Zimbabwean women’s participation and representation in politics: Lessons from Rwanda

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Abstract

Despite the Zimbabwean government’s ratification of various regional and international conventions on gender equality, female participation and representation in the country’s politics is still limited. This paper examines women’s participation and representation in the election process in Rwanda and Zimbabwe, with the goal of identifying best practices that could promote women’s political representation and participation in the latter. The study is a documentary review of information considered relevant to its aims. Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states were mandated to ensure that women had 50% political representation by 2015; however, Zimbabwean women have not attained this level of representation in the parliament, senate, cabinet and decision making posts in political parties. This can be attributed to structural, institutional and individual barriers. In contrast, Rwanda has over 50% women in its parliament and other decision-making posts; hence, the need to learn from Rwanda in terms of its wide-ranging and sustained campaign for women and its strong gender equality political agenda.

Introduction

It’s now time for women (The Herald, June 20, 2013)

Women remain underrepresented (The Herald, August 16, 2013)

Outrage over cabinet gender bias (Zimbabwe Independent, Sept 20, 2013)
The headlines above, all from Zimbabwean newspapers, aptly capture the story of local women’s experience with political participation and representation. Based on the hope embedded in the new constitution, which for the first time in Zimbabwe set aside 60 seats for women in the National Assembly (NA) in the July 2013 general elections, and based on the belief that women candidates were assured of their political parties’ support (Butaumocho, 2013), it appeared as if equal representation for men and women in politics would soon become a reality. However, a few months later, women were still underrepresented in political institutions and there was outrage at the gender bias in favour of men in the cabinet.

Zimbabwean women are not alone in this situation, as women are the minority in almost every legislature worldwide (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014; Dolan & Lynch, 2015). This may be attributed to lack of knowledge, motivation or resources among potential female candidates (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014). Nevertheless, women have been making steady progress in politics worldwide. According to Chattier (2015), in 1997 women held 12% of parliamentary seats globally which rose to 22% in 2014. While Zimbabwe may not have reached 50% female representation in 2013, it is among the 39 countries whose Lower Houses are made up of at least 30% women. There were 33 such countries in 2012; Austria, Cameroon, Grenada and Zimbabwe (both houses) joined this group in 2013 (Interparliamentary Union (IPU), 2014).

Although Zimbabwe is counted among the few countries with a larger, albeit minority, proportion of women in parliament, it is still important for Zimbabwe’s women and the entire nation to work towards achieving fifty percent female representation in politics. This is an achievable goal, as demonstrated by Rwanda, whose Chamber of

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Deputies reached a record-breaking 63.8% female membership in 2013 (IPU, 2014). Since its 2003 election, Rwanda has had the highest proportion of women in parliament in the world (Bauer, 2008; Tsanga, 2010), and women are well represented at other levels of government (Wallace, Haerpfer, & Abbott, 2008). This paper examines the electoral systems of Rwanda and Zimbabwe with the goal of identifying best practices that could promote women’s political representation and participation in Zimbabwe’s government.

**Traditional African political set-ups**

Formal leadership in Africa has been men’s sphere of influence (Dodo, 2013). Traditional leadership positions such as those of village head or chief are inherited, the preserve of men and there are rules of succession guiding the selection process (Dodo, 2013; Matavire, 2012). According to Ndlovu & Tshuma (2014), some cultures uphold the view that a chief is not voted for like politicians, but is born into that position. As such there is opposition within male traditional leadership against assigning females to the chieftaincy on the basis that this is not aligned with culture (Dodo, 2013). In some cases the Zimbabwean government has had to intercede in succession rows concerning female contenders as these would be disregarded and consigned to subservient positions despite the government’s call to regard them as suitable candidates for village headship and traditional chieftainship (Matavire, 2012). So strong is the cultural norm of the male traditional leader that in cases where there is no son to succeed to the position, customary alternatives like rotation amongst the family unit or appointment of a male nephew or cousin are explored, rather than selection of a female leader (Omagu, 2013; Matavire, 2012)
The chieftaincy is invested with a lot of power and authority as chiefs are regarded as custodians of customary law and practice executing judicial and religious roles, as well as allocation of land to citizens in their area (Omagu, 2013; Chitotombe, 2012). This political system is so masculinised to the extent that even the chief’s council in most African societies was constituted largely of male heads of families who met at regular intervals to give advice to the chief, devise policies and decide on village issues (Omagu, 2013). Women largely remained outside the core of the traditional African political setup leading to the possibility of their interests and concerns remaining peripheral in policy formulation and decision-making at the local level.

