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Women's Participation in Parliament  
The Case of Rwanda

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## RESUMO

Ruanda é o primeiro país no mundo a atingir a maioria, (61.3%) na representação das mulheres no Parlamento em 2013. Este número torna-se peculiar tendo em conta o conflito em 1994, no qual morreram mais de 800,000 ruandeses. Além disso, todo o país foi devastado e deixado em ruínas. O papel das mulheres foi fundamental durante o processo de reconciliação, dado que constituíam 70% da população. Depois do genocídio, o governo lançou o processo de transição democrática do qual resultaram a nova constituição e em 2003, as primeiras eleições democráticas com diferentes partidos. Esta constituição garante leis sensíveis aos géneros e reforça a emancipação política das mulheres, declarando um mínimo obrigatório de 30% de presença de mulheres no Parlamento. Esta dissertação tem como objectivo principal explicar o processo de igualdade dos géneros no Parlamento tendo em conta a nova constituição com várias leis ratificadas de acordo com a maior presença e influência das mulheres na tomada de decisões, assim como o papel dos media na representação política dos géneros.

**Palavras chave:** mulheres, igualdade de género, emancipação política, media, Ruanda

## ABSTRACT

Rwanda is the first country in the world that achieved a majority, (61.3%) of women's representation in the parliament in 2013. This number becomes more extraordinary due to the conflict in 1994, when more 800,000 Rwandan people were killed. Moreover, the entire country was devastated and left in shambles. The women's role was crucial in the process of reconciliation, as they accounted for more than 70% of the population. After the genocide, the government launched the democratic transition process, which resulted the inauguration of the new constitution in 2003, and in the first democratic multi-party system elections. This constitution guarantees gender sensitive legislations and reinforces the women's political empowerment, declaring that there must be a minimum of 30% of women in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate as well. This work aims to explain the process of women's equal representation in the Parliament and in the political organizations taking into account the constitution and the several laws ratified in according to the major attendance and influence of women in the decision-making, as well as the role of the press media regarding to the representation on gender political equality.

**Keywords:** women, gender equality, political empowerment, media, Rwanda



## ABBREVIATIONS

- AU: African Union
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CE: Council of Europe
- CSO: Civil Society Organizations
- EAC: East African Community
- EU: European Union
- FDU: Union of Democratic Forces
- FFRP: Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum
- GBV: Gender-Based Violence
- GMO: Gender Monitoring Office
- HIPC: Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
- IDA: International Development Association
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- IPU: Inter-Parliamentary Union
- MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
- MIGEPROF: Ministry for Gender and Family Protection
- NGP: National Gender Policy
- NIS: National Investment Strategy
- NWC: National Women Council
- OAS: Organization of American States
- OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- PDC: Centrist Democratic Party
- PDI: Ideal Democratic Party
- PL: Liberal Party
- PR: Proportional Representation System
- PRS: Poverty Reduction Strategy
- PSD: Social Democratic Party
- PSR: Rwandan Socialist Party

- RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front
- UDPR: Democratic Union of the Rwandan People
- UN: United Nations
- URDF: Union of Rwandese Democratic Forces
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- WB: World Bank
- WHO: World Health Organization



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*“Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”*

(Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. P.3.)

This citation illustrates perfectly the principal direction of my dissertation, which is the importance of the women’s integration in decision-making and their participation in politics to achieve the equal right making choices and being equivalent at all level of the power. I chose this topic for my dissertation research because I found it curious and admirable that a nation managed to get back on its feet and rebuild itself to become a peaceful and conductive country regarding to the women’s empowerment after all the tragical antecedents and experiences. On the other hand, it is quite remarkable that Rwanda was able to achieve the reduction of gender-based inequalities not only in the politics, but also in the social, cultural and economic spheres.

The result of the parliamentary elections in Rwanda in 2013 broke a record with 61,3% of women in the lower house, which is the highest percentage worldwide since 2013 (Inter-Parliamentary Union,(IPU) 2017; see the World Classification of Women in Natonal Parliament - Figure 2). This number becomes more impressive if we take into consideration the country’s history, which determined strongly the inferior position and secondary role of women in the society and culture from the two colonial periods (1897-1917 and 1919-1962), the independence movement, the nation-building process after a long-term colonization and, one of the most determinant and recent events, the genocide of 1994.

The starting point is to see the process as well as the political, economic, social and cultural factors that led Rwanda to this successful accomplishment. In order to develop my argument and to examine better the long and effective procedure from the genocide in 1994, my principal research question is the following: How has Rwanda achieved the reduction of gender-based inequalities in the Parliament? In addition, to establish my study I have the successive subordinate questions: Why is the application of gender sensitive legislation and policies crucial and primary to good governance? The major representation of women in parliament indicate positive changes in everyday live of citizens? How represent the press media the promotion of the women’s empowerment in decision-making?

According to these queries and analyst aspects, the main objective of my paper is to examine how the female majority in the Parliament can change and develop the structure of the political balance mainly after the genocide until the last elections of 2013. In addition, my intention is to identify the benefits of the female majority in the Rwandan Parliament and to describe the still existing obstacles that women have had to face recently.

Furthermore, I analyze three online Rwandan newspaper; *The New Times*, *News of Rwanda*, *Rwanda Eye* and one African online newspaper *AllAfrica* to see the impact of the press media on the female representation before during and after the elections. I observe the transmission of information and news regarding to the policies, legislations and all the changes that stemmed from the female majority in the decision-making.

The research was made by national and international academic database resources (SCOPUS, SciELO, JSTOR between others) from the beginning of the first “democratic” election of 2003 until 2017. I collected analitical academic studies, reports and reviews published by private researchers, the Rwandan Government, NGOs and the United Nations (UN) to have different perspectives and debates about the topic. Although the laws, policies, legislations, the new *Constitution of 2003*, the *Rwanda Vision 2020* and the document *From Victims to Leading Actors, Rwanda’s Gender Dividend* made by the government were the foundational and relevant sources for my investigation. As my original intention was to create a survey with some questions to see the women’s real experiences in the political sphere nowadays, I contacted with the National Women Council (NWC), Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and several female parliamentarians from the Chamber of Deputies of the Rwandan Parliament, which email addresses are public on the site of the Parliament, but without success. I didn’t receive any answer from them.

This dissertation is divided in five chapters, beginning with the first, *Women’s Political Empowerment*, which is divided in two subsections - *Global Context* and *African Context* - to observe the process and the advancement of the female political representation more competently. The third section of my thesis is a brief historical and political description of the country, *Contextual Evolution: The Lands of the Thousands Hills, Rwanda*. The fourth part is about the *Half of the Population, Women in Rwanda*, and emphasizes the the situation of the Rwandan women in their culture and society, together with their economic and political status during the colonization, after the independence of the country, and during the genocide in 1994

and in the post-genocide period. The last chapter is divided in three sections: *Women's Political Participation: The Power of Elections and the Favourable Electoral to Increase Women in the Parliament*, *Women's Participation in the Parliament in Rwanda* and *The Role and the Impact of the Media Regarding to the Women's Political Empowerment in the Parliament*. I will present the process of the gender equality in the political space, analysing the substantive and symbolic representation of the majority of female parliamentarians. I will also observe the electoral system using the proportional representation system and the implementation of quotas to increase the percentage and impact of women. In addition, I will see how represent the press media the promotion of the women's empowerment in the political sphere.

## 2. WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

### 2.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT

*“ The attainment of gender equality and the full participation of women in decision making are key indicators of democracy. The involvement of women in all aspects of political life produces more equitable societies and delivers a stronger and more representative democracy.”*

(Ballington, 2008)

As presented by Ballington, women's political empowerment and the equal right to participate in the country's political life are fundamental elements of the democracy. In addition, the integration of women in the social, economic and political issues, result a continuous development of the country. It is crucial to identify the results that women achieved during the last two decades, as well as the currently existing obstacles that they have to face in their every day life. In order to see expansively the growth of women's representation in the parliament, it is essential to emphasize the graduality its progress.

Women's political participation in the parliament has had a particular importance in the last two decades. Several international bodies such as the UN, the IPU, African Union (AU), Council of Europe (CE), European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of American States (OAS) express their recommendations and proclamations as their priority mission to achieve equal presence in the parliament (Sundstorm, Paxton, Wang, Lindberg, 2015; Dahlerup, 2005; Tripp, 2001; Ndlovu, Mutale, 2013). According to the most recent statistics by the UN, in 2016 women parity in the parliament reached the average of 25%<sup>1</sup>. Although, in agreement with the data of the World Bank (WB), which demonstrates the evolution of the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments between the period of 1990 and 2016 concluded 23.02 % (Figure 1).

Despite of the improvement in many countries all over the world, this number is still not sufficient for the equality in decision-making in the parliament. In accordance with IPU's latest world classification, from 193 countries only 47 reached a minimum of 30% of the women's

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<sup>1</sup> Women's political parity slow to grow as UN launches latest 'Women in Politics' map, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/03/womens-political-parity-slow-to-grow-as-un-launches-latest-women-in-politics-map/> Visited on 17/05/2017

representation in the parliament.<sup>2</sup> Above all, only two of them achieved more than 50%, which are Rwanda (61.3%) and Bolivia (53.1%). (Figure 2) The average of the Nordic countries one by one is behind regarding to their conductive role in the past; Sweden achieved 43,6%, Finland accomplished 42% and Norway concluded 39,6% in the most recent statistics. (IPU, 2017; Figure 3). In addition, the current data of the IPU's shows to us the Regional Averages regarding to the percentage of the women's participation in the Single House or lower House. It becomes evident the domination of the Nordic countries with 41.7%, following the Americas with 28.2%, then the European countries without the Nordic countries with 26.1%, after that the Sub-Saharan Africa with 23.8%, Asia achieving 19.7%, Arab States concluding 18.2% and the last one is Pacific with 15%. (IPU, 2017; Figure 3)

There are many reasons in the majority of countries leading to the marginalization of women, who still face several difficulties to candidating, being part of a political party, entering in government institutions, campaigning during the elections and attending decision-making. Nadezhda Shvedova divides these barriers in three main categories: political obstacles, socio-economic obstacles and ideological and psychological hindrances. She highlights the 'masculine model' of political life, as men determined always the political decisions and they adjudged the norms and policies even if those refer to all people. Regarding the socio-economic factors, the main difficulty is women's limited access to education, trainings and knowledge. As a consequence women are underrepresented in the political sphere and their rights are restricted. In the last classification Shvedova focuses on the women's traditional role, which influences the 'women's role' in the society as mothers and housewives (Shvedova, 2005, pp. 35-36).

In order for women to fulfill their traditional 'obligations', it becomes more difficult to balance the work time and the family commitments. According to the significance of ideology, Paxton and Kunovich (2003) also emphasize the impact of the representation of women in the parliament. They underline that social stereotypes complicate women's advancement into the political sphere. Furthermore, patriarchal and religious values intervene negatively in women's political possibilities and free choices.

