.7% from the 13% it was in 2001 and currently 39.3% women are appointed in the cabinet. Also, because the leadership's political will to increase women's representation, a Senate was established in 2003 making Rwanda to have a bi-cameral legislature and women are guaranteed 30% representation in the Senate. Additionally, women representation further rose to 56.3% in the Chamber of Deputies in 2008 from the 48.8% representation of 2003. At local government level, because of mechanisms of RPF such as the *triple balloting* and women's councils, women's representation increased. Currently Rwanda has 40% women Governors, 43% women in district councils, 43.9% women as Village Councilors and 45% women representation at sector councils.

However, the Rwandan women's representation doesn't only take the form of 'descriptive representation' but 'substantive representation' as well. As more women gained positions of authority, they worked on ensuring that the government address women's needs and issues. Because of increased women representation to 48.8% in 2003, the Rwandan parliament enacted more laws promoting women's rights such as the 'Inheritance Act' of 2003, Land Rights Law of 2005 and the 'Gender Based Violence law' of 2008 (Bauer, 2012; Delvin and Elgie, 2008). This has led to changing women's role in Rwandan society as progress in terms of gender equality started to gain momentum.

The women's high representation in decision-making bodies such as parliament and cabinet level enabled them to drive policy changes in Rwanda to ensure gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting to address women's needs in different sectors. Consequently, the women's political representation contributed to increase in female literacy rate, greater women's participation in labor and economic growth in Rwanda. According to data from World Bank,

female population in secondary education as of 2012 is 7.4 of 8.0 male population in secondary education. This is owed to the progress in women's political participation and representation as more women enter the political terrain, girls' access to education increases (Burnet, 2011). Additionally, women's share of the tertiary enrollment as of 2012 is 43.0% and literacy among women age fifteen years and above is 76.9% whereas male literacy rate is 80.4% (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2013). As women's and girls' access higher education, it give them opportunities of self-reliance, greater voice in decision-making and increase their assertiveness. Access to higher and tertiary education are sustainable and effective opportunities of empowerment and changing the lives of women. Thus, the increased in representation of women in decision-making bodies have enhanced their role in Rwandan society. Furthermore, female participation in labour force surpassed that of male, at 86.5% female to 85.5% male participation (UNDP, 2014).

Also, the "symbolic representation" of women in Rwandan has increased as more women get to the decision-making positions as reflected in the views of women parliamentarians interviewed in Delvin and Elgie (2008). According to the interviewees, the increase in representation of women enabled women in Rwanda to become more aware of their rights to political participation and ensured greater solidarity on women issues (Delvin and Elgie, 2008). Furthermore, because of the change in political culture and social conceptions of gender roles as Rwandan women received greater acceptance in positions of authority, it has led to cordial relationship between different genders in parliament and gender sensitivity among male parliamentarians in Rwanda (Delvin and Elgie, 2008).

Moreover, the gained greater capacity to speak in public forum as active and independent agents in public life, and have autonomy in decision-making in family, thereby decreasing the political

engagement gap. Additionally, as Delvin and Elgie (2008) argued, the increased in numbers of women in public sphere contributed to women having more confidence in themselves to be in the same platform with men without feeling low. Thus, reflected in the greater participation of women in decision-making bodies as more are being nominated into political office as seen in their high numbers which currently stood at 63.8% representation in the Chamber of December. Therefore, the leadership's political will to gender equality has been the key driving force to the progress of women's political participation and representation in Rwanda.

b.) Constitution

One of the main drivers of success in women's political participation and representation in Rwanda is the coming into force of the post – genocide constitution in 2003. Following nine years of transitional 'Government of National Unity' led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, in May 2003 a new constitution was adopted in a referendum in Rwanda. In the new constitution, women's rights to equality with men including political representation in all public governance structures are guaranteed. The constitution of Rwanda set aside a minimum of 30% quota for women in all decision making organs and reserved 24 seats for women in the Chamber of Deputies. According to article 9 of the constitution "the State of Rwanda commits itself to conform to the following fundamental principles to promote and enforce the respect thereof: (4) *building a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty percent [30%] of posts in decision making organs.*"¹⁸

¹⁸ See article 9 (4) of Constitution of Rwanda (2003)

In addition, the constitution also prohibits discrimination in all its form including discrimination based on sex grounds.¹⁹ However, one would tend to ask why the gender sensitive constitution guaranteeing women equal rights as men is adopted in a patriarchal African country where women are considered subordinates to men. There are different strands of arguments to this question. Some scholars expounded that aggressive civil society campaigns and lobbying to the Rwandan Patriotic Front that was exposed to gender equality while exiled in Uganda contributed to the inclusion of quota for women in the constitution (Longman, 2006; Burnet, 2008). On the contrary, others argued that the inclusion of women in decision making is a way of authoritarian RPF shifting attention from absence of ethnic pluralism in its government (Powley, 2003).

The RPF has been considered by rights groups to have a stiff policy of resistance to political liberalization and silencing dissent. Nevertheless, the government has showed willingness and made women's inclusion in decision making a hallmark of its program for post-genocide recovery and reconstruction (Powley, 2006). On the other hand, it is prudent to note that political transitions provide opportunity for mobilization of women's movements to participate in the process of drafting of constitutions and laws. Thus, one can argue that women's representatives to the constitutional committee utilized this opportunity and campaign for a gender sensitive constitution. Consequently, the adoption of quotas for women in the constitution thereby ensuring increased participation and representation of women in governance institutions, particularly the legislature in Rwanda.

¹⁹ Article 11.

c.) Commitments to International and Regional Instruments

In addition to the national constitution, Rwanda is also a signatory to the CEDAW, the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the UN Platform for Action and Beijing Platform. According to the CEDAW “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) *To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;* (b) *To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.*”²⁰ The Beijing declaration of 1995 also called on state parties to take measures to ensure equal and full participation of women in decision making structures. The gender-sensitive constitution may have been premised on these international legal commitments as Powley (2003) argued that the 2003 constitution references the CEDAW and commits to guarantee 30% women representation.

d.) National Gender Policy

Another factor that has contributed to the increase in numbers of women in decision-making structures in Rwanda is the adoption of a National Gender Policy in 2010. As the policy sets to guide sectoral policies and programmes to integrate gender issues in respect to social, cultural, economic and political planning and programming, it aims to promote a society free from discrimination and promote effective and full participation of all citizens in the development process of the Rwanda. In addition, it also seeks to ‘ensure gender sensitive representation and effective participation of women and men, girls and boys in decision making positions at all levels’ through its program on Good Governance and Justice. Thus, one could argue that as a

²⁰ See article 7 of CEDAW (1979)

strategy to complement the existing legal framework, the policy has contributed to enhancing women representation leading to the female-dominated parliament in 2013.

However, realizing that laws and policies alone are not enough to achieving the political equality guaranteed in the constitution and international instruments, the Rwandan government initiated several institutional mechanisms to promote women's participation in governance at all administrative levels.

However, one might tend to ask why the Rwanda's political leadership demonstrates strong political will to gender equality by not only having a constitutional guarantee for women's inclusion in decision making but instituting mechanisms for effective implementation of the law. Among the reasons for the political will is argued by scholars such as Powley (2003) to be the exposure of the RPF to gender equality while exiled in Uganda. The leadership of RPF spent years in Uganda where women are included in decision-making bodies. Museveni's government instituted a 30% for women in Uganda through a reserved seat that ensured effective women's political representation. Currently there are 112 women out of the 338 seats unicameral legislature making up 35% directly elected in a single-seat constituency by simple majority. Arguably this exposure of the Rwanda's leadership to the model of women's inclusion contributes to the high political will in Rwanda as both countries include women in parliament through reserved seats and that the inclusion of women in politics is a strategy of the government to control liberal and dissent views.

According to scholars such as Hogg (2009), the authoritarian Rwandan Patriotic Front used the inclusion of women in political discourse to consolidate its resistance to political liberalization and substitute the lack of ethnic pluralism in its government. Naturally, women are assumed as

non-opinionated and that they do not usually express opposition to a political leadership. This could be the main motive why an authoritarian Rwanda would be committed to gender equality and adopted quotas for women as the government could use women to dominant the parliament. Nonetheless, in the analysis of the case studies, a more elaborate argument of the main factors determining Rwanda's political will that ensured progress of women's political participation and representation will be discussed.

Institutional Factors

Electoral System

i. Quotas for Women's Representation

Gender quotas are the fastest way of increasing women's political representation. Over the years, quotas have proven to be efficient in providing space for women's entry into politics in countries where it is introduced. In the post-genocide constitution, a reserved seat quota is guaranteed as 30% of seats in parliament are set aside for female legislators. In the Chamber of Deputies, 24 of the 80 seats are contested by women only and that women are also entitled to contest with men for the remaining open seats. In the Senate, women are guaranteed a minimum of 30% representation, which is by appointment and since the adoption of the constitution. As a result, Rwanda has been fulfilling this constitutional commitment.

As argued by scholars such as Burnet (2011), Bauer and Burnet (2013), Dahlerup and Freindenvall (2006), Longman (2006), Powley (2005), and Schwartz (2004), the dramatic increases in numbers of female politicians in Rwandan politics is because of the quota reserved for women in the constitution. It was after the inclusion of quotas that the dramatic increase of women's representation took off in Rwanda as 39 women were elected into the Chamber of Deputies comprising 48.8% and 6 women appointed by the government in the Senate making up

30.0% in 2003 (IPU, 2014). As expected quotas increased women's political representation, however, it is remarkable that women have been exceeding the minimum benchmark set for them in Rwanda. Therefore, one would asked who impacted the process of quota formulation in Rwanda and why the unique type of quotas for reserved seats in both houses.

Arguably, the campaign of women's organizations and the female legislators in the transitional government through its platform - 'Forum for Rwandan Women Parliamentarians' for women's inclusion in governance led to the adoption of reserved quota for women in the constitution (Powley, 2005). These stakeholders were involved in consultations and engagements in the constitutional drafting process and sought concerns from women at the grassroots level on their issues to be included in the new constitution. Among the issues and recommendations was the need for more female participation in governance which was documented into a policy paper and presented to the constitutional commission and the stakeholders lobbied to the Rwandan women to support its adoption (Powley, 2005). Therefore, the participation of women's movement and solidarity among women is crucial for the construction of legal guarantee of women's rights. Furthermore, scholars such as Bauer and Burnet (2013) and Hogg (2009) argued that women's shared experiences as disproportionately disadvantaged population during the genocide led to their inclusion in governance through the adoption of reserved quotas.

ii. Proportional Representation System

The type of electoral system in a country is argued by scholars to be a strong determinant in enhancing women's political participation and representation. As mentioned earlier, Matland (1998), Inglehart and Norris (2003), Kunovich and Paxton (2005), Schwindt-Bayer (2005), Bauer and Britton (2006), Henderson and Jeydel (2007), and Karp and Banducci (2008) all argue that the system of proportional representation tends to be more favorable to women's election

into political office. In proportional representation, women's chances of being elected increase because of large district magnitude, thus making quota implementation easier. In the post-genocide reconstruction, Rwanda adopted a closed-list proportional representation system for its bi-cameral legislature. In 2003, the seats in the Chamber of Deputies were increased to 80 and 24 seats are reserved for women by the constitution. In addition to the 24 reserved seats, women won 15 seats in the openly contested seats, making up a total of 39 seats out of 80. Thus making women representation in the Chamber of Deputies reached 48.8% in 2003.

The Senate, on the other hand, has 26 seats and the constitution guarantees women 30% appointment in the Senate, thus increasing women representation in the Senate. Therefore, the proportional representation electoral system facilitates the easy implementation of reserved seats quota for women. Because of the large district magnitude in the proportional representation system, women's chance of winning in the open seats increases. Consequently, the high number of women winning in the open seats in addition to the reserved seats for them led to the dramatic increase in numbers of women in the Rwandan parliament.

iii. Triple Balloting System

The innovative electoral system Rwanda introduced at the local governance level in the post-genocide reconstruction contributed to the dramatic increase of women's representation at district level. Committed to ensuring women's political representation not only at parliament but all levels of governance, the Rwandan government introduced the 'triple balloting' system in 2001 in order to include women and youth who were traditionally under-represented in governance. Through the 'triple balloting' system electorates cast three ballots (a general candidate ballot, a woman ballot and a youth ballot) in the district level elections (Powley, 2003). In the women ballot, only women contest for the elective posts and in the youth ballot, only

youths contest for the available seats. However, both women and youth can contest the general ballot in addition to their individual women and youth ballots. This mechanism ensures that one-third of those elected at the sector level will be women and that the representatives elected at the sector level indirectly constitutes the district council, thereby having more women sitting in district councils as well (Powley, 2003; UNDP and NDI 2012). Thus, this innovative electoral system has led to greater women's representation at provincial, district, sector and cell levels. It was because of this mechanism that 27% of councilors in district councils were women in 2001.

National Women's Councils

Another innovative structure instituted by the Rwandan government in post-genocide democratization process was the establishment of women's councils. The 2003 constitution of Rwanda guarantees the establishment of women's councils at all levels of government in Rwanda.²¹ This institutional mechanism has contributed to increase female participation in public spheres at all levels in Rwanda (UNDP & National Democratic Institute, 2012). Women's councils were purposely for women; members of women's councils at each level have a reserved seat on the general local council during the transitional period.

Following the restoration of democracy in 2003, a parallel system of women's councils and women-only elections were initiated. Women's councils operate at grassroots level. Councilors elected at the *cell* level work in parallel with the general local council, thereby ensuring representation of women's issues (Powley, 2003). The general council is the local government councils established by the Rwandan constitution for execution of decentralization of power from central government to local level. Local government councils implement development programs at community level and ensure governance at the local level. The Women's councils

²¹ See section of the Constitution of Rwanda, 2003

on the other hand, are women-only councils that operate in all districts for promotion of women's rights and needs, and membership composed of only women. However, the head of the women's council holds a reserved seat on the general local councils. Thus, because of such representation, women in the local government councils ensure that women's needs and issues are mainstreamed in the development projects and programs implemented at local level.

