



Graduate School of Development Studies

**THE QUOTA SYSTEM IN RWANDAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: WOMEN'S
REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT**

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List of Acronyms

ISS: Institute of Social Studies

MIGEPROFE: Minister of Gender and Family Promotion.

MINALOC: Minister of Local Government.

MRND: Mouvement de la Révolution Nationale pour le Development

NEC: National Electoral Commission

NGO: Non Government Organisation

NUR: National University of Rwanda

NWC: National women's Council

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women

Relevance to Development Studies

Women's under-representation in political institutions all over the world is an increasing concern among scholars, politicians and development practitioners. By questioning the potentiality of the quota system for women's representation and political empowerment in Rwandan local government; taking the case of Huye District, the contribution of this study is to inform policy makers and gender activists about the dilemmas between the existing gender regimes and local perception of women, femininity and gender relations, on the one hand, and the ideas and practices of the quota system, as currently embraced by local political authorities, on the other hand.

Keywords

[Women, political Representation, power, empowerment, political empowerment, participation, gender, politics, local government, Rwanda]

Dedication

To Almighty God my Savior;
Arthur HABIMANA my lover;
My family members, you went before enjoying the fruits of your love.

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This research paper is a product of many people. I take this opportunity to express them my high gratitude.

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Abstract:

While undertaking this research, the main objective was to assess the potentiality of the quota system for women's representation and political empowerment in Rwandan local government.

To do this, close attention is drawn to the quota system's assumptions and practices in Rwanda's local government in relation to women's interests. Different concepts and theories such as quota discourses, women's representation, political participation, power and empowerment have driven the theoretical framework. The empirical data collected through semi structured and open ended interviews, focus group discussions, observation and documentation have been tightly analyzed and confronted with the theoretical elements using the frame of intersectionality.

In this regard, the study used specific indicators as focus points of the research process. These are: the electoral procedure, the background of women elected on quota, the bargaining power of individual women in decision-making process, the positions they hold in different organs in the District Council and the perceptions of the system by different groups of women as a mechanism for their political representation and empowerment. The study mainly used empirical data. Due to time constraints, the research area was limited to local government in Huye District. This means that all primary data have been gathered from that district and therefore the result will not be generalised to the entire country. Rather, this research may serve as a call for other researchers to address issues raised in this study area, and explore further what is going on elsewhere in Rwanda concerning women's political representation.

Rwanda introduced the quota system in 2003, and as a result is the country with the highest proportional representation of women in the world, with 48.8% in parliament and 40.2% in local government. Currently, women hold public office and constitute the subject of public debate in Rwanda.

However, this study argues that the road ahead is still long to achieve effective political representation of women in local government. There are many factors which hinder the performance of the quota system such as political patronage, class relations, power relation and patriarchy. Most of the time, the system is hijacked for the benefit of elite women. These elite women are political cronies of the ruling party, and they are mainly perceived as keeping close party to grass-roots control. The quota system does not go beyond numerical representation to allow for representation of women's interests especially poor women. The quota system does not I acknowledge the diversity of women but rather homogenizes them.

CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The development of every society is a result of its people's participation; there is no true governance, democracy or development without the equal participation of women and men in all spheres and at all levels of decision making (Karl, 1995).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

“Everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account” (UN 2002: 128).

In many societies however, women have long been excluded from the development process. The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. Rwandan women have historically been marginalized and discriminated against in all developmental aspects (social, economic and political). Women have been denied participation in political institutions at all levels (Narayan, 2002).

When the new Constitution was adopted in May 2003, representation of women at all political levels became a fundamental principle, with a constitutional mandate of 30 % fixed for women, from local government level to national Parliament. The underlying assumptions of this policy are that women's political participation will enhance their equal representation in decision-making bodies, and that women will advocate for solutions to women's problems and this should make it possible to reverse their subordinate position (Powley 2005).

But the questions remain whether these assumptions are accurate: does an increased number of women in political positions through the quota system means their inclusion in the political system (gender equity and equality in political bodies)? Do women elected on the quota system bring women's issues into formerly male-dominated political bodies? Another question is whether the quota system contributes to the increase of women's bargaining power overall in relation to men in political bodies. Does it enhance their involvement in decision-making processes, or are women just 'placed' in elected offices as figures and symbolically, mainly to justify the political legitimacy of the Rwanda's state, domestically and externally?

1.1. Research problem

Women's under-representation in political institutions (organs of public decision making) all over the world is an increasing concern among scholars,

politicians and feminist activists (Hassim 2003). This concern remains relevant since women constitute more than 50 percent of the population in most countries, but worldwide they hold less than 18 percent of parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union, March 2008).

Following strong feminist pressure in the last few decades, as expressed for instance in the Beijing “Platform for Action” of 1995; in addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all level, governments and other actors are supposed to “take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making .One of the measures that has been used by many countries including Rwanda to increase the number of women in decision making positions is the system of quotas or the reservation of seats for women in electoral representative institutions. Since that time, a new concept of gender equality has been gaining increasing relevance and support: the notion of "equality of result". This may have some implications for how the numerical equality of the quota system can be viewed (Malhotra and Schuler 2002).

The argument of “equality of result” (or substantive equality) is that equal opportunities do not exist in practice even though formal barriers may be removed. Indirect discrimination and a complex pattern of hidden barriers can still prevent women from getting their share of political influence and resources. Quotas and other forms of positive measures are geared towards equality of results and need to be assessed on this basis. The key argument in this respect is that experience shows equality as a goal may not be attainable through formal equal treatment alone. If barriers exist, it is argued, compensatory measures may need to be introduced to reach equality of results as the final outcome of unequal processes. From this perspective, quotas are no more than a compensation for the structural barriers that women meet in political and electoral processes (International IDEA 2006).

However, as Goetz (2003) argued, many efforts to increase the number of women in politics also tend to be oriented towards supporting the legitimately project of the state itself. Quotas can undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of women politicians because they will tend to be viewed as latecomers with artificial advantages and ready-made constituencies. For Goetz, the quota system detaches women from the normal competition for the councillors or parliamentarians seats and makes them seem lesser ‘political’ and less ‘authentic’ perhaps than other politicians (Goetz, 2003).

Rwanda is one of the countries where the quota system for women’s political participation was introduced in 2003, with the result that 48,8% of all representatives in the parliament were women. This made Rwanda the highest proportions of women in parliament in the world. This explains why it’s the effects of the quota system are important to study.

Rwanda is a society where the patriarchal system is deeply respected; the division of labour is highly gendered, and determined by various factors including economic, social, cultural, religious values and beliefs, as well as by the formal legal system. One may wonder if the quota system or the descriptive representation is the appropriate approach to integrate women in political system, and to empower them. It is a dilemma to what extent the quota system has effectively places women in an equal position to bargain and negotiate with men in the decision making process. In other words is a quota system (reserved seats for women) an effective mechanism for women political empowerment?

Given the idea behind the quota system that the increase of women's representatives will enhance an equal representation in decision-making positions, many of the studies in this area were preoccupied by the matter of increasing women representation. Few have questioned the potentiality of the quota system for women's political empowerment. This has triggered my interest to study whether the quota system in Rwanda enshrined in the National Constitution of 2003, has effectively placed women in more equal political positions with men or is it just another collusion, or gender-friendly way to silence women.

Since societies are not homogenous, women too are not a homogenous group. This study thus aims to assess the potentiality and benefits of quota system for political representation and empowerment of women from very different background in local government in Rwanda where the context is a patriarchal society and most women were for a long time denied the benefits of political participation, and where both participation and quota system are still quite new ideas and practices. The contribution of this study is to inform policy makers and gender activists about the dilemmas and contradictions brought up by existing gender regimes and local perception of women, femininity and gender relations, on the one hand, and the ideas and practices of the quota system, as currently embraced by local political authorities, on the other hand.

1.2 Historical background of Rwanda

In order to understand the reason why the quota system has been adopted as a mechanism for Rwanda's women political representation, it is important to briefly reflect on the political history of Rwanda. In the following section, a short overview of the country's political history is addressed.

1.2.1 The political history of Rwanda

The genocide of 1994 has, more than any other event in recent Rwanda's history, contributed to shape the country's current political landscape. That is why it is used as a reference point to help me to identify the characteristics of different periods of Rwanda's political process and gender relation. In this regard, I will look at the period before the genocide (or before 1994) and after the genocide.

Pre-genocide and genocide period

Before the colonial period, Rwanda (¹) was a centralized kingdom under which a monopoly of power was in the hands of the king and his advisors who decided on all matters. The large majority of the population had little access to power or privilege except through the king. The advent of first the German and then the Belgian colonisers brought far-reaching changes to the country. Germany's control over Rwanda lasted only until its 1918 defeat in World War I. Subsequently in 1919 Rwanda became a mandate territory of the League of Nations under the administration of Belgium (Mutamba 2005). During this period, the Belgians colonizers had discriminated against the majority of the population (Hutu) and favoured the minority (Tutsi), redrawing political, social and economic relationships of power between the population². By the time of independence in 1962, the Hutu majority was both resentful and frustrated by the total domination of the Tutsi and Belgians in all spheres of lives. Thus

¹ Rwanda's existence as a nation state dates from the 11th century. It is a country located in the Great Lakes Region of Africa with a total area of 26,338 km² and a very high population density of 400 inhabitants per km. It has a total population of 8.2 million (2002 population census) of which 52.2% are females. Excluding children ages 15 -19, the percentage of women rises to 57% in the 20-44 year age group, and to 58% in the 45-64 year age group. In different terms, in the 25 -29 year age group, there are only 69 men per 100 women. Rwanda ranks among the least developed countries, with a per capita income of \$250 per year. Its gross domestic product fell by 50% in 1994 because of the war and genocide (MUTAMBA 2005: 5).