In countries where patriarchal society dominates, women are a minority even if they account for half of the population. Women are ignored by men in any part of the decision-making or in

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<sup>2</sup> "The level of female representation is critical for women to be effective legislators – the United Nations argues that women need to constitute 30% of national elites in order to exert meaningful influence on politics. Paxton, Kunovich, 2003



government institutions. In regard to Sundstrom, Paxton, Wang, Lindberg, in the V-Dem Project, they separated in a completely different way the construction of the women's political empowerment. They distinguish civil liberties, civil society participation and political participation. This division includes other dimensions of women's rights as well as the freedom of discussion, political debate, efficient interaction in public and in the political sphere, impact on decision-making (CSO) etc (Sundstrom, Paxton, Wang, Lindberg, 2015). They emphasize that women empowerment in the political life begins with a fundamental right, the freedom of choice: “ *to have choice and to be able to make meaningful decisions in critical areas of their (daily) lives, women must have basic freedom of movement, have property rights, be free from forced labor, and be treated as equals in the justice system.*” (Sundstrom, Paxton, Wang, Lindberg, 2015, p.6.)

The growth of women's presence in the political sphere is a long and slow development and the international community is confronted with numerous challenges during this process. In order to cause a better impact and success, women have to collaborate with men to take decisions together and support each other.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, women have to build and preserve relations with women's and civil society organizations. These links can help achieve the common goals regarding their rights in the society (Lovenduski, Karam, 2005, Seckinelgin, Klot 2014, Bauer, 2009, Adams, 2008, Bush, 2011). The following words are from Margaret Dongo, former parliamentarian member from Zimbabwe, which underline the crucial role of women's organization and the power in women's collaboration: “*As women parliamentarians, we need to share our experiences. This in itself will inspire women. At every opportunity, at every forum, each and every time we must share information, ideas and knowledge. We must make sure that women are the most informed people within society.*” (Shvedova, 2005, p.38.)

Furthermore, women have to institutionalize policies and norms that affirm and reinforce gender equality in the political sphere. (Bush, 2011) These policies and laws regard not only the percentage of women in the parliament, but also free and equal access to education and to all information, knowledge, including the equality of women in society as well as at work and at home, and demolishing all the cultural “*beliefs about appropriate gender roles in relation to politics and public sphere.*” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2014, p.91.)

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<sup>3</sup> “*The women and men involved in this process should work together to be agents of change, constantly aware that obstacles are but means to realize new and evolving strategies.*” Karam, Lovenduski, 2005, p.210.

## 2.2 AFRICAN CONTEXT

*“There is a realization that it is more important to invest in women and to involve women at different levels and to recognize that they are doing a great job, both in parliament, in the executive, and in other areas as well.”*

(Bauer, Oktopor, 2013, p.91)

In according to the quote, I am convinced that the equity between women and men in every areas is a fundamental recognition and the first step to its realization. In the previous chapter I argued about women’s political empowerment globally, so in this section I will focus on the African framework. I will indicate the factors that helped start the development of the women representation in the political sphere in Africa due to the different historical, cultural, social, economic and political situations. Currently, the African countries are at the top of the ranking due to the high percentage of the women’s presence in the parliament and I will underline the actions and operations that led them to the primary places.

In Africa, two periods determine the increase of the equal attendance of the women in the legislature, the first is the beginning of 1975, and the second in the early 1990s as part of the global movement for the women’s equality (Bauer, Okpotor, 2013). The first initiative emerged from the *“start of the United Nations Decade for Woman and the first United Nations conference on women.”* (Bauer, Okpotor, 2013, p.80.) The second wave began at the initial years of 1990s and evaluated to the high point, which was the organization of the UN’s Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, where the involved countries adopted a Platform of Action including the enhancement of the women’s empowerment in the parliament (Tripp, 2001; Ndlovu, Mutale, 2013).

These conferences, forums and initiations encouraged women’s organizations of the participating African countries and emerged many progressive actions in their own countries. The rise of the african women’s organizations played a significant role in the successful progress of women’s political rights, including the gender parity in the parliament (Ndlovu, Mutale, 2013). The effective contribution of these organizations helped to achieve at least 30% of the representation of women in the lower or single House in 8 African countries (Rwanda, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola, Burundi, Uganda) being in the top 30

countries in the world. Above all, African countries received financial support and donors by the international communities to impact the growth of women in decision-making (Tripp, 2001). These donations allowed African women to “*participate in civic education, constitutional and legislative reform, and leadership training, and they have funded programs for female parliamentarians.*” (Tripp, 2001, p. 144.)

Concerning the historical facts related to the colonialism, decolonisation, independence movements and several internal conflicts in African countries, different forms of challenges emerged in the process of the gender equality in the parliament. In accordance with Ndlovu and Mutale, they defined these adversities as “*patriarchal and religious beliefs in politics*”, scarce or limited knowledge about political structures and legislative norms of women in rural environments, gender - based political violence, lack of media coverage of women in politics and lack of financial resources for campaigning (Ndlovu, Mutale, 2013). In regard to the colonial experiences and the patriarchy in political and cultural structures, women had been ignored or marginalized in the African territory. “*Marginalization of women in contemporary Africa, therefore, is largely traceable to the culture of domination of the colonial area.*” (Ipadeola, 2017, p.395.) In a patriarchal setting, women are removed from the public sphere and their obligations are restricted to family commitment. Men, on the other hand, get to make decisions and discuss about state affairs exclusively. The division of tasks in this society divided men and women, assigning the former to the public and political spheres and the latter to the private sphere. “*Colonialism destroyed and marginalised the African family and social systems and continues to perpetuate this marginalisation of the continent through neo-colonial measures*”. (Tanye, 2010, p.86.)

Considering the recent statistics of the IPU, it is evident that in the last twenty years African countries evolved a lot and, beside of the challenges, found numerous factors that facilitated the improvement of women’s participation in the parliament. With the transition to democracy in post-conflict African countries came into prominence the approval of new constitutions, elections and the growth of the gender equality in political space (Tripp, 2001). Several African countries underlined in their new constitutions the significance of the gender parity in different aspects, including the reinforcement of women’s political rights as for example Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, Burundi, Mozambique or Kenya. In order to enhance women’s political participation, African countries promoted new electoral systems along with the proportional representation (PR) system or the plurality/majority system and the implementation of quotas, which permit a certain percentage of women in the parliament (Ballington, Karam,

2005, Lindberg, 2004, Bauer, 2008). Furthermore, these countries focused on the assurance of equal educational opportunities for girls, which “*led to the emergence of a larger group of proficient women who are in a position to compete with men for political power in various levels.*” (Ndlovu, Mutale, 2013, p.75.) Education offers fundamental knowledge and skills to change women’s standing in the society as well as in politics.

In line with this topic in the following chapter I will focus on Rwanda introducing its historical and political aspects as well as the challenges and difficulties in the society. From 2003 Rwanda is the first country where women’s representation in the parliament is much higher than the men’s presence and in the third part of the dissertation I will see the social and economic factors that make difficult women’s work opportunities or health security.

### 3. CONTEXTUAL EVOLUTION:

#### THE LANDS OF THE THOUSAND HILLS, RWANDA

*“Rwanda will become a modern, united and prosperous nation founded on the positive values of its culture. The nation will be open the world, including its own Diaspora. Rwandans will be people, sharing the same vision for the future and ready to contribute to social cohesion, equity and equality of opportunity.”<sup>4</sup>*

(Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.11)

The equity and equality of opportunity both for men and women became one of the most important priority in the future vision of the country in according to the citation from the Rwanda Vision 2020. This document is crucial for my work as a government development program, launched in 2000 by the president Paul Kagame. The main goal is developing the country and reducing poverty and health problems as well as continuing the nation-building process. Even if the the geographic situation of Rwanda is a small landlocked country in east-central Africa, its population increased the nearly 12,12 million (Worldometers, Rwanda Population, 2017). It borders Uganda on the north, Burundi on the south, Tanzania on the east and the Democratic Republic of Kongo on the west. In the country, there are four official languages: Kinyarwanda, French, English and Swahili, the latter having been authorized by the government in February 2017.<sup>5</sup> The major part of the Rwandan population follows the Christian religion and the indigenous beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

The country became a German colony between 1897 and 1917, being afterwards colonized by Belgium in 1919, until the Rwandans' independence 1962. (Bruce, 2001, p.17.) The Belgian occupation influenced strongly the social, cultural, political and economic structure of the country during its domination, which lasted nearly 43 years. The Belgian government divided the nation in three separated ethnicities, the Tutsi, the Hutu and the Twa. They authorised the Tutsi ethnicity to get supreme priorities in every level of the positions in the state, ministries and administration (Jones, 2001). According to the *“creation of this internal discrimination*

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<sup>4</sup> Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.11.

<sup>5</sup> [Rwanda moves to make swahili its fourth official language](http://www.africanews.com/2017/02/10/rwanda-moves-to-make-swahili-its-fourth-official-language/) <http://www.africanews.com/2017/02/10/rwanda-moves-to-make-swahili-its-fourth-official-language/> Visited on 05/05/2017

<sup>6</sup> Rwanda country profile <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093238> Visited on 06/05/2017

system, which allowed the Tutsi privileged access to the state, to job and to the church, would have a profound impact by creating an ethnic hierarchy.” (Bruce, 2001, p.19.) Belgian colonizers established the hate and the inimicaility between the Rwandan nation by constructing an unequal ethnic hierarchy system. In order to reinforce this ‘race’ diversity, the Belgian authority created “*ethnic identity cards*” to classificate the three ethnicities. (Powley, 2003, p.10.)

After 1962, Rwanda gained its authority and thus began the First Republic with President Kayibanda who lead an authoritarian, elitist and secretive government. (IPEP, 2000) The Second Republic started in 1973 with General Juvenul Habyarinan, who will led the country until 6 April 1994, when his plane was shot down (Powley, 2003). There was no violence between the Tutsi and Hutu during his 17 years in office. These years of peace and harmony demonstrated that the different ethicities could live together. The implementation of the Arusha Agreement, which is a set of five negotiations that was signed in Arusha, Tanzania on August 4, 1993 by the government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) and was one of the reasons why the 1994 genocide broke out, which was comunicated by Hutu extremists by the end of 1993. The major issues of the Peace Agreement are the following: “*Reaffirming their unwavering determination to respect principles underlying the Rule of Law which include democracy, national unity, pluralism, the respect of fundamental freedoms and rights of the individual.*”<sup>7</sup> The peace agreement was viewed as a highly disadvantageous, ‘win-lose’ situation by many members of the government team. “*The barriers weakened the bargaining ability of the government to such an extent that the team was unable to achieve any significant gains during the peace process, which left the extremists, and even many moderates, unsatisfied when the time came to implement the agreement.* (Lindsay, 2004 p.69.) The Hutu extremists proclaimed “*two objectives: to push the President to delay the setting up of the Arusha institutions and to prepare the Tutsi genocide, by distributing weapons to militias.*”(Republic of Rwanda, 2010, p.106.) In the following 100 days over 800,000 Rwandan people, mostly Tutsi citizens, were killed in the massacre (Powley, 2003).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/agreements/pdf/rwan1.pdf> Visited on 30/05/2017

<sup>8</sup> In order to further readings on the Rwandan genocide see the following studies and books: John M. Janzen and Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen (2000): *Do I still have a life?: voices from the aftermath of war in Rwanda and Burundi*, Michael N. Barnett (2003): *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*, John A. Berry and Carol Pott (1999): *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory*, Din Temple-Raston (2005): *Justice on the Grass*, Jean Hatzfeld (2007): *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*, Paul Rusesabagina (2006): *An Ordinary Man*, Romeo Dallaire (2003): *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Danielle de Lame (2005): *A Hill among a Thousand, Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda*,

Moreover, thousands more were raped, tortured and millions of Rwandans were displaced to neighbouring countries due to the huge destruction in the whole country. Afterwards the genocide ended with the domination of the FPR. This political party governs the country to this day, with the current leader Paul Kagame. (IPEP, 2000).