**The general value of women’s representation and participation in politics**

Women’s representation and participation in politics is regarded as necessary and worthwhile for nations worldwide. Given that women make up half of the world’s population, equal representation is imperative for egalitarianism, legitimacy and proficient utilisation of the country’s human capital (Tsanga, 2010). In addition, it has been noted that specific issues that affect women are better articulated by women themselves and that women’s presence in parliament helps ensure that these issues receive attention and are incorporated in policy making (Tsanga, 2010; Yoon, 2011). However, despite the valuable contributions that women make to parliament, various challenges relating to societal attitudes, knowledge and resource availability continue to hinder their equal representation.

In spite of the inroads that women have made in various social institutions, they must still contend with patriarchal values that can limit their participation in politics. This is not just an African phenomenon; it is pervasive in all regions of the world. According
to Dolan & Lynch (2015), in spite of decades of constant improvement, fewer women in the United States of America (USA) are likely to campaign for, and get voted into political office compared to men. In the case of Fiji, a combination of cultural and gendered norms may result in stereotyping of the political sphere as masculine and exalting of women’s responsibility in the private sphere (Chattier, 2015). Such cultural stereotyping is also prevalent in Africa with women being socialised into accepting their place in society as second to that of men (Olufade, 2013). In Malawi, Kayuni and Muriaas (2014) note that there is a general view that women and politics are incompatible. Olufade (2013) asserts that social principles, values and customs merge to sustain the label of the Nigerian woman’s place as the kitchen, while politics is believed to be a man’s territory, where no woman need apply. Similarly, Powley (2007) highlights that in Zimbabwean culture, a woman’s place is in the kitchen and her role is to support the husband; a woman who becomes a successful leader might be written off as a prostitute. There is also a cultural belief that women do not have meaningful contributions to make in important issues to do with governance for instance. Matavire (2012) noted that during village court procedures statements like, “If you don’t have anything to say you can join the women in the kitchen”, are often made. These expressions are typically meant for men who may be deemed as lacking in sensible and important input akin to the women (Matavire, 2012)

Patriarchal values and discrimination are ubiquitous and at times difficult to change because they are ingrained in the social outlook, subtly imposed by both men and women, and are not quite evident to many people (Tsanga, 2010; Powley, 2007). This ‘invisibility’ and persistence of patriarchal values across generations and diverse regions may lead to their acceptance as natural and immutable, thus making them
difficult to change. Although it is possible to change these negative attitudes towards women, it has been acknowledged that such change takes time (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014). Thus, equality of male and female political representation takes a long time to achieve. Taking this into account, most nations across the globe have implemented affirmative action in the form of gender quotas for women in politics.

**Gender quotas for women in politics**

Gender quotas are a way of acknowledging the disadvantaged position of women in society and recognising that identical treatment of people in unequal situations has the effect of maintaining rather than eliminating inequality (Tsanga, 2010). The two forms of electoral gender quotas that are most common in Africa are: reserved or appointed seats intended to ensure that at least a minimum number of seats are held by women; and voluntary party quotas, set by political parties, aimed at influencing the number of women candidates (Bauer, 2008; Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014). There have been debates about the positive and negative aspects of gender quotas in relation to issues of fairness and justice for both male and female candidates, increased female representation in parliament, and the effectiveness and self-esteem of legislators appointed on the basis of such quotas (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014; IPU, 2014; Clayton, Josefsson, & Wang, 2014; Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), 2013; Yoon, 2011; Tsanga, 2010; Bauer, 2008).

For instance, it has been noted that while gender quotas lead to an increase in the number of women in parliament, these women may become ineffective in their new roles: they feel duty-bound to be committed to their parties’ positions on issues because political parties control these quotas (Yoon, 2011). It has been observed that,
on the one hand, electoral gender quotas may have a ‘crippling’ effect because women candidates could develop a fear of running for election in their constituencies; on the other hand, women who initially enter parliament by means of reserved seats can be prepared to contest in constituencies in the future (Bauer, 2008). Kayuni & Muriaas (2014) have also suggested that gender quotas do not really address the underlying issue of the shortage of women who are prepared and able to stand for elections. They argue that it is important to increase the supply of capable women candidates by providing women with financial resources and campaign materials. Such strategies could be employed in addition to, or separately from, gender quotas. This option was feasible in Malawi ahead of the 2009 elections, after which the proportion of women in parliament increased by 9.3% to 22.3% (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014).

