

# **Women's Representation in the Rwandan Parliament**

- An Analysis of Variations in the Representation of Women's Interests  
Caused by Gender and Quota

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Gothenburg, the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2005

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## **Abstract**

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This study focuses on women's representation in the Rwandan parliament. The lack of empirical research about women's representation in non-Western contexts serves as a point of departure, generated by the increasing number of female MPs in Sub-Saharan Africa during the last decades. The purpose is to empirically examine variations in the representation of women's interests caused by gender (in terms of MPs gender) and quota (in terms of MPs elected on quota). Theoretically, the concept of women's interests divides into two concerns: The recognition of women as a social category and the acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes. Empirically, this corresponds to measurements indicating MPs attitudes and behavior concerning issues such as gender equality.

The empirical material consists of a survey conducted among the 80 members of the Rwandan parliament. Statistical methods, mainly cross-tabulations, have been used in order to analyze the surveys. In addition, interviews have been conducted with 9 members of the Rwandan parliament.

The results show that gender better explains variations in the representation of women's interests than quota, and that Rwandan female MPs represent women's interests to a greater extent than male MPs. As such, this thesis contributes to strengthen the validity of existing theories on women's representation.

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## 1 Introduction

Women's under-representation in parliaments all over the world is an increasing concern among scholars, politicians and women activists. In 2004 women averaged only 16 percent of the memberships of national parliaments worldwide, and participate consequently to a small extent in national decision-making process. The Nordic countries form the region with the highest number of women in parliaments with an average of 40 percent. The average for the rest of Europe is 17 percent, and for the Sub-Saharan countries 14 percent.<sup>1</sup> In the literature on women's representation there is a growing consensus that the gender of politicians matters in representative democracy. However, the bulk of these studies have been conducted in Western contexts. Little attention has been paid to the validity of the existing theories in non-Western contexts. This study is a contribution to fill this gap.

### 1.1 Women's representation

In previous research women's representation is divided into two basic concerns. The first is the numerical division between women and men in decision-making bodies. The second concern is the presence of women's issues or interests<sup>2</sup> in the decision-making process.<sup>3</sup> It is the latter that is in focus in this study.

Findings from previous research demonstrate that female Members of Parliament (MPs) to a higher extent than male MPs represent issues of particular concern to women.<sup>4</sup> What is seldom pointed out is that these findings are exclusively based on empirical data from Western societies. One possible explanation for this contextual imbalance might be that, until recently, female parliamentary representation in non-Western societies has been relatively low. This is no longer an excuse; nowhere in the world has the increase in representation of women in parliaments been as fast as in the Sub-Saharan Africa over the past four decades. The number of female MPs increased tenfold between 1960 and 2003, jumping from one percent in 1960 to 14 percent in 2003.<sup>5</sup> In 2003 Rwanda became the country with the

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<sup>1</sup> All information found at <http://www.ipu.org/>. See appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of women's interests will be discussed in chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> Wängnerud (1998), *Politikens andra sida*, Lovenduski/Norris (1993) *Gender and party politics*.

<sup>4</sup> Wängnerud (1998), Lovenduski/Norris (1993), Phillips (1995) *The politics of presence*.

<sup>5</sup> Tripp (2003), *The changing Face of Africa's Legislatures: Women and Quotas*.

highest female legislative representation in the world, as the women claimed 48,8 percent of parliamentary seats, surpassing the Nordic countries.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of empirical research about women's representation in non-Western contexts serves as the point of departure for this study, generated by the increasing number of female parliamentarians in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## 1.2 Gender quota

One of the main factors accounting for this increase is the expanded use of various forms of quotas. These quotas result from pressure applied by domestic and international women's groups, as well as political will of governments to introduce mechanisms to increase the number of women in parliaments. A number of the countries with quotas recently have emerged from civil wars (Rwanda, Eritrea, Mozambique, Somalia and Uganda) or wars of liberation (South Africa and Namibia) after which they drew up new constitutions or re-established their parliaments from scratch. The end of major turmoil and conflict has most likely contributed to a greater openness in relation to creating new rules that have included women's representation.<sup>7</sup>

Because quota has proven to be very efficient in terms of enhancing the number of women in parliaments, it provides the space for women's entry into politics and a potential for change. Scholars warn however, that numbers do not necessarily translate into substantive representation for women.<sup>8</sup> The unique way in which the number of women in parliaments has increased in Sub-Saharan Africa contrasts the Scandinavian progress that rests on a gradual female emancipation and on gradual historical changes in the perceptions of womanhood.<sup>9</sup> As the debate about quota in essence is based on principals rather than empirical observations, there is, to my knowledge, few studies addressing the impact quota has on women's representation beyond numbers.<sup>10</sup> In this study, I intend to highlight whether MPs elected on quota to a higher extent than other MPs represent women's interests.