After the genocide Rwanda had to face a devastating reality and tough challenges for the future, which in the first place was the nation-building, the reconciliation and the economical growth in the face of the conflict's aftermath. The victorious political group announced their 'Government of National Unity' which was the first step in the long and slow process toward a peaceful and developed country. (IPEP, 2000) According to Clark and Kaufman, the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation would be attainable if the leadership prioritized "*to break this cycle of violence and poverty, economic and development work must build on social justice principles, good governance and social structures that respond to people's basic human needs, values and motivations, such as identity, security, recognition, participation, dignity and justice.*" (Clark, Kaufman, 2008, p.150.) The support and donations from the international community were essential to remedy the unfathomable devastation. According to the The World Bank Study, the Institute provided aid to Rwanda since 1970 with the country's economic growth in mind, which shows that Rwanda already needed a loan to recover from its recession before the 1994 genocide. Furthermore, "*the World's Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to support a comprehensive debt reduction package for Rwanda under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.*" (The World Bank Country Study, 2004, p.21.) After the genocide, the social and economic situations were characterized by extremely poverty and recession.

Afterwards, in the following segments I briefly summarize the problematic issues and challenges that the Rwandan government had to face due to the country's high population rate. This part is relevant for my paper to understand that the women's prejudicial situation in many aspects depends also on the country's economic, geographic and health situation. In many circumstances, the policies and laws took by the government in order to the equal possibilities in the education and work are not enough per se. According to the current annual population growth rate, which is 3.2%, finding a solution for the growing poverty and insufficient environmental conditions become the highest priority in the Planning Processes of the country.

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Mahmood Mamdani (2002): *When Victims become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* and Bruce D. Jones (2001): *Peace-making in Rwanda, The Dynamics of Failure.*

(Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.15.) The Rwandan Government handled this as one of the most crucial difficulties in the Rwanda Vision 2020,<sup>9</sup> which is led to the establishment of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the National Investment Strategy (NIS) (Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.23.). As a result, other complications emerged from this situation due to land and food shortage, water scarcity and health issues, as well as many diseases. “*High population growth rates may make it more difficult for failing states to provide adequate schooling, nutrition, immunization, and other essential services.*”<sup>10</sup> Because of the lack of safe water and sanitation, diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS became the first and persistent challenge for the Health Institutions in Rwanda, which effect mostly women and child. In order to find and innovative solution, Rwanda received plenty of support from the international community as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Thaxton, 2009). These challenges and complications effect mostly the Rwandan women and child, which is not relieve their future possibilities as the conclusion of their studies or the equal opportunity to work.

Rwanda is an agriculture-dominated population. More than 90% of the people grow crops, and their exportation accounts mostly for coffee and tea.<sup>11</sup> This production, however, is not sufficient to supply for the high rate population, and the situation is aggravated by the *massive environmental degradation*. (Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.8.) This gets worsened further if we take into account the scarcity of plain territory in the country, which is why Rwanda is denominated as the ‘lands of the thousand hills’. This is the main reason why the economic development is the focal point in the Rwanda Vision 2020, with four of the six pillars underlining its importance: *human resource development and knowledge-based economy, a private sector-led economy, productive and market-oriented agriculture and the regional and international economic integration*. Regarding the knowledge-based economy, Rwanda proposed to achieve the “Universal Education for All”, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The equal education of both boys and girls is one of the most significant elements of a developed economy, because a well-educated generation with adequate knowledge and skills will have the possibility to enter in the fields of “*technology, engineering and management.*” (Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.15.) Rwanda opens its economy

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<sup>9</sup> “After extensive consultations, the Government of National Unity drafted a document called VISION 2020. This draft document was presented to a large cross-section of Rwandan society, by whom it was amended and validated. The final result is the current document, in which a long-term development path for Rwanda is outlined and ambitious goals to be reached by the year 2020 are formulated. Rwanda Vision 2020, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.populationinstitute.org/external/files/Rwanda.pdf> Visited on 07/05/2017

<sup>11</sup> Rwanda country profile <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093238> Visited on 06/05/2017



toward foreign investors, in order to increase the export to import rate of the country: *“it will be necessary to pursue an open, liberal trade regime, minimizing barriers to trade as well as implementing policies to encourage foreign direct investment.”* (Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000, p.19.) As a consequence, the economic growth would provide facilities for the expansion of the infrastructures, to provide electricity to the entire country, to develop public transportation and improve it in order to ease travel between rural and urban areas, and to supply nationwide sanitation and safe water, which advances are benefit both for women and men to have more possibilites equallt to work and be part of the country’s development.

#### 4. THE HALF OF THE POPULATION : WOMEN IN RWANDA

*“Rwandans believe that in their victimization and endurance, women bore the brunt of the genocide and therefore deserve a significant and official role in the nation’s recovery.”*

(Powley, 2003)

The citation underlines that in the aftermath of the genocide women gained more attention and importance as the percentage of the Rwandan female was over of 70%, which reinforced the crucial role of women acting in the reconciliation and in the nation-building processes (Powley, 2006, Burnet, 2008). According to the database of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, the structure of the Rwandan population changed regarding to the aftermath genocide. The population currently in 2017 is 12 132 420, within the half of that 50.9% are female citizens.

From the period of the pre-colonial Rwanda, the traditional role of the women was around the household, as the motherhood and as the different responsibilities in the family. (Powley, 2006) Women were restrictively allowed to succeed these duties only in the private sphere. In accordance with Elizabeth Powley, she emphasizes that women had a considerable autonomy as child bearers and food producers. In addition, in the Rwandan culture the importance of the family and marriage was priority, and married women were highly respected in the society. At the same time, women were also *“subordinated within a patriarchal system of authority.”* (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009, p.10.) In consequence of this patriarchal structure women were not authorized to have own property as for example a land. If their husband passed away, the land passed directly to the male relatives in the family. Moreover, the women became their ownership too (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009). In accordance to the marriage, the origin of polygamy came from the pre-colonial period and also nowadays a real problem regarding to the women’s position in a marriage, such that *“a bride was encouraged to accept sexual relationships with her brothers-in-law. If she or her husband refused, the family could reject the bride”* (Powley, 2003). The Republic of Rwanda and the East African Community (EAC) in the Gender and Community Development Analyses confirms that this phenomenon is present nowadays as well in various regions of Rwanda, and even though it is now illegal, it still exists and has a negative impact on women’s social, cultural and economic lives. Furthermore, in the Rwandan

culture, the birth of a male child has always been more significant and favourable. The man is the head of the family, the jobholder, he is “*responsible for the perpetuity, continuity and durability of the family and the clan name.*” (Republic of Rwanda, 2009, p.22.) Women experienced violence and they were beaten if they had a female child. They became the victims of these cultural-social habits. In the traditional Rwanda, any type of violence against women was accepted and hidden, particularly sexual violence. Women couldn’t talk about it, because they would fear repercussions just for speaking out about the topic. Gender-based violence (GBV), which includes “*physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence and psychological violence*”, is a common abuse against women that to this day remains unsolved. (Republic of Rwanda, 2009, p.23.) Above all, in the public sphere, women didn’t have a ‘voice’. They were not allowed to speak, express themselves, or discuss about their social life. Generally, the “*culture of silence*” (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009, p.15.) characterized the Rwandan population. In addition, the violation of women’s rights was present also in their economic situation. According to the EAC Development Analysis, this strengthened the unequal access to credit, and the limited entry of women in commerce. The disempowerment of women in the trade at grassroots level contributed to the economic recession of the country.

The genocide in 1994 changed Rwandan women’s life in several aspects. During the slaughter, Tutsi women were the primary targets for Hutu men, who often used all types of gender-based violence such as sexual violence, rape and torture ( Powley, 2006).<sup>12</sup> These 100 days brought social relations to an entire transition. As a consequence of the genocide, 70% of the remaining population was made up of women and girls. (Powley, 2006) This is meaningful considering the challenges that they had to face. Women had to rebuild a nation and “*assumed roles as heads of households, community leaders and financial providers.*” (Powley, 2006) Women had to deal with new challenges in their everyday life, such as “*putting roofs on houses*” (Burnet, 2008, p.384.) and the economy responsibility and acting in the society, where they couldn’t participate before.

In post-genocide Rwanda, the government prioritized the gender equality in every section of the state functions. The authority adopted the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In addition, they accepted the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and its Protocol

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<sup>12</sup> “*Women who survived the genocide lost husbands, children, relatives, and communities. They endured systematic rape and torture, witnessed unspeakable cruelty, and lost livelihoods and property. In addition to this violence, women faced displacement, family separation, and food insecurity, all of which resulted in post-conflict psychological trauma.*” Powley, 2006.

on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). The Rwandan government created the Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), to underline the importance of women's integration in the society. The authority also established the National Gender Policy (NGP), which is "*a framework for the orientation of interventions to serve as a foundation of gender equality and equity.*" (Republic of Rwanda, 2009, p.6.)

In the national context, the Constitution of 2003 was a landmark in Rwandan history, which ensures for the first time "*equal rights between Rwandans and between women and men without prejudice to the principles of gender equality and complementarity in national development*"(Constitution, 2003, Preamble). The previous Constitution of Rwanda is from 1991, which was approved by the Habyalimana government. I found only one article regarding to the gender parity, which is the Article 16 – Citizen Equality: *All citizens shall be equal in the eyes of the law, without any discrimination, especially in respect to race, color, origin, ethnic background, clan, sex, opinion, religion, or social status* (Constitution 1991, Art. 16). In the new Constitution there are 16 laws, which state the importance of equity in society, economy and politics. The most relevant articles that positively impact women's lives are the following: Article 26, which emphasizes that only and exclusively monogamous marriage is accepted by the Rwandan government.<sup>13</sup> Next we have Articles 37 and 38, which enable free choice of employment and equal rights to any position and job. This legislation is fundamental for women due to the equal pay and the equivalent opportunities for men and women. "*Every person has the right to free choice of employment. Persons with the same competence and ability shall have a right to equal pay for equal work without any discrimination.*"(Constitution 2003, Art. 37.) In the political section there are 5 significant legislations (Art. 52., 54., 76., 82., 126.), which I will emphasize in details in the next chapter. Concisely, these laws changed completely the Rwandan political structure since 2003 and affirm that in the democratic structure, women and men have equal access to the elections offices and to all political organizations as well. According to Article 126, women have equivalent right and access to enter into Public Administration, which encompasses the Rwanda Defence Forces, the Rwanda National Police and the National Intelligence and Security Service.

As mentioned before, in the following section I will underline the power of the elections and the favourable electoral system that guaranteed the minimum 30% of women's participation in

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<sup>13</sup> "*Civil monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is the only recognized. No person may be married without his/her free consent. Parties to a marriage have equal rights and obligations upon and during the subsistence of their marriage and at the time of violence.*" (Constitution 2003, Art. 26.)

the parliament of Rwanda. Moreover, I will see the progress of the presidential and chamber of deputies elections after the genocide following the first elections in 2003, then in 2008 and the last one in 2013. I will present the candidates and percentage of the votes with the gained seats in the parliament.

## 5. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

### 5.1. THE POWER OF ELECTIONS AND THE FAVOURABLE ELECTORAL SYSTEM TO INCREASE WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENT

*“Treat democracy as an attribute of the political system, where self-government translates into a set of qualities – equal political participation, free political competition, and a procedural legitimacy – that a system of rule potentially has to varying degrees.”*

(Lindberg, 2006, p.24.)