These parallel structures exist at the local, provincial, and national levels. The 24 reserved seats for women in the Chamber of Deputies are contested by women only through women-only elections and coordinated by the national system of women's councils (Powley, 2005). The council is engaged in skills training and rights awareness for local women, and advises the electoral bodies on women's issues, thus carving out new political space for women (Powley, 2004). Therefore, it seems fitting to argue that women's councils have played a crucial role in enhancing women political engagement in Rwanda.

Gender Ministry and Monitoring Office

Another institutional mechanism for the increased women's representation is the creation of Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Affairs during the transition period. This ministry was later split leading to a specific Ministry of Gender and Women in Development charged with responsibility of ensuring gender mainstreaming in all sectors of governance in Rwanda (Powley, 2003). Aware of the nature of patriarchal society in Rwanda, the ministry works towards gender awareness and trained Rwandan population including men on gender equality and women's political representation in key decision making organs of government. Through consultations and engagement with Forum for Rwandan Women Parliamentarians and women NGOs, the women's ministry together with these sectors submitted a policy paper with

recommendations for a gender sensitive constitution to the constitutional commission (Powley, 2005).

It has also engaged in promoting women's interests in development, advising local governance structures on women's issues and educating women how to participate in politics (Burnet, 2008). In addition, the Constitution of Rwanda also establishes Gender Monitoring Office whose role includes to "monitor and supervise on a permanent basis compliance with gender indicators of the programme for ensuring gender equality and complementarity in the context of the vision of sustainable development and to serve as a reference point on matters relating to gender equality and non-discrimination for equal opportunity and fairness."²² Accordingly, these institutional mechanisms have played a role in the success of the women's political representation in post-genocide Rwanda.

Organizational Factors

Political Parties

Political parties are gatekeepers to candidates' representation into elective office. They play an ever-increasing role in the management of parliamentary politics, thus the principle of equality should be practice at party level. Political parties have been contributing to the effective implementation of the constitutional requirement of 30% women representation in all decision-making institutions in Rwanda. It is through political parties that women get nominated for election and their role in the success of women's political participation and representation is worthy to note. It is argued that when the dominant party in a country is gender sensitive, women's chances of political representation increases. This is reflected in the Rwandan Patriotic

²² See article 185 of the Constitution of Rwanda, 2003

Front, the ruling party in Rwanda has demonstrated political will to gender equality, thereby leading to the increase women's political representation.

i. Rwandan Patriotic Front

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has played a vital role in the increased women's political representation as it has been nominating women for non - reserved seats in general elections and appoints women to cabinet positions. As argued by Caul (1999) when women participate in internal party structures, their power within the party enhances, thereby enabling them to lobby for nomination of more women candidates by the party. The first female Minister of Women's Affairs after the genocide who was appointed by the RPF served the party as Commission of Finance (Powley, 2005). According to the constitution of RPF, women are guaranteed 30% representation in all party structures (IDEA, 2013). Such structures include the General Assembly, Political Bureau, National Executive Committee, Executive Committee at Provincial and Village levels, Youth and Women's Councils. In addition, the Chairperson of the Women's Council of the RPF has a seat in the Political Bureau and the National Executive Committee and she plays a crucial role in internal party decision making.

As argued by Caul (1999), political party quotas signify that the party acknowledges women's under-representation and demonstrate commitment to promote women's representation. Scholars like Burnet, (2008, 2011); Longman (2006) and Powley (2005) argued that the RPF's strategy of women's inclusion in governance is owed to its exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda where women hold reserved seats in parliament. According to Burnet (2008) since at its origin, the RPF has mainstreamed women in its structure as women were included in both political and armed wings during the armed struggle from 1990 to 1994. The inclusion of women in the political and armed wings of the RPF could be because of women's the RPF leadership

experiences in Uganda where women are included in decision-making bodies and political institutions. Thus, realizing the crucial role women could help towards the success of the resistance movement, they were incorporated to be part of the movement and women assisted towards the RPF ending genocide.

Additionally, because of the gendered nature of the conflicts as Tutsi women were mostly targeted by the Hutus as reflected in the genocide declaration that marrying, any association or employment of Tutsi women were forbidden. This could be the main reasons why the RPF included women in its structures in during the armed struggle, thus continued after the genocide as they are highly represented in current decision-making structures in Rwanda.

Powley (2005) argued that because of the significant role women played in the RPF resistance success while in exile through the armed struggle it gave them the platform to advocate for women's inclusion during the transition phase.

In the aftermath of the genocide, RPF implemented several steps to enhance female political participation and has appointed as legislatures, ministers, secretaries of states and supreme court judges (Burnet, 2008). According to Powley (2005) the gains registered by women who were members of the RPF were consolidated in the new constitution as they advocated for women's quota. Upon gaining power in 2003, the RPF has 'publicly demonstrated a strong commitment to expanding rights and representation of women in decision making' (Longman, 2006 p.141). Therefore, one can argue that because of gender-sensitive party dominating Rwanda's politics has enabled the successful implementation of these mechanisms thereby leading to increased women's political representation in Rwanda.

ii. Centralist Democratic Party

Although, it is minority party the Centralist Democratic Party has also being mainstreaming gender in its party as women's have being included in the party structures. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2013) the Centralist Democratic Party has guaranteed women 30% representation in all decision making structures of the party such as the National Congress, Political Bureau, National Executive Committee and Permanent Commissions, In addition, the party has among its structure a Gender Commission whose chairperson advises the Political Bureau and National Executive Committee on gender equality.

Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP)

As a women caucus, the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires, or FFRP) has played a crucial role in advancing women's representation in the Rwandan parliament. Established by law makers in 1996 during the transitional government (Gomez and Koppell, 2008), FFRP has been promoting women's rights in Rwanda. As women caucuses help in increasing the confidence of female legislators, the FFRP has among its objectives building the capacity of female parliamentarians and advocating for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the legislature (Gomez and Koppell, 2008).

According to Burnet (2011) the FFRP had led several policy initiatives to enhance women's rights including the adoption of gender quotas and enactment of an inheritance law in 1998. According to Burnet (2008) the FFRP contributed to increase female representation in parliament and in 2007 it hosted a national conference on 'Gender and Role of Parliament' where various stakeholders discussed the role of parliament in promoting gender equality as a key component of development. Furthermore, the FFRP has been engaged in training aspiring women candidates and female parliamentarians on parliamentary rules and procedures. In their studies of the effect

of increased women's representation in parliament, Delvin and Elgie (2008) found out that the FFRP has become more important in coordinating the activities of larger group of women, thus increased solidarity among women. Accordingly, the FFRP has contributed to enhancing women's rights, including the right to political participation and representation in Rwanda.

Women's Movement and Advocacy for Political Inclusion

Women's organizations and civil society also played an important role in the progress of women's political representation in Rwanda. According to Burnet (2011), the women's movement and civil society organizations led to the improvement of women's status in Rwanda prior to the adoption of quotas for women in the constitution.

Although the Rwandan government initiated mechanisms for implementation of laws and protocols signed that support women's equal political representation, however, such initiatives came as a result of the strong advocacy and lobbying by women's organizations for women's political participation to be recognized by the new government. The mobilization of the women's movement worked to institutionalize the expressed commitment of political leaders in the transition period to ensure that women would continue to have equal opportunities for representation in political institutions at all levels (UNDP and NDI, 2012).

According to Powley (2005) women's movement have been very effective in organizing the activities of women, advising the government on issues of women's political participation and promoting reconciliation. She argued that through their umbrella organization, Pro-Femmes, the women's movement coordinated with the gender ministry and Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians and initiated a policy for the adoption of quotas for women submitted to the

Constitutional Commission (Powley, 2005). As argued by Burnet (2011) the lobbying by civil society and women led to the granting of inheritance rights to girl children through changes in the marriage laws in 1998. In addition, Bauer and Burnet (2013) argued that during the transitional period, women's organizations were active in lobbying behind the scenes to the men in parliament for the enactment of laws promoting women's rights, such as property and land laws, inheritance law and classification of rape and torture as serious crimes.

According to Bauer and Britton (2006) women organizations mobilized and advocated for political leadership which encouraged their political involvement. Through their lobbying to the 'transitional government' and legislature, women organizations pressured for women's issues to be addressed in the constitution and this led to the constitution guaranteeing specific rights to women including political rights (Bauer and Britton, 2006).

Furthermore, women's CSOs contributed a significant factor to the success of the quota adoption through lobbying (Bauer and Burnet, 2013). According to Burnet (2008) international events such as the third United Nations World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 influenced the women's movement as several women organizations were formed in the 1980s to promote women's rights. This was further complemented by the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 as Rwandan women gained connections, exposure and skills, and accessed funding from UN agencies and international aid organizations for women's rights promotion (Bauer and Burnet, 2013). According to Bauer and Burnet (2013), through civil society consultation with government, a gender policy platform for Rwanda was identified that emerged from the Beijing conference (Bauer and Burnet, 2013). This has been reflected in the thematic report on Gender of the Population and Housing Census 2012. The report notes that the Fourth World Conference on Women is among the major factors underpinning the gender

changes in Rwanda because the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action provided opportunity for Rwandan women to increase their participation in decision making (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012).

Bauer and Burnet (2013) notes that the formal lobbying of women's organization and woman-to-woman behind the scenes lobbying persuaded the male constitutional committee members who were initially resistance to quota to agree and included women's quota in the constitution. Furthermore, the only female representative to the Constitutional Commission, Judithe Kabakuze had a wide experience in the women's movement and advocated for increased constitutional protectio of women's rights leading to the adoption of gender quotas in the new constitution (Bauer and Burnet 2013).

Also, women's organizations' engagement in capacity building and leadership training for potential aspiring women politicians is crucial in building their leadership skills and confidence to run for political office. Therefore, it is evident that women's movement and civil society networks played a crucial role in the adoption of quotas leading to increased women's political representation in Rwanda. However, ideational factors such as political will of Rwandan leadership is the key determinant of the progress of gender equality including political participation and representation in Rwanda.

CONCLUSION

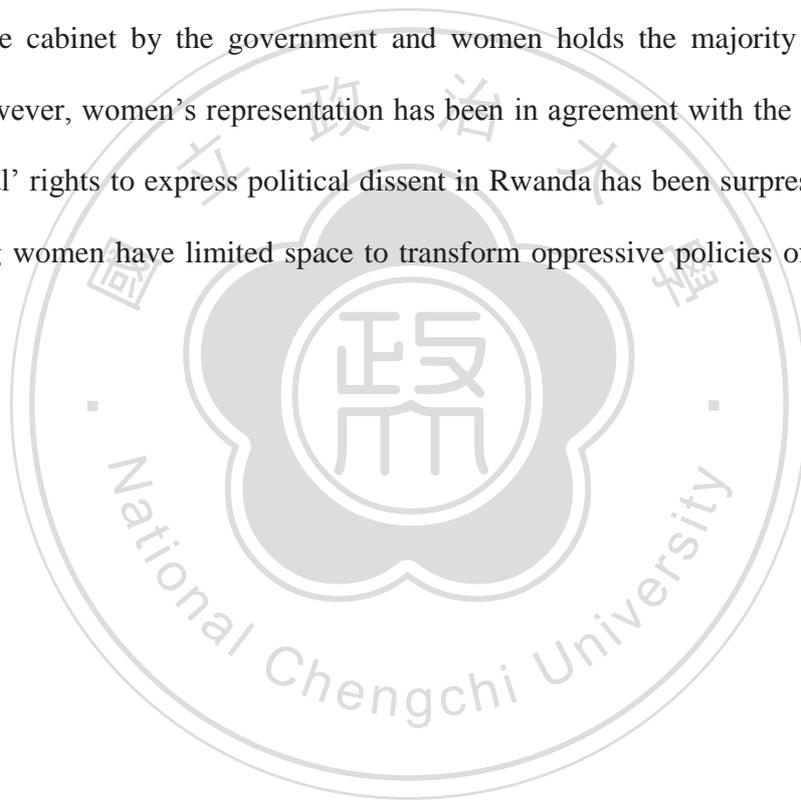
Women's political engagement in Rwanda began since independence; however their effective representation in state political institutions took off after the genocide when a gender sensitive constitution was adopted. In the first legislative elections after the genocide, women political representation got near parity with 48.8% of seats held by women in the lower house while 30.0% women appointed in the upper house. Since then, Rwanda has been progressing with regards "descriptive representation" and currently holds the world's highest score on female parliamentary representation. However, it is worth noting that though the constitution guarantee a minimum of 30% women representation in decision making, it is remarkable that women have been exceeding the benchmark since its adoption and currently holds 63.8% in the Chamber of Deputies and 38.5% in the Senate.

At the ministerial level, women have also been surpassing the minimum target as reflected in the number of women appointed in cabinet which presently stood at 39.3%. The major driving force behind the increase in numbers of women in the political sphere in Rwanda is because of the Rwandan leadership's strong political will to gender equality resulting to adoption of 2003 constitution that allocates 30% quotas for women. In addition to the legislative mechanism, the RPF-led government instituted innovative electoral systems such as triple balloting and women's councils as the party demonstrated high political will to women's representation. Moreover, the genocide effect changed women's role in Rwandan society which inadvertently contributed to the leadership's political will in ensuring women's political equality in Rwanda.