² . The Belgian colonial rule introduce cash-crop economy which displaced the barter and gift economy from feudal society. Also, political discrimination against Hutu was sharpened. They were excluded from public office and all positions of influence while consolidating the Tutsi hegemony. Monarchic rule thus was identified with a system of sharp repression and economic exploitation. The Tutsi, rather than Belgian, appeared to be the agents of colonization. Belgians introduced a number of administrative reforms, among which the identity card, that reinforced the ethnic ideology among Rwandans (Hintjens 2001).

Hutu took power in the name of revolutionary democracy and in the spirit of revenge.

As consequences, the period after decolonization was marked by massive political violence against the Tutsi (especially in 1959, 1973), leaving thousands of them killed and forcing others to flee to neighbouring countries and, ultimately, leading to genocide (Prunier 1995, Hintjens 2001).

In 1973, the Second Republic took place by a “coup d'état” that removed the first president from power. From 1974, the President outlawed political parties and created his own Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND)³. Both Republics were characterized by centralized, dictatorial, corrupt political regime, and popular discontent grew through the 1980s. The economic austerity coincided with the first attack of RPF (⁴) military from Uganda in 1990. In the same period, as a result of pressure from international community for democratisation, the MRND agreed to allow partisan competition and several new parties emerged in 1991. Economic decline, political manipulation of ethnic animosities, and civil war all contributed to the disintegration of Rwandan society in the 1990–1993 period. In 1994 a total breakdown occurred in the form of the genocide. In response, the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) stepped up its liberation efforts. In July 1994, RPF occupied the country and a transitional national government was formed (Prunier 1995).

Post genocide period

When the genocide had come to an end and the RPF took power, the challenge consisted in ruling a country left in shambles after genocide, four years of civil war and an even longer period of economic decline. During the transitional period between 1994 and the elections in 2003, in its effort to rebuild the country, the transitional government of Rwanda identified the deplorable political, economic, and social situation of Rwanda as a direct consequence of the previous administrative history of the country. The highly centralized governance of the colonial as well as post independence administration of the country excluded the population from participating in the determination of their own development. Among the main problems which

³ . MRND is a ruling party of the second Republic of Rwanda from 1973 up to 1994, which organized and executed the genocide of Tutsi of 1994 (Prunier 1995).

⁴ . RPF: A political movement organized from the community of Tutsi exiles in Uganda that started the liberation war on the 1st October 1990 (Powley 2005, Mutamba 2005).

persisted into the post-genocide period was the near absence of women and youth in the running of political and economic affairs and the administrative systems. The transitional government decided to formulate policy, and new legal, constitutional and institutional frameworks that would guarantee good governance as the foundation of political stability and economic prosperity in future. Among the key policy frameworks that were developed as guiding principles were the decentralisation policy (2000), and the National Constitution (2003). These reinforced the principles of gender equality and of women's political participation (Mutamba 2005, MINALOC 2000).

The ultimate mandate of the policy was to enable and reactivate local people to participate in initiating, making, implementing, and monitoring decisions and plans that concern them. The goal was also to take into consideration local people's needs, priorities, capacities and resources by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government. For the effective implementation of decentralisation, a territorial reform of the structures and divisions of local government was also introduced. Since then, the actual administrative structure has been as follows: there are four provincial administrations; the Kigali City Council; 30 Districts; 416 Sectors; and 22,148 Cells. The provinces provide the deconcentrated level of Central Government. Districts are legally decentralised entities, each responsible for local development. Governors, with an elected Council and an Executive Committee run the District (MINALOC 2005).

At the same time, a multi-party system was established from 2003 onwards. The law allowing for that at local government level came into place after the first local government elections in 2001. Once promulgated in 2003, the electoral law did not allow for party organization at the local level, but only at provincial and central government levels (Schwartz 2004, art.3 of Organic law n° 16/2003).

As a result people elected in the local government elections of 2001 and 2006 were obliged to run as independents, and may not represent a political party, at least not officially. Given that candidates could not run on a party basis, the ruling party was able to use its extensive power base to ensure that loyal officials were the ones most likely to be elected. The situation has changed somewhat since May 2007, when a new law was published, allowing for political organizations to organise in elections and have members at grassroots level.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

a. Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the potentiality and benefits of the quota system for women's representation and political empowerment in local government in Rwanda.

Specific objectives are:

1. To identify the assumptions that inform the quota system for women's political representation in political bodies, and what inspired policy makers to introduce the quota system in Rwanda?
2. To find out whether the quota system is inclusive or exclusive of women in general, and specifically of women from different social backgrounds (to see if the quota system is intended as a mechanism for women's political empowerment or just to enhance Government legitimacy).
3. To investigate to what extent the quota system empowers individual women and improves their bargaining power in decision-making processes
4. To identify how women in Rwanda (taking the case of Huye District) perceive the quota as a mean to ensure their representation and their political empowerment

b. Research questions

The main question of this study is: To what extent is the quota system a potential mechanism for women's representation and political empowerment in local government in Rwanda?

Additional questions are:

1. What are the assumptions about women, gender and politics that inform the quota system for women's political participation? What inspired policy makers to introduce the quota system in Rwanda?
2. How is the quota system inclusive or exclusive? In other words, what is the socio-economic and political background of women who get elected? From which position in community or socio-economic and political backgrounds do

they come from?

3. How are women elected in the quota system? What official and unofficial methods are used to identify and select women who will be put on the quota lists?
4. What are the issues women bring to politics? Given their diverse background, do they identify with all women's interests, or with other social groups (class, age, ethnic) interests?
5. Does the quota system increase individual women's bargaining power in decision-making processes in the political bodies?
6. How do local women outside local government spaces perceive the quota system? To what extent do they view it as a potential or actual mean of women political empowerment in Rwanda?

1.4 Method of the study

The study has focused on the local government level specifically at the District level in Huye District. In order to gain insight into this area, the study uses both primary and secondary data. This section draws out the various methods and techniques of data collection and analysis used to carry out the present research.

As mentioned earlier, this research aims at assessing the potentiality and benefit of the quota system for women's political representation and empowerment in local government in Rwanda. In this case, it becomes necessary to hear about experiences and testimonies of women who are already in the system and to record their views about the system and how it works for women in the community. In this endeavour, the study is purely qualitative and exploratory since it intends to understand how the quota system is viewed as a vehicle for women's political representation and empowerment in the context of Rwanda. To get relevant and complete information, I used different data collection techniques with the ultimate objective being to benefit from the fact that they complement each other. Thus, documentation, interviews, focus group discussions and observation were found very suited and meticulously used together during the fieldwork.

1.4.1 Data collection process

Selecting respondents

All the respondents are stakeholders of the quota system at local government level in Huye District. Each group and every individual was purposefully selected:

Eight out of the 26 District Councillors elected on the quota system were interviewed to find out more about their background, and to learn directly about their experiences of and opinions about the quota system; women's organizations considered as part of the women movement at local level (ABIZERANA Cooperative) and opinion leaders considered part of civil society were interviewed as well. The cooperative was selected among others due to its being a rural women's organization, composed of different categories of women (poor women, widows, those with husbands in prisons, adults, old and young). This was important to access a range of diverse and heterogeneous points of view, which made triangulation of data possible.

The ABIZERANA Cooperative is located in MARABA Sector which is a target of Vision 2020 Umurenge⁵ in Huye District, due to its extreme poverty. Their members were asked about their views on both the actual quota system and how it works in practice and about its potentialities and possible uses in principle. District officials, as well as those of the National Electoral Commission, were selected for interviews as they were involved in the implementation of gender policy, especially women's political participation/representation in local government.

All 48 respondents (45 women and 3 men) for this research were grouped into 6 categories as follows:

Eight women councillors elected on quota in Huye District Council; Two women from District Committee of National Women's Council ; two people involved with women's election (officials of National Electoral Commission at Huye District): one woman, one man; three District Officials in charge of

⁵ . The Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP) is a new initiative by the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with development partners and NGOs to use the existing decentralization system and leverage technical and financial assistance to accelerate the rate of poverty reduction in Rwanda. The aim is to eradicate extreme poverty by 2020 (MINALOC 2007).

gender: two women, one man ; Three `opinion leaders': two Assistant Lecturers at National University of Rwanda (one man, one woman, and one woman member of the Women's Students Association at NUR; local women organised in named "ABIZERANA co-operative" (30 women with whom I conducted 3 focus group discussions). With a help of the leaders of this cooperative, I randomly chose 30 women out of 147 members of that cooperative. Each group was composed of 10 women and the discussion was taking between 30-45 minutes. All this was done with the help of a researcher assistant who was writing down the discussions since.

Techniques used to collect data

Different techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions and diary observations recorded in a diary were used to collect primary data. In this subsection, I will briefly discuss each technique and explain why it was chosen and how it was used to collect data.

An interview can be described as "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. The interview is more than the spontaneous, everyday exchange of opinions; it is a way for the interviewer to receive carefully tested knowledge. The respondents do not only answer formulated questions, but express in a dialogue, an understanding of his or her world"(Laws, Harper and Marcus 2003: 297).

In the case of this study, the interviews were chosen firstly because I wanted to get people's experiences or views about the research topic in depth, and secondly because politics is a sensitive issue given the political history of Rwanda, some people could not talk in groups. Individual interviews were conducted with 8 women elected on quota in Huye District Council; three officials in charge of gender at the District level; two officials of the National Electoral Commission at the District level; two women members of the District Committee of the National Women's Council; and three opinion leaders. The aim of the interviews is to better understand how the respondents relate to the concepts in focus of the study. The interviewees are treated as respondents rather than as informants as such, from whom I collected "facts". I am interested in them as persons and in their specific knowledge in relation to what they are experiencing and know firsthand and through their own observations.

Consequently, I have not analyzed the information in terms of what is true and what is false. Instead the information has been treated as a foundation to better understand different mindsets among different groups of respondents (different categories of women). In each case, interviewees were given the opportunities to express their feelings and opinions on the potentiality of the

quota system as a means for women's representation and the extent to which it is bringing about political empowerment at local level in Rwanda.