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<sup>6</sup> Inter parliamentary Union, press release no. 176, Geneva, 22 October 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Tripp (2003).

<sup>8</sup> Tamale (1999), *When hens begin to crow*, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2003), *Quotas as a fast track to equal political representation for women*, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> I am referring to the aspect of women's representation that has to do with the representation of women's interests in the political process.

### **1.3 Research problems**

The overall problem of this thesis is to highlight whether results from Western-based research, indicating that women to a greater extent than men represent issues concerning women, are valid in an (non-Western) African context. Bearing in mind that representative democracy is a Western tradition, attitudes towards representation and the duties of representatives may differ in a non-Western context where democratic traditions are considerably younger and less rooted. Secondly, I shall highlight the impact that the use of quota has had on women's representation in the Sub-Saharan Africa context, by finding out whether women elected on quota to a higher extent than other MPs represent women's interests.

Furthermore, these two parallel research problems shall be connected: The former problem will be examined through a comparison between female and male MPs representation of women's interests. The latter problem will be examined through a comparison between female MPs elected on quota, female MPs elected on party lists and male MPs representation of women's interests. *As such, the purpose of this study is to empirically examine variations in the representation of women's interests caused by gender (in terms of MPs gender) and quota (in terms of MPs elected on quota).* This requires a specific setting, in my case, Rwanda.

## **2 Context; Rwanda**

A presentation of the Rwandan context is essential in order to better understand the background of the increasing number of women in parliament. In the following section, an overview of the modern historical and political development in Rwanda shall be addressed.

The genocide of 1994 has, more than any other event in recent Rwandan history, contributed to shape the country's current political landscape. It is undoubtedly a daunting task fully to understand the impact of the genocide on the thinking and behavior of political actors today. To discern the main parts of the picture, the following points are worth noting.

### **2.1 Before 1994: Multiparty Politics and civil war**

The genocide marked the end phase of a four yearlong civil war. When the upheaval started in 1990 the Rwandan regime was already confronted with a deep economic crisis and a growing demand for political liberalization. In 1990, a World Bank

structural adjustment program was adopted, and in 1991 President Habyarimana allowed for new parties to be established alongside his ruling party (National Revolutionary Movement for Development, MRDN). One of the most important parties created was the Democratic Republican Movement, MDR, which reactivated the heritage from the period before Habyarimana came to power in his *coup d'état* in 1973. Yet people belonging to Rwanda's majority ethnic group, the Hutu, had dominated both the MRDN and the MDR. As the Belgian colonists had discriminated against the Hutu and favored the minority Tutsi group, the Hutu majority took power after independence in the name of numerical democracy, and in the spirit of revenge. The period of independence (1959-1962) and the 1973 regime changes were marked by massive political violence against the Tutsi, leaving thousands of them killed and forcing tens of thousands more to flee to neighboring countries. In effect, it was a group emerging from the community of Tutsi exiles in Uganda organized within a movement called Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) that started the war in 1990.<sup>11</sup>

## **2.2 The genocide**

From 1992 hate-speech had been announced in Rwanda by certain Hutu personalities. While this propaganda often was shrouded in coded language, the Hutu were told to “do the harvest”, “get down the work” etc., clearer signals emerged from the extremists in the government specifying plans to exterminate the Tutsi minority. From 7 April this plan was implemented; triggered by the shooting down of a plane carrying President Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart who were both killed. The genocide was carried out with an almost unthinkable intensity: In the span of 100 days, almost one million people, for the most part Tutsis but also moderate Hutus opposed to the plan, were slaughtered.<sup>12</sup> The female experience of the genocide was particularly devastating. Targeted for not only their ethnicity but also their gender, women were subjected to sexual assault and torture.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.3 After the genocide: Resistance against political liberalization**

In July 1994, the genocide had come to an end and the RPF had taken power in the capital Kigali. The challenge consisted of ruling a country in shambles after four years

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<sup>11</sup> Jones (2001), *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure*.

<sup>12</sup> NORDEM (2003), *Rwanda: The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2003*, report 12.

<sup>13</sup> Powley (2004), *Strengthening governance: The Role of women in Rwanda's Transition*.

of war and an even longer period of economic decline. The population was decimated by roughly one tenth, and the refugee population in neighboring countries had once again boomed. But most important; Rwanda was a country in a deep state of shock and disillusion after the unimaginable horrors that its people had endured. During the transitional period between 1994 and the elections in 2003, in its effort to rebuild Rwanda, the RPF committed itself to a platform of unity and reconciliation.