After the genocide, the FPR took over the power and the party launched a transition procedure from 1998, to which it called “democratization” (Burnet, 2011). In accordance to this process, the government had to follow the values that incorporate a democratic political system. These qualities, as I mentioned in the citation at the beginning of this chapter, *“includes participatory and contested elections perceived as the legitimate procedure for the translation of rule by the people into workable executive and legislative power.”* One of the three main<sup>14</sup> pillars is the election, but it is not enough per se – it needs to be competitive and legitimate (Lindberg 2006, Ibelema 2008). The equal political participation is fundamental as well as the organization of the elections. Every citizen has the right to have the opportunity to take part at any level, free from any form of discrimination based on age, class or gender (Lindberg 2006).

In Rwanda the first pluralist election was only in 2003, 9 years after the genocide and 41 years after its independence. The constitutional referendum organised on 26 May in 2003, the population voted with 93.42% to the New Constitution (Frère, 2011, Burnet, 2011). Subsequently, the first Presidential Election in the Rwanda's history was organised on 25 August in 2003, where the number of the registered voters achieved 3,948,749, and the 95.05% (3,544,777) choose Paul Kagame as the president from the party FPR. The following candidate Faustin Twagiramungu received 3.62% of the votes and the nominate Jean-Népomuscène Nayinzira got 1.33%. (Figure 4)

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<sup>14</sup> The three prominent values of democracy: Political Participation: *“based on equal distribution of sovereignty, provide equal shares of legal political freedoms for all citizens.”* Lindberg, 2006, p.30.  
Competition within the system: *“ The fundamental value of self-government as individual and collective freedom translates not only into equality of political participaton, but also into free political competition allowing the people to exercise its sovereing discretion to rule.”* Lindberg, 2006, p.32.  
Legitimacy: *“When the people manifest their desire to rule themselves by established procedures, self-government is legitimate.”* Lindberg, 2006, p. 33.

In the same year the Chamber of Deputies Election had taken place on 20-23 September and 02 October the FPR Coalition (Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), Centrist Democratic Party (PDC), Ideal Democratic Party (PDI), Democratic Union of the Rwandan People (UDPR) and the Rwandan Socialist Party ((PSR)) won the 73.78% of the votes, which means 40 seats from the totally 53. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) achieved the 12.31% of the choices and had 7 seats in the parliament after that the Liberal Party (PL) followed with 10.56% and 6 seats. (Figure 5)

Following the first pluralist elections, many scholars denounced that Rwanda is mostly an authoritarian regime and that the FPR government does not respect the democratic values. Moreover it practices dictatorship manipulates the international community (Reyntjens, 2011, Burnet, 2011). One of the reasons why they query its democratic system is because in there is a theoretical multy-party system in the official elections, but in practice there is only a single-party political scheme, with “ *FPR functioning as a state party* ” (Burnet, 2011, p.9.). There are several observers, including the European Union, that have evidences that the FPR destroyed and eliminated their opponents’ parties before the elections with various motives. In addition, the FPR regime controls every single institution during the elections, including the non governmental organizations (NGOs) and CSOs (Reyntjens, 2011). Moreover, the Union of Democratic Forces (FDU), a member of the Union of Rwandese Democratic Forces (URDF) stresses that the FPR “ *monopolizes all levels of power, decides which political party or individual must run for power, holds the entire country under tight control during elections and prevents free access to the media, the elections will remain a smokescreen used to divert the public’s attention from the real issue of justice and democracy.* ” (Frère, 2011, p.57.)

The next Chamber of Deputies Election had taken place on 15-18 September in 2008. The FPR Coalition dominated again the election with the victory of 42 seats in the parliament, this followed the PSD with 7 seats and the PL gained 4 seats (Figure 6). In 2010 was staged again the Presidential Election on 09 August and Paul Kagame won the majority of the votes, 93.08%. The other candidates are the following Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo (5.15%), Prosper Higiyo (1.37%) and Alvera Mukabaramba (0.40%) (Figure 7). The ultimate Chamber of Deputies Election was organised on 16 September in 2013 and the FPR gained again the major number of the seats, 41, the consecutive was the PSD with 7 seats and the PL in the last place with 5 seats (Figure 8).

According to the political empowerment of Rwandan women, there is a determinant factor that permitted the minimum 30% of women in the parliament, which is the proportional

representation (PR) system<sup>15</sup> and the implementation of the quotas<sup>16</sup>, denominating three types of quota, which are the reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas (Burnet, 2011). In accordance to the reserved seats in 2001, the government configured the so called “triple balloting” system (Uwineza, Pearson 2009, Powley, 2003). This means that in this electoral mechanism there are three ballots: the general ballot, the women’s ballot and the youth ballot, and according to this system the voter chooses one person in each ballot. After this selection, the district council picks up the candidates that earned most votes at the sector level (Powley, 2003, Uwineza, Pearson 2009). As a result, this safeguarded women’s involvement at the grassroots, regional and provincial level. Above all, this system worked very well from the first election in 2003, when women occupied 48.8% of the seats. In 2008 it grew to 56% (Burnet, 2011) and in 2013 achieved the world record, 61.3%, according to the statistics of the IPU.<sup>17</sup> The high percentage of women in the parliament guarantees a more efficient influence to take in advance the gender-sensitive issues and has a stronger impact in the decision-making processes, which refer to women’s interests.

While the structure demonstrates a very fast and effective improvement, there are debates on the quota system at the same time. One of the main reasons of the discussion is the strong patriarchal ideology and culture in Rwanda as in the previous chapter was mentioned. Therefore, women in the past were not allowed to talk in any public space and now they are in superiority in the public, and particularly, in the political sphere, which is an extensive cultural and social transformation in a short period of time. On the other hand, there are debates according to the quota system, because it does not seem to be democratic due to the fact that “*politicians are elected because of their gender, not because of their qualifications, and the better-qualified candidates are pushed aside*” (Dahlerup, 2005, p.143.). Besides of the majority of women, in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, women continue to have difficulties to stand for office. They face challenges that did not exist before, such as balancing the time and obligations between family, work and politics. Moreover, Elizabeth Powley draws attention to the barriers in her research work, regarding the experiences that women emphasize during the interviews: “*lack of experience and fear to competing, campaigning, and marketing*

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<sup>15</sup> “*In proportional systems the electoral system is designed to ensure that the overall votes for a party or coalition are translated into a corresponding proportion of seats in the legislature.* Matland, 2005, p.99.

<sup>16</sup> “*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 a government.*” Dahlerup, 2005, p. 141.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> Visited on 18/05/2017



*themselves as reasons many Rwandan women are still reductant to stand for office*” (Powley, 2003, p.21.). Women need to be equally prepared to candidate to the political positions ensuring trainings and adequate education by the political organizations and by the women councils. One of the primary aims of the foundation of FFRP, MIGEPROF and NWC is to help women gain more visibility in decision-making, educating them to have the appropriate knowledge and ability, encouraging and supporting at every level to integrate them in politics increasing their confidence as well. (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009) During one of her interviews with Elisabeth Powley, Berte Mukamusoni affirmed the exigency to gain equal qualities and preparation entering in political sphere: *“So with (the women’s councils), it has been a mobilization tool, it has mobilized them, it has educated (women) ...It has brought them to some (level of) self-confidence, such that when the general elections are approaching, it becomes a topic in the women’s (councils). Women as citizens, you are supposed to stand, to campaign, give candidates, support other women. They have acquired a confidence of leadership.”* (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009, p. 19.) Rwanda is a good example to demonstrate that the implementation of a quota system works efficiently. The permanently growing percentage of women confirms that an adequate electoral system and the implementation of the quotas is an advantage for women’s political empowerment.

In the next chapter I will analyse the women’s substantive and symbolic representation due to the ratification of several laws and policies. I will represent why the new political legislations in the new Constitution have a crucial role regarding to the guarantee of the minimum 30% of women’s participation in the parliament. Moreover, I will see the progress of the government on gender equality in the parliament, observing the institutions that play an essential role in the enactment of laws, which protect and reinforce women’s equal participation in the national development.

## 5.2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARLIAMENT IN RWANDA

*“Increased participation of women in politics is, therefore, necessary for improved social, economic and political conditions of their families and the entire country.”*

(Paul Kagame, 2003)

One of the main advantage of the female majority in the political sphere is the development of the families and at the same time the improvement of their life conditions as says the citation above. Rwanda is the first and only country in the world that achieved the majority 61.3% of women's representation in the lower house in the parliament (IPU, 2017). According to the Rwanda's Gender Dividend latest report, the number of women in power and in decision-making in 2016 achieved 64% of female parliamentarians, 40% female ministers, 50% female judges, 50% provincial governors and 43,6% female members of district advisory councils (Republic of Rwanda, 2016, p.14.). The Rwandan government established four essential institutions for the advancement of women, which are the MIGEPROF, the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), the National Women's Council (NWC) and the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (FFRP). In this chapter, I would like to underline the progress and the mechanism of this advancement in gender parity in the political space. In addition I will see the substantive and symbolic representation of the women in decision-making.

In 2003 the new Constitution was a milestone in the history of Rwanda, particularly in gender sensitivity aspects (Powley, 2003, Devlin, Elgie, 2008, Uwineza, Pearson 2009, Burnet, 2011). In regard to the political sphere, there are five specific articles that underline and reinforce women's crucial role in the decision-making. Article 52 affirms that women and men have equal admittance to the elective offices. Political institutions, including the government, cannot base their choice on any type of discrimination against an ethnic group, age, sex, or religion. Furthermore, Article 54 goes on stating that the *“political organizations must constantly reflect the unity of the people of Rwanda, gender equality and complementarity, whether in the recruitment of members, putting in place organs of leaddership and in their operations and activities.”* In addition, the legislation that completely changed women's presence in the political organizations, especially in the Parliament of Rwanda, is Article 76, which relieves that at least 24 out of the 80 (30%) members in the Chamber of Deputies have to be women, and *“elected by specific councils in accordance with the State administrative*

entities” in the Chamber of Deputies election. In the Senate, which is the upper house of Rwanda’s bicameral legislature, women have 30% of the 26 seats (Powley, 2005). Consequently, after the parliamentary elections of 2003, the presence of women reached 48.8% at the lower house, which exceeded the previous record of 18% (Powley, 2005).