A focus group "is a group interview, where people are brought together for a discussion. Often they have experience in common, but not always. They may be strangers to each other, or drawn from an existing community group" (Laws, Harper and Marcus 2003: 298). Three focus group discussions have been used to collect opinions/views of 30 local women from ABIZERANA co-operative in the Huye District. In addition to the interviews and focus groups, I had one day of participating in the Huye District Council meeting whereby I observed the participation and interactions among Councillors while taking decisions.

Primary data were collected for a period of one month in Rwanda, from 13th July to 11th August 2008. All interviewees were based in the Huye District and were interviewed there. The first week was spent contacting District authorities and my respondents, making appointments and consulting documents from the District. The second week I conducted most of the interviews. During third week, I conducted the 3 focus group discussions and a few more interviews with some respondents who had not been able to respected appointments in the previous week. The fourth and last week was concentrated on looking for data about women's political participation and the quota system by visiting different institutions in charge of gender issues such as the Ministry of Gender, the Ministry of Local Government, the office of UNIFEM, and the office of the Parliament among others, etc.

In general, I was unable to gather any documents which directly address the quota system and women's political participation in Rwanda. However, I collected the following relevant policy documents and reports: the Strategy of Gender Policy Implementation, the Report on Beijing after 10 years of implementation in Rwanda, the Report on Local Government Election of 2006 and Huye District Strategic Plan of 3 years (starting from 2007 to 2010).

Primary data were complemented by secondary data, constituting literature, reports and policy documents on the quota system, women's representation and political participation and empowerment in Rwanda and other countries (African and elsewhere). The technique used here was documentary, using secondary sources on a range of comparative and specific cases.

1.5 Scope and limitation of the study

This research focuses on quota system and women political representation and empowerment in local government in Rwanda. The focus of the research is on the ideas and practices of the quota system in local government in Rwanda

specifically at district level. Due to time constraint and limited resources, the study could not cover the entire country or 30 Districts. One District - HUYE in Southern Province – was therefore selected as a case study. Thus, my findings should not be generalised to the entire country, but rather should be taken as a microcosm (small version) of a wider situation and as something that may be useful for thinking of further research. It may also be useful to policy makers and development practitioners interested in women's political representation and empowerment questions in general.

1.6 The study site

The District of Huye was selected due to the fact that this is the researcher's work area and it was expected that this would facilitate the data collection process, being a place I know very well. Also the District has both rural and urban settings and this therefore allowed access to the required diversity of respondents.

Huye District is one of the eight districts that make the Southern Province of Rwanda. It is composed of 14 Sectors (whereby nine of them rural, two urban and three are semi-urban), with seventy seven cells and 509 villages. It has a population of 290,677 inhabitants (159 644 female and 131 033 male). This means that 55% of the district population are females. The District has a population density of 500 persons per square kilometre (Huye District 2007).

Huye District Council members are elected by the citizens. The District Council is composed of 26 councillors, 12 of whom are women, 8 of these are elected on women's quota, 2 on youth's quota, 1 as a Women's National Council representation, and 1 is elected for general candidate. There are 14 male councillors who are elected as general candidates. Each of the fourteen Sectors has at least one Councillor in the District Council (Huye District, 2006).

The Mayor is in charge of the day-to-day running of the District, assisted by two Vice-Mayors (Vice-Mayor of Social Affairs and Vice-Mayor of Economics and Development) and an Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary is a government technocrat assisted by technicians in implementing both central and local government decisions at the district level. Those technicians are grouped into 7 units: (i) infrastructure and planning; (ii) economic development; (iii) education, youth, sport and culture; (iv) administration, governance and social affairs; (v) taxation and mobilization of resources; (vi) human resources management unit and the unit for (vii) gender, health and family planning (Huye District 2007).

1.7 Practical problems in carrying out the research

While carrying out this study, it became clear that the research topic is considered a sensitive one. Furthermore, to my knowledge, no similar research has been conducted before at the same area in Rwanda. For both reasons, it was not easy to get secondary data or to ask people to talk about their views frankly. To face this, I have been guided by some studies done in other African countries where the quota system is already used, such as Uganda and South-Africa, and from some of the Scandinavian countries. Given the political history of Rwanda, it was not always easy to share opinions with the interviewees, for instance on sensitive topics like identity and politics.

However because I know very well the place where I conducted the interviews and focus groups, I knew how to talk to them and was able to understand their local references, for example to recent events and local personalities.

As mentioned already, this study used open-ended interviews and focus group discussions. These were chosen so that people would feel less constrained in giving their opinion in ways that were meaningful for them. This process of ‘opening up’ debates on the quota system’s implications produced a vast amount of data. For the researcher, such richness is both rewarding and problematic since what the data gain in authenticity by not being forced into pre-coded categories may be lost without careful and systematic interpretation. For this, at each research question (where necessary), the analysis has taken into consideration many nuances of different voices, within and between categories of respondents.

1.8 Organisation of the paper

This paper is composed of five chapters. The first chapter has been a general introduction in which the problem was stated, and the contextual background, objectives, research questions, methods and the study area have been presented. The second chapter will try to grasp issues related to women’s status in Rwanda. The third chapter is about the main concepts and theories, and presents the overall theoretical framework of the study. The fourth chapter contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the main findings, and finally the fifth and last chapter is the concluding part of the study.

CHAPTER 2: WOMEN IN RWANDA

In order to understand the context in which the quota system has been introduced; this chapter draws on a brief portrait of women's social, economical and political position and gives an overview of how gender relations in Rwanda can be understood.

2.1 Gender regimes in Rwanda

Rwanda is a patriarchal society where women traditionally have had subordinated positions. This influences not only the relationships between men and women, but also differences in social position of different groups of women, and cultural norms and practices regarding women and gender relations (Rombouts 2004). From the pre-colonial period, women faced social, economic, political and legal discrimination in Rwanda. For example, a royal (pre-colonial) law denying women the right to engage in any commerce without her husband's permission was only repealed in 1992, but still many people adhered to this prescription. Especially in rural areas women have often been unwilling to openly contradict it. The advent of colonial rule introduced new social cultural values, which together with abrupt shift from subsistence to monetary economy exacerbated the already existing gender inequalities to the disadvantage of women (Schwartz 2004).

In the Civil Code and the Family Code adopted in 1999, the husband is identified as the legal head of household and in the case of disagreements over parental authority; the father's will automatically prevails. Because the Rwandan Civil Code made no provision for regulating property in the context of marriage, women's property and inheritance rights were governed by customary law. Because of this, women could not inherit property or land, which frequently left them unable to provide for themselves and their families after the death of a father or husband. In addition women in Rwanda play greater roles in agriculture (93% of farmers are women but the imbalance in the traditional male-female power relation makes it more difficult for them to own land and have access and control over other assets such as fertilizer, seeds, pesticides, and extensions services. Most of the domestic work remains primarily the responsibility of women and girls (MIGEPROFE 2004).

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the population was 70 percent female and 70 percent of the population was living below the poverty line, a large proportion of these being women. The first post-genocide National Population Census (August 2002), revealed that over 35 percent of households in Rwanda were headed by women, and largely this can be understood as a consequence of genocide. Such a situation can be viewed as

completely abnormal when viewed from the perspective of the Rwandan social structure which is firmly based on a patriarchal system. Indeed the post-genocide system has created an abnormal situation, one which has required women to assume multiple roles they were not used to such as heads of household, community leaders and financial providers, as well as giving them greater responsibility for meeting the needs of devastated families and communities (Newbury and Baldwin, 2000, Powley, 2004).

2.2 Women's political participation

In Rwanda, women have historically been predominantly confined to the domestic sphere, while men monopolized the public and political arenas. Political decision-making at the community and national levels was almost exclusively the province of men, and mainly of older elite men. With the consequent unequal power relations, gender-based discrimination was considered normal.

During the King's regime, there was political institution of "King mother" playing a role of advisor of the King. The colonial period introduced a formal, gradually extended and eventually universal education system, where the focus shifted sharply from traditional knowledge to 'science' and from customary exchange and barter to a monetary economy. These shifts disadvantaged women in terms of the loss of their status and roles, as elsewhere in Africa. The Rwandan women were granted the right to stand for election in 1961. The post-independence regimes were characterized by a discriminatory policy based on gender, ethnicity, etc, which reinforced women's discrimination from politics and decision making process. The first female parliamentarian began serving in 1967. However, before the war in the early 1990's and genocide of 1994, Rwanda's women never held more than 18% of seats in Parliament (Powley 2005, Mutamba 2005).

Since 1994, the Government of Rwanda has taken meaningful steps demonstrating its commitment toward gender equality. From this period, the situation began to improve in terms of women's participation in development and decision making bodies. The new law for inheritance was promulgated in 1999, though its application is still far from satisfactory. During the nine-year period of post-genocide transitional government (from 1994 to 2003), women's representation in parliament (by appointment) has reached 25.7% (Akanga 2007, Mutamba 2005, Powley 2005).

In May 2003, Rwanda adopted a new Constitution which enshrines a commitment to promote and respect gender equality. This respect for equality is to be ensured in part by granting women 'at least' 30 percent of posts in all decision-making organs at local and national level (National Constitution of

Republic of Rwanda 2003). From this period on, women's representation at all levels (local and national) became a fundamental principle. As a result, Rwandan women gained 48,8% of seats in Parliament and shifted from 27% (2003) to 42% (2006) of political representatives at local government level (National Electoral Commission of Rwanda, 2006)

2.3 Women's election in local government

In local government elections (i.e. in Sectors and Districts) in 2001, Rwanda introduced an electoral mechanism aimed at better including women and youth (also defined as a formerly underrepresented group). In these elections, each voter used three ballots: a general ballot, a women's ballot, and a youth ballot. In each sector, voters selected one person on each ballot, thus picking a general candidate (frequently a woman, and a young person. Through a subsequent indirect election, a District Council was chosen from candidates who won at the sector level.