The need for women and men to participate equally in politics and decision-making has been recognised by African states in various executed protocols. Article 9 (1) of the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory, states that nations are to adopt affirmative action, enabling legislation and other measures to ensure that women participate without discrimination in all elections, and are represented equally with men at all levels in all electoral processes. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development builds on the African Charter and is more explicit about its targets for women’s representation. Article 12 (1) states that nations ‘shall endeavour that by 2015, at least fifty percent of decision making positions in the public and private sectors are held by women.’
Nevertheless, no SADC member country has attained this target so far in the political arena, though South Africa and Namibia are close to achieving the set target. The proportion of women in the lower house of parliament in SADC countries ranges from 6.2% up to 42% as shown in Table 1.

### Table 1: Women in parliament in the SADC region as at 1 January 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women in parliament (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interparliamentary Union (2017)

The statistics presented in Table 1 show that the problem of female underrepresentation in politics is prevalent in all countries in the SADC region. In
addition, world and regional averages of women in parliament illustrate that this situation is not confined to this region alone (refer to Table 2).

Table 2: World and regional averages of women in parliament as at 1 January 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Women in parliament (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic countries</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe (Nordic countries not included)</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab states</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Interparliamentary Union (2017)*

It is apparent that at a regional scale, the Nordic countries have the highest proportion of women in parliament which is 13.4% more than the region on second position. The Americas, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa range from 23 to 28% women representation; while Asia, Arab states and the Pacific region have below 20% women in parliament. Therefore various measures need to be adopted to promote women’s representation in politics.

The value of electoral gender quotas cannot be ignored in the drive to increase the number of women in parliament. Rwanda first used electoral gender quotas in its 2003 election (Bauer, 2008). Women’s representation in parliament increased from 48% in 2003 to 56% after the 2008 national elections. The trend continued in 2013 with
Rwanda attaining the highest global record: women made up 64% of parliamentarians in the Lower House and 38.5% in the Upper House (National Gender Statistics Report, 2013). We believe it is worthwhile to understand the electoral practices that have resulted in such impressive increases in female representation in Rwanda’s legislature during a period of only ten years. Such practices could be usefully adapted in Zimbabwe so that the nation can attain, and even surpass, its target of 50 percent female representation.

**Comparison of Zimbabwe and Rwanda’s situations: what are the lessons?**

**The electoral systems**

Zimbabwe’s electoral procedure in its constituencies is based on the ‘first-past-the-post system’ (FPTP). This means that the person with the most votes is declared the winner of that constituency seat. For the next 10 years, through proportional representation (PR), 60 seats in the Lower House (National Assembly) will be reserved for women. According to the new constitution (Chapter 6 (124), which addresses the composition of parliament states:

i) The National Assembly consists of: 210 members elected by secret ballot from the 210 constituencies into which Zimbabwe is divided; and for the life of the first two Parliaments after the effective date, there will be an additional 60 women members, 6 from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected through a system of proportional representation based on the votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the provinces.
ii) The Senate is made up of 80 members: 6 selected from each of the 10 provinces by proportional representation, 18 Chiefs and 2 members elected to represent people with disabilities (UN Women, 2013).

According to Section 120 (2) (b) of the new constitution, the party list that will be submitted for the senatorial seats must take the ‘zebra-format,’ that is, it must interchange female and male candidates, beginning with a female. In this way, any party will inevitably have at least 50% female candidates for these seats (ZESN, 2013).

It is important to note that the clause stipulating 60 reserved seats for women does not prevent women from participating in an open election for the other 210 constituency seats (Tshuma, 2013). The local authorities have 1958 posts for which candidates need to compete in elections, but the quotas do not apply to these posts. According to ZESN (2013), the lack of gender quotas in this area thwart a significant gain for women.