Still, the RPF maintained a potent military apparatus after the genocide. Within Rwanda, this apparatus is coupled by a meticulous and smoothly functioning administrative structure. Arguably, this structure was rendered even more effective as a result of the local elections in 2001 and 2002. The laws allowing for a multi-party system were not in place until well after these elections. Given that candidates could not run on a party basis, the RPF seems to have used its extensive power base to ensure that loyal officials would be elected. Moreover, the electoral law, once promulgated in 2003, did not allow for party organization on a local level – only at provincial and central levels. The 2003 elections thus took place in a structure marked by RPF dominance all the way from the center via provinces, districts, sectors and cells to the ten-house agglomerations. Opposition parties have thus only operated at the central level. Those that opposed RPF policies, moreover, faced intimidation. Most illustrative and decisive in this regard is the pre-electoral dissolution of the main opposition party, the previously mentioned MDR, by the RPF-dominated Transitional National Assembly (TNA) in April 2003. The row has involved the disappearance, arrest and emigration of dozens of prominent MDR figures.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the RPF initiated campaigns to recruit party members. Some of those who were reluctant to sign up were told that they would be accused of the grave crime of “divisionism”.<sup>15</sup> “Divisionist” or “sectarian” is, according to law no. 47 of 2001, *any oral or written statement, or any act of division that may generate conflict in the population (...)*. The law does not, however, specify what acts or statements qualify as “divisionist”. It has therefore become a tool that the authorities use against dissenters. The rise and use of “divisionism” may reflect how little political space the RPF allowed for its contenders in the 2003 elections. In effect, anyone who would express disagreement with the RPF risked being classified as a

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<sup>14</sup>. Interayamahanga, Révérien (2003), Le parti MDR : Une fin programmée ? In *Amani: Mensuel d'information et d'analyse de la LDGL*, no. 43-44, April-May.

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch (2003), *Preparing for Elections: Tightening Control in the Name of Unity*.

“divisionist”. Dissent could be criminal, and no guidelines existed to tell people when it would be criminalized and when it would be accepted. To understand how the suppression of dissent can be codified in law in the midst of a process to prepare for elections, we need to keep in mind that the last times multi-party politics was allowed in Rwanda, in the early 1960s and 1990s; political liberalization clearly came at the expense of extensive violence. That violence deliberately targeted the minority Tutsi group, from which the RPF once emerged. It is in this framework one might understand the ruling party’s electoral focus on “unity” and fear of any form of divisions. In effect political pluralism had not only preceded genocide, but also served to undermine parties who had been dominated by the Tutsi minority – such as the RPF.<sup>16</sup>

#### **2.4 New constitution and elections**

The very same government, despite its resistance to political liberalization, showed political will to increase participation of women and youth in governance.<sup>17</sup> In 2001-2002, a civil education campaign of almost 600 meetings was run to increase popular awareness of the constitutional reform. Meanwhile, in a consultative process, the constitutional commission appointed by the Transitional National Assembly (TNA) drafted a new constitution, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the referendum of May 2003. The constitution requires the participation of women in 30 percent of the decision-making positions, which corresponds to 24 seats reserved for women in the national assembly.<sup>18</sup>

There is no conclusive explanation why gender quota was introduced, and whether it was implemented mainly from above or below. The truth might lie in between the two. Some claim that pressure from civil society movements, especially women’s organizations, played a significant role. A more skeptical analysis is that the government could be using the inclusion of women and youth as a means of diverting attention from the absence of ethnic pluralism.<sup>19</sup> Whether quota was implemented

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<sup>16</sup> NORDEM (2003), nr. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Kanakuze (2003), *Quotas in Practice: The challenge of Implementation and Enforcement in Rwanda*.

<sup>18</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003), article 9, available in appendix 2.

<sup>19</sup> Powely (2004), *Strengthening governance: The Role of women in Rwanda’s Transition*.

from above or below and despite potential motives, important for this thesis is that the government had a political will to constitutionalize the inclusion of women in parliament.

As a result of the presidential elections the 5 August 2003, the candidate Paul Kagame of the RPF won a landslide victory of 95 percent of the votes. The RPF secured, in alliance with four political parties (PDC, PDI, PSR and UDPR), 40 seats out of 80 in the Chamber of Deputies. Two other parties viewed as RPF allies, the Social Democrat Party (SDP) and the Liberal Party (LP), obtained 7 respectively 6 parliamentary seats.<sup>20</sup> The remaining 27 seats were set aside for representatives of women, youth and the handicapped.<sup>21</sup> This means that the 27 MPs elected on quota (24 elected on quota for women, 2 elected on quota for youth and 1 for handicapped people) do *not* represent a political party, at least not officially.<sup>22</sup>

Rwandan women earned 48,8 percent of the seats in Rwanda's new bicameral legislature through election and appointment, making a total of 39 women elected to the lower house out of 80 members. This means that 15 women were elected in addition to the 24 reserved seats for women.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, Rwanda presently has the highest percentage of women in parliament of all countries in the world.