However, according to the UNDP gender inequality index 2013, Rwanda ranks 79th position, thus indicating that gender equality goes beyond political representation but includes country's improvement with social and economic indicators such as education, health and women's

participation in labor force. Nonetheless, because of the significant increase of women representation in the 2013 legislature, Rwanda is the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa that made the list of top ten ranking of the World Economic Forum global gender gap report. It ranks 7th position in the world and number one in the Sub-Saharan African continent, thereby being able to close the gender gap (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Also, there is greater acceptance of women's role in positions of authority as more women were appointed in the cabinet by the government and women holds the majority in the Rwandan parliament. However, women's representation has been in agreement with the RPF leadership's agenda as 'equal' rights to express political dissent in Rwanda has been suppressed and political actors including women have limited space to transform oppressive policies of the single-party regime.



CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE GAMBIA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Gambia was a British colony which was granted self-determination status in 1965 and it became a Republic in 1970 (Sallah, 1990). Following independence in 1965, the the first Prime Minister of The Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jarawa became the President under the Protectorate Progressive Party - which later became People's Progressive Party, (Eddie, 2000). The Gambia was considered as one of the most stable in the region with no history of political violence except the 1981 bloodily aborted coup d'état (Sallah, 1990). President Jawara has been in power from 1965 until July 1994 when he was ousted in a coup d'état led by lieutenant Yahya Jammeh (Eddie, 2000). With the 1994 military take over, the country became under a military regime for two years (1994 -1996) led by the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC).

Following the end of the transition period in 1996, Presidential election was held and won by Yahya Jammeh who contested under the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) party ticket (Eddie, 2000). A new constitution was adopted in January 1997 and The Gambia restored multi-party democracy and national assembly elections in 1997 (Eddie, 2000). According to the Population and Housing Census 2013 report, The Gambia has about 1.8 million people and 51% of the people are women (Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The World Bank data shows that The Gambia is a low income country with \$903.5 million gross domestic product (World Bank, 2015).

The country has 48.4% poverty level and it ranks 172 out of 187 countries in the UNDP Human Development Report 2014 (UNDP, 2014; World Bank, 2015). According to the World Economic Forum global gender gap 2012 report, The Gambia has female literacy rate ratio of 40 to 60 for male and ranks 93 out of 135 countries (World Economic Forum, 2012). In UNDP gender inequality index of 2013, the country score 139th position in the global rankings and has 16.9% female literacy rate compared to 31.4% for male (UNDP, 2014). However, participation in labour force stood at 72.2% for female and 83.0% for male (UNDP, 2014). According to these figures, one can argue that The Gambia is still far from closing the gender gap as the country continues to poorly perform in global rankings and female literacy is far below the male ratio.

Political System

The Gambia established a multi-party democracy following independence and participation of political parties in the country's political landscape existed. However, as mentioned earlier, there was no change in the electoral system of The Gambia as the ruling party - People's Progressive Party (PPP) has been the dominant party throughout its 29 years of existence in the first republic (Edie, 2000). The same scenario remains today as Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction is the dominant political party and President Jammeh was re-elected for the fourth time in 2011 as there are no constitutional term limits (Edie 2000). The opposition parties are weak and have limited say in the government as the ruling party has the majority in both parliament and local councils.

According to IEC (2015), there are ten registered political parties and the opposition parties include United Democratic Party (UDP), People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), National Reconciliation Party (NRP), Gambia People's Democratic Party (GPDP), People's Progressive Party (PPP), Gambia Moral Congress (GMC), National

Democratic Action Movement (NDAM), National Convention Party (NCP) and National Alliance for Democracy and Development (NADD).

The 1997 constitution of The Gambia established the three arms of government – Legislature, Executive and Judiciary and provides for separation of powers. According to Chapter VII of the constitution of The Gambia, a National Assembly shall be established whose membership shall be 53 (48 elected by simple majority and 5 appointed by the President) to serve a term of five years.²³ The President is given the powers by the constitution to terminate the appointment of nominated members and a member ceases to be a parliamentarian if his/her appointment is terminated by the President or he/she ceases to be a member of a political party of which he/she was elected parliamentarian.²⁴ Section 89 of the constitution provides the qualification of national assembly members which includes being a citizen of The Gambia, attainment of a minimum age of twenty-one, ability to speak English language with a certain degree of proficiency, and residency in a constituency for a minimum of one year preceding nomination.

The constitution further provides for the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) whose members shall be appointed by the President of the country in consultation with the Judicial Service Commission and Public Service Commission.²⁵ The IEC shall be responsible for the supervision of all public elections, registration of political parties, and conduct and supervision of registration of voters.²⁶ The constitution provides for decentralization of powers through the establishment of local government administration and an Act of the National

²³ See sections 87 & 88 of the Constitution of The Gambia, 1997

²⁴ See section 91.

²⁵ See section 42.

²⁶ See section 143.

Assembly to establish Local Government Authorities (LGA).²⁷ Local Government Authorities include City Councils, Municipalities and Area Councils whose members are to be elected for a term of four years.

Although The Gambia has a multi-party system and conducts regular elections, the government is intolerant to dissent and suppresses human rights as indicated in Human Rights Reports on The Gambia of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. According to the 2014 Freedom House global rankings of 'Freedom in the World', The Gambia ranks 'not free' (Freedom House, 2014).

STATUS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Gambian women have long been active in politics as they always participated in the political process in the country as voters. While women account for 51% of the population and more than 50% of the electorates, and play a crucial role in the country's development, they are hardly represented in decision-making in general. Even though the constitution of The Gambia adopted in 1997 is relatively progressive when it comes to women's rights as women have been granted equal right to political participation and protected from discrimination, institutional mechanisms to promote their rights politically are limited. Women are grossly under-represented in political decision-making institutions particularly the parliament and local government authorities.

²⁷ See sections 192 & 194.

Women in Parliament

Women in The Gambia have long been under-represented in this vital state institution. Although, women were granted the right to political participation and representation in 1960, there was no female legislature until 1971 when the first woman was nominated in the Legislative Assembly (Nabaneh, 2014). In the first republic, The Gambia has a parliamentary system of governance as appointed cabinet members were also serving as legislatures. According to Nabaneh (2014), the first Gambian woman to be nominated in parliament was Mrs Louise Njie who was also appointed cabinet minister in 1971 and she served until 1985. In the history of Gambian politics, the first time a woman was elected Member of Parliament was in 1982 in the person of Mrs Nyimasata Sanneh Bojang who contested for the Kombo North constituency and won under the ticket of People's Protectorate Party (Nabaneh, 2014).

Women representation in The Gambia's legislature was abysmally poor as Mrs Sanneh Bojang was the only female elected legislature until in 1992 that three other women were nominated in the country's parliament who were Mrs Elizabeth Renner, late Kunda Camara and Mrs Agnes Jawo (Nabaneh, 2014) making up 7.8% female representation. These women continued to serve in the legislature until 1994 when a military take over occurred and the parliament was dissolved. After the transition period ended in 1996 and legislative elections held in 1997, Mrs Cecilia Cole was nominated member of parliament in 1997 (Nabaneh, 2014). She remains to be the only female representative in the country's legislature from 1997 to 2001 constituting only 2.0% and also served as the Deputy Speaker of the house (Nabaneh, 2014; IPU, 2015).

However, women representation started to slightly increase in the second republic when legislative election was held in 2002 and three women contested and won seats including those that contested under opposition party tickets. According to Nabaneh (2014), Mrs Bintanding

Jarju of Foni Berefet constituency, Ndey Njie of Lower Saloum and Duta Kamaso of Wuli East were elected members of parliament in 2002. However, the marginal progress of 2003 13.2% female representation declined in the 2007 legislative elections as only two women were elected in the parliament and three others nominated including the Speaker of the house, constituting 9.4% women legislatures.

Following the revoking of the Speaker's nomination (Hon Fatoumatta Jahumpa Ceesay) in 2009 by the President of The Gambia, female representation reduced to 7.5% even though she was replaced by another female Speaker, Mrs Elizabeth Renner who was also sacked in 2009. This percentage remained until the 2012 legislative election which saw the election of three women who contested under the ruling party (APRC) ticket and another woman nominated by the President. They are Bintanding Jarju, Haddy Nyang-Njie and Habsana Jallow, elected by Foni Berefet, Jeshwang and Nianija constituencies respectively and Mrs Fatou Mbye who is nominated serves as Deputy Speaker (Nabaneh, 2014, IPU, 2015). Currently, women representation in The Gambia's parliament is only 9.4% (IPU, 2015).

Women in Ministerial Positions

Although women representation at cabinet is rather slow and un-static, The Gambia performs better in women representation in ministerial positions than elective positions such as parliament and local government councils. As The Gambia has a parliamentary system in the first republic, women were first appointed into cabinet in 1979 when nominated parliamentary member, Mrs Louise Njie was assigned Minister for Health, Social Welfare, Labour and Environment (Nabaneh, 2014). However, female representation in cabinet in the first republic was low as only four women has ever held ministerial portfolios in the Jawara led government. Mrs Nyimasata

Sanneh Bojang, the first elected female member of parliament also served as Minister of Health, Labour and Social Welfare (1982 – 1987), Mrs Louise Njie served as Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture (1982-1987) and Minister of Health, Environment, Labour and Social Welfare (1987-1988), Mrs Ralphina A. D’Ameida served as Minister of Social Security and Health (1988-1992) and Undersecretary of Health (1992-1994), and Mrs Amie Bensouda served as Solicitor General and Legal Secretary (1992).

Following the military coup d’etat in July 1994, women were represented in the ‘transitional council’ as Amie Bensouda was appointed acting Secretary of State for Justice (1994-1995), Amina Faal Sonko appointed Secretary of State for Youth, Sports and Culture (1994-1995), Satang Jow appointed Secretary of State for Education (1994-1995) and she was later moved to Youth, Sports and Culture (1995-1997) and back to Education (1997 -1998) until she resigned in December 1998 on health grounds (Christensen, 2015). Also, Susan Waffa Ogoo was appointed Secretary of State for Information and Tourism (1994-1995), Fatoumatta Tambajang Secretary of State for Social Welfare and Health (1994-1995), Coumba Marenah-Ceesay appointed Secretary of State for Social Welfare, Health and Women’s Affairs (1995-1996) and Isatou Njie-Saidy served as Secretary of State for Women’s Affairs in 1996, and Health and Social Welfare from 1996-2001 (Christensen, 2015).

As the transitional government ended in 1996, women continue to serve in ministerial positions as the first female Vice-President, Isatou Njie-Saidy was appointed in 1997, a position she held till date. Arguably, The Gambia is said to be the only country in Africa with a female and longest serving Vice-President who also doubles as Minister for Women’s Affairs since 1996. Other ministers such as Susan Waffa-Ogoo who has served in the ‘transitional council’ continues to be appointed in the President Jammeh led government in different capacities, Minister of Tourism

and Culture (1997-2001), Fisheries and Natural Resources (2001-2004), Tourism and Culture (2004-2006) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012). Although, women representation is low at parliamentary level, women have been represented in cabinet and they served in portfolios of Justice and Attorney General, Basic and Secondary Education, Health and Social Welfare, Industry and Employment, Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Communications, Information and Technology, Tourism and Culture, Foreign Affairs, Petroleum, Forestry and Environment, and Energy.

Since 2000, women representation in ministerial positions has been meeting up the 30% benchmark of minimum 30% as female representation in cabinet was 30.8% in 2000, 20% in 2005, 27.8% in 2008, 31.3% in 2010 and 2012, and 27.8% in 2014 (IPU, 2014). Currently, The Gambia's cabinet comprised of five female ministers (including the Vice-President) out of eighteen ministers making up (IPU, 2014). They occupy ministerial portfolios such as Basic and Secondary Education, Foreign Affairs, Attorney General and Justice, and Petroleum (Government of The Gambia, 2015).

Women in Local Governance

Although representation in local governance is very imperative as decentralization process is instituted at local level and representative could play crucial roles in the development process, women representation at local governance continues to remain poor in The Gambia. During the first republic were not represented in local governance as politics was predominantly patrilineal and patriarchal and men were mostly chosen as Chiefs and Alkalolus. With the advent of the second republic, The Gambia has a formal decentralization process as a local government act was passed in 2002 that establish local government councils in all the seven administrative

regions of the country. However, women's under-representation is more extreme at local level as women have never made up to 15% of local councilors. In the current local government councils, there are only 18 women councilors out of 137 councilors (Nabaneh, 2014), constituting 13.3%. In the history of the two mayoral positions (Banjul City Council and Kanifing Municipal Council), no female Mayor has ever been elected.

At the regional level, there is only one female Governor out of five regional Governors (appointment occurred for the first time in 2014) and only 7 women Alkalolus (Village heads) out of 1, 807 (Chant and Touray, 2012). Thus, it is evident that the political landscape of The Gambia has long been dominated by men. However, several factors serve as barriers to women's representation in decision making institutions and politics continues to be highly patriarchal.