This District Council included all of those elected on the general ballot, 1/3 of those elected on women's ballot, and 1/3 of those from youth ballot. From among that selected group, the District Mayor and other executive committee officials were also chosen. This system has been successful at getting women into office: 27 percent of those elected to the District Councils in 2001 were women (Powley 2005). In 2006, women were given 30% of the seats in addition to women through youth ballot, which makes 40% of women elected in local government. For the local government, the quota system has been applied since 2001, thus before being stated by National Constitution of 2003, but it was not immediately embraced by the community. Even though women shifted from 27% to 40% in local government women's representation in the executive committees of Districts remains limited: only 5 Mayors out of 106 districts in 2001 and only 3 out of 30 in 2006(National Electoral Commission 2006).

Despite these electoral successes, socially and culturally embedded values and notions of gender still influence gender relations in practice in local government in Rwanda. Women remain in inferior positions to men, on average, and are rarely expected to play an important or assertive role. Many are regarded as dependents of their male relatives and allies. Their main social roles are still viewed in terms of their identity as mothers and wives rather than as political figures or decision makers (Powley 2005, Rombouts 2004).

Given this context, the quota system begs many questions. We need to ask especially: what does a quota system mean in terms of women's political participation and their economic and political empowerment? Do the women elected through the quota system gain real power in terms of their role in

politics? In the background lies the question of what inspired the quota system for women's representation in Rwanda in the first place. Considering the limited time for this research, these questions cannot be addressed adequately or directly. Rather, as indicated earlier, a more limited set of questions has been addressed: who are the women that have come to political office through the quota system, and to what extent do they use their positions to bring empowerment to themselves and other local women?

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I define the most relevant concepts for this study, especially the quota system, political participation, power and political empowerment. I consider them in relation to one another. I also have elaborated on the theory of representative democracy in relation to diversity among women, in order to try and better understand how women's representation might link with women's political empowerment in Rwanda.

It needs to be borne in mind that the aim of this research is both to analyze the background to the quota system, and to assess its potential and actual impacts in Huye District on women's political participation ⁽⁶⁾ their representation and their empowerment at local government level. In this chapter, a number of reflections on key selected concepts and theories should help answer the question: how does a quota system contribute to/how can it lead to women's political representation? It should also help start to address the question of how the quota system thus contributes to women's empowerment, and to what extent.

3.1. Quota systems and quota discourses

Quota systems in politics are mechanisms by which a political system reserves a number of seats in representative organs to a particular group of people. In some countries quotas apply to minorities based on their regional, ethnic, linguistic, religious or indigenous identities and differences. However this study focuses on a quota system that applies to women in elective office.

According to International IDEA (2006), electoral quotas for women may be constitutional, legislative or take the form of a political party quota. It may apply to the number of women candidates proposed by a party for election, or may take the form of reserved seats in the legislature. Quotas for women entail that women must constitute a certain number or percentage of the members of a body, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or an appointed government body. According to the National Constitution of Rwanda Of 2003, the political quota system in Rwanda is constitutional and reserves at least 30% of the seats for women and at least 30% for youth in

⁶ . The term "political participation" is used interchangeably with "political representation" in this paper

political institutions at all levels.

The core idea behind the quota systems is to increase women's entry into political positions and political decision-making, so as to ensure that women are not only tokenistic in political life, or remain in a tiny minority. In other words, the quota has been taken as an efficient mechanism in terms of enhancing the number of women in decision-making positions (parliaments, central government, local government, etc.) to provide the space for women's entry into politics and a potential for women's issues to be entered more forcefully into the political agenda for change (Ballington, J. and Karam, A.2005). This means that the quota is a way for women's entry directly into the decision and policy making process, from a stronger position than through 'influencing' this process from outside. The idea is that those women who are appointed or elected will form a critical mass, which will both represent other women, and bring women's issues into the political spaces they inhabit. In this way, the hope is that agendas will reflect women's interests better, and women's situation will change through policy reform, as their problems are known, acted on and ultimately resolved. This kind of approach is the one emphasized by the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, who in 2003, while speaking about the parliamentary elections, said that:

"Women's underrepresentation 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 themselves, their families and the entire country". (Kagame, quoted in Powles 2005: 159).

3.2. Political participation

Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) have described two forms of participation: social participation and political participation. The former falls outside of the State and addresses those who had been excluded from the existing institutions. It could take a variety of forms, from social movements to self-help groups. Political participation has been broadly defined as taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. The main concern of political participation is that citizens should be able to take actions, individually and collectively, that are more or less directly aimed at influencing decision taken mainly by public representatives and officials.

Similarly, Conway (2001) has defined political participation as those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of the government, the selection of government authorities or the policies of government. He argues that in culture that values freedom, equality and democracy, citizens are expected to engage in political activities (for example voting in election), have

options to participate even further, such as being active in political party organization or running for public office.

Desbmukb-Ranadive, links women's political participation to "their access to public political space"(quoted in Wu 2006). The quota system is intended to create public political spaces that ensure improved: "women's access to and control of public office, participation in the administration and governance of the society and institutions locally, regionally and nationally" (cited in Wu 2006)

Pandey hold that increased women's participation in politics is a means as well as the end. Participation is

"A mean for women to gain access to resources and power to control them; it is also a basic human right that women should enjoy equality. Up until now, women have lived in the world where men set the agenda and priorities. With increased political participation, women would have a voice in shaping their own as well as society's future" (quoted in Wu 2006: 9).

This view falls into the sphere of debate in this paper in which I intend to investigate the potentiality – and actuality - of the quota system for women's political participation in terms of access to political resources and power to control them and influence decisions/policy making process for their own interests. In this regards, the recognition of a typology of different grades or levels of participation, as proposed by Gaventa and Pretty can be very useful. They have classified participatory schemes as follows: passive participation (being told what is going to happen); participation in information giving; participation by consultation; participation for material incentives; functional participation; interactive participation; and self-mobilization or transformative participation (Gaventa and Pretty quoted by Pellissery and Bergh 2007).

3.3. Power and political empowerment

We need to understand what constitutes power in order to define empowerment, and apply it to the sphere of political participation. Power is largely defined as the ability to exert influence over institutions and structures, resources and people. In the 1970s Foucault has pushed farther the analysis of power by rejecting the notion that power is something held by individuals or groups. He argues that power permeates social relations, interactions. It is fluid, relational and exists not only in the domain of politics, but also in the everyday relationships of people, both individually and in institutions (Parpart 2002). Parpart argues that, if women are going to successfully organize and exert power to challenge gender hierarchies, both in daily life and in state and governance, we need to consider the relationship between structures, agency

and discourses of power with attention to individual consciousness - power within, and its role in collective action - power with, and not only power over.

Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as gaining an improved “ability to make choices”; to be disempowered, therefore, implies to be denied or have severely constrained choices. According to her, choice in the context of power means the possibility of alternatives and therefore, “empowerment” entails the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choice acquire such ability and can exercise their choices. In other words, empowerment implies a process of change and can be thought of in terms of three elements: *resources* (not only material but also multiplicity of social relationships conducted in various institutional domains which make up a society), *agency* (the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them) and *achievements* (outcomes). The author argues that empowerment is a process and an end at the same time and the three elements are the dimensions under which we can achieve empowerment.

Bennett describes empowerment as “the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them” (Bennett as cited in Malhotra and Schuler et.al 2002). The empowerment process, as she characterizes it, operates “from below” and involves agency, as exercised by individuals and groups. She continues describing it as “a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-confidence, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination”.

Moreover, drawing from feminist perspectives, women’s empowerment contains the idea that a fundamental shift in perceptions, or “inner transformation”, is essential to the formulation of choices. That is, women should be able to define self interest, have choices and exercise control over decisions or resources, and consider themselves as not only able, but entitled, to make choices (Sen, A. 1999; Kabeer 2001). In other words, women’s empowerment refers to the expansion in their ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001).

From the above debate, women’s political participation can be seen as an entry point for the process of empowerment because women need to be inside (as well as outside) the system in order to challenge and be able to influence it with some hope of results. Political empowerment, in this context, refers to the process by which women access political resources, control them and use their individual or collective ability to recognize and utilize resources thus influencing political decision-making processes in their own interests. In this context, I would argue that political empowerment is tightly linked to social and economic empowerment of women. This link is especially relevant when

we ask: who are women who access political resources or who can be selected in the quota system?

To answer this question we need to look at different social and economic positions of women in the society which may influence their access to political resources. In other words, as Kabeer (2001: 7) stated:

“Access to resources (social, economical) reflects the rules and norms which govern the distribution and exchange of resources in different institutional arenas. And these resources are acquired through a multiplicity of social relation conducted in the various institutional domains such as family, market, community, political party, religious institutions...”

This means that women who belong to economically and socially powerful families and communities have much more resources to enter the political arena, compared to women from socially and economically marginalized groups.

In the context of this research, political empowerment includes: knowledge of the political system and means of access to it; exercising the right to vote; women's involvement and their mobilization in the local political system; women's representation in local, regional and national bodies of government; their strength as a voting bloc; and the representation of women's interests in effective lobbies and in advocacy and interest groups. This interacts with social empowerment: being able to improve education; having access to social spaces; participating in social network groups; having access to media, and so on. It also interacts with economic empowerment, which includes: access and control over income; access to employment; involvement in local trade and farmers/ labour associations; access to markets (Malhotra and Schuler 2002).

From this, I can argue that Rwanda's women political participation depends on their position in different social and economic domains of life in the society. For example a woman with a high degree of education, who is employed by a public institution, or involved in trade is in a better position to access the political system (e.g. to have membership in a political party and thus be on a list of candidates). She is far more likely to become involved in women's representation in different political bodies, than a woman who is not educated to a high level, belongs to a poor community or household and lives in a remote rural area.