## **2.5 Women's traditional roles**

Rwanda is a patriarchal society where women traditionally have had subordinated positions. Despite male dominated social structures, women had relatively important roles in the pre-colonial period. Women chiefs ruled over several parts of the country on behalf of the king. At the domestic level women enjoyed considerable autonomy over household resources and played advisory roles in decision-making. The advent of colonial rule introduced new social cultural values, which together with abrupt shift from subsistence to monetary economy exacerbated the already existing gender inequality to the disadvantage of women.<sup>24</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, women counted for 70 percent of the population. Given this demographic imbalance women assumed multiple roles as heads of households, community leaders and financial providers, which implies that

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<sup>20</sup> All information obtained at [www.comelena.gov.rw/english/legislative2003.html](http://www.comelena.gov.rw/english/legislative2003.html)

<sup>21</sup> National Electoral Commission of Rwanda at [www.comelena.gov.rw/francais/depoteabagore1.html](http://www.comelena.gov.rw/francais/depoteabagore1.html)

<sup>22</sup> This does not exclude the possibility that they indirectly support one political party or another.

<sup>23</sup> All information obtained at [www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.html](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.html)

<sup>24</sup> Mutamba (2004), *Factors for sustainability of women's participation in decision making*,

women played an important role in the immediate reconstruction of the country.<sup>25</sup> Today women constitute 54 percent of the Rwandan population. However, 70 percent of the population is living below the poverty line, and a large proportion of these are women.<sup>26</sup> Despite the destruction of social fabrics during the genocide, the introduction of gender quota in order to increase the number of women in parliament must be understood against the background of patriarchy. In other words, it is important to bear in mind that a constitutional mandate of gender equality does not transform into social and cultural reality overnight.

## **2.6 Broader context**

The intention with the preceding discussion has been to present the broader context of the study. When studying women's representation in the Rwandan parliament it is critical to understand it in the light of the authoritarian tendencies in the country. To summarize we have seen that the political system in Rwanda is threatened by the dominance of a single party, the RPF, and increasingly, by a Tutsi minority. There are significant concerns about the lack of civil- and democratic liberties. In the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2003, human rights groups noted limits on campaigning and access to the media, restrictions on freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, intimidation at the polling stations and a suspect candidate identification. These factors contradict the expectations of the significance of MPs gender. With these contextual notes in mind, it is time to take a look at the theoretical framework.

## **2.7 Disposition**

In the following chapter, the theoretical framework will be presented in order to provide a deeper understanding about the theories on women's representation, the discourses on quota and the controversy of women's interests. Furthermore, empirical studies of relevance to this thesis shall be discussed. At the end of the chapter, I am presenting a number of arguments to highlight why it is important to broaden the contextual premises of existing theories. The content of the chapter finally results in three specific research questions.

After the theoretical chapter, the method, the material and the analytical framework I have chosen will be presented. The aim of this part is to explain the way

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<sup>25</sup> Powely (2004).

of procedure, and to discuss the methodological considerations regarding the interviews and the survey.<sup>27</sup>

The methodological chapter will be followed by the presentation of the results, which is divided into two parts. In the first part of the analysis the interviews are presented. The results from the interviews can be regarded as a validity test of the measurements used in part two. In part two, variations in the representation of women's interests caused by gender and quota will be systematically analyzed.

After the presentation of my results, my conclusions will be discussed, with focus on how the results can be related to existing theories and the initial research problems.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

#### **3.1 Does it matter who our representatives are?**

Any analysis of women's representation is rooted in the research field of representative democracy. In the following text, some central views on representation will be discussed, with an emphasis on the normative debate concerning whether it matters *who* our representatives are.

A central idea of representative democracy is to entrust, for a limited period, a chosen few to construct binding decisions on behalf of the many. One recognized theory of representative democracy holds that the elected should "mirror" those they represent in terms of social status, economy and demography and even according to values, beliefs and opinions.<sup>28</sup> Such a view rests upon the idea that the parliament should make decisions which reflects how the people would have made decisions if they were themselves able to decide. Another perspective on representative democracy holds that representation entails acting in the interest of the represented in a manner responsive to them. In her classic work, *The Concept of Representation*, Pitkin argues that it is the activities of our representatives and not their characteristics that really matter.<sup>29</sup> The core idea is that an over-emphasis on who is present in the legislative assemblies draws attention from the more urgent question of what they actually do.