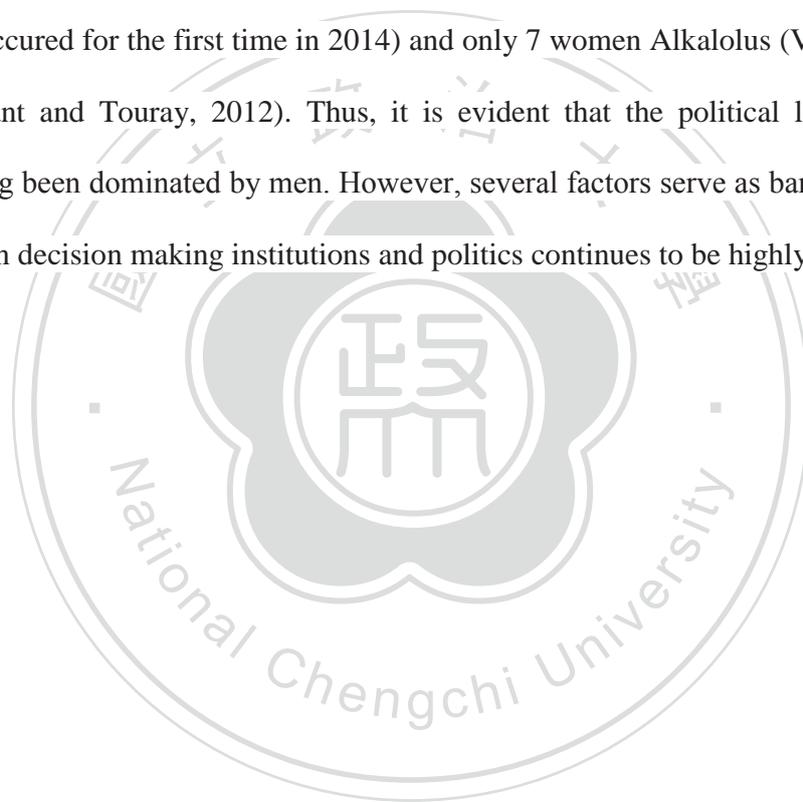


Table 3: Composition of Women in The Gambian Parliament from 1965 – 2015

	National Assembly		
Year	Seats	No. of Women	% of Women
1966	41	0	0%
1971	41	1	2.4%
1982	45	3	6.6%
1987	51	4	7.8%
1992	51	4	7.8%
1994	*	*	*
1997	49	1	2.0%
2000	49	1	2.0%
2002	53	3	5.7%
2003	53	7	13.2%
2007	53	5	9.4%
2009	53	4	7.5%
2012	53	4	7.5%
2014	53	5	9.4%
2015	53	5	9.4%

Source: Inter- Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliaments 1945-1995: Worldwide Statistical Survey*, Geneva (1995); Inter - Parliamentary Union “Women in national parliaments” webpage accessed here <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010415.htm>; Nabaneh (2014)

*Parliament was dissolved following a military coup d'état on 22nd July, 1994 and the country was governed under a military regime from 1994 -1996

Table 4: Cabinet Composition of Women in The Gambia from 2000 – 2014

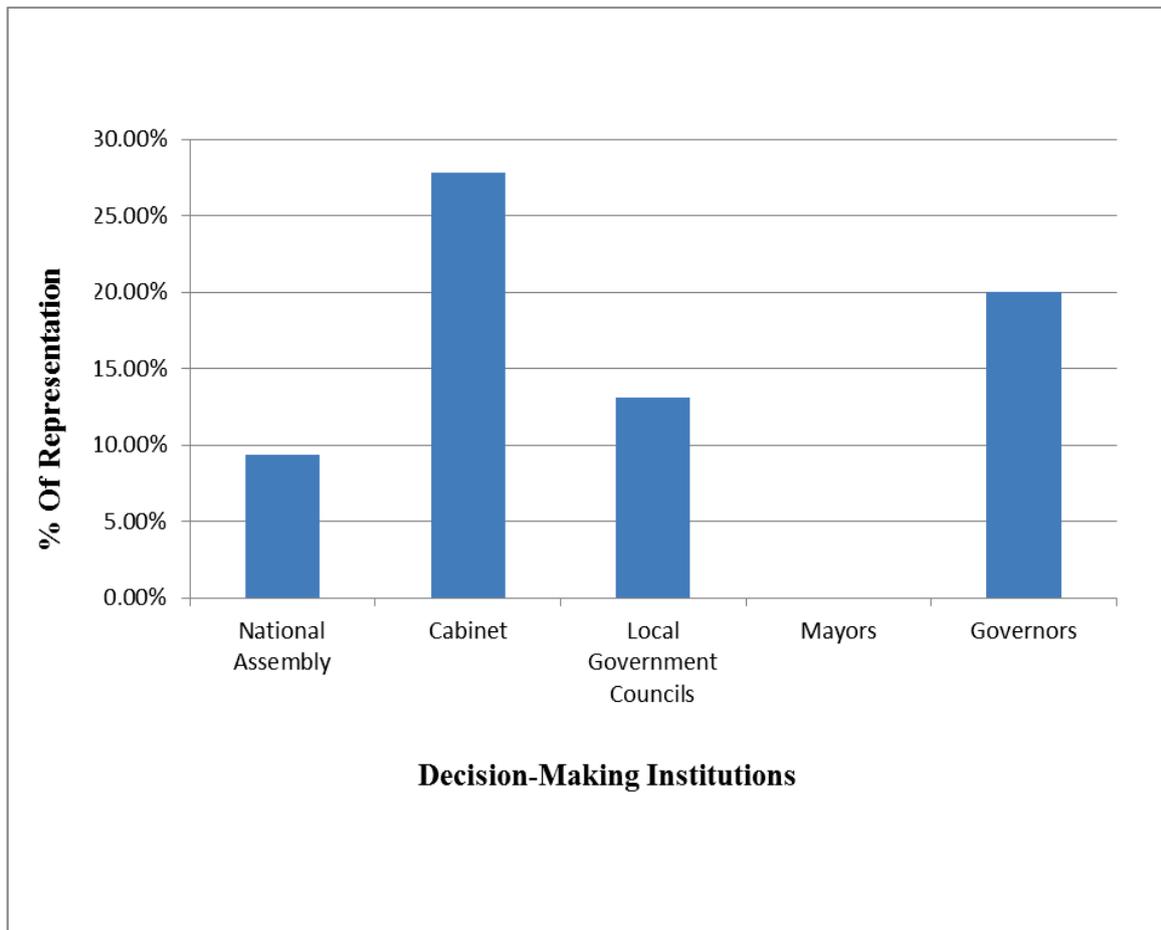
Appointment Year	Total Ministers	Number of Women	% of Women
1979	*	1	?
1982	*	3	?
1988	*	3	?
1992	*	3	?
1994	*	4	?
1996	*	4	?
1998	*	4	?
2000	13	4	30.8%
2005	15	3	20.0%
2008	18	5	27.8%
2010	16	5	31.3%
2012	16	5	31.3%
2014	18	5	27.8%
2015	18	5	27.8%

Source: Inter - Parliamentary Union, Map of “Women in Politics”, situations as of March 2000, 1st January 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 and Christensen (2015) Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership accessed here <http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Gambia.htm>

*Data for the total number of cabinet posts is not available as the sources only provided the number of women holding ministerial positions prior to 2000

? % of women appointed in the cabinet prior to 2000 is not available as the data for total ministerial positions is not provided, thus making it difficult to calculate the % of posts women held

Figure 2: Current Status of Women’s Representation in Decision-Making Institutions in The Gambia



Source: Inter- Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliaments 1945-1995: Worldwide Statistical Survey*, Geneva (1995); Inter - Parliamentary Union “Women in national parliaments” webpage accessed here <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010415.htm>; Nabaneh (2014); IPU Map of “Women in Politics”, situations as of March 2000, 1st January 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 and Christensen (2015) *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership* accessed here <http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Gambia.htm>

FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL UNDER-REPRESENTATION

Although The Gambia has some progress in women's representation in cabinet, women continue to be under-represented in state political institutions including parliament and local government council. However, the political under-representation of women in The Gambia could be accounted for several factors that influence women's participation in politics. Factors such as legal and policy framework, institutional and organizational factors contribute to the under-representation of women in politics in The Gambia. However, ideational factors including political will that if influenced by socio-cultural values are the key determining force to the country's under-representation of women in decision-making bodies.

Normative Factors

a.) Limited Political Will

The key contributing factor to women's political under-representation in The Gambia is owed to the limited political of the leadership of political actors. Although, other factor might influence the progress of gender equality including women's active and effective participation in decision-making, the key determinant of the slow progress is political will. However, it is worthy to note that the limited political will is also influence by ideational factors including socio-cultural issues such as patriarchy and religion that undermine women's equal rights as men in public sphere and the political leadership's intolerance to liberal values and dissenting views.

Configuration of Political Will in The Gambia

Relationship between Political Will and Cultural Factors

A crucial factor that caused the configuration of political will in The Gambia is ideational socio-cultural barriers such as patriarchy, gender-role ideology and religion that are highly entrenched in Gambian political culture. The Gambia like most African countries has deeply held societal beliefs and cultural practices that are a strong force in influencing people's everyday life and interaction between men and women. Such values are usually manifested in the form of misconceived socio-cultural beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes are generally male-dominated. These beliefs strengthen cultural values, practices and structures that pin down women to specific traditional gender roles and family responsibilities as society ascribed women's role as primary caregivers and home maintainers.

a.) Patriarchy

Politics in The Gambia like most African nations has been patriarchal in nature for centuries as women are believed to be the 'natural' household heads and this belief naturally extends to the political realm. As patriarchy is the social structures and practices in which men dominant and exploit women, has led to women being perceived as subordinates and followers rather than leaders. According to Bhasin (2006:3) as quoted in Sultana (2010-2011) patriarchy "refers to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways." (Sultana, 2010-2011). Hooks defines it in a more broader perspective as "a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially

females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence” (Hooks n.d.).

As a result of this societal belief, treating women as minors and second class citizens is justified in patriarchal societies and therefore a woman needs the husband’s or any man’s permission to undertake any activity in public sphere. Because of such patriarchal nature in Gambian politics, women’s political participation and representation continues to be hindered as the leadership’s political will to gender equality is influenced by what society deeply believe should be the status of women in public life. Because women are seen as ‘weak’ and incapable to handle leadership positions in the public sphere, their non-inclusion is often justified based on cultural reasons. According to Nabaneh (2014) the socialization that perceived men as ‘superior’ and women ‘inferior’ makes society to consider men as leaders and women as supporters. This has been reflected in the views expressed by a prominent opposition politician in Nabaneh’s study “*the continued visualization of women as ‘followers’ and rather as ‘leaders’ based on cultural and traditional beliefs, continue to hamper women’s political participation*” (Interview with Lawyer Ousainou Darboe as cited in Nabaneh, 2014 p.40).

Furthermore, because of the patriarchal nature of politics, women are often stereotype and subjected to harassment and violence when engaged in politics. This has been revealed by some female politicians interviewed in Nabaneh’s study “*If you are not married, you are usually advised to get married. This is premised on the belief that unmarried women do not bring a lot of people or supporters*” (Interview in KMC, 14 August 2013 as cited in Nabaneh, 2014 p.40).

Because of such discrimination and stereotypes women encounter in the political field together with the male-dominated political landscape, women’s active political participation and representation in decision-making bodies is still at ebb.

The patriarchal value system in The Gambia militates against gender equality and women's progressive empowerment including political participation and representation. Women's roles are traditionally perceived in society to be 'working mothers' and this constraint their time for political commitments and efforts required in holding political office.

b.) Masculine Model of Politics

In addition to the patriarchal nature of The Gambian society, the political landscape is modeled to a masculine form and women have traditionally being excluded in politics. Because of such model of politics in the country, men often formulate and decide on the rules of the game as reflected in the political institutional settings, time of parliamentary sittings and standards of evaluation. As men are naturally heads of households, it has extended to the political realm and men have been dominating the political landscape of the country. Most often men are leaders of political parties and decide who to nominate or include in the party list.

Additionally, as argued by scholars such as Shvedova (2005) men's politics is characterized by 'winners and losers', competition and confrontation rather than mutual respect, collaboration and consensus building, thus making women to prefer staying away from the field. This further discourages educated women in The Gambia to be active in the political terrain and contest for elections as often politics in The Gambia is *gendered*. Although, women are challenging the traditional gender norms in The Gambia and expressing interest to actively and effectively participate and be equally represented in political positions, the legacies of male dominance in politics continues to disadvantage women. Therefore, because of these societal positioning of women's role which generally sees and accept women as followers rather than leaders in The Gambia contributes to the leadership's low political will to confront such traditions and norms,

thereby implementing actions that will advance women's representation in decision-making institutions.

c.) Religious Influence

Religion remains an integral part of African society and The Gambian population is pre-dominantly Muslim. Though the country is a secular state as dictated by the 1997 constitution, Islam is the predominant religion as majority of the population, about 90% are Muslims (CIA, 2015). The interpretation of women's leadership role in Islam generates different perspectives as some scholars such as An-Na'im holds the view that Islam based *Shari'a* law disqualifies women from holding high-ranking public office (An-Na'im, 1987 (9) as cited in Thabane, 2006). According to Iwanaga (2008) religion influences women's political participation as it impact on attitudes regarding sex roles and gender inequality in the private and public spheres.

A study by Inglehart and Norris (2003) found that Islam is a barrier to gender equality including women's political participation and representation. This believe of Islam barring women from holding high ranking public office is also held by some religious leaders who are also very influential in Gambian society including politics. Because of such believe about the Islamic religion and women's role in society, women's rights including political participation and representation continues to be hindered in The Gambia. This has also contributed to the leadership's limited political will to promote women's representation and participation in decision-making institutions. A prominent Imam (Muslim scholar) at the State House once publicly against women's participation in politics by writing a newspaper article and published it in the media in 2014, stating that women cannot be President in The Gambia because of religious reasons as Islam prohibits women to lead men (Darboe, 2014). This action of publicly

discriminating women to hold political leadership positions such as the presidency by the Imam has been condoned in The Gambia and no further action was taken by the government against him or any official condemnation of such future statements in order to protect women's rights. Because of such actions, societal belief of the Islamic religion prohibiting women from holding high political office is high.

Although, women's rights organizations do educate and sensitize political leaders including religious leaders in The Gambia on the need for women's participation and representation in politics. However, whether the Islamic religion actually prohibits women from being political leaders is unclear but the misinterpretation of this belief evidently impedes women's political participation and representation in The Gambia. As religious scholars are influential figures in Gambian society, not only in social aspect but political sphere as well and this influences the political leadership's will to gender equality including women's political and representation.

Intolerance to Political Liberalization

Although the socio-cultural factors such as patriarchy, masculine model of politics and religion contributes in configuring the political will of The Gambia's leadership to gender equality, however the government's intolerance to political liberalization is a key factor that caused the low political will. The Gambia has an authoritarian system of governance even though the constitution establishes multi-party democracy. The political leadership has been very intolerant to dissenting opinions and fundamental principles such as freedom of expression and equality of rights for all are suppressed.