The 2013 elections were expected to offer women the opportunity to move into the political space that was created by the new constitution (Mutenga, 2013). Nevertheless, the actual election results indicated a mixed bag of results regarding women’s representation, as indicated in the Table 1:

Table 3: Representation of women in the Zimbabwean parliament 2008 - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chamber</th>
<th>(n) seats 2008</th>
<th>(n) seats held by women</th>
<th>(%) seats held by women</th>
<th>(n) seats 2013</th>
<th>(n) seats held by women</th>
<th>(%) seats held by women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Assembly</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Zimbabwe Electoral Commission as cited in Electoral Resource Centre, (2013)*

The introduction of gender quotas has had a positive effect on the representation of women, at least in terms of numbers as the proportion of women in the National Assembly increased by 16.3% in 2013. Unfortunately, the raised numbers came alongside a reduction in the number of female candidates, who were actually elected in the contested 210 constituency seats (ZESN, 2013). While 32 women were directly elected to the National Assembly in 2008, this decreased to 26 in 2013. Thus, the percentage of women who were elected into office after contesting in the constituencies actually decreased by 18.75%; it was the 60 reserved seats for women which resulted in more women getting into the National Assembly. According to UN Women (2013), the use of a special measure also led to 37 women candidates being elected to the Senate, and one woman was elected to one of the two Senate seats allocated for people living with disabilities.

Rwanda has a similar electoral system to that of Zimbabwe. According to Rwanda’s constitution, two systems are used to select members of the lower house or chamber of deputies:

a) The bulk of the members (53 out of 80) are directly elected to the Chamber of Deputies (Proportional representation (PR) system using closed party list). While there are no mandatory party quotas, the constitution requires that the party list take gender equity into consideration. The ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) has so far largely complied with this requirement.
b) The remaining 27 are reserved seats: 2 for youth, 1 for the handicapped and 24 for women (elected two each from the provinces and the City of Kigali).

As noted before, women’s representation in parliament increased from 48% in 2003 to 56% after the 2008 national elections. The trend continued in 2013, with Rwanda attaining a global record: 64% women parliamentarians in the Lower House and 38.5% in the Upper House (National Gender Statistics Report, 2013). This increase was partly due to gender quotas as well as an increase in the number of women who were actually voted into parliament. For instance, in 2003 15 of the 39 (28%) women in the Lower House were directly elected and in 2013, this increased to 26 (49%) women directly elected (Munyaneza, 2013). Therefore the proportion of women actually voted into office after contesting in the constituencies increased by 21%. It is worth noting that these women did not rest on their laurels even though they had reserved seats in the Lower House.

In the Zimbabwean case, it is important to note that reserved seats are not a permanent feature of the electoral system for the National Assembly. These guaranteed seats will be removed after the 2018 elections, but the legislated quotas for the Senate do not have a time limit. It has been emphasised that these women (in the 60 seats) must now convert their positions into serious political presence and interventions. Because they do not have constituencies, they must develop initiatives to raise their profiles among both women and men within five years, and they must work to become highly competent politicians (UN Women, 2013). It could also be argued that the National Assembly is where the real business of the legislature takes place and it would have been preferable to maintain quotas here for as long as possible. In order to maintain,
or even to increase the number of women currently in the legislature, much work will be required to ensure that women will have improved chances of success in future direct competitive elections.

**Campaign for women**

It is one thing to have constitutional provisions in place guaranteeing electoral gender quotas and non-discrimination between male and female candidates in contested seats, but women still need support in terms of training, as well as financial and material resources to campaign and contest successfully in elections. A few weeks before the July 2013 elections, the Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) launched the ‘50/50 campaign’ in June 2013, encouraging citizens to vote for women in the country’s first elections after the adoption of the Constitution. WiPSU trained women candidates; provided platforms for them to engage with the media; profiled women candidates in the national media, on social media and through ‘Meet the candidate’ forums; and lobbied the three main political parties to nominate and support women candidates (SADC, 2014). In hindsight, one could conclude that this was a case of too little being done too late.

Resources are an important aspect of campaigning. According to WiPSU’s Director, Ms. Chirisa, taking part in national politics calls for essential resources and few women had them (Tshuma, 2013). Women’s voices also need to be heard. However, according to (ZESN, 2013:47):

> In the media, women’s voices were clearly relegated to second place behind their male counterparts in most election-related stories, providing an accurate
reflection of the prevailing male dominated political environment in Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, the campaign for women candidates in Rwanda has been a sustained effort over a long period of time. Wallace et al. (2008) stress that Rwanda’s impressive success reveal years of campaigning throughout the transitional period by women’s organisations and lobbies. One important instrument for promoting women’s issues was the Women’s Councils, which reached from the bottom up in Rwandan society as a way of prioritising gender issues. For example, these Councils were responsible for selecting female candidates (Wallace et al, 2008). The National Women’s Council (NWC) coordinates the functioning of Women’s Councils from the grassroots to the national level and ensures that women know their rights at the community level. Berthe Mukamusoni, a parliamentarian elected through the women’s councils, explains the importance of this system as follows:

In the history of our country and society, women could not go in public with men. Where men were, women were not supposed to talk, to show their needs. Men were to talk and think for them. 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, and support other women.’ They have acquired a confidence of leadership (Powley, 2004).