Moreover, the above discussion leads us to the important conceptual aspect of this research which is the issue of women's political representation. Women are not an abstract, unified category, with abstract unified political interests. Women are positioned within economic, ethnic, regional, religious, age and political axes of power and social relations. Their interests may be closer to the interests of the men of their social group, than to interests of women from another group. Thus, the ideas of womanhood and/or femininity

that inform the quota system need to be examined in themselves as well as in relation to social, economic and political interests of women and their political participation.

3.4. Representative democracy and politics of representation

In this section, I discuss the central idea of representation and explore its emphasis on the normative debate of whether it matters who our representatives are as long as they 'do their job'. To make it more coherent with my study interest, I will bring in the factors for women's political effectiveness as representatives of other women.

I start from a question: Does it matter who our representatives are? According to Narud and Valen, one theory of representative democracy holds that "the elected should 'mirror' those they represent in terms of social status, economy and demography and even according to values, beliefs and opinions". Another theory on representative democracy holds that "representation entails acting in the interest of the represented in a manner responsive to them" (in Schwartz 2004:14!). The core idea in this view is that the parliament should make decisions which people would have made if they were themselves in that position of making decisions. For example, as Pitkin argues, "it is the activities of our representatives and not their characteristics that really matter" (in Schwartz 2004: 15)). The argument is that an over-emphasis on "who" is present in the legislative assemblies draws attention away from the questions of "what" they actually do. This may also be the case for women's representatives.

These different views reflect the conflict between those who advocate social representation and those who promote the politics of ideas. It is on the basis of this controversy that Anne Phillips establishes her criticism, arguing that the former has to be understood in relation to the latter. Phillips bases her critique on the argument that "male-dominated parliament does not give equal consideration to the interests of male and female citizen" (Phillips, 1995:25). She argues that, "the social background is important in the sense that men and women have different experiences that can influence their political work". Thus, she emphasizes that, it matters who our representatives are. However, I argue in this paper that the differences between women and men are not the only differences that matter. Equally important are differences among women and what these differences imply for the ability of some women to 'represent' the interests – or even understand the interests – of other women.

The quota system has been adopted in response to feminist pressure for women's representation in political realms during the past decade or more. This system has now been adopted by policy makers and politicians worldwide. However, the new discussion is on how women can enter and can effectively

make an impact in the key institutions of representative democracy. The focus is on the dilemma of autonomy versus integration or descriptive versus substantive representation. In other words, does women's numerical presence in democratic representations mean their political effectiveness, or leads to the response to women's demands (Goetz and Hassim 2003).

In this regard, Goetz and Hassim (2003: 6) have suggested different factors which can contribute to women's political effectiveness:

“the success of the gender equity interests in policy making will depend upon three major factors and their interactions: The nature of civil society (its power to mobilise resources and public concern to support its demands, its power to challenge gender-biased conceptions of women's needs, roles and rights); The nature of the political system (the depth of procedural and substantive democracy and the organisation of political competition); The nature and power of the state (whether it is developmental state, the extent of decentralisation and institutional accountability)”.

Goetz and Hassim argue that, in efforts to increase women's political effectiveness, the attention should be on building gender sensitivity into accountability systems. In practice this means examining whether civil society associations and political parties are internally democratic and the extent to which women have a voice within them.

It is clear that, discussions on relations between the gendered politics of domination and exclusion, and differences in experiencing such politics among women have a long tradition. This can be traced back to feminist theorizing of women's knowledge and questions of intersectionality of power relations. In this context, women's life experience can be taken as a base for producing feminist knowledge. Feminist knowledge can in turn be the basis for feminist strategies that push for change of social relations of power so that specific groups of women, in different ways are no longer excluded in ways that are specific to women's social, economic and political positions within society. In this research paper, I will combine arguments put forward by analysts of representative democracy with some arguments of feminist scholars on intersectionality.

3.5 Intersectionality

As mentioned above, women who enter the political process through the quota system come from very different social backgrounds, are located differently in the complex social networks, and have very different experiences of power, empowerment, and politics. They may also have very different ideas about womanhood, about women's interests and/or women's issues.

To deal with all these differences, I will use intersectional analysis to explore the research questions identified in Chapter 1.

Intersectionality as a concept refers to the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of structural forms of exclusion and subordination. It is a feminist theory and method which is used to critically analyze the multiplicity of exclusions and inequalities that can operate in any given situation. It initiates a process of discovery alerting the researcher to the fact that the world around them is always more complicated and contradictory than they could ever anticipate. This compels the researcher to grapple with complexity and to engage with it rather than to resort to devices which simplify reality in the name of tidying up the research process (Davis, 2007).

Intersectional analysis will help me examine the diversity of ideas, experiences and the range of social, economic and political locations of individual women who enter politics through the quota system in local government in Rwanda. It will also help to understand their willingness to engage in representative politics, and their ability to put forward women's interests in the process. In this research, intersectionality is a tool for analysing women as a heterogeneous group, and for examining the electoral procedure through which these women access the quota system in order to find out the potentiality of the quota system for women's representation and political empowerment.

In other words, an intersectional approach will help me to analyze how the quota system, political participation and representation, power and the political empowerment of women are related. This will be done by investigating the social, economic and political positions of individual women who enter into political institutions at local level. The research questions have guided the process of data collection and analysis. Indicators and variables considered in relation to the research questions have included: electoral procedures, socio-economic background of individual women who get the seats, representation of women's interests, power relations in decision making processes, and the degree of collaboration between women in political institutions and women at community-level. Each of these will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: QUOTA SYSTEM, WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN HUYE DISTRICT

Using empirical findings from interviews and focus group discussions, in this chapter I focus on electoral procedures of women in the quota system, in a District Council. I also look at questions of inclusiveness and exclusiveness; the representation of women's interests and the bargaining power that women hold in decision making processes in the District Council. I analyze how issues of class, patriarchy, power relations and patronage all influence the effectiveness of women's political representation in the District Council. This chapter also analyzes the interactions between the electoral structures, women's agency, the benefits women derive from the system, and whether the outcome is to reinforce or lessen their subordination. Finally, the chapter considers whether the quota system has brought any positive results for women's entry in politics, i.e. in terms of outcomes or only increased the number of women in political institutions, rather than inclusion of their substantive interests in political decision-making. Possible reasons are given as to why the quota system alone cannot be expected to effect women's empowerment: (1) the quota system operates in a way that treats Rwandan women as a homogeneous group; (2) class divisions imply that a quota system will reproduce the pro-elite bias of politics generally; (3) the quota system can contribute to fragmenting local women as social and political actors by making some outcomes that silence the expression of their varied and overlapping interests.

Before moving on to the empirical findings, there is an important comment that is needed concerning the presentation of data. In order to carry out a sound analysis of the data, it is important to summarize and organize the main findings. For this reason, I first summarize systematically the information provided by different categories of respondents in the research and then link it with the concepts and theories employed in order to arrive at my main conclusions through an analysis of 'what has gone wrong' with the quota system in Rwanda, using the case of Huye District.

4.1 Electoral Procedure: Accountability and Criteria for Elections

This section is about how women are elected in the quota system: the official and unofficial conditions and criteria under which they get the seats. It is worth

noting that the electoral procedure of women in the quotas for local government is the same everywhere in the country. Huye District is no exception to the system. The respondents whose experiences I look at in the following section are people who are involved in the electoral process as well as women who are not directly active in politics, in the sense of being in office or elections as candidates and representatives.

First, it is necessary to understand the process. Election of women's candidates takes place under two phases: the first is at Sector level and the second is at the District level. At the Sector level, through direct election, each voter uses 2 ballots: a general ballot and a women's ballot. The voters select one person on each ballot. No man can go for the women's candidate but sometimes women can go for general candidate, even though, frequently, it is only men who succeed. At the District level, through indirect elections, women who get the seats in the District Council are elected by different political representatives, such as the committees of all sectors' Council in the District, the Coordinators of all Cells of the District, all Committees of National Women's Council at both the District and Sector levels and the Coordinators of the National Women's Council at Cell level. Certain number of women who win at the Sector level (and there were 14 winners in the Huye District) are selected to fill in, 30% of seats in the District Council. For the case of the Huye District – which has 26 seats in District Council, 8 women have been elected on quota system.

A person who wants to be elected as a woman candidate in a District Council must fulfil the following criteria: be a female, at least 21 years old and possess at least a diploma of secondary school.

Looking at the criteria and the procedure of election of women on quota in the District Council, because all the population participate freely, women's candidates on quota are not nominated, but rather, elected through competitive process among women themselves. All the males and females of the adult population are given right to vote for women's political representatives. And from this, one can easily assume that this electoral process is free and fair and hence, will produce or attract the right women representatives.

However, the information gotten from some interviewees makes this assumption questionable. According to them, women's candidates for the District Council are usually the cronies of the ruling political party (RPF). They secretly select women who are active in their political party and present their names unofficially to the National Electoral Commission. During official elections those women who have already been selected by the incumbent party will submit their names to the National Electoral Commission as though they are coming on their own. Other women who do not belong to the party are usually either frustrated during this electioneering process or the results are

manipulated on behalf of the women who belong the incumbent party. According to the interviewees, because of these problems, most women's candidates who do not belong to the political parties, or to the ruling party, do not succeed in elections.

Furthermore, given that women councillors are not elected by women as a group, but rather by the whole population, the election is usually exposed to some fraud⁷: firstly the political party is likely to select their own favourite candidates who represent the party's interests, as opposed to those who are favourites to women and represent their interests. As a result, the electoral procedure affects the "voice-accountability" between the elected and the supposed constituency: since the elected women do not feel as purely women's representatives, they therefore do not feel accountable to the women. This reply came repeatedly, and from majority of women councillors during the interviews: "Even if I am a woman candidate, I represent all groups of the population, since they voted for me, and I fight for their interests, not for women".

Equally, women in the local communities do not feel that they are represented by women elected on quota as evident in a statement often repeated during the focus group discussions:" As it is well known, women who get the seats have to be known by politicians and come from a high class".