In order to sustain the achievements, fulfil the various commitments that adopted and to ensure the realization of women-friendly legislation and policies, the Rwandan government established a structure of women’s councils (Uwineza, Pearson 2009, Bauer, Burnet, 2013). The MIGEPROF was founded shortly after the genocide and as their mission confirms the aim of their work is the protection of families, the empowerment of girls and women, the elimination of gender-based violence and the implementation of positive masculinity.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, “*at the national level MIGEPROF in the Office of the Prime Minister coordiante the government’s efforts on gender issues*” (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009, p.20.). They have numerous projects and programs including gender mainstreaming, and recently they are working on the Advancing and Sustaining Gender Equality Gains in Rwanda Project (2013-2018). The program recognizes the importance of women’s empowerment and gender equity on all levels for the economic transformation and development.<sup>19</sup> In collaboration with the MIGEPROF, there is the NWC, which is responsible for the advocacy and for the social mobilisation of women. The commission of the NWC is the integration of women’s capacity in the national development, as well as women’s equal participation in society.<sup>20</sup> The NWC influenced women in every level, encompassing the national level, the provincial and Kigali city levels and the district level. In harmony with the previous institutions, the government established the GMO, to monitor and observe how the implementations and commitments that Rwanda adopted are mainstreamed at national level.<sup>21</sup> This ‘Gender Observatory’ helps to verify if the government assures its responsibility on gender parity for a sustainable government. In the interest of the women’s councils well functioning and for the success of the legislation and policies on gender equality, women in the parliament settled the FFRP in 1996.<sup>22</sup> The main objective is to “*ensure capacity building for women parliamentarians for them to adequately carry out advocacy on gender and development ad successfully discharge their parliamentarians’ duties.*”<sup>23</sup> They played a crucial role in inspiring and encouraging

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<sup>18</sup>Official site of MIGEPROF <http://www.migeprof.gov.rw/index.php?id=186> Visited on 20/05/2017

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.migeprof.gov.rw/index.php?id=151> Visited on 20/05/2017

<sup>20</sup> Official site of NCW <http://cnf.gov.rw/index.php?id=10> Visited on 20/05/2017

<sup>21</sup> Official site of GMO <http://gmo.gov.rw/index.php?id=5> Visited on 20/05/2017

<sup>22</sup> Official site of FFRP <http://ffrp.rw/index.php?id=2> Visited on 22/05/2017

<sup>23</sup> Official site of FFRP <http://ffrp.rw/index.php?id=10> Visited on 22/05/2017

women's to enter in the political space and to bring more women in the Chamber of Deputies. They wanted to include more and more women in order to efficiently have a positive impact on the decision-making and on the legislation, to ensure women's equal rights in all aspects. The FFRP mainly focuses *"on the implementation of gender balance policy regarding legislation, national policies, budget management, and advocacy for the eradication of women's poverty, women empowerment and awareness of their rights."*<sup>24</sup> One of the most compelling accomplishments that FFRP reached is the inclusion of men as partners in the promotion of gender equality. The involvement and collaboration with men in women's interests is *"most sustainable when it is a broad-based goal of all parliamentarians, rather than the exclusive province of women"* (Uwineza, Pearson, 2009, p.19.).

In according to Gretchen Bauer and Jennie E. Burnet analyses and experiences in the field, they underline the substantive<sup>25</sup> and symbolic representation<sup>26</sup> effects due to the dominance of the women in the parliament. The most significative and substancial effects are the policies and legislation agenda that Rwandan women parliamentarian members (MPs) achieved. I will begin with the first law, the Law N°22/99 of 12/11/1999 to Supplement book one of the civil code and to institute part five regarding matrimonial regimes, freedom and succession.<sup>27</sup> This legislation was passed to protect monogamy in the society and to abolish the polygamous system in Rwanda, which was considered humiliating for women in many ways. It guarantees the equal division of ownership in the marriage and the common property. The Law N°27/2001 on the Rights and Protection of Child Against Abuse was essential increase and protect children's rights:*"women MPs continued to champion children's rights by advocating for legislation criminalizing prostitution for clients, championing HIV screening and treatment, and raising awareness about child sexual abuse"* (Bauer, Burnet, 2013, p.108.). After a long process and political debate, MPs achieved another important pillar for the protection of women and children, which is the Law N°59/2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence. This charter protects women and children against any type of violence

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<sup>24</sup> Official site of FFRP <http://ffrp.rw/index.php?id=10> Visited on 22/05/2017

<sup>25</sup> *"Women's substantive representation is determined by how well women leaders represent the interests of women, supporting and making policy decisions favorable to women and the issues that most affect them."* Bauer, Oktopor, 2013, p.90.

<sup>26</sup> *"Symbolic representation refers to the symbolic power of having women as leaders and the "feelings or attitudes" that leadership evokes in the represented."* Idem

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.migeprof.gov.rw/fileadmin/migrated/content/uploads/MATRIMONIAL\\_REGIMES\\_LIBERALI\\_TIES\\_AND\\_SUCCESSIONS-2.pdf](http://www.migeprof.gov.rw/fileadmin/migrated/content/uploads/MATRIMONIAL_REGIMES_LIBERALI_TIES_AND_SUCCESSIONS-2.pdf) Visited on 22/05/2017

including conjugal rape, any type of harassment on the child or on the wife/husband, sexual slavery, sexual torture and gender based human trafficking etc.<sup>28</sup>

Rwanda is one of the first countries in the world that adopted the anti-GBV legislation. (Bauer, Burnet, 2013) Moreover, the Law N°13/2009 of 27/5/2009 Regulating Labor in Rwanda, is determinant for women to have equal payment and access in the labor force. Therefore, this legislation ensures that women have the possibility of equal economic development and advancement in their careers. The last significant substantial effects of women's major presence in the parliament is the Law N°43/2013 of 16/6/2013 Governing Land in Rwanda, which guarantees the equal right to the land ownership for women and men. Besides, Article 4 affirms the Equal Right to Land: "*All forms of discrimination, such as that based on sex or origin, in relation to access to land and the enjoyment of real rights shall be prohibited. The right to land for a man and a woman lawfully married shall depend on the matrimonial regime they opted for.*"<sup>29</sup> This has a powerful impact on women's economic situation, because in the past, Rwandan women were not allowed to inherit nor own land, neither if the land belonged to their husband nor if he passed away.

All these legislations have had an effective impact on women's position in the society, mainly in politics. The new Constitution and the mentioned laws' ratification allowed for the involvement of women in their advancement in their social, economic and political lives, giving them equal possibilities and protection. The symbolic representative outcomes of women's participation in the parliament led to more cultural changes in women's every day life. Jennie E. Burnet emphasizes these transformations that she experienced during her ethnographic research between 1997 and 2009. (Burnet, 2011, p.5.) She indicates firstly the "*greater impact has been women's increased engagement in local level governance structures.*" (Burnet, 2011, p. 17.) As a result, women can be part of the transformation at grassroot level and understand the problems in the rural areas. Consequently, they can assist them and facilitate their lives.

The following revolutionary change in Rwandan culture is that women can have equal voice in the society. I argued about the 'silence culture' in the previous chapter, which means women could not speak out in the public sphere before. In accordance to Burnet's experiences, after 2003 it changed completely and women "*recounted their vocal participation in local*

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<sup>28</sup> Law No.59/2008 of 2008 on Prevention and Punishment of Gender/Based Violence, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a3f88812.html> Visited on 22/05/2017

<sup>29</sup>The land law of Rwanda 2013, Art. 4. [http://ffrp.rw/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Law\\_N43-2013\\_of\\_16-06-2013\\_governing\\_land\\_in\\_Rwanda.pdf](http://ffrp.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Law_N43-2013_of_16-06-2013_governing_land_in_Rwanda.pdf) Visited on 22/05/2017

*government and community meetings*” (Burnet, 2011, p. 18.). They can be active members of their community and in the church, which was not allowed before. Furthermore, women and girls now have greater access to education, which increases their opportunities for the future and assures their economic situation. Rwandan women’s economic autonomy also increased due to women’s rights in marriage and to the equal ownership of the properties (Burnet, 2011). These laws are key to women “*joint decision-making over domestic resources*” (Burnet, 2011, p.20.). Women do not stay at home all the time anymore, they can get job and develop their family at the same time.

Concluding this section, it became clear that all the conventions, implementations ratified by Rwanda’s government, the establishment of the new Constitution and the four institutions (MIGEPROF, GMO, NWC, FFRP), the promotion of laws and regulations that reinforce gender equality is the beginning and a good start toward to encourage women’s participation in politics and especially in the decision-making. It is the start for Rwandan women to be able take part of their own economic, social and political future and to achieve their goals involving the male MPs as well.

### 5.3. THE ROLE AND THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA REGARDING TO THE WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE PARLIAMENT

*“Four issues remain crucial in reinforcing the region’s media ahead of forthcoming elections, whatever the quality of the poll might be: journalists’ freedom and security; the media’s financial and material independence, the consolidation of regulation and self-regulation; and better cooperation with actors in the election processes.”*

(Frère, 2011, p. 255.)

In accordance with the Freedom House Index in 2017, in Rwanda there is no freedom of press and neither political independence using the internet.<sup>30</sup> The report of the Freedom House underlines that in 2016 there were “*Journalists and members of banned opposition groups reportedly faced arbitrary arrests, beatings, politicized prosecutions, and enforced disappearances during the year*” (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/rwanda>). In accordance with the press status of the country I decided to see the role of the media during the genocide as well as in the post-conflict Rwanda, the challenges and difficulties that they have to face to the free and impartial transmission of news regarding the elections and the electoral processes. Moreover, I will argue about how the media represent issues on women in the political sphere. I chose three Rwandese newspapers and one global African journal to compare their news in different aspects. The Rwandese magazines are the following: *The New Times*, *News of Rwanda* and the *Rwanda Eye*. The global African online newspaper is *AllAfrica*. I will observe how these newspapers support and help to enforce the gender equality in the political organizations as well as the incompleteness of these news. These journals are favourable for my work because of the language that they use (English) and to the dedicated section of women news in their webpage.

During the genocide in 1994, the number of the journalists victims was the highest in the country’s history. Many reporters and commentators were tortured and murdered, and one of the consequences that is why the Rwandese journalists are generally afraid of standing up against the current regime, of criticizing it or supporting the opposite side during the elections (Frère 2011; Reyntjens 2011; Beswick 2010). As reported by the Committee to Protect

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<sup>30</sup> Freedom in the World 2017 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/rwanda> Visited on 24/06/2017

Journalists, 15 reporters were killed during the 1994 massacre.<sup>31</sup> After the genocide, the country's landscape and infrastructures were devastated, which made transportation and travel within the country more difficult for the journalists to report any situation.

In Rwanda, the transition period toward democratic political system theoretically brought along the liberalization of the press media together with legitimate elections (Frère, 2011, Beswick 2010). One of the most relevant roles of the media before, during and after the elections is to give information and transparent reviews to the citizens regarding the current situation about the political parties, electoral structures, processes and rules. The reports and news have to be *"honest, fair and delivered in a responsible manner. The media can only fulfill their mission if they are free, diverse and aware of their responsibilities"* (Frère, 2011, p.2.). In order for the media's to maintain their independence, the state and the political parties should not manipulate or pressurize the opinions and critical overviews of the journalists.

In post-conflict Rwanda, the atmosphere is fairly delicate, and consequently the media's autonomy and security is rather suspicious. Marie-Soleil Frère argues about the fragility of broadcasts according to the position of the media in these conflicts: *"Since the media are often more than simple observers in conflicts – becoming actors or victims (or both) – they do not emerge unscathed from a war"* (Frère, 2011, p.14.).

The freedom of press in Rwanda has been completely restricted ever since first election in 2003, and is still remains firmly controlled by the government. The majority of newspapers are located in Kigali, the capital city, and therefore people in the provincial districts do not have access to read any papers, except for the media held by the RPF regime (Frère, 2011). Between 2003 and 2008 there was a notable change regarding the liberalization of the media, as this period saw *"newly created private radio stations"* (Frère, 2011, p.59.), which were allowed to broadcast. While the private radio and television gained more space to air their programs, the government rejected and boycotted some of the newspapers in order to prevent the dissemination of content with opposite critical viewpoints (Frère, 2011, Reyntjens, 2011, Beswick, 2010). This limitation imposed by the regime is absolutely contradictory, because in the new Constitution established in 2003, the Article 33 declares that *"Freedom of thought, opinion, conscience, religion, worship and public manifestation thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with conditions determined by Law."* Furthermore, the situation of the

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<sup>31</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists <https://cpj.org/africa/rwanda/> Visited on 24/06/017



journalists in the post-genocide country is challenging due to the “*shortage of human, material and financial resources*” (Frère, 2011, p.72.).