As authoritarian regimes do not tolerate political liberalization and democratic values such as equal political participation, The Gambia's political leadership has been thwarting any opposition to the regimes agenda and thus demonstrated low political will to promote effective

women's representation in decision-making. Political leaders in the opposition are often ostracized and labeled by the Gambian leadership as enemies of progress and arrested when they express views critical of the government's agenda. These attacks on members of the opposition and chastisement often discourage women to be interested in politics because of fear of being reprimanded by the political leadership. The intolerance to dissent by the political leadership of The Gambia has been argued by prominent female politicians such as Mrs Amie Sillah and Fatoumatta Jawara, members of the opposition PDOIS and UDP parties respectively in a radio program on women's political participation conducted by this researcher in 2012 in The Gambia (Sillah, et al. 2012). They argued that as female politicians, they encounter a lot of challenges to advance their career because of stereotype and discrimination based on the fact that they belong to opposition political parties in a country where the leadership does not tolerate dissenting opinions (Sillah, et al. 2012). Because of the leadership's intolerance to political liberalization including women's political participation, women in The Gambia continue to be grossly under-represented in decision-making institutions.

However, women politicians have now realized the need to challenge the status quo and are standing up for their rights by demanding for political reforms to enhance their effective participation and representation in politics. In the views of Mrs Amie Sillah "there is need to strengthen their campaign to demand the leadership's greater political will to initiate measures to promote women's political participation such as enacting of quota law for women as it is only through such that political parties will be compelled to include equal number of women and men in their selection list, thereby practising gender parity" (Njie, 2013). However, the leadership's intolerance to political liberalization and democratic values has greatly influenced its low political will to gender equality including women's participation and representation in decision-making

bodies. Accordingly, it is prudent to now turn to the argument of how political will is the key contributing factor causing The Gambia's women's political under-representation.

How Political Will caused Women's Under-Representation

Advancing women's effective participation and equal representation in political decision-making institutions require political will from political leaders both in government and political parties. However, in The Gambia the limited political will to gender equality by the political leadership has been the key factor influencing women's under-representation in politics. As the government is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies, it is crucial that there exist strong political will to increase women's access to political office. Although The Gambia has committed herself to several international instruments and policy documents that promote women's political participation and representation, enforcement of such laws is inadequate. The CEDAW calls on state parties to adopt TSMs such as affirmative action, quotas or reserved seats to improve women's representation in decision making.

The Gambia has internalized the CEDAW into a national law in 2010 (Women's Act), however the Women's Act does not specify any type of affirmative action that the government will adopt to enhance women's representation in politics. The Women's Act only calls for the adoption of TSMs by every organ, body or institution including public institutions and political parties to be adopted to enhance women's representation in decision making but the law has not set any time frame for the introduction of such TSMs or affirmative action but only calls for its introduction. Since the enactment of the Women's Act in 2010, no quotas for women is introduced neither by the government nor by political parties to increase women's representation in decision making and the political actors have not shown any willingness for implementation of such.

There are no legal mechanisms instituted by the government for the enforcement of such international laws like the CEDAW which are domesticated and the existing women's laws. Perhaps one could argue that international instruments are ratified by most African governments for the purpose of what may seem as 'political correctness' or for being recognized as part of the global system as laws becomes useless when they are ratified and not fully implemented. In addition, the commitment of adequate human and material resources for the implementation of such laws are needed, thus political will is crucial in enhancing women's representation in political decision making institutions.

Although The Gambia has some institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming such as National Women's Councils, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Bureau, however such institutions are not adequately resourced and lack the capacity to fully promote women's rights to political participation and representation. Both the national women's council and women's bureau were established in 1980, however, they have made limited impact in enhancing women's representation in decision making. The national women's council of The Gambia is different from that of Rwanda as the Gambian case is more like a coordinating body at ministry level than active political institution that engages in activities such as awareness raising and education of women on their rights to political participation. The women's council in Rwanda was engaged in training women on their rights to political participation and educating the society for the need to change perception about women's rights in politics and the need to include women in decision making.

However, in The Gambia such role is perform by the civil society and women's right organizations and not the government machineries. Nonetheless, such institutions could be credited for advocating for gender mainstreaming in government ministries and departments as

most ministries have now instituted gender units and there exist gender focal points. However, such bodies have little impact in enhancing women's representation in decision-making institutions such as parliaments and local government councils.

Furthermore, political will at political party level is imperative to increase women's representation in politics since parties are the gatekeepers to candidate selection, funding and support of candidates' election campaign. When political parties perceive men as more viable and better candidates for political office than women, women's political representation continues to be low. Political will of the dominant party can advance or hinder women in their quest for political office. In countries where the dominant political party has strong political will and commitment to gender equality such as Rwanda, women's political representation increases.

Moreover, parties that have high political will to gender equality adopt some form of affirmative measures such as quotas for women at party level in order to increase women's chance of representation in decision-making bodies. However, there is limited political will of the ruling party in The Gambia to increase women's political representation as the party has no quota for women or affirmative action to increase women's chances of being selected in the party list for nomination to political office. Nonetheless, the party chairman who is the president appoints women to cabinet positions. On the other hand, one may argue that appointing women to cabinet positions is not sufficient to increase women's political representation as most decisions that impact on women's lives are made at parliament, thus the need for women to be represented in such institutions.

In addition, even though all political parties often express commitment to gender equality, however genuine political will should go beyond declaration of principle and strategies to

enhance women's political participation and representation put in place by parties. Because of the low political will of the leadership to gender equality, women continue to be grossly under-represented in decision-making bodies in The Gambia.

b) Inadequate Laws and Policies, and Limited Enforcement of Existing Ones

Although The Gambia has national legal and policy framework that could serve as catalyst for enhanced women's participation and representation in politics, the inadequacy in the laws and limited enforcement impede women's advance in decision making. The 1997 constitution guarantees equal political participation including the right to vote and be voted for into political office to all citizens. According to section 26 of the constitution of The Gambia, every citizen of full age and capacity has the right to partake in political affairs either through freely chosen representatives or standing for political office. Furthermore, section 33 prohibits discrimination based on the grounds of sex, age or social class. However, the existing laws do not sufficiently address women's political under-representation because of its inadequacies and poor enforcement as no strong institutional mechanisms for full implementation exist.

In spite of the non-discrimination clause guaranteed under the CEDAW and article 7 specifically dealing with women's right to equally participate in politics as men and The Gambia's constitution promoting equality and non-discrimination as well, discrimination is condoned under customary laws. Thus, the limited enforcement of the existing gender laws as discrimination against women continues to exist in The Gambia. Furthermore, article 8 of the CEDAW and article 15 of the Women's Act of The Gambia both calls for the adoption of TSMs what's this in order to accelerate *de facto* equality between men and women in politics. However, the Women's Act didn't adequately address women's political under-representation as meeting the target of the TSMs was not included as a legislative requirement. Moreover, no

provisions for quotas exist or means of instituting the TSMs that is set out in both the CEDAW and Women's Act. Therefore, the laws are not adequate to address women's under-representation in The Gambia's political landscape.

Additionally, the inadequacies in the laws to address the complex nature of women's low political representation coupled with the poor implementation strategies of the existing ones result in their ineffectiveness. According to Nabaneh (2014), the low women's political representation is owed to the failure of the state to observe national and international standards as laws in place are not fully implemented. This was further reflected in the views of some interviewees in a focus group discussion conducted in Nabaneh's study "*The Gambia has beautiful laws and policies such as the Women's Act and National Gender Policy respectively in place, but there is no proper implementation strategy and effective monitoring remains a challenge*" (Focus Group Discussion in Basore with young people, 15 August 2013 as cited in Nabaneh, 2014 p.38). Therefore, one can argue that although the legal and policy framework could have served as a catalyst for enhancing women's political representation, however the inadequacies and limited enforcement hinders women's representation in decision making in The Gambia.

c.) Customary Laws

It may be surprising that the law itself contributes to women's under-representation in politics as it gives equality in one hand, and it takes it back with the other, hence women's continued under-representation in politics. The Gambia like most African countries has a legal system comprising customary and personal laws in addition to the English laws that it inherited upon attaining self-determination status. Customary laws are acceptable norms, customs and cultural practices that have been recognized by society as binding and incorporated into the legal system.

Although, the constitution has provided for a non-discrimination clause prohibiting discrimination against women, however customary laws condone discrimination when perpetrated under customary and personal. Women's rights relating to marriage, inheritance and divorce are guaranteed in the Women's Act of 2010 subject to customary and personal laws, thus making women's rights enforcement ineffective as discrimination continuous to be sanctioned in The Gambia including discrimination in politics.

In addition, because of such customary laws, women are usually portrayed as 'weak' in society and seen as unfit to govern political office, thereby limiting women's confidence to contest for political office. As argued by Thabane (2006), legal systems in Africa somehow weakened women's chances of succeeding in politics as political institutions are considered mostly for the powerful and influential in society. These laws discriminate against women as they are patriarchal in nature and usually implemented by men. As laws and policies alone are not sufficient to address women's under-representation in politics, there poor enforcement in a complex patriarchal society like The Gambia with no strong institutional mechanisms continues to hinder women's success in political participation and representation.

Institutional Factors

Electoral System

The type of electoral system in a country is argued to have influence on women's representation in politics. According to scholars such as Matland (1998); Inglehart and Norris (2003); Kunovich and Paxton (2005); Schwindt-Bayer (2005); Bauer and Britton (2006); Henderson and Jeydel (2007) and Karp and Banducci (2008) proportional representation system is more favourable and accommodating for women to access political office than majoritarian system. The Gambia

adopts an electoral system of simple majority since the advent of the second republic. Thus, making it difficult for women to succeed in political office as political parties tend to nominate candidates whom they believe will win election. Because in simple majority system of election, the candidate with higher votes get elected into parliament, thereby making political parties excluding women in their candidates' list as they believe men are more capable to win elections than women. In simple majority system like The Gambia, political parties would not want to risk nominating a woman candidate who might likely lose election as the societal perception on women's political participation and representation is still poor. Thus, decreasing women's chance of being nominated in political office by political parties and get elected to ensure their elective participation.

Organizational Factors

a.) Political Parties

Women's success in their political career requires an effective role played by political parties. All the existing political parties in The Gambia are formed by men and are naturally male dominated, hence the un-equal gender representation in party affairs. Because of such unequal gender representation in parties' leadership, women do not usually get the full support of political parties to run for political office. According to a study conducted by the African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, out of the ten (10) registered political parties currently in The Gambia, only one (PDOIS)²⁸ makes provision in its constitution for equal participation of women in the party's affairs (ACDHRS, 2012).

²⁸People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) is an opposition party that has been functional in The Gambia since the first Republic as it was formed in 1987. It is laudable that the party has included equal women participation in its constitution by having equal men and women in the party's central committee and adopts a gender neutral policy in

The study adds that other parties didn't show how women will be selected in their parties but made reference to gender equality and have structures such as women's wings. The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (party in power) and National Reconciliation Party manifestos described actions they undertook for women's leadership positions. According to a study by IDEA (2013), the APRC in its party constitution under article 33 sets out among its structures, the establishment of Women's Wing at each level of constituency. The main opposition party - United Democratic Party also establishes among its structure Women's Wing (IDEA, 2013). Nonetheless, women are hardly present in the parties' leadership bodies both at national and local levels except within the party structure of women themselves (women's wings).

Women's wings affiliated to parties somehow show willingness to take on board women's concerns, however, there is limited impact of such structures to ensuring parties include equal number of women and men in party list for nomination. This is because it is the party leadership structures such as central committees or national executive committees that candidates are selected and recruited for nomination. Since women are not equally represented in such leadership structures, it is not surprising that women candidates nominated by political parties in The Gambia are small in number, thus their continued political under-representation.

The selection process of candidates for nomination is usually male dominated and unfair to women as selection committees are often headed by men who are gender biased against women.

selection of candidates. However, the party's performance in the country's elections since inception has been low as they have been one of the parties with minority members in the Gambia's National Assembly over the years and currently has no representative in both parliament and local government councils. No woman has ever won a parliamentary seat under this party's ticket, though some women have been nominated in parliamentary elections by the party but they were not successful

This has been reflected in the views of some politicians interviewed in a study by Nabaneh that the selection process of candidates by political parties often hinders women's election to political office. According to an interviewee *"the lack of support of men involved in the selection process prevents women from being nominated"* (Nabaneh, 2014 p.43). Another noted that *'in the selection, there is motivation and sometimes ulterior motive in selecting someone. This might also be the reason why most educated women are reluctant to enter politics'* (Nabaneh, 2014 p.43). According to the study, the unfair nature of the selection process is a contributing factor to women's under-representation as reflected in this statement *"in the selection process, the members force candidates on communities whether those people are for the benefit of the community or not. There are hardly any women in the committees"* (Nabaneh, 2014 p.43). Furthermore, women interested in politics are often discouraged and ostracized by men as reflected in the views of a politician interviewed in Nabaneh's study *'the Chief will call the Alkali, who will in turn call the head of compounds and ultimately convince them that a particular female candidate should not be selected'* (Nabaneh, 2014 p.43).

According to Nabaneh (2014), parties recruit women for the purpose of mobilization of voters and election campaigns as women are often perceived as incapable with limited political knowledge, experience and skills, thus create an unfavorable environment for women's success in politics. As politics requires skills and political knowledge to be able to make effective decisions that will benefit people, however political parties in The Gambia rarely conduct training programs specifically design for women, thus their low participation in politics. In addition, it is often argued that when the dominant political party has some commitment and will to gender equality at party level, other parties tend to follow. However, for the case of The Gambia, APRC has been the dominant party for twenty years and usually has the highest

percentage of candidates as CIA world fact book (2015) shows that out of the current 48 elected parliamentarians, 43 were elected under APRC ticket.