Consequently, the electoral procedure affects the effectiveness of the system, because women in politics do not feel responsible for raising their voice and being answerable to the female community. The latter, especially poor women develop an inferiority complex vis-a-vis their representatives. As one woman expressed it: "I can't talk to them, they...I am poor, they are rich". This situation illustrates how the patronage in electoral process, coupled with class barriers creates relations of inequality and undermines the link between women's representatives and their constituencies in the quota system.

This is also supported by Hassim in his arguments about descriptive representation:

"For women citizens in most democracies, there is a problem of both representation and accountability. The possession of formal political equality, the vote, does not necessarily translate into representation even in the broadest sense of the presence of women in representative institutions. Even if representation is significantly increased, representative democracies fail to deliver accountability.

⁷ . This word may sound strong here but actually that is how the situation was described to me by the interviewees. They said that, the candidates who pass are mostly the ones preferred and supported by the party and this may be different from the candidate preferred by women, or all population. This hinders the quality of election or output.

Election which is free and fair in the procedural sense do not necessarily produces outcomes which reflect either the diversity or interests or identities in the societies.” (Hassim 2003: 85).

In addition, women candidates have to meet some quite stringent conditions for Rwandan women. Among other things, their level of education has to be of at least 6 years of secondary school, which is quite high given women’s rates of illiteracy in Rwanda. In 2004, for example only sixty-five percent of women in Rwanda had a primary school leaving qualification, and only 5 percent had completed secondary school. An estimated 30 percent had never been to school (Rwanda National Institute of Statistics 2005).

As mentioned above from the interviews conducted, women who entered the quota system were pre-selected by their political party, and as the following section shows, currently all of them come from the ruling party. This also limits women to pose their candidacy, especially those who either do not belong to any political party, or those belonging to smaller parties. Poor women who are not known by the politicians will not even be considered. Even those who may belong to the party but do not belong to the elite class may not get considered as suitable for a seat, if they are not well-connected or well educated. This takes us to the question of inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the quota system.

4.2 Exclusivity versus inclusivity of the quota system

Women who enter the political process, even through the quota system, come from different socioeconomic and political backgrounds. As already stated, they are located differently in a complex social network, have very different experiences of power, empowerment, and politics and may have very different ideas about women’s issues and interests. To analyse this in the context of Rwanda, we need to ask: who are the eight women who got the seats in Huye District Councils?

From the basic information on women’s social, economic and political background (see Table 1, Appendix II), it is evident that they are from quite similar social locations. For example: In terms of age, all of them are between 35 and 46. This means that the category of youth is not represented within women’s quota. According to the government of Rwanda, a youth is anyone between the ages of eighteen years and thirty five years. The reason for this may be the fact that Rwanda has a quota for youth representation, and Huye District has two women councillors on youth’s quota.

In terms of occupation, six out of eight interviewed councillors are directors of primary or secondary schools, and one is a teacher in a primary school. This shows that their careers are quite similar. The exception was a

woman who is an executive secretary of the ruling political party (RPF). All are married except one (a genocide widow) and their partners are all educated and have political influence (especially two of them: an Army Captain and an Executive Secretary of the Sector). They all belong to the ruling party RPF, meaning that they are influenced by the same political ideology.

The only substantial difference among the candidates is in their geographical location: five out of eight are from rural areas (as Huye District is largely rural and semi-urban). Those with less than 2 years of political experience (3 out of 8) were elected on the actual mandate of 2006 while others have been in politics for long. They have been representing women either in National Women's Council or District Council from 2001 and 2003. This means that, sometimes, women who get the seats do not leave it for new entries. In other words, there is monopolization of power within one group of people (the same women in different mandates in different organs), which hinders the new constituencies and hence block new ideas in political institutions.

From this picture of social, economic and political backgrounds of the women councillors, it is easy to notice that majority of come from the elite group of Huye District (middle class, influence in politics, well-known). This is probably the nature of politics almost everywhere, but it certainly seemed to be the case here. This seems to confirm the previous information which suggested that those women are part of local elites with similar characteristics, and are pre-selected to become candidates.

This situation takes us back to the questions about how inclusive or exclusive the quota system is in practice, considering the issues of class and heterogeneity of women as a social category. If women who get elected come from similar socio-economic and political backgrounds, while Rwandese women are located very differently socially, economically and politically, in what sense the elected councillors then really represent diversity of Rwandese women and their interests? If women's social locations impact differently upon ways of facing and feeling gender injustice, and affect different ways of living through social relations and structures of power, then this may influence their ways of reacting or pushing forward women's issues through an engagement with formal politics. How well then, do the women councillors represent other women?

These questions allow us to reflect upon the participatory politics within the empowerment framework which are present in development discourses, with focus (among others) on representation of women in political institutions at all levels of governance.

For this, I argue, as Rai (2002:135) did, that, there is a need to consider the state, its politics, ideology and institutions, its bureaucracy and the political

parties as a part of the debate, since they are the institutions of power. I also highlight that, since there is tendency to homogenize actors for women's empowerment, there is need to focus on the politics of difference among "women", as this is crucial for political representation of different women's interests – and thus for building the strategies with long term viability of empowerment. Thus, I assume that the social differences among women can affect the outcomes of the political process or, how women councillors represent women's interests.

In this regard, one may think that I am fronting for social representation, or representative's identity. From my experience and knowledge, it is more effective if one advocates for an issue she or he has experienced, especially in the area of oppression, or social justice, such as poverty, subordination, sexual violence, rights for inheritance, problems of health, etc. It does not however mean that people cannot act in the interests of whom they represent – in terms of political (rather than social) location. But this is determined by their political actions, as we will see in the following section. The elected women, apparently, have a great responsibility to uphold respect and represent interests of people (from political party) who put them in these positions, and to whom they are accountable.

4.3 Does quota system allow for representation of women's interests?

It is important to know whether the women Councillors represent women's interests/ issues, since they are elected to be women's representation. Do they prioritize women's issues or advocate, fight for women and their problems more than for other groups of population? What are the issues that preoccupy them mostly? To answer these questions and analyze their meaning for this study, the data collected through interviews, focus groups and observation of women Councillors, district officials in charge of gender, women from National Council of Women and members of ABIZERANA Cooperative will be considered.

The majority or 7/8 of women Councillors elected on quota said that women's interests are not their priority but rather all population's interests. The following is a typical answer: "For me, women's interests are not priority because, to me, all population is equal. My objective is justice for all". The justification of this answer is that since women are elected by all population, they represent the all population's interests, and women are included. However, District officials and National Women's Council have a different view. For them, women councillors are elected as women's candidates; therefore they should represent women's interests. Obviously, this is not the case: "I never heard those women raising their voice for other women's

interests. They seem not to be women's representatives. The councillor from Nation Women's Council is the only one that speaks on behalf of women" said one official in charge of gender. When I was observing the District Council meeting on 24th July 2008, I was waiting for comments or a debate on the budget and District plan of 2009 especially the one of Gender Department, but none of the women councillors mentioned anything about that.

Local women also see those elected on quota as if they are not their representatives and are not in politics for women's interests. Firstly because of the electoral procedure, which some of them call corrupted since unofficially candidates are selected by the political party before being elected by the population. Local women's view on this is expressed in the following sentences: "They don't represent us (women), they are there for their interests. Since the system began in 2003, we didn't see any change in women's situation, especially of poor women". Secondly women councillors do not meet women in their communities, or collaborate with women's organisations to share with them their problems. This creates a gap between the two groups.

I asked eight councillors elected on quota, how they know what are women's problems and interests. Seven of them said that they know women's problems through National Women's Council (NWC) committees or when they talk with their neighbours across the streets. Some of them think that they know it simply because they are also women. Only one woman said that she organized women from her Cell and holds regular meetings, at least once in three months. This shows that even if this councillor doesn't meet women of the whole Sector at least she has some idea about situation of women from her Cell (one Cell out of eight which compose her Sector). On the question about councillors' collaboration with women's organisations, all of the councillors said that they do not collaborate or meet women's organizations.

According to women from NWC and District officials in charge of gender, the meetings of NWC committees at any level are hardly ever organised. Each committee is composed by 10 women, and it is supposed to take place at least every 6 months. But very often this period is not respected. They may hardly meet once year. For them, the reasons for this problem of meetings are basically the budget: to organize a meeting with all women especially at the Sector level is quite hard since the later is geographically big. Therefore it may be a big task for NWC committees since they are volunteers and do not have the budget. They often organize such meetings once year while organizing women's international day.

In this vein, one's question may be how the women councillors represent women's interests since they do not advocate for them during decision making process in District Council's meetings. In the same line, another question is what success can be expected of women politicians who do not meet their constituencies in their communities to share with them their lives. What do

they advocate for then? What do they say during District Council meetings as women's representatives and for whose interests? In addition, the collaboration with women's organisations would be the formal canal through which councillors could learn about issues of women and together push for change. What are the factors that underlay this situation and what is the women's representation or the increased number of women in political bodies for?

Some of these questions have been underlined also by Hassim (1999:13), when he was talking about women's political representation in deliberative democracy in South Africa: "while in Scandinavian countries increased representation of women led to the introduction of women-friendly social policies, in African countries women MPs have been woefully inadequate in putting a range of women's issues on national agendas". Hassim argues that the presence of women in the political sphere does not of itself ensure the advance of gender concerns. From this, one's question may be why increasing the number of women in decision-making organs if then they do not represent women's interests?

Before looking at why women's issues do not constitute priority of women councillors elected on quota in Rwandan context, I wanted to verify if they knew about women's interests as a social category. In this regard, women councillors held that women's interests are different from men's since they are generally about their education, health care, their state of poverty, domestic violence, child nutrition, fight against polygamy, under which women are still suffering. In other words, it is about all things which still contribute to women's subordination. So, this shows that women in politics are aware of women's problems, but they do not take a stand on these specific problems and push for change.