During my analysis of the three rwandese online newspapers (*The New Times, News of Rwanda, and the Rwanda Eye*) and the one global African online newspaper *AllAfrica*, I noticed very impressive unspoken evidences, which I would like to argue and summarize in the following section. Firstly, my research purpose was to see how the media represent gender equality before, during and after the elections in 2003, 2008 and in 2013, due to the high percentage of female representation in the parliament that has been constantly increasing. During my exploration, I didn't find any news regarding the first democratic elections because these newspapers had not been established yet at that time. Even in 2008 and in 2013, there are no articles that encourage, support or prioritize the transmission of information and data before and during the election period regarding the importance of the women's participation in the decision-making. On The New Times' page, I found about five articles that talk about the result of the elections and underline the increasing number of women in the lower house of the Parliament and in political organizations.<sup>32</sup> In the other papers, I didn't find articles arguing about the gender equality in the parliament during the Rwandan elections. That is why I decided to take a different approach in my observation of these, which is how the media reinforces and supports the female representation in the Parliament and which type of news and information they communicate to their readers. In accordance to this perspective, there are several articles about conferences, meetings, reunions and sessions on the reinforcement of gender equality like the Women in Parliament Summit,<sup>33</sup> the speech of President Paul Kagame during the recent national congress about the zero tolerance on human trafficking and domestic violence,<sup>34</sup> the lecture from the spokesperson of Rwandese Parliament, Chamber of Deputies Hon. Donatilla

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<sup>32</sup>- Karuhanga, Taking stock of the female dominated Parliament in 2013 <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2013-12-29/91752/> Visited on the 20/05/2017  
- Ntambara With elections over, it's time to walk to talk <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2013-09-21/69369/> Visited on the 20/05/2017  
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<sup>33</sup>- Musoni, Athan, Rwanda's strength lies in its women-experts <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-07-01/44126/> Visited on the 20/05/2017

<sup>34</sup>- Mugabo, Kagame declares zero tolerance to injustice human trafficking and domestic violence <http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/32232/kagame-declares-zero-tolerance-to-injustice-human-trafficking-and-domestic-violence/> Visited on the 20/05/2017

Mukabalisa about the achievement of gender sensitive laws to strengthen full participation of women<sup>35</sup> and the session of the FFRP about building up strategies to increase women's leadership skills with commitment to social, cultural, economic improvements.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, I noticed a really significant statement in two articles that I think are of uttermost relevance when we discuss about gender equality and the female empowerment. These articles mention the necessity of men's full contribution to promote gender parity in leadership positions, and that in order to emancipate women they must not be excluded or put under the shade of men, like President Kagame underlined in his speech during the latest national congress: "*when we talk about empowering women, we are talking about empowering family, not to pit women against men.*"<sup>37</sup>

Above all, I would like to accentuate the shortcomings that I examined during the observation of these newspapers as well as its reasons and consequences. To illustrate my point I would begin with the scarce amount of news, information, and reports about rural women in Rwanda. Searching in the archives of the four papers, I found only one article that pointed out the importance of communication to Rwandese rural women about their rights and the policies that permit to benefit their opportunities, which were provided by the government for their economic and social development.<sup>38</sup> It is essential to inform and to advise rural women about the changes, legislations and policies that were ratified during the last years according to the female majority of women in the decision making, because all the laws refer to them in the same way that they refer to women living in the city or in the capital, Kigali. They lack this knowledge due to the scarce examples of newspapers in the rural area. Jennie E. Burnet experienced as well the absence of information and references in the rural area during her ethnographic research and she underlines that many of the women interviewed answered that 'nothing has changed' "*in terms of gender roles, political power, or the democratic legitimacy of the state in Rwanda*" (Burnet, 2011, p.29.). On the other hand, I observed exclusively two articles that provide exclusively opinions, being fully critical and having no descriptive

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<sup>35</sup>- Gahiji, AU dialogue calls for stronger gender sensitive laws <http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/30107/au-dialogue-calls-for-stronger-gender-sensitive-laws/> Visited on the 22/05/2017

<sup>36</sup>- Musoni, Women MPs hold retreat <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2009-02-03/6973/> Visited on the 22/05/2017

<sup>37</sup>- Mugabo , Kagame declares zero tolerance to injustice human trafficking and domestic violence <http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/32232/kagame-declares-zero-tolerance-to-injustice-human-trafficking-and-domestic-violence/> Visited on the 22/05/2017

<sup>38</sup>- Mugabe, Seize available opportunities, MP advises women <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2010-11-02/25550/> Visited on the 23/05/2017

function. The first essay has the title: 'With more women in parliament, we have higher expectations', which disapproves the amendment of the labour code because the Parliament changed the regulation of the maternity leave from 12 weeks to 6 weeks. The author disagrees with this alteration, saying that this is a standing down in the women emancipation for the Rwandan women's future. In addition, she argues about the contradiction of the fact that the majority of the parliamentary members are female, though they make disadvantageous decisions: "*maybe our female representatives should take advantage of their growing numbers to serve more aggressively in the interest of Rwandan women; it seems as if our emancipation isn't as correlated to the number of women in legislature as it is to the commitment of the president and the government at large.*"<sup>39</sup> This critical article appeared in *The New Times*, which is really interesting as the paper is under control of the current regime, RPF. It is clearly visible that there is censorship on the webpage and that every type of criticism and opposite opinions are blocked from the newspaper. On the other hand, I found other critical news on the page of *AllAfrica*, in the section of Rwanda, which was really interesting due to the independence of the page. I was curious to see if I could find any different news, considering that this page is not censored. Recently, Diane Shima Rwigara, a Rwandan businesswoman announced that she will be applying for Rwandan presidency, in opposition to the current President Paul Kagame. She argues that the current government has not solved a fair amount of issues, such as the increasing poverty and the growing social inequality. She underlines that there is no free press media in the country, and that journalists are afraid to express their opinions or criticize the current situation and the nation's issues due to several cases where people disappeared after their statements: "*We have cases of insecurity as people disappear without trace, some are killed while others flee the country. Most Rwandans know this but won't speak out because of fear,*"<sup>40</sup> This declaration came out only in this page. I searched in the other three newspapers to see if they talked about this relevant news due to fact that she is the first female independent presidential candidate, but there is no trace of this announcement.

My point during the observation of these articles is to find out how the Rwandese press media represent the real situation and actions about women's emancipation in politics. As a result, I understood that there is no liberty for the Rwandese press media to assume its full obligations as the transmission of the diverse facts, opinions, and ideas that take place in the

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<sup>39</sup> Akintore, With more women in parliament we have higher expectations <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2013-03-26/64260/> Visited on the 20/05/2017

<sup>40</sup> Rwanda: Unbowed By Mudslinging, Diane Vows to Soldier On in Race for Presidency <http://allafrica.com/stories/201705180091.html> Visited on 23/05/2017

country. Because of the control and manipulation of the news by the regime, Rwandese citizens do not have the possibility to access the pluralist information and the various assumptions. On the other hand, one of the conclusion after analysis these newspaper is that does not exist a lot of articles relating to the women's political, social situation. I could not find articles regarding to the women's participation before, during and after of the elections, which means that even if women are in majority in the parliament there is no reflection in the media.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As the research demonstrated, Rwanda came a long way to have the result of the 61,3% of women representation in the lower house of the Parliament, which is the highest percentage all over the world from 2013. The purpose of this paper is to establish the development of the women's political, economic, social and cultural situation, which were indispensable to reduce the gender-based inequalities in these sectors. It is clear the importance and meaningful of this paper's topic regarding to succeed accomplishments due to the female majority in the Rwandan Parliament.

To conclude the main points of the thesis' I would like to review briefly the chapters to see the final completion and the imperfection of the process. In the initial chapter *Women's Political Empowerment – Global and African Context*, we can see that in the last two decades the female representation is growing permanently due to the several declarations by the international community. Nevertheless, women have to confront with many obstacles as the limited access to education, trainings, the balance between the family and work and in many cases the patriarchal or religious structure of the country. All these barriers are still existing and hinder their equal rights in the political, social, economic and cultural sphere. While in the African framework the role of the women's organizations, the financial support and donors that helped to achieve the parity in the various areas. In many African countries radical changes promoted the improvement of the female empowerment as the new electoral systems, the PR system or the plurality/majority system and the implementation of the quotas.

The third chapter, *Contextual Evolution: The Lands of the Thousand Hills, Rwanda*, is a historical revision, which shows that how strongly influenced the German and Belgian colonial period, the First and Second Republic, the Arusha Agreement and the genocide the position of the Rwandan women in the society and culture. Furthermore, I emphasized that due to the country weak economic status and poverty the victims of the several illnesses like the HIV/AIDS and malaria are women in majority. As a conclusion, these aspects take more difficult the women's circumstances regarding to their education, work opportunities and political activities.

The following section, *The Half of the Population: Women in Rwanda*, it is an examination about the role of the women and their position in the Rwandan culture and society. The fundamental transformation began after the genocide due to the female dominance in the

population percentage. Their key role during the reconciliation and throughout the nation rebuilding is crucial and also the beginning of their equal political presence in the country. In accordance to the new Constitution, women gained equal attention and importance in the several issues of the government.

The last chapter, *Womens' Political Participation* includes three subsections *The Power of Elections and the Favourable Electoral System to Increase Women in the Parliament*, *Women's Participation in the Parliament in Rwanda* and *The Role and the Impact of the Media Regarding to the Women's Political Empowerment in the Parliament*. The initial sector describes the indispensable changes in the electoral system regarding to the process of the equality between women and men in the political sphere. In order to the establishment of the PR system and the quota structure, statistics proved the continuous and efficient growth of the women politicians in the Rwandan Parliament and in the other governmental institutions from the first elections of 2003. In accordance to results of the elections in 2003, 2008 and 2013 it became noticeable also the strong dominance and control of the RPF state party, which strengthened its authoritarian regime characterization.

In the following chapter, *Women's Participation in the Parliament in Rwanda*, it is clear that beside of the electoral system transformation, it was necessary the foundation of other governmental institutions to reinforce and support the development of women's advancement in politics. In addition, we see the significance of the new Constitution within the equality between women and men one of the most determinant factor. According to the substantive effects of the women's major presence in the parliament, the conclusion is that parliamentary women suggest and enact laws, which facilitate and favourable for their economic and social situation.

In view of the last chapter of the thesis, *The Role and the Impact of the Media Regarding to the Women's Political Empowerment in the Parliament*, it evolves that the media is strictly controlled and dominated by the regime, censorship and self-censorship is omnipresent. It was difficult to find support and encouragement regarding to the women's favour before, during and after the electoral period in 2003, 2008 and 2013. It is clear that the news that these papers publish regarding to the women's growth in the parliament are simple facts without arguing the significance of the results or the advantage of women's presence in politics. There are no information and knowledge about the laws and legislation that could make difference in the women's everyday life.