There are other similar institutions, such as the Beijing Permanent Secretariat, the National Gender Cluster, and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians (FFRP), as well as different mechanisms enabling women at the grassroots level to participate in decision making at all levels (Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), 2010). These wide-ranging and sustained efforts certainly paid off, as Rwandan women are now well represented in other institutions besides the parliament. Women have achieved other successes in governance in Rwanda; they make up 40% of Provincial Governors, 83
% of Vice Mayors in charge of social affairs and 38% of District Council members (Rwanda’s Gender Dividend, 2014).

**Political will**

Political will on the part of the government and the contesting political parties is necessary to move beyond the rhetoric of equal representation in politics. Zimbabwean female politicians have criticised political parties’ hollow commitments to equal representation of women (Mhlanga, 2013). This insincerity has been more pronounced on issues related to resources and nomination of female candidates in contested constituency seats.

Bauer (2008) cautions that the availability of a lot of reserved seats commonly takes the demands off political parties to put forward women to stand in directly elected seats. It seems that this was the case in Zimbabwe’s 2013 election in some constituencies, as political parties tended to choose male candidates because their own female candidates stood a greater chance of election as party-list candidates for the 60 reserved seats (Mhlanga, 2013; ZESN, 2013). This unsupportive atmosphere is accurately captured by the National Coordinator of the Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe (UN Women, 2013):

*It was a dog-eat-dog election…and women were pushed toward the 60 seats and told to vacate the competitive seats for men. It was not usual for women to be told ‘we gave you 60 seats, what more do you want?’*

In the end, there were only 66 women out of the 871 candidates for the National Assembly (ZESN, 2013). Given that through reserved seats women make up only 22.2% of the National Assembly, it became increasingly difficult to make up the difference and reach 50% through contested seats when there were so few women
candidates to begin with. Even after the elections, few women were appointed to the cabinet. There were 3 women out 26 cabinet ministers; 3 women out of 13 ministers of state; and 5 women out of 24 deputy ministers (Zaba & Ndebele, 2013).

In Rwanda, on the other hand, ‘political will’ on the part of the ruling party played a significant role in the decision to increase women’s representation (Bauer, 2008; Munyaneza, 2013). The most prominent example is the 2003 National Constitution (Republic of Rwanda (RoR), 2003), which is an important tool for sustaining women’s participation in decision-making positions at all levels of government. The 2003 Constitution marked the turning point for the country’s move toward gender equality. Rwanda established policies and programs aimed at increasing the role of women in social-economic reconstruction, thus overturning the country’s long history of gender inequality (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), 2010). In fact, Article 9 of the Constitution institutes equality among all Rwandans and grants women at least thirty per cent of posts in decision making organs at all levels of the country. In addition, Article 16 reinforces the principles of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Rwanda’s political parties have embraced this culture of gender equality, leveraging the country’s PR electoral system to expand women’s representation (IPU, 2014). Regardless of the seats reserved for women, Rwandan political parties still gave women an equal chance to contest for the directly elected seats. According to Munyaneza (2013), during the RPF primary elections it was the party’s policy that a man and a woman should both contest, in keeping with the principle of gender equality.
Conclusion

Although the number of females in Zimbabwe’s parliament has increased due to introduction of gender quotas, the downside has been a decrease in the number of women actually being elected to the contested seats. This is a serious cause for concern given that gender quotas for the National Assembly are not a permanent feature of the Zimbabwean electoral system. Therefore, there is a need to learn from Rwanda, which has pursued a powerful gender equality political agenda (Wallace, Haerpfer, & Abbott, 2008). In the Rwandan context, gender quotas originally meant to ensure robust and diverse representation have led, in practice, to shared leadership between men and women (IPU, 2014). The campaign for women candidates has also been a sustained effort over a long period of time. This results in more women being prepared and available to actually contest in elections. Women voters are also continually made aware of the need to vote for a woman who will represent their interests in the legislature.

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