The core idea for this may first come from article 64 of the National Constitution of Rwanda which stipulates that: "Every Member of Parliament represents the whole nation and not just those who elected or nominated him or her or the political organization on whose ticket he or she stood for election" (National Constitution of Rwanda 2003). This may influence the behaviour of all politicians in Rwanda at all level. The idea is that, according to the political history of the country, all kind of difference engenders divisions and conflicts.

Furthermore, this situation may be due to the electoral procedure: the women Councillors may think that they stand for their political party since (unofficially) they are selected by the party and therefore they don't feel accountable to women as a group. Finally, it may be due to the absence of interactions between civil and political society and the state/government at this level of governance as highlighted by Goetz (2003: 30):

“The success of the gender equity interests in policy making and implementation will depend upon the interaction of three major factors: the strength of the gender equity lobby in civil society, the credibility of feminist politicians in political competitions, and the capacity of the state to enforce commitments to gender equity.”

This leads me to the issue of ‘female politicians’ competencies (on women’s issues, and other political issues) in relation to their individual empowerment, as well as to the issues of the structural relationships within the political system, in which women find themselves.

4.4 Empowerment and Bargaining in Decision-making Process

This section is about women’s empowerment and bargaining power during the process of decision making or, what is the power relation between women elected on quota and their other colleagues, councillors, while taking decision in the District Council. This question I explicitly addressed to women councillors. In addition, I set at a District Council meeting on 24th July for 8 hours, in order to observe what happen there during decision-making. To my surprise, only one woman spoke during these eight hours of meeting. Other women most of the time were whispering among themselves, or were walking up and down in and out of the meeting hall as if they were waiting for the meeting to end.

Surprisingly, when I asked them what happens during decision making process, if they feel free to talk and discuss actively or express their opinions during District Council meetings, most of women (or 6/8) were very positive about their participation during the meetings: “Yes I feel free and I talk since I have an experience in politics”, one said. But the other two women were pessimists and expressed the following: “Sometimes I fear to debate with the mature men who have a lot of experience. Most of the time I don’t have arguments, I lack knowledge about some issues, for example the budget, and therefore I fail to argue”.

To better understand this situation, I asked the same question to the officials in charge of gender who participate in different meetings of District Council. They told me that, women councillors do not talk in the meetings. They only mentioned three out of eight women councillors trying to participate actively. According to the officials, this is due to the fact that the three women have been working with most of the men councillors, so they feel more accommodated in that environment.

Looking at all different information on this situation, we can deduce that women councillors still have problems in participating actively and involving in the decision-making process. Why such situation and what are its effects in

relation to women's political representation and empowerment in Rwanda? There are two possible reasons which, I think, could be underpinning this situation. The first is the electoral procedure for the quota system and the second is the background of the individual women elected on quota. Both point to the relation of power between men and women or gender regimes in Rwanda and the political capabilities of women politicians.

As mentioned above, the fact that the women councillors are not elected by women as a social category affects their behaviour as women representatives. By Constitution, they are not accountable to women. Therefore they do not feel that they have the duty to speak on women's behalf. In addition, when those women are pre-selected by political party (meaning: male politicians who very often are leaders and members of District council), the women councillors cannot contradict or oppose the party views. Furthermore, given that Rwandan society is deeply patriarchal, and the political terrain is male dominated; given also that these women are newcomers without political experience and in some cases without knowledge required in different domains (majority of them have secondary school diploma and work in education), all of this may hinder the power relation with their male colleagues or their involvement in decision making process. As a result, it seems to be hard for the women councillors to exercise both power with and power within, since the political environment is not favourable for them. Finally, with no knowledge about lives of the women in their District, women councillors may have nothing to say.

4.5 Do women have power-over in District Council?

In this section, it is necessary to highlight some points concerning the political positions occupied by individual women who got the seats in Huye District council. To know their positions will help us to analyse which kind of influence these women may have, not only in policy formulation but also in implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In this regard, the situation is as follows:

There are three commissions within the District Council: political, economical and social commission; the Executive Committee of the District and the Committee of District Council. In all of them, women hold the position of secretary except in the social affairs commission, where the President is a woman, and the District Committee, where the Vice-Mayor of Social Affairs is a woman. When I wanted to know the reasons for such distribution of duties, and what women themselves think about this, the answer was: "Women hold those positions because most of the time they are not qualified for other posts and also it depends on people who vote. They

may prefer women in social affairs and as a secretary”. This answer goes along the same line that Schwartz got from members of Rwandan parliament when she was asking them if men and women have different political priorities. The answer was that there are specific needs and interests arising from women’s everyday experiences differing from men - such as health, education, social matters, children, basic needs, etc (Schwartz in 2005). From this, it is clear that the distribution of political positions in different political arenas is related not only to individual capabilities/ competence but also to Rwanda’s perceptions on womanhood and manhood.

The view on women’s political positions from local women from ABIZERANA Cooperative and opinion leaders seems to emphasise the last point. They expressed it as follow: “During election, people vote for men first, for important positions. When they are about to finish, politicians remind the public (voters) about gender and then they vote for women”. This shows, at least in the opinions of local women that, women are elected just for formalities: “just give them places/posts because they are women”, as both bureaucrats and politicians have to accomplish their duty of increasing the number of women in political bodies.

4.6. The Quota System: Women’s political empowerment or a facade?

On this point, I want to analyse different views on how empowering is the quota system for women in general, given the situation described above, the political history of Rwanda and the power relations and gender regimes which influence political culture of Rwanda’s society. The respondents are all categories. Some were asked about how they experience the system as women in politics. Others were asked to discuss the system as beneficiaries and experts in gender and development, or how they perceive the quota as a mean for women political empowerment.

As it is illustrated by the Appendix 2, women have procured different perspectives to the system but what they have in common is the opinion that the system itself, or the idea of giving women a quota in public offices, is fair. It is a kick off for women to go into the politics, to increase their numbers in political bodies, develop their political confidence and prove their competence to men and the society in general. All respondents expressed the follows: “It helps women to gain confidence and prove their competence vis- à- vis the society and men in particular.

It is good because now we can speak at public meetings. Men respect us even if there are some who still have some resistance”. However, some respondents added that the system has to be amended because it undermines

the competence of women: “Women are given the place because they are women”, and since they do not compete with men it places them in a different situation of legitimacy. This, according to some respondents, should be changed in the future.

However, concerning the practice of the system, there is a difference between views of women in politics and other groups of respondents. The former do not see anything bad in the practice of the system, whereas the others criticize the way it is implemented. Here, their arguments go back to the electoral procedure which turns the policy of women representation into “pro-elites” program. They stated that this is particularly so when looking at how posts are given to women and the absence of benefits of the quota policy for poor women and masses of the poor population.

Following the above analysis, we can deduce that although the number of women in political bodies in Huye District (as elsewhere in Rwanda in local government) has increased due to the introduction of the quota system, the process has not been smooth as expected and as it prevails today. Problems are rising around issues of class, power relation, political patronage and patriarchy. As it is shown by the research findings and supported by Dowding’s argument on Structure-agency divide (2008: 23), the structure of an organisation affects its outcome no matter what are the preferences of its actors. This illustrates well the situation of women’s representation in Huye District: the electoral procedure in quota system is structured according to the political institutions rules (official and unofficial), which influence the identity of individual women who get the seats and the outcome. Consequently, the socio-political environment in which women operate or exercise their roles becomes not conducive and reinforces the male domination. Furthermore, even when women have political capabilities (competency in terms of education, political experience, etc), they seem to be unable to organise themselves and act collectively (power within and power with). Even if women constitute the public debate subject actually due to the system, but women in local communities, especially poor women seem to not benefit from the new opportunity and complain about its practices. Brief, the system seems to be manipulated by those who are in power to hold their power.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND THE WAY AHEAD

The quota system has been introduced in Rwanda as a top-down approach to include women in political institutions. To some extent, this is a good sign since it means that the Rwandan government is taking seriously its international obligations to overcome gender inequalities and injustices. On the other hand, the problem is that Rwandans from the grassroots, including different groups of Rwandan women have not been involved in the formulation and/or implementation of the system. Its basic principles have therefore reflected what the government sees as preferable, and the system is not always understood by the general population. Instead, the system is organised in such a way that the benefits are easily hijacked by local, highly educated and well-connected elites. Even if the women's quota is guaranteed by the Rwandan National Constitution, it seems that women in general and poor women in rural areas especially, do not have enough information about how the quota system is practiced in order for them to seek to benefit from it. This reinforces the tendency for elite women to keep monopoly control over the quota system and over political representation.

The results of my research show disturbingly low levels of trust between the local women and those inside the quota system even if they support the idea underpinning the system. On the other side, my research shows clearly that women councillors are not aware of, nor do they take their responsibility as women's representatives as central to how they see themselves. My observations indicate that women are given posts under the quota system as the law says, but that there is little or no follow-up to consolidate their role and help them to play their role in terms of being the representatives of women in general, let alone poor or socially excluded women, and building up their political capabilities in this respect.

By and large, my research shows that the electoral process is led by political patronage and therefore, is not fulfilling its representative aspects fully. Some evidence exists that democratic processes, intended to open up decision-making to women's interests in general may be being hijacked for the narrower benefit of elite and well-connected women alone. These elite women are almost always close to the ruling party (the RPF) and have been selected in order to maintain close connections with grassroots party support within the communities. This means that other women are not recognised as having their own needs: the system does not recognize the real heterogeneity of Rwandan women. Rather, it takes elite women as legitimate representatives of all women. In so doing, the quota system can contribute to the separation and

fragmentation of women's interests and groups rather than their consolidation or strengthening. There is still some way to go before women's struggles for empowerment can find a common focus through the quota system, and through their political representatives, therefore.

The quota system has also failed to represent the interests of all women, as had been hoped, because elected women more often represent their own interests as individuals, or as part of the political and class elite and/or view their interests in terms of their close connection to the ruling political party. This prevents the representation of the full diversity of women's interests through the quota system and the representatives who come to power through its electoral selection processes.