Concluding, I would like to underline that a country like Rwanda with its unique history made a long journey arrive to the point where is today. In many aspects, the improvements are positive and visible, especially regarding to the gender equality issues as we observed from the period of the transition of the country as well as in the period of the elections from 2003. The efforts and resolution in the last 20 years regarding to the gender sensitive laws and legislations are unique and particular all over the world. Moreover, the introduction of the equity between women and men in the new Constitution, the establishment of several gender-focus oriented institutions (MIGEPROF,GMO,NWC,FFRP), all together demonstrate that women are important not only in the process of the nation-building and reconciliation but also in the mechanism of social, economic and political improvements. They are indispensable part of the enhancement of their families' conditions. On the other hand, I also noticed the imperfection of the process regarding to the real actions in the decision-making in the parliament. The major presence of female parliamentarians not always signify their emergence or the raise of their voice.

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## 8. ATTACHMENTS

Figure 1 - Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments

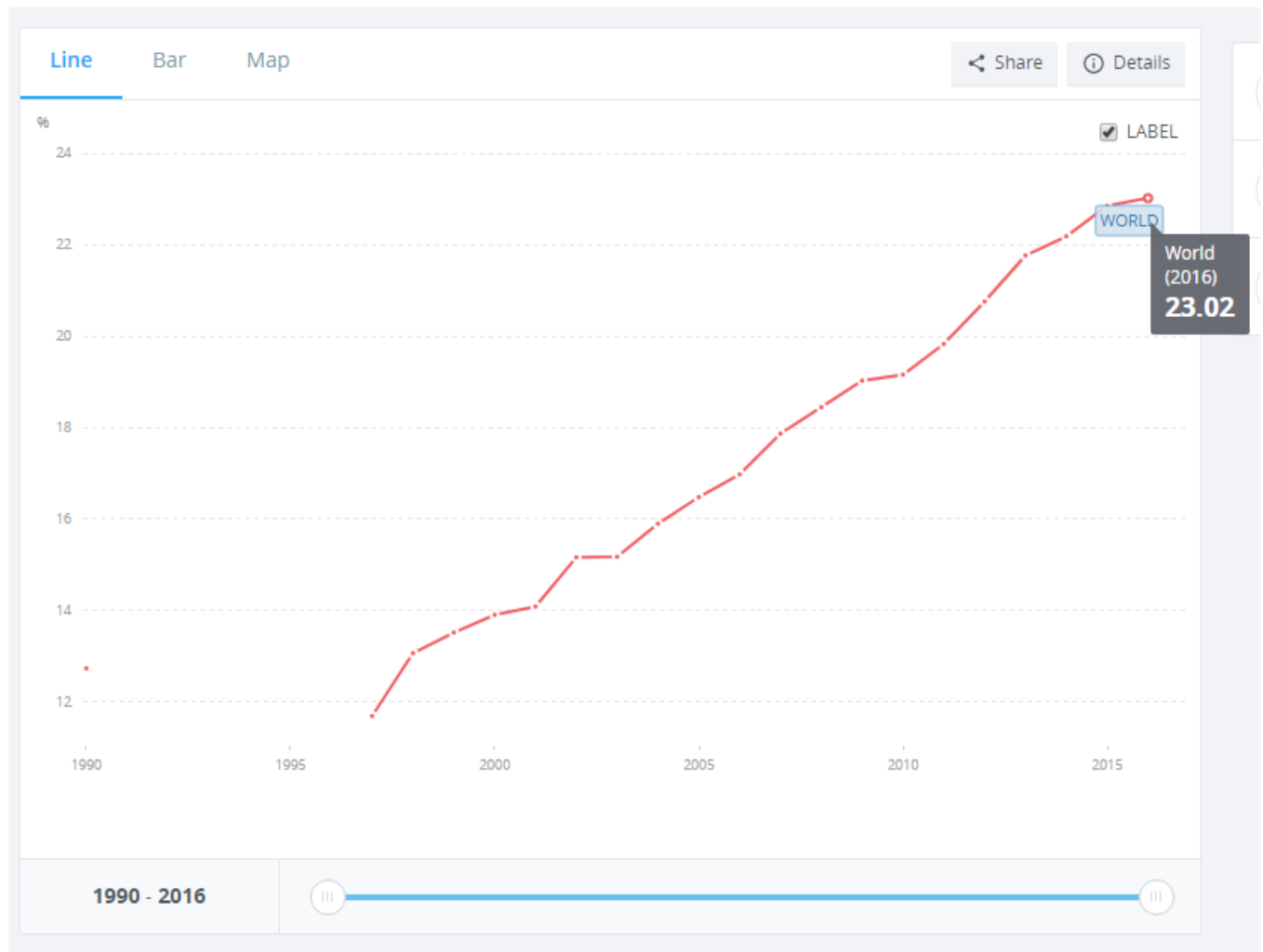


Figure 2 – World Classification of Women in National Parliament - The world classification of the Women in national parliaments, the percentage of women in the lower or single House by 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017 (IPU)

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	16.09.2013	80	49	61.3%	26.09.2011	26	10	38.5%
2	Bolivia	12.10.2014	130	69	53.1%	12.10.2014	36	17	47.2%
3	Cuba	03.02.2013	612	299	48.9%	---	---	---	---
4	Iceland	29.10.2016	63	30	47.6%	---	---	---	---
5	Nicaragua	06.11.2016	92	42	45.7%	---	---	---	---
6	Sweden	14.09.2014	349	152	43.6%	---	---	---	---
7	Senegal	01.07.2012	150	64	42.7%	---	---	---	---
8	Mexico	07.06.2015	500	213	42.6%	01.07.2012	128	47	36.7%
9	Finland	19.04.2015	200	84	42.0%	---	---	---	---
10	South Africa <sup>1</sup>	07.05.2014	400	166	41.5%	21.05.2014	54	19	35.2%
11	Namibia	29.11.2014	104	43	41.3%	08.12.2015	42	10	23.8%
12	Mozambique	15.10.2014	250	99	39.6%	---	---	---	---
"	Norway	09.09.2013	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	---
14	Spain	26.06.2016	350	137	39.1%	26.06.2016	266	101	38.0%
15	Argentina	25.10.2015	257	100	38.9%	25.10.2015	72	30	41.7%
16	Ethiopia	24.05.2015	547	212	38.8%	05.10.2015	153	49	32.0%
17	Timor-Leste	07.07.2012	65	25	38.5%	---	---	---	---
18	Angola	31.08.2012	220	84	38.2%	---	---	---	---
19	Belgium	25.05.2014	150	57	38.0%	03.07.2014	60	30	50.0%
"	Ecuador	19.02.2017	137	52	38.0%	---	---	---	---

Figure 1 - Regional Average of the Women's Participation in the National Parliaments (IPU)

REGIONAL AVERAGES			
	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	41.7%	---	---
Americas	28.2%	27.6%	28.1%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	27.5%	26.0%	27.1%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	26.1%	26.0%	26.0%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.8%	22.2%	23.5%
Asia	19.7%	16.0%	19.4%
Arab States	18.2%	12.6%	17.4%
Pacific	15.0%	37.1%	17.4%

*Regions are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House*

Figure 4 – Presidential Election 25 August 2003 – (<http://africanelections.tripod.com>)

**25 August 2003 Presidential Election** [[Results by Province](#)]

Registered Voters 3,948,749  
 Total Votes (Voter Turnout) 3,812,567 (96.6%)  
 Invalid/Blank Votes 83,291  
 Total Valid Votes 3,729,276

Candidate (Party)	Number of Votes	% of Votes
Paul Kagame (FPR)	3,544,777	95.05%
Faustin Twagiramungu	134,865	3.62%
Jean-Népomuscène Nayinzira	49,634	1.33%

Figure 5 – Chamber of Deputies Election 29-30 September & 02 October 2003 - (<http://africanelections.tripod.com>)

**29-30 September & 2 October 2003 Chamber of Deputies Election\*** [[Results by Province](#)]

Registered Voters 3,958,058  
 Total Votes (Voter Turnout) 3,818,603 (96.5%)  
 Invalid/Blank Votes 58,001  
 Total Valid Votes 3,760,602

Party/Coalition	Number of Votes	% of Votes	Number of Seats (53)**
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR)-led Coalition	2,774,661	73.78%	40
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR)			33
Centrist Democratic Party (PDC)***			3
Ideal Democratic Party (PDI)***			2
Democratic Union of the Rwandan People (UDPR)			1
Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR)			1
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	463,067	12.31%	7
Liberal Party (PL)	396,978	10.56%	6
Party for Progress and Concord (PPC)	83,563	2.22%	-
Independents	42,333	1.13%	-

Figure 6 – Chamber of Deputies Election 15-18 September 2008 – (<http://africanelections.tripod.com>)

**15-18 September 2008 Chamber of Deputies Election\*/\*\***

Registered Voters 4,769,228  
 Total Votes (Voter Turnout) Not Available (N/A)

Party/Coalition	Number of Seats (53)***
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR)-led Coalition	42
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR)	36
Centrist Democratic Party (PDC)	1
Ideal Democratic Party (PDI)	1
Democratic Union of the Rwandan People (UDPR)	1
Party for Progress and Concord (PPC)	1
Prosperity and Progress Party (PSP)	1
Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR)	1
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	7
Liberal Party (PL)	4
Independent	-

Figure 7 – Presidential Election - 09 August 2010 - (<http://africanelections.tripod.com>)

**9 August 2010 Presidential Election** [\[Results by Province\]](#)

Registered Voters 5,178,492  
 Total Votes (Voter Turnout) 5,049,302 (97.5%)  
 Invalid/Blank Votes 65,912  
 Total Valid Votes 4,983,390

Candidate (Party)	Number of Votes	% of Votes
Paul Kagame (FPR)	4,638,560	93.08%
Jean Damascene Ntawukuriyayo (PSD)	256,488	5.15%
Prosper Higiyo (PL)	68,235	1.37%
Alvera Mukabaramba (PPC)	20,107	0.40%



Figure 8 – Chamber of Deputies Election - 16 September 2013 –  
 (http://www.electionguide.org)