Despite having the majority in The Gambia's political landscape, the APRC party has never at any point nominated up to ten women candidates in parliamentary elections since been in power from 1996 to date. No woman has ever been nominated for the office of the presidency and at the local level; no woman has ever been nominated to a Mayoral position, neither appointed Governor by the President until in 2014 that a female governor was appointed in the West Coast region for the first time in the history of Gambian politics. Women in The Gambian political parties often serve as cheer-givers, cooks and dancers of men during campaigning for political office under their parties. Women support men to win elections as they constitute more than 50% of electorates and usually exercise their franchise in The Gambia as reflected in their voter turnout but are neither supported to participate nor equally represented. The unequal gender nature of political parties therefore, consequently contributes to women's political under-representation in The Gambia.

b.) Women's Movement and Civil Society Campaign for Political Inclusion

Although, women have been grossly under-represented in the political landscape of The Gambia for several decades, women rights organizations and civil society have been active in promoting women's right to political participation. Over the years, the civil society has been engaged in progressive initiatives to educate political and traditional leaders, women and Gambian citizens on the need for women's inclusion in politics. However, the fight is mainly done by women's rights organization as few political parties are interested in the issue. Women rights organizations in the Gambia such as the Female Lawyers Association of The Gambia (FLAG), West African

Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP) have been advocating for women's political participation and representation in decision making.

Over the years, women's rights NGOs have been engaged in trainings and educating political parties and religious leaders on the need for women's political participation. However, women's organizations are now engaging political parties as GAMCOTRAP has recently launched a campaign demanding for political reforms to ensure the effective participation of women in all positions of political leadership. The organization has engaged women politicians from different political parties under one platform in order to discuss the issues impeding women's progress in politics and map out strategies of addressing such barriers (Jammeh, 2014). According to a reknown female politician, Mrs Amie Sillah there is need to strengthen the campaign to demand for quota law as it is only through such that political parties will be compell to introduce quotas into their selection list and party selection committees will practice parity (Njie, 2013).

In additon, organizations like The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia (TANGO) has also been engaged in projects to promote women's inclusion in politics and studies to investigate the main challenges impeding women's effective participation and representation in decision making. However, the key factor impeding women's political representation is limited political will by the country's leadership to include equal men and women in decision-making bodies. In spite of the progressive initiatives of civil society and women's rights organization in promoting gender equality in politics, little progress has been made as women engaged in politics continue to face discrimination and generally women are grossly under-represented in decision making institutions.

However, there is need for coordination of efforts and initiatives through a unified structure to promote women's leadership as activities of women's organizations are isolated and usually conducted in the bid up for election. In the absence of legislative measures such as quotas, there is need to develop strategies to further women's representation. Mechanisms of mentoring aspiring female politicians and young women should be instituted and training women on their political rights is needed in order to build their confidence and skills to contest for political office. Through such initiatives and strategies, political parties could be to be pressured to increase women's nomination for election or introduce quotas for women at party level thereby enhancing women's representation in decision making.

CONCLUSION

For several decades, the politics in The Gambia has been overwhelmingly dominated by men. Although, women attained the right to political participation at the same time with men in the bid up for self-determination, they have minimally succeeded in achieving even token representation in state political institutions. The struggle to achieving political equality in The Gambia has been very slow despite the fact that women made up more than half of the electorates and the country's population. Women in The Gambia have long been grossly under-represented in decision-making bodies due to several factors that serve as barriers for them to attain equality in politics of which limited political will of the leadership being the key. In spite of the relatively progressively legal and policy framework promoting women's rights to political participation and representation, there is low political will to ensure its effective implementation and enforcement, thereby impeding women's right to equal political representation.

Moreover, the existing laws are inadequate to address women's under-representation as both national and international laws call for adoption of TSMs to increase women representation in decision-making, however there is low will to adopt such TSMs for enhanced women's participation. The Gambia has no institutional and legal mechanisms for implementation of such TSMs and no willingness to introduce some form of affirmative action to enhance women's representation in politics is shown since the ratification of international instruments like CEDAW. Furthermore, the male-dominated political parties have shown no political will to ensure equality at political party level as women have always been poorly represented in political party structures and they lack equal decision-making powers in their parties. These factors coupled with the country's leadership's limited political will to address women's under-representation has been the driving forces to the limited progress of women's effective participation in decision-making bodies.

Though the women's right organizations and civil society has been active in promoting women's political rights and educating Gambian citizens on the need for women to be represented in decision making in order to change societal perception about women's role in society. Nonetheless, there is slow progress for women to attain equality in politics as women constitute 9.4% in parliament, 27.8% in ministerial positions and only 13.1% in local government councils. Thus, there is need for greater political will from the political actors to gender equality and adopt measures in order to change the status of women in The Gambia's political landscape.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

COMPARISON OF POLITICAL WILL AS THE KEY DETERMINANT TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Women's political participation and representation in decision-making institutions in Rwanda and The Gambia has garnered varied results. However, this is owed to various issues that influence political will to gender equality in each country. Although, the genocide is not the key determinant of women's political participation in Rwanda, it has played a role in the political will of the country's leadership. Because of the genocide, the power structure in Rwanda was destroyed and the existing power structure reconfigured. Prior to the genocide, the Habryarimana government sidelined the Tutsi politicians and the government was Hutu dominated. This led to continued conflict and civil war in 1990 which culminated into a genocide.

However, as the genocide ended, most of the Hutu extremists and politicians were killed and the existing political leaders discredited. Some political parties such as the MDR (Democratic Republican Movement) and PDR (Party for Democratic Renewal) were officially banned from operation as the RPF that assumed leadership role. As the immediate aftermath of the genocide left Rwanda with 70% women population and they assumed traditionally male roles in society. Because of this political reality created by the genocide, a new arena of opportunity for women to be included in leadership positions arose as they are considered less controversial and would not be against the agenda of RPF. Thus, their inclusion in the post-genocide transitional government and eventual adoption of gender quota in the new constitution for them to be included in all decision-making institutions. As the power structure changed in Rwanda, a new

political landscape was reconfigured which led to the RPF's political will for inclusion of women in decision-making.

On the other hand, The Gambia also witnessed changes in power structure as the military take over in 1994 ushered in a new government. However, the military coup destroyed the power structure in The Gambia but did not reconfigure the existing political landscape because of a military regime's style of government. As the coup ended, the leaders of the coup took charge of the country and announced a two-year transitional period and declared the constitution that existed illegal. Also, the leadership announced decrees to which they will rule the country and banned some political parties. Though the coup was declared unconstitutional by the African Union and ECOWAS, the military leaders ruled the country for two years and transformed themselves into civilians, registered their own political party and contested election. The coup leader was elected President and since then has been ruling The Gambia.

However, because the previous government that was ousted stayed too long in power (29 years) and was accused of corruption and lack of transparency, in the immediate aftermath of the coup, the new government and its authoritarian policies were not challenged by the existing politicians because most people wanted change of government and that led to the new leadership consolidating their power. The power structure was not reconfigured as the new leadership continued with policies of the previous government and women's political participation and representation continues to be low.

Furthermore, the military coup in The Gambia was peaceful as no political leader was killed and the existing political parties continued operation as the transition period ended in 1997 and few other parties were formed. Because the power structure in The Gambia was not reconfigured,

women's rights including political participation and representation did not change, hence women's political under-representation. Accordingly, the different configuration of political will of the both countries' leadership caused the differentiated outcome of women's representation in decision-making institutions.

Rwanda has progress over the years in women's representation in decision-making as women gain the majority in its Chamber of Deputies with 63.8% representation and 38% representation in parliament. At cabinet level, 39% of Ministers are women while representation at local is also high with 40% Female Governors, 43% Women in District councils, 45% in Sector councils and 43.9% in Village councils.

On the other hand, women's political representation in The Gambia continues to be at ebb as women only comprised 9.4% of parliamentarians and 13.1% representation in local government councils. Although, there is some progress at cabinet level as 27.8% women are appointed Ministers. However, the reasons for the different outcome of women's participation in decision-making in respective countries is owed to the different levels of political will to gender equality in both countries. Nonetheless, the political will in both respective countries is shaped by varied factors result that influence the leadership's willingness to advance gender equality and promote women's political empowerment.

The Rwandan case study has revealed that factors such as the RPF leadership's exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda and women's contribution to RPF's success in the genocide caused the configuration of the leadership's political will.

Additionally, the research has shown that because of the Rwandan leadership's desire to use gender equality in order to control political liberalization and divert attention from the lack of

ethnic pluralism in its government are the main driving forces behind its strong political will to promote women's political participation and representation. However, as political will comes with its associated costs and benefits, the Rwanda's leadership high political will one can argue has been beneficial to the leadership. As more women gain access to decision-making positions in Rwanda, the political leadership's strategy of using gender equality to control political liberalization has been effective as the leadership has succeeded in sustaining a single-party regime in the country since the end of the genocide.

Rwandan Patriotic Front has been in the helm of power since the genocide ended under the leadership of Paul Kagame and since then has gained the majority in all political institutions including parliament and cabinet. Through its majority in parliament and cabinet, institutions in which women are highly represented, the RPF has been able to control the country's political landscape and ensuring that political actors' decisions are in tandem with the party's agenda. The government has been criticized over the years by rights groups of its bad human rights records and suppression of freedom of expression from the opposition and dissenting views. Although the Rwandan leadership has demonstrated willingness to gender equality, nonetheless, it has succeeded in controlling political liberalization as Rwanda has been ruled by a single-party for almost twenty years now.

Additionally, because of the willingness to promote women's political representation, the leadership is able to divert attention of argument of the non-ethnic pluralism in its government. Although the current government is dominated by members of the RPF, majority of who are Tutsis and that the leadership is able to use the gender equality to justify equality of all Rwandans. As mentioned earlier, scholars such as Hogg (2009) argued that the RPF based the inclusion of women in decision-making bodies on assumption that the 'non-ethnic woman

representative' will have a different relationship to politics, hence women's greater representation will 'better' the post-conflict political climate. This argument is on the pretext that the inclusion of women in decision-making will ensure that discussion on ethnic discrimination in the RPF-led government will not suffice as women in decision-making positions will be representatives of both Tutsis and Hutus women. However, the Rwandan government is able to use gender equality to control any discussion of such.

Thus, the research is able to prove the statements that the configuration of Rwanda's political will to gender equality is because of the RPF's exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda and the strategy of RPF using gender equality to repress political opposition and thwart arguments of ethnic discrimination as evident in the current political landscape of Rwanda.

On the other hand, the findings have shown that The Gambia's low political will to gender equality has been shaped by the entrenched socio-cultural values such as patriarchy and religious influence, and the regime's intolerance to political liberalization and dissenting views. However, it is interesting to observe that because of political intolerance, The Gambia's leadership is hesitant to demonstrate strong political will to gender equality, whereas in Rwanda, the leadership is able to use the gender equality agenda to suppress political dissent. This shows that political actors in both respective countries have a way of promoting their agenda as they both weigh the costs and benefits associated with political will and that drives their determination to ensure strong or low political will to gender equality.

Furthermore, it is worthy to note that The Gambia's political will has also been influenced by the socio-cultural values that are prevalent in African political landscape. However, the patriarchal nature of politics that is entrenched in most African society did not influence Rwanda's political

leadership to ensure gender equality and promote women's political participation and representation. Consequently, it is prudent to analyze why the patriarchal culture that contributes in shaping the political will in The Gambia does not impede on the political will in Rwanda in spite of both countries being African countries with deep societal values. Prior to the genocide, Rwanda has high patriarchal culture and practices that hinders women's rights as seen in women's low status in society in the pre-genocide poeriod.

However, one can argue that because of the gendered nature of the genocide, it played a role in shaping Rwandan society as women were dispropotionately affected by the genocide. Additionally, because of the changes in gender role ideology in Rwanda in the aftermath of the conflict as a result of the high women population, the continued existence of a patriarchal culture would be difficult as women comprised of 70% Rwanda population in the immediate aftermath of the genocide and 35% household heads. Thus, influenced the changes in shift in patriarchal politics in Rwanda society thereby not impeding on the leadership's political will to gender equality.

Moreover, religious factors that influence on The Gambia's political will is not the case with Rwanda even though Rwanda has a high religious population, 88% Christians and 1.8% Muslims (CIA, 2015). However, it is because of the belief that the Islamic religion does not support women holding high ranking political postitions which is not the case in the Christian religious belief that the religious influence on political will are different. Nonetheless, one could argue that because of varied determining factors in both respective countries that caused the different political will, gender equality including women's representation in decision-making institutions genenated different outcome.

ANALYSIS OF THEORIES EXPLAINING WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN THE CASE STUDIES

From the literature review, several theories explained women's political representation in the world. The theories of political and institutional factors, cultural obstacles and women's movement campaign for inclusion have been found to be applicable in the Rwanda and The Gambia case studies. The research found the factors influencing progress of women's political participation and representation in decision-making institutions in Rwanda included political and institutional mechanisms adopted by the leadership that demonstrated strong political will to gender equality. Additionally, the role played by women's movement in lobbying and campaign for inclusion of women quota in the new constitution resonates with the theory of women's movement influencing political participation as discussed in the literature by scholars. In the Gambian case studies, the research have found the political and institutional factors as well as cultural obstacles to influence the political will of the leadership that caused women's under-representation in decision-making bodies in the country.

However, the research have found modernization theory not applicable to the two cases. This is because both countries are developing countries with low economic development. As modernization theory argued that a country's level of economic development, feminization of poverty and women's educational level influence their participation in political decision-making institutions. Although, Rwanda has a higher-level economic development than The Gambia according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2014, however the level of economic development doesn't influence women's political participation and representation in both respective. As modernization theory argued that industrialization influences a nation's

advancement, thus progress in women's political participation and representation. This has not been the case with both Rwanda and The Gambia as Rwanda's progress in women's political representation started at a time when the country just recovered from genocide with low economic development and high poverty. As the participation of women in decision-making bodies started to increase, Rwanda's economy started to increase and women's needs addressed. The Gambia on the other hand, is still at ebb in terms of economic development and women's political participation and representation.