Women's political marginalization is further reinforced by the fact that Rwanda is a patriarchal society where men are ascribed the dominant position in terms of social, economic and political power. Although the quota system is supposed to be for women, it remains structured and controlled by men; therefore it produces outcomes that tend to reflect the wishes of those Rwandan men who are already located in relatively powerful positions.

Most of the women councillors are not elected in key decision-making organs, like Mayors, but in low cadre positions like secretaries or (in few cases) as Vice-Mayors. For that reason, they are unable to have much influence over decisions, or to challenge the domination of decision-making by men. It seems that these women elected through the quota system are mainly there as symbols of the Rwandan government apparent gender sensitivity and dedication to promoting women's participation, but still those women inside the system do not have real voice.

This situation is not surprising, given that the quota system is a recent phenomenon in Rwanda. There could and should be progress in the future. However, the biggest challenge is ahead. First, the women councillors seem to be satisfied with the present situation. On the individual level, they seem to be empowered, or feel themselves to be in a situation that has increased their status and control. This may say something about their previously much more marginalized situation as individuals, as women, but it may also be an image they want to project about themselves, given their admission that they often lack specific competencies related to local political decision-making. This may also be the reason these women do not take up the challenges facing them – such as participating in meetings actively and networking actively with local women's associations and other associations. Follow-up programs may help here in building up these women's political capacities. Secondly, women councillors act as if it is not their right to be there, but rather a favour that they have been granted, and for which they must express gratitude. Given pre-selection, this may be the way that women in the quota system are likely to respond. A more legitimate election process involving women from all walks

of life could change such a situation and improve their feelings of responsibility to those below them in the social ladder rather than those above them in the chain of command.

Changing the selection and election process could also help to change the most crucial element of the process, namely women councillor's lack of commitment to women's issues or accountability to women electorate. This may in turn explain the lack of contacts with local women and with women's movements. Women's NGOs and groups could act as intermediaries, and raise the collective consciousness of both women councillors and local women could make a difference in this respect. But for this to happen, it would be necessary for the principle of wider and more open election procedure to be accepted by all concerned. Whether women councillors are elected by women only or by the entire local population, what matters is that they are there, under the terms of the Constitution, to advance women's broad interests and the cause of gender equality as promoted by the Rwandan government in recent years.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interviews guide

The semi-structured, open ended interviews and focus group discussions are the keys techniques which guided the primary data collection of this research. The interviewees of this research are the following: a group of women who are in the District Council elected on the quota system, women who are in women's organization-ABIZERANA Cooperative, opinion leaders (people who could benefit this research according to their professional experience in politics, gender issues, etc), Officials of NEC at the district, district officials in charge of gender, Women councillors from National Women's Council at district level. The following questions led both interview and focus groups:

Question 1:

What are the assumptions about women, gender and politics that inform the quota system for women's political participation? What inspired policy makers to introduce the quota system in Rwanda?

To answer this, different information/data was collected through official and academic documents and the following questions guided our search:

- When the idea of quota was adopted by the government of Rwanda or what are the
- Why or what were the reasons behind that
- Who introduced the quota system?
- What are the assumptions or reasons for quota system
- What are the strategies for implementation?
- What is the relation or how is quota system linked to others political/public events/policies that came out at the same period at national and international level

Question 2:

How is the quota system inclusive or exclusive, or in other words, who are the women who get the seats? From which position in community or socio-economic and political backgrounds do they come from?

To answer this, I collected all information about socio-economic and political background of women elected on quota system, and the position they hold (elected for) in the District Council:

- Year of birth; Place/Country of birth; Education : primary, secondary, tertiary ;Occupation/job: farming, industrial worker, administrative worker, unemployed, Not seeking employment, Military (rank) Politics(local, national...) Other
- Marital status: Single, married, Widows (genocide widow or other), Husband in prison, Divorced , Other ,
- Education of the (current) partner:, primary, secondary, tertiary
- Occupation/Job of the (current) partner: farming, Industrial worker, Administrative worker,Unemployed not seeking employment, Military (rank), Politics (local, national...),other

Question 3:

How are women elected in quota system? What official and unofficial methods are used to identify and select women who will be put on the women's lists?

Respondent category: people who are involved in electoral process, local women who are not in politics.

- Who elect women in quota system (women only or all population)?
- What are the criteria/conditions for being selected as a women's candidate
- What is the procedure of women election in quota system(the official and non official aspects of electoral procedure)

Question 4:

What are the issues women bring to politics? Given their diverse background, do they identify with women's interests, or with other social groups (class, age, ethnic) interests?

Respondent category: women elected, Officials in charge of gender at Huye District, women councillors from NWC:

- What are the issues that preoccupy women councillors or do they present mostly during District council
- How do you women elected perceive women's interests/ what are women's interests for you
- Do women's interests present a great importance for women councillors than other group of population?
- Through which canal do they know women's inquiries/problems?
- How do they collaborate with women's organizations?
- How many times do they meet women in their communities?

-Do they have an internal organization women elected through quota in District Council?

-If yes why and how is it organized?

Question 5:

Does the system increase individual women's bargaining power in decision-making process in the political bodies?

Respondent category: women councillors:

- How do you conceive women's representation through quota system?
- Given Rwanda's expressions and conception of women in politics, how do you feel about your position in District Council
- How do you deal with gender /women issues during district council?
- How do men (your colleagues, your husband, others men in your community) perceive you as a politician woman?
- How other women perceive you as a politician woman?
- What are the positions that women elected occupy in District Council (in different commissions and committee at district level)
- What happen between you and your colleagues men during the time of decision making process/debate

Question 6:

How do women perceive the quota as a mean of women political empowerment in Rwanda?

Respondent category: all groups of women

- How do you conceive women's representation through quota system?
- What do you know about women elected in the district Council?
- How do you perceive the electoral procedure of women in quota system?
- How do you collaborate with women elected?
- Do they visit you? If yes how many times a month, term, year?

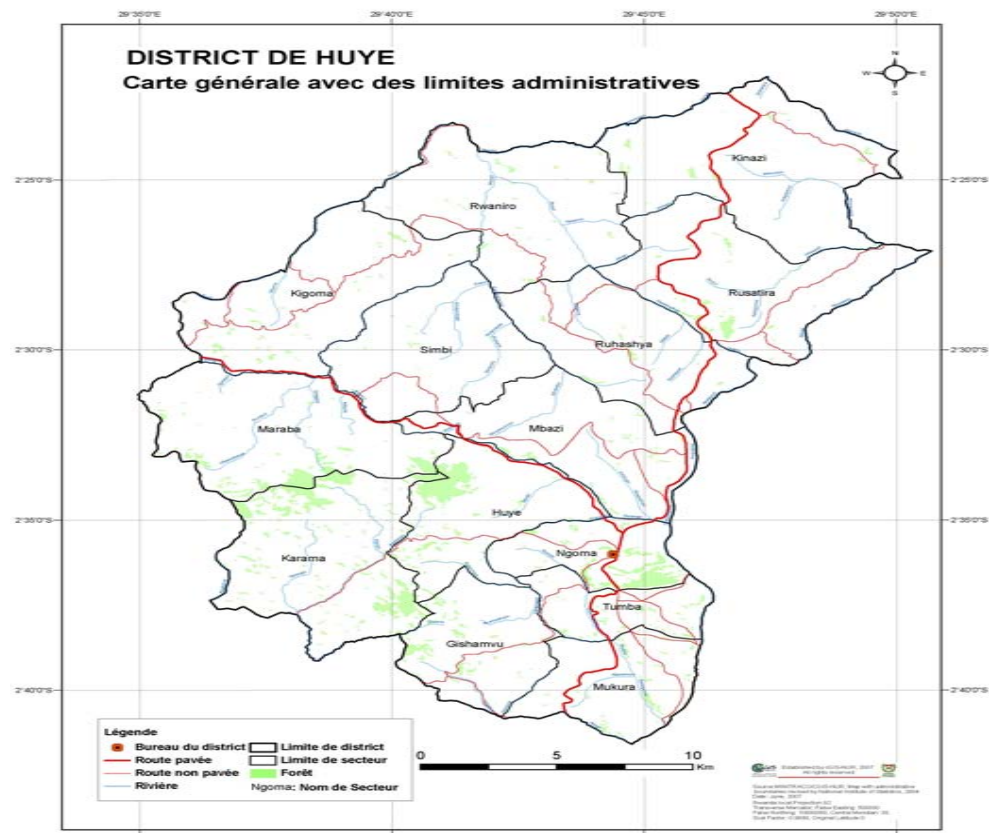
Appendix 2 : The social, economic and political backgrounds of 8 women councillors elected on quota in Huye District

Women's background	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 5	W 6	W 7	W 8
Year of birth	1973	1972	1964	1962	1962	1969	1972	1964
Place/country of birth	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda
Education	Secondary school	Bachelor's degree.	Secondary school	Secondary school	Secondary school	Bachelor's degree	Secondary School	Secondary school
Occupation /job	Director Primary. School	Executive Secretary, of RPF in Huye District	Teacher Primary School	Director of Primary School	Director Primary School	Director Second. school	Director Primary School	Director Primary School
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Genocide widow	Married	Married	Married
Education of current partner	Secondary school	Bachelor's degree	Teacher Secondary.Sc	3years post primary	-	Bachelor's degree	Secondary school	Secondary School

Occupation of current partner	Teacher, Primary .Sc	Military : Captain	NUR officer	Driver	-	Executive Secretary of Sector in Huye District	Teacher Primary. School	Business man
Political party belongin-gness	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF
Political party belongin-ness of the partner	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	-	RPF	RPF	RPF
Political experience	2years	8 years	2 years	8 years	4 years	7 years	4 years	2 years
Geographical location	Rural	urban	urban	rural	rural	urban	Rural	rural

Source: interviews with individual women elected on quota in HUYE District Council, July 2008

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Appendix IV: Rwanda's Provinces and Districts