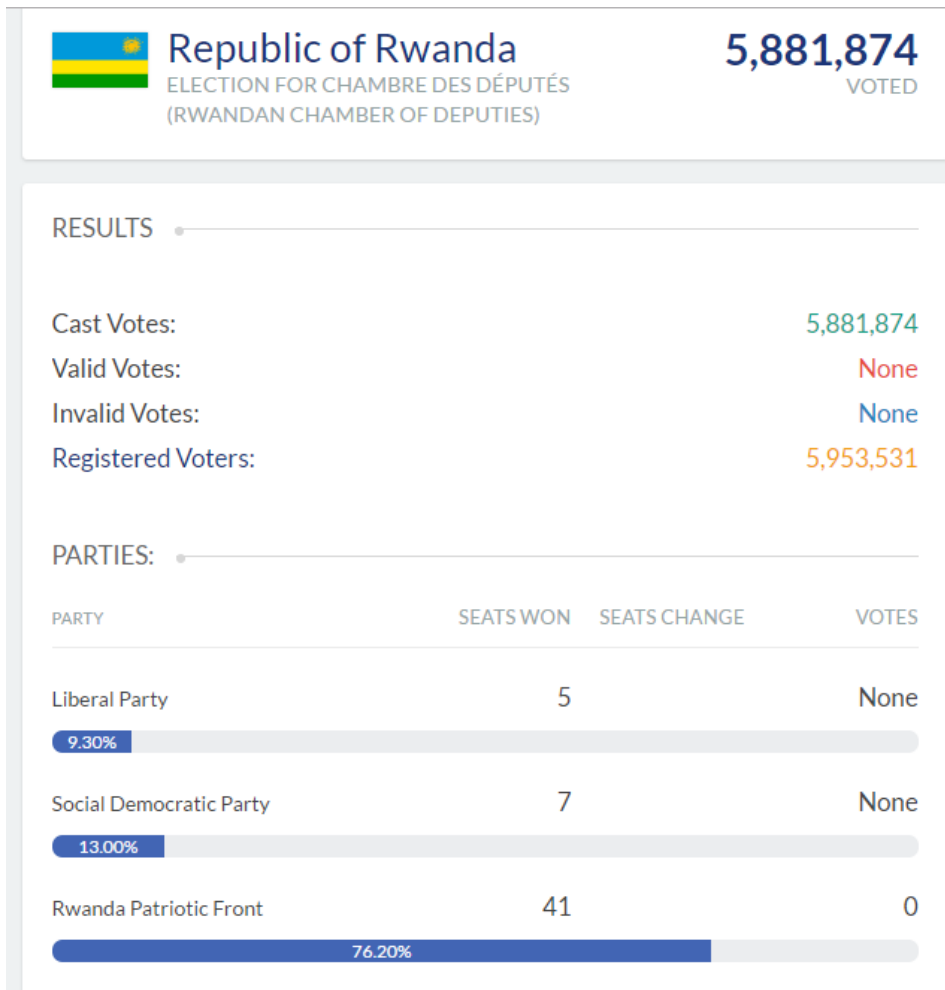
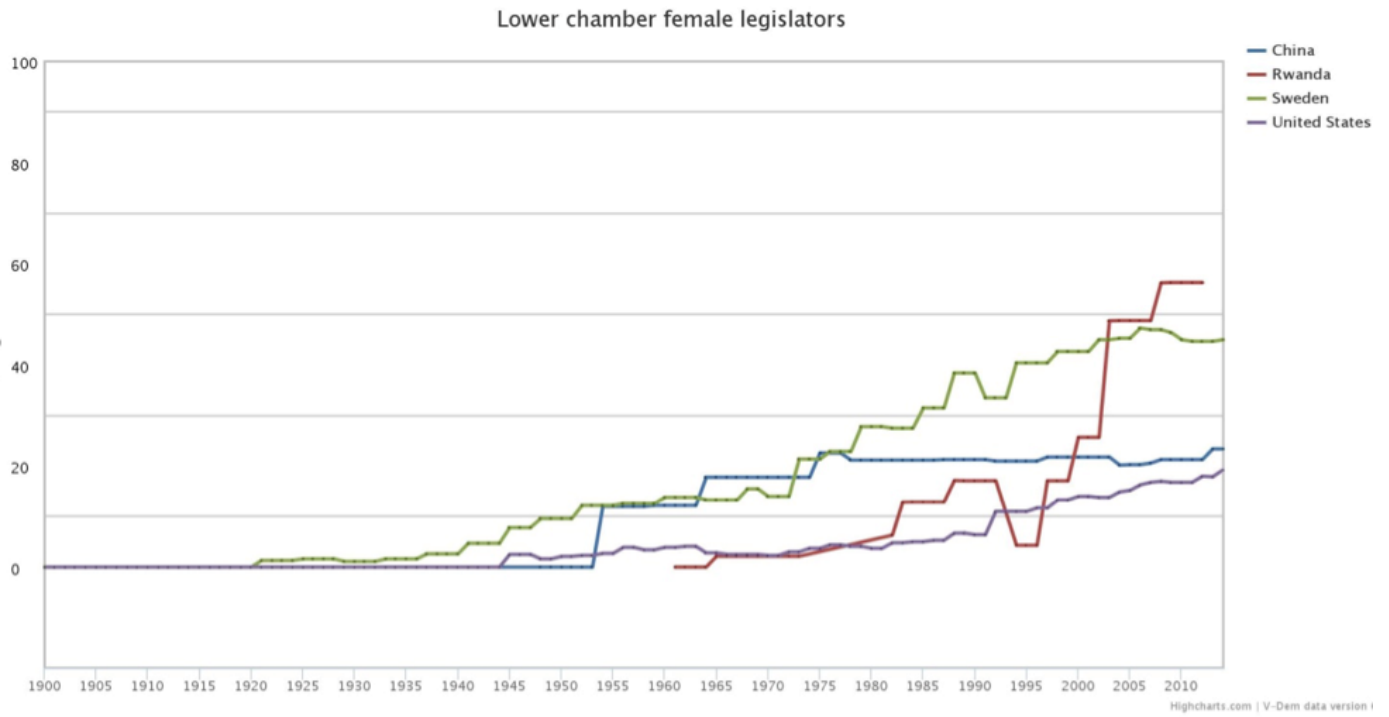


Figure 9 – Lower Chamber Female Legislators - Rwanda as a first country before China, Sweden and United States (V-Dem, Varieties of Democracy)



[to article list](#)

Figure 10 – Women in Rwanda’s Parliament 1961-2008 - The number of the male and female mebers of the parliament (Burnet J.E. (2008) *Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda*)

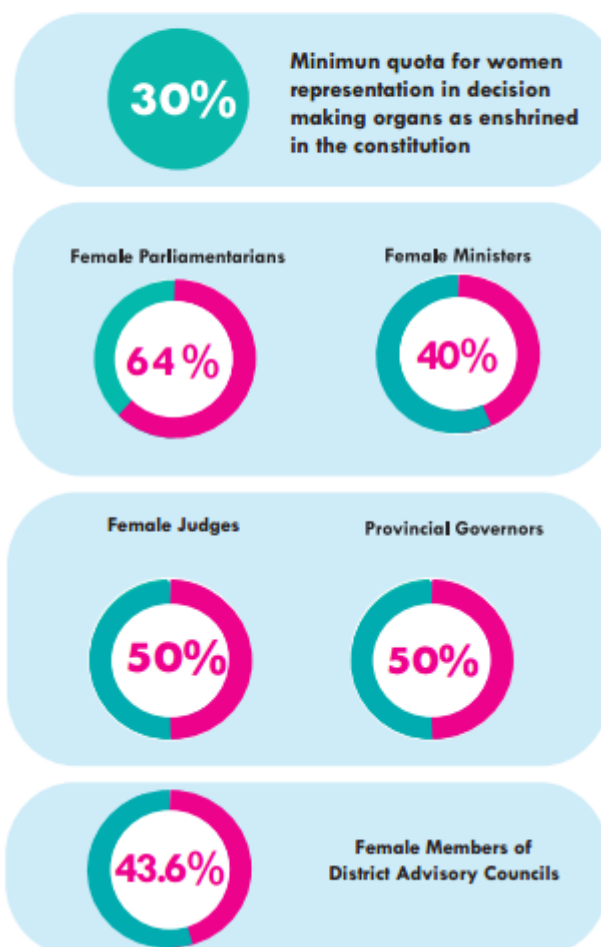
*Table 1. Women in Rwanda’s Parliament (1961–2008)*

		<i>Total Members</i>	<i>Female Members</i>	
		<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1961	First Legislative Assembly <sup>‡</sup>	44	0	0
1965	Legislative Assembly <sup>‡</sup>	47	1	2.1
1969	Legislative Assembly <sup>‡</sup>	47	0	0
1973	No legislative assembly existed <sup>‡</sup>	NA	NA	NA
1982	National Development Council <sup>‡</sup>	64	4	6.3
1983	National Development Council <sup>‡</sup>	70	9	12.9
1988	National Development Council <sup>‡</sup>	70	11	15.7
1994	Transitional National Parliament <sup>‡</sup>	70	8	11.4
1994	Transitional National Parliament <sup>§</sup>	NA	10	NA
1999	Transitional National Parliament <sup>§</sup>	NA	NA	<25
2002	Transitional National Parliament <sup>*</sup>	74	17	23
2003	Transitional National Parliament <sup>§</sup>	NA	NA	25.7
2003	<b>Parliament (both houses)<sup>§</sup></b>	<b>106</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>
2003	<b>Chamber only<sup>§</sup></b>	<b>80</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48.7</b>
2006	<b>Parliament (both houses)<sup>†</sup></b>	<b>104</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42.3</b>
2006	<b>Chamber Only<sup>†</sup></b>	<b>78</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44.8</b>
2008	<b>Senate<sup>€</sup></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34.6</b>
2008	<b>Chamber<sup>¥</sup></b>	<b>77</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>46.8</b>
2008	<b>Parliament (both houses)<sup>€·¥</sup></b>	<b>103</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43.6</b>

Figure 11 –Women’s Representation in the Rwanda’s Parliament 2016 - (Republic of Rwanda – *From Victims to Leading Actors, Rwanda’s Gender Dividend*)

## WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION MAKING

Rwanda leads the world in terms of women’s representation in Parliament



## 9. CURRICULUM VITAE



### Eszter Zaborszky

**Date of Birth:** 03.02.1992.

**Nationality:** Hungarian

**Address:** Rua de Reno 5.02.01.c, 1c, 1990-512, Lisbon, Portugal

**Telephone Number:** +351 915 738 668

**Email:** eszterzaborszky555@gmail.com

#### Resume

I am a trilingual professional and I am finishing my master degrees in International Studies in ISCTE. I am living in Lisbon since 2012, first as an Erasmus student in Universidade Católica and then working in several projects while I am doing my master studies. At the present I looking for an opportunity where I can put in practice all the knowledge obtained during my living, studying and working experiences.

#### Education

<b>Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal</b> Master in International Studies	2015-2017
<b>Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, Portugal</b> Course of Applied Foreign Languages	2012-2013
<b>University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary</b> Course of Italian and Portuguese Philology	2011-2014

#### International Experience

**ERASMUS (2012-2013) : Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, Portugal**

#### Professional Experience

<b>Public Relations Department Adviser at Webhelp – easyJet Project</b>	Sep/2016-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsible for managing the Public Relations Bookings, the organization of the various competition winners, easyJet staff and journalist travels.</li> <li>- Accountable for handling the managers and directors flights, administration of the PDR (Personal Data Request).</li> </ul>	
<b>Adviser in the Specialties Department at Webhelp – easyJet Project</b>	Mar/2016-Aug/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main functions: Business to Business (B2B), Group Bookings, Special Assistance.</li> <li>- Manage agencies communication in any problematic situation, travel organization of groups, operation of all type of special assistance needed at the European airports.</li> </ul>	
<b>Customer Adviser at Webhelp – easyJet Project</b>	Oct/2015-Feb/2016

- Responsible for handling client communication in any dubious situation, verifying the circumstances in the case of any delay or flight cancellation, refunding EUC or any other compensation if needed.

**Logistic Assistant and controller at vertente Humana – CHEP project**

Aug/2014-Oct/2015

- Contacting with clients and transporters in order to schedule the collecting and delivery of products and equipment.
- In charge of assuring the client’s satisfaction with the good service and communication.
- Administration of all the transport and cargo information in the Electronic Public Road Trade Control System of Hungary.

**Language Skills**

**Languages**

- **Hungarian** (Mother tongue);
- **English** (Fluent);
- **Portuguese** (Fluent);
- **Italian** (Fluent);

**Other Skills and Abilities**

- High ability to adapt to multicultural environments, through my working experiences and during my Erasmus Exchange Program;
- Proactive and strong resilience trying to find the right answers to the problems;
- Good communication skills in four languages
- Strong capacity of team work with motivation and dynamism;
- Persistence in achieving the outlined goals
- Experience with SAP, Leanlogistics, Carbon and Siebel.
- Familiarity and practice using Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook).

**Other Informations**

Driving License: B