Nonetheless, the feminization of poverty and women's low educational status has influenced the under-representation of women in The Gambia's political landscape as women are among the most poor in the country and has low educational status than their male counter-parts. However, women's socio-economic conditions is argued to influence their political representation, nonetheless is not the main factor as some countries in Africa with high poverty rate and low literacy such as Burundi, Mozambique and Tanzania have progress in women's political participation and representation in decision-making bodies. Thus, the political will of the country's leadership is the key determinant of their political under-representation. Therefore, modernization theory is not fully applicable in the case studies of the thesis.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN DE JURE AND DE FACTO EQUALITY IN THE GAMBIA

Although, The Gambia has committed herself to several international instruments such as the CEDAW and African Women's Protocol and has national laws that promote women's participation and representation in politics, yet women continue to be grossly under-represented in decision making. Therefore, there is need for greater political will to ensure effective

measures and strategies in instituted to bridge the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality in politics in The Gambia.

Increase Leadership's Political Will

Women's political participation and representation in decision-making institutions requires political will from the national leadership to establish adequate and effective mechanisms that promote equality and prohibit discrimination. For women's effective participation and representation to be enhanced, the national leadership needs to demonstrate the political will to gender equality and ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the international laws the country committed herself to. The Gambia has ratified the CEDAW, African Women's Protocol and other international instruments that promote women's political participation and representation in decision-making institutions. However, the CEDAW is not fully enforced as the TMSs are not yet adopted by the government even though the country internalized it through a Women's Act. A temporary special measure that countries like Rwanda which has progressive women's political participation and representation has adopted is having a constitution that guarantee a specific quotas to women. Also, the Rwanda's leadership political will led to the created of institutions and mechanisms that enhanced women's political participation and representation. Thus the need for the Gambia's leadership to show greater political will to increased women's representation in decision-making bodies and establish institutions and mechanisms that will consolidate the laws for progress to be realized. Moreover, the party in power could play a great role in enhancing women's representation by having the political will to institute quotas a party level and include more women in its nomination list. Consequently, other parties might as well follow and show greater willingness to women's political participation and

representation. Therefore, it is crucial that political will is increased at the national political leadership level in order to fully implement the laws and institute mechanisms that enhance women's participation and representation in decision-making bodies. However, one might tend to ask how to measure the political will for increased women's political participation and representation in decision-making. The increase political will of the country's leadership could be measure through the adoption and effective implementation of the following mechanisms by the government and political parties for increased progress of political gender equality in The Gambia. Analyzing from the Rwandan case studies, because of the leadership's political will, measures and strategies such as legal policy, strong institutional mechanisms and political party quotas led to the increased women's political participation and representation in decision-making institutions. Thus, The Gambia's leadership need to demonstrate political will and fully institute effective mechanisms in order to address women's political under-representation.

i. Adequate Legal Framework

For women's under-representation in The Gambia's political landscape to be address, it is crucial that adequate and effective laws are not only in place but fully enforced. Although, laws and policies exist that promote women's political participation and representation, there is need for specific laws such as quotas or reserved seats in order to overcome the gender stereotypes. The international instruments and Women's Act that cals for TSMs should be strengthen by having a set legislative requirement for implementation of TSMs such as reserved seats or constitutional quotas. As evidence has shown in other countries such as Rwanda, women's political participation and representation has to be founded on the leadership's greater political will that ensured strong laws and institutions are in place and fully enforced. Furthermore, for gender

equality in politics to be ensured, it is imperative that corrective measures are introduced to ensure enforcement of TSMs set out in international instruments and Women's Act.

ii. Adoption of Quotas by Political Parties

Although, majority of political parties in The Gambia are opposed to the idea of quotas for women as indicated in Nabeneh's study, however for the gender inequality in Gambian politics to be addressed, political parties need to be committed to quotas. In a traditionally patriarchal society like The Gambia, political parties could play a great role in addressing women's political under-representation by instituting quotas at party level. Through quotas at parties, women's representation in parties' governance structures such as central committees will increase, thereby giving women more chances of being selected by parties selection committees. As the Women's Act under section 15 calls on all bodies and organs to adopt TSMs to increase women's representation in politics, political parties need to comply with this provision and endeavor to introduce quotas at party level thereby enabling women represented and contribute meaningfully in the political processes.

iii. Supporting Institutional Mechanisms

There is need for institutional political reform to adopt innovative electoral mechanisms, proportional representation and more gender sensitive strategies to increase women's representation in decision-making. As the Rwandan experience has shown, in addition to the quotas laws, the government introduced innovative institutional mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of the constitutional quota such as the triple balloting, women's councils and the proportional representation electoral system. It is important that laws aimed at enhancing

women's political participation and representation are enacted, but addressing the under-representation need strong political institutions to ensure full and effective implementation of such laws and policies. It is worthy to note that learning from best practices could increase performance in one's work, thus it is crucial that the innovative institutional mechanisms introduced in Rwanda could also be practice in The Gambia to enhance women's political representation especially at local level. The *Tripple Ballot* system of having a woman's vote in both parliamentary and local council elections in Rwanda has been very effective in increasing women's representation, thus The Gambia should also introduce it at least at the Local Government Council to enable women effectively participate in development processes in their communities. Furthermore, the already existing women's institutions in The Gambia such as the National Women's Councils, Women's Bureau and Ministry of Women's Affairs should be strengthened to engage in more active and effective strategies to increase women's representation in decision-making. These institutions could play a great role in enhancing women's representation in governance by actively educating women on their political rights and lobbying with decision makers such as the National Assembly for legislating quotas for women. In addition, there is need to build the capacities of government both at central and local level to promote the need of including more women in policy decisions, and implement gender-responsive policies.

Increase Civil Society Campaign and Advocacy

The civil society and women's rights organizations should strengthen their campaign and advocacy for increasing women's participation and representation in politics. There is need for continuous lobbying for enactment of quotas at national level and among political parties in The

Gambia. Additionally, because of the highly patriarchal society The Gambia is, it is crucial that activities of strengthening the understanding of quotas are implemented by civil society in order to encourage political parties to adopt voluntary quotas at party level and enforce the TSMs set out the already existing laws. Moreover, educating The Gambian citizens on the need for women's equal representation in the country's political landscape could help in changing societal perception about women's role in society, thereby reducing the obstacles to women's representation such as socio-cultural issues. In addition, such public awareness programs could help in minimizing the gender-based violence and stereotypes women engaged in politics faced and ensure positive publicity of women's role in public life.

Capacity Building for Women Politicians

In addressing women's political under-representation, women's capacities and skills need to be enhanced. Women need to be educated on their rights to engage in politics and political knowledge in order to build their skills and capacities to build confidence to stand for political office. Also, there is need for mentoring programs and training for young women interested in politics as this could enhance their skills and prepare them to get the requisite qualifications and political knowledge in order to break the barriers and contest for political office. As often people argue that quotas should not be introduced women's numbers in decision making institutions but women should also get the required qualifications and political knowledge to be selected thus, such mentoring programs and training for women will aid in increasing their leadership skills and be effective in their political roles. Aspiring women politicians need to be empowered with the requisite tools and skills to make their voices and concerns heard in political decision making processes.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Women's political participation and representation in Africa has been progressing over the years as countries such as Rwanda have been a shining example of gender parity in parliament in the World. However, most of countries in the continent still lag behind as regards gender equality including women's effective enjoyment of their rights political participation and representation. The research has shown that different factors determine progress of women's representation in a country. This thesis aims to answer the question of the key determinants of different progress of political gender equality in Rwanda and The Gambia. I argue in this thesis that the different levels of political will of Rwanda and The Gambia is the key determining factor that has led to differentiated progress of gender equality in politics in the respective countries. However, the research has proved the research above statement as shown the case studies in both respective countries.

Furthermore, the statement that women's participation in, and contribution to, the actions of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) during the genocide; the RPF's exposure to gender equality while exiled in Uganda and the strategy of RPF using gender equality to repress political opposition and thwart arguments of ethnic discrimination jointly accounted for Rwandan political leadership's high political will for realizing gender equality in post-genocide Rwandan politics has been validated in the research. The Rwanda's political leadership has been able to

use gender equality to promote its agenda of suppressing political dissent and controlling agitation of non-ethnic pluralism in the RPF-led government.

Also, the research has proved the statement that because of The Gambia's high patriarchal nature, religious influence, and political intolerance to liberal values of the government have jointly limited the Gambian leadership's political will to improve women's political representation. As evidently argued in the thesis, the low political will to gender equality in The Gambia is owed to the socio-cultural values and leadership's intolerance to dissent. Hence, women's gross under-representation in decision-making bodies in The Gambia, as opposed to the progress of political gender equality in Rwanda. As the research shown, Rwandan women enjoy political equality as women have not only been equally represented in parliament but dominate the country's legislature with 63.8% representation in the Chamber of Deputies and 38% in the Senate. At cabinet level, representation is also progressive with 39% of appointed Ministers as women. Contrary, The Gambia has 9.4% women representation in parliament and marginal progress at cabinet with 27.8% women appointed Ministers. The slow progress in The Gambia is owed to lot of factors and limited political will of the country's political actors being the key driving force.

The high representation has not only been in terms of 'descriptive representation' but 'substantive representation' as well. With increase in numbers of women holding decision-making positions, progress has been in terms of greater women's rights as more gender friendly laws were enacted, increase female literacy rates and greater participation in labor force. In Addition, as more women get to the decision-making platforms, confidence of women to speak publicly in the same forum with increased as highlighted by female politicians in Rwanda and this has encouraged more women to contest for political office. Moreover, changes is gender

roles in the Rwandan society occurred as political culture to accept women's role in public life ensued. Thus, enhancing women's decision-making powers is crucial to ensure greater gender equality and women's empowerment in a country.

On the other hand, women's representation in The Gambia continues to be slow as low political will impedes on gender equality. The socio-cultural barriers and intolerance to liberal values need to shift and greater political will ensured if progress is to be seen in women's political empowerment.

LESSONS LEARNT

A key lesson to be learned is that political will of country's political leadership is crucial is enhancing women's political participation and representation. However, the ruling party leadership's experience in a country greatly influence the political will as seen in Rwanda where the leadership's will to gender equality aroused from the party's experience while exiled in Uganda.

Additionally, it is prudent to note that quotas alone do not address women's under-representation in politics, although they are necessary but not sufficient. The process of quota implementation is as important as quota adoption and measures to accompany the quota implementation needs to be instituted to ensure its effectiveness. However, the implementation of quotas could be underpinned if electoral system is not strong enough or favourable to high women effective participation and representation in politics. As the discussions above have shown, the Rwandan electoral system supplemented the quota adoption, thereby ensuring its effectiveness.

Even if quotas are mandated by the constitution, if there is lack of political will by the political leadership and political parties that nominate candidates for elective office, the quota implementation will be challenging. Therefore, it is fundamental to ensure political will to complement the adoption of quotas in order to limit resistance from parties. Furthermore, with increase political will, political parties can be encourage to introduce party quotas thereby increase women's support by parties for elective office.

However, it is crucial to mention that quotas can enhance 'descriptive representation' for women but does not necessarily lead to 'substantive representation' of women's needs and concerns in all cases. Although the increased women representation in the Rwandan parliament led to enactment of laws promoting women's rights. As Dahlerup (2003) argued 'if quotas are to lead the empowerment of women, elected women must have the capacity to fulfill their new responsibilities especially in a strong patriarchal society, thus capacity building for women politicians is essential.' Since quotas are supposed to be 'special temporary measures' which act as catalyst for broader cultural change and a more gender friendly political culture to develop, they must be supplemented with other measures for overall shift of political culture and societal perception about women's role in public sphere.

Moreover, there is need for women's organizations to continuously engage in awareness of electorates about the importance of women's political engagement and representation in decision-making to ensure changes in societal conception of women's role. Also, women's organizations should be involved in capacity building and education of women on their rights to political participation and representation in order to build their confidence to challenge the status quo and patriarchal culture of politics to complement the advocacy and lobbying of women's inclusion in governance. Thus, it is imperative to note that for women's enhanced participation

and representation in public sphere, concerted measures and strategies need to be in place to complement the legislative mechanisms. Nonetheless, political will is key factor that a country's leadership must ensure if progress is to be attained.