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<sup>26</sup> All information obtained at, [www.gov.rw/government/06\\_08\\_00news\\_statement-muganza.html](http://www.gov.rw/government/06_08_00news_statement-muganza.html)

<sup>27</sup> The terms *Survey* and *Questionnaire* are used as synonyms in this study.

<sup>28</sup> Narud and Valen (2000), "Does Social Background matter?" in Esaiasson and Heidar *Beyond Westminster and Congress. The Nordic experience*, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Pitkin (1967) *The Concept of representation*, p. 209.

Think of the legislature as a pictorial representation or a representative sample of the nation, and you will almost inevitably concentrate on its composition rather than its activities. Think about the same body as a symbol and you will almost inevitably be more concerned with its psychological impact on the minds of the people than with any accuracy of correspondence between it and the nation. Think about it, in turn, as an agent or collection of agents, and your interest will focus on other concerns.<sup>30</sup>

The different views can be illustrated as the conflict between those who advocate *social representation* and those who promote *the politics of ideas*. It is on the basis of this controversy that Anne Phillips establishes her critics, arguing that the former has to be understood in relation to the latter. Phillips bases her critique, which is widespread within the feminist research field, upon a number of empirical observations: Male-dominated parliament does not give equal consideration to the interests of male and female citizen.<sup>31</sup> With a sociological approach, in a set of ideas that she calls *the politics of presence*, she emphasizes the importance of social background, arguing that men and women have different experiences that will influence their political work considering the significant autonomy of our representatives.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, Phillips argues, it matters who our representatives are.

While the politics of ideas is an inadequate vehicle for dealing with political exclusion, there is little to be gained by simply switching to a politics of presence. Taken in isolation, the weaknesses of the one are as dramatic as the failings of the other. Most of the problems, indeed, arise when these two are set up as exclusionary opposites: when ideas are treated as totally separate from the people that carry them; or when the people dominate attention, with no thought given their politics or ideas. It is in the relationship between ideas and presence that we can best hope to find a fairer system of representation, not in a false opposition between one or the other.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2 Quota discourses

When linking the preceding discussion to the discourses on quota, it is worth noting that the idea of gender quota touches upon a recognition of the importance of the representation of women in institutional decision-making bodies.<sup>34</sup> But which form of representation and in what way women are most likely to secure presence is debated. Scholars have distinguished at least four arguments for women's equal representation in parliaments. The justice argument points to the fact that women represent half the

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<sup>30</sup> Pitkin (1967), p. 226.

<sup>31</sup> Phillips (1995), chapter 1.

<sup>32</sup> Phillips (1995), p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Phillips (1995), p. 25.

population and therefore has the right to half the seats. The second argument highlights women's different experiences, biologically and socially constructed. In line with this argument women should enter into positions of power because they will engage in politics differently, thereby improving the nature of the public sphere. The third argument points to women and men's partly conflicting interests thus men cannot represent women. Finally, women politicians represent important role models, encouraging other women to follow suit.<sup>35</sup>

These arguments are founded upon an understanding of quotas as compensation for structural barriers that prevent fair competition. Those opposed to quota, regard it as discrimination and violation of the principle of fairness.<sup>36</sup> Critics hold that from a liberal perspective quota, as a specific group right, conflict with the principle of equal opportunity for all, since women are given preference over men. By explicitly favoring certain groups of citizens (women), all citizens (men) are not provided with equal chances to attain a political career, power and influence. On the contrary, discourses on quota point to the unwillingness to provide specific categories a right to have a guaranteed outcome of representatives based on their specificity, and argue in favor of equal results rather than equal opportunity.<sup>37</sup> Opponents of quota insist on the dangers of abandoning meritocratic principles in favor of selection by gender arguing that the overall caliber of politicians will fall and that politicians selected on the basis of their gender will not be taken seriously. Those who support quota argue that selection by merit and selection by gender are not irreconcilable, pointing out that the more qualitative criteria used in the process of selecting candidates for political office most often favor those who are most like the people conducting the interviews; they often favor men.<sup>38</sup>

On the basis of the preceding discussion we have seen that the idea of gender quota is founded upon the argument that it matters who our representatives are. I do not intend to further develop the normative aspects of the use of gender quota. Instead I shall discuss some important aspects of the literature on women's representation.

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<sup>34</sup> Dahlerup (2003), p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Phillips (1995), Dahlerup (1988), "From a small to a large minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics", in *Scandinavian Political