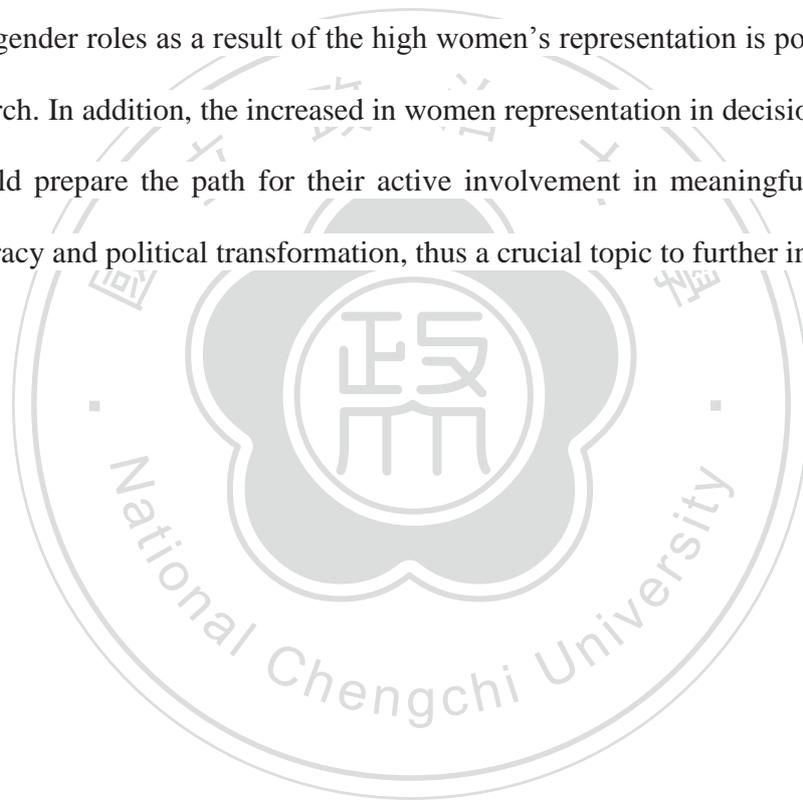
IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although considerable research is done on gender equality focusing on women's political participation and representation in Africa, most especially in countries that are progressing in women's political empowerment such as Rwanda. However, the topic of women's political participation and representation can be studied in in-depth in countries in Africa such as The Gambia where not much work has been on this issue. In studying women's political participation and representation it is important to look at the proportion of women's representation in decision-making bodies such as parliament and cabinet. Nonetheless, focusing on the significance of women's representation in ensuring greater gender equality and overall women's empowerment in respective countries is essential. There is need for further research on women's access to leadership positions and its relation with achieving education, health and economic empowerment goals in a more in-depth manner. Investigation of how women political leaders are driving policy changes in Rwanda and other African countries with progressive representation in decision-making bodies is worthy to note.

Additionally, political participation is an important aspect of democracy, thus crucial to research on how women's political participation has contributed in ensuring democracy or otherwise in both Rwanda and The Gambia. Also, investigation of the overall power positions of women, not only in terms of proportion of seats held or cabinet appointments but women's representation within political party structures in both respective countries is crucial for future researchers to

consider. Moreover, investigation of women's political equality would also be interesting to interview women already engaged in the political field as women political leaders, activists and human rights defender on the inequality encountered in this field in The Gambia could add value to any qualitative research on the topic.

Furthermore, as social and cultural variables influence gender equality including political participation and representation in Africa, a study on changes in political culture and social conceptions of gender roles as a result of the high women's representation is positive to consider for future research. In addition, the increased in women representation in decision-making bodies in Rwanda could prepare the path for their active involvement in meaningful participation in genuine democracy and political transformation, thus a crucial topic to further investigation.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Synopsis of Legal and Policy Framework on Women's Political Rights

- **Binding International Instruments**

There exist considerable international instruments that provide for gender equality, non-discrimination and recognize citizens' rights to participate in governing of their countries either directly as elected representatives or indirectly as through freely chosen representatives. Both Rwanda and The Gambia are parties to the following instruments.

- **Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), 1948**

First among the global mechanisms is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights that came into being in 1948 and guarantee all citizens of the world fundamental rights and recognize dignity of persons without discrimination. According to the world's rights declaration, 'every citizen irrespective of gender, age, nationality, race or ethnic background, sexual orientation, creed or social class possesses the same rights. The very first article of the UDHR proclaims that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.' The declaration further provides that 'everyone has a right to take part in the government of his [or her] country, directly or through freely chosen representatives'. Through the UDHR, states assert that both men and women have equal rights to participate in all spheres of life.

- **Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW), 1953**

The convention on the political rights of women is the first binding convention specifically guaranteeing women's right to political participation and representation. This Convention reaffirms the principles of equality and non-discrimination provided for in both the UN Charter

and the UDHR. It further provides for women's eligibility to hold public office and to exercise public functions. The UN General Assembly (GA) reinforced this Convention by adopting resolution 58/142 on women and political participation, which calls on member states to increase women's political participation.

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966**

The twin Covenants, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted in 1966 guarantee equality and non-discrimination rights to all citizens. Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee the rights to non-discrimination.

The civil and political rights covenant under article 25 notably reiterates article 21 of the UDHR as it provide for *'the right of every citizen without reasonable restrictions to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections; and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service.'* Like its twin covenant, the economic, social and cultural rights covenant under article 2 recognizes the rights of all persons to equality and non-discrimination. The common article 2 of these Covenants enjoins state parties to guarantee rights enunciated therein without any discrimination and to adopt legislative and other measures to give effect to these rights. Although these instruments employ generic terms like 'everyone' and 'every citizen', women are inclusive, thus their rights to equality, non-discrimination and participation are guaranteed.

- **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

Arguably, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 is the most important international human rights treaty for women as it is a specific legal document that addresses all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres of life. This women's convention explicitly covers women's right to equality and non-discrimination in public and political spheres and provides definition and condemnation of discrimination against women. In its preamble, the CEDAW recognizes that:

discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

Women's right to political participation and representation is guaranteed under article 7 which focuses on the right to political and public life. It obliges states parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life of the country, and in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to:

- *vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;*
- *participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;*
- *participate in non- governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public life of the country.*

Article 8 of the CEDAW called on states parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations. The convention also imposes certain obligations on state parties, as article 4 called for the adoption of temporary special measures to ensure the realization of article 7 and 8. Furthermore, it is worthy to mention that the Committee on CEDAW has passed several General Recommendations (GR) such as GRs No. 5, 8, 23 and 25, the first two introduced TSMs while GR No. 23 specifically deals with participation of women in political and public life. General Recommendation No.23 addresses the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality while GR No 25 defines the contours of *de facto* equality as employed in article 4(1).

- **Soft Laws on Political Participation and Representation**
- **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA)**

The United Nations led conference on women held in Beijing, China in 1995 culminated to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. At the conference, states reiterated the equality and inherent dignity of women and committed themselves to ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and girls as an integral part of universal human rights. Although there is no particular mention of the right to equality in relation to politics, the declaration noted the explicit recognition and reaffirmation of the need to promote and protect all human rights of women and girls.

The Platform for Action on the other hand, does not specify women's political empowerment but refers to the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at the national, regional and international levels. Nonetheless, the platform acknowledges that the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of

sex is priority objective of the international community. Furthermore, it recognized that there has been a worldwide movement towards democratization that opened up the political process in many nations, but that the popular participation of women in key decision-making processes, particularly in politics, has not yet been achieved. The platform goes further to recognize that ‘the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women is essential for the empowerment of women.’

- **Regional and Sub-regional Mechanisms**

At the continent and sub-regional level, there exist considerable instruments that are binding on both Rwanda and The Gambia. Key among them is the following:

- **African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR)**

The first binding human rights instrument at the Africa region is the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights that came into force in 1986 under the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In the charter, states are mandated to guarantee the equality of every person before the law as well as the enjoyment of the rights under the Charter without discrimination on any basis, including sex and it recognizes the inherent dignity of the person. The African Charter made specific reference on women’s rights in article 18 as it called for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The charter also recognizes political rights of people as it gives every citizen the right to participate freely in the government either directly or through freely chosen representatives.

- **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**

It is argued that the limitations of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights

as regards women's political rights led to the adoption of special treaty on women's rights dubbed Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. As reflected in its preamble, the protocol exists to fill the gaps of the charter as discrimination against women persists. The preamble states that:

despite the ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international human rights instruments by the majority of States Parties, and their solemn commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harmful practices against women, women in Africa still continue to be victims of discrimination and harmful practices.

The protocol guarantee women's political right under article 9 as it adjures state parties to adopt affirmative action policies, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that:

- women participate without any discrimination in all elections;
- women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;
- women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies and development programmes.

Consequently, the protocol obliges states to ensure representation of women in decision-making institutions by not only enacting legislations but ensure women's *de jure* rights translates into *de facto* equality.

- **Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa**

The African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted by the heads of states of the African Union in July 2004, is a declaration where state parties reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality. This commitment is enshrined in article 4 (1) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as other existing commitments, principles and

obligations set out in the various regional, continental and international human rights instruments, particularly those addressing women's rights. The declaration contained eight solemn commitments and Commitment No. 5 specifically calls for the promotion of 'The Gender Parity Principle at National and local levels.' Through this commitment, concerted efforts to promote parity at all levels are illustrated, thus the need for deliberate and concerted effort to promote the parity principle on an incremental basis.

- **ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy**

As the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has stretched its mandates beyond economic integration, it has incorporated the principles of human rights protection, consolidation of democracy and the rule of law into its work. Pursuance to the need for adherence to democratic values such as popular participation, ensuring free and fair elections, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance was adopted in 2001 and entered into force in 2008 by ECOWAS member states.

In its preamble, the Protocol recalled that women's rights have been recognized and guaranteed in all international human rights instruments and regional human rights instruments. Article 1(d) provides for popular participation in decision making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance. Recognizing the critical issue of women's political participation, the protocol mandates state parties to adopt measures aimed at ensuring women's representation in decision making at all levels.

Article 2 (3) of the Protocol obliges Member States to 'take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for in elections, to participate in the formulation of government policies and the implementation thereof and to hold public offices

and perform public functions at all levels of governance.’ In addition, article 40 recognizes that the ‘development and promotion of the welfare of women are essential factors for development, progress and peace in the society.’ The protocol further provides for member states to undertake to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. The Gambia, being a member of ECOWAS is obliged under this protocol to promote women’s political rights by taking actions that will ensure the *de facto* representation of women.

- **National Commitments to Women’s Political Participation and Representation**
- **The Constitution of Rwanda (2003)**

The constitution of Rwanda is the most important national legal instrument that promotes women’s political rights. In its preamble, the constitution reaffirm the country’s commitment to ensuring equal rights between Rwandans and between women and men without prejudice to the principles of gender equality and complementarity in national development.

Women’s right to political participation is guaranteed by the constitution under article 9 (4) which reaffirm ‘equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least 30% of posts in decision making organs.’ The constitution also prohibits discrimination in all its form including discrimination based on sex grounds. Furthermore, the constitution also mandates the establishment of ‘gender monitoring office’ and national women’s councils under articles 185 & 187 respectively for promotion of women’s rights.

- **Constitution of The Gambia (1997)**

The constitution of The Gambia was adopted in 1997 as the supreme law of the land under the second republic that came into being following the end of two year transition period following a coup d'état in 1994 (Saine, 2008). The right to equality of all citizens first reflects in the foreword of the constitution that states 'the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution will ensure full respect for and observance of human rights of the people at all times without discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, language or religion.'

As freedom of association stimulates political participation and provides a source of political leadership, thus section 25(1) (e) provides for the freedom to form and join associations and unions, including political parties and trade unions.

The right to political participation is guaranteed under section 26 as it states that:

Every citizen of the Gambian of full age and capacity shall have the right without unreasonable restrictions

- to take part in the conduct of public affairs directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- to vote and stand for elections at genuine periodic elections for public office, which elections shall be by universal and equal suffrage and be held by secret ballot;
- To have access on general terms of equality, to public service in The Gambia.

As stated explicitly stated in this section, the right to political participation and representation has been provided for women in The Gambia. Additionally, women's rights have been guaranteed under section 28 of the Constitution which states that:

- Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men.
- Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men, including equal

opportunities in political, economic and social activities.

Under this constitutional provision, women's right to equality as men and the right to equal opportunities in all spheres have been conditioned.

The constitution goes further to prohibit discrimination against women as section 33 states that 'all persons are equal before the law.' Section 33 defines the term "discrimination" as meaning affording different treatment to different persons attributed wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, colour, gender, language, religion, political; or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject, or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.

- **The Women's Act (2010)**

The Gambia has domesticated the international and regional instruments such as the CEDAW and the African Protocol into a Women's Act, enacted in 2010.

The Women's Act as it seeks to eliminate discrimination against women contained provisions aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of women in The Gambia.

The act called for the adoption of TSMs by all bodies aimed at ensuring de facto equality between men and women as stated under section 15:

- Every organ, body, public institution, authority or private enterprise shall adopt temporary special measures as set out in this Act aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women;
- The special measures to be adopted under subsection (1) shall
 - not to be considered discrimination as defined in this Act or in any other law in

force, but shall in no way entail, as a consequence, the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; and

- be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.
- Without prejudice to the provisions of subsections (1) and (2), every organ, body, public institution, authority or private enterprise shall take appropriate measures to protect the maternity status and reproductive health of women, including allocation of special facilities, time and resources, aimed at protecting maternity and such special measures shall not be discriminating.

Thus it is clear that section 15 on temporary special measures is in line with The Gambia's international and regional obligations as it calls for every organ, body, public institution, authority or private enterprise to adopt measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women. However, it is evident that women's *de jure* right to political representation does not translate into *de facto* representation in The Gambia.

- **Policy Framework on Women's Rights**

- **National Gender Policy of Rwanda**

The National Gender Policy of Rwanda adopted in 2010, sets to guide sectoral policies and programmes to integrate gender issues in respect to social, cultural, economic and political planning and programming. As stated in the guiding principles, the national policy in line with government's commitment to promote a society free from discrimination and promote effective and full participation of all citizens in the development process of the Rwanda.

Under its program on Good Governance and Justice, the policy seeks to ‘ensure gender sensitive representation and effective participation of women and men, girls and boys in decision making positions at all levels.’

- **National Gender and Empowerment Policy of The Gambia**

The Gambia has adopted policies as framework for the attainment of gender equity and equality. The first women’s right policy that The Gambia adopted was the “National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women (1999 - 2009)”. Upon the end of implementation of the first policy, a new framework ‘National Gender and Empowerment Policy 2010 – 2020’ came into being. This policy sets indicators to assist in gender mainstreaming from a human rights-based approach in planning, programming and implementation processes by sectoral departments, partners and other stakeholders. Its goal is to mainstream gender in all national and sectoral policies, programmes, plans and budgets to achieve gender equity and equality and women’s empowerment in the development process. Among its 8 key priority areas, Gender and governance are inclusive which sets to promote women’s participation and representation in decision making. In the policy, reference is made to the CEDAW and the African Women’s Protocol and baseline information on women’s and girls’ rights and gender equality are provided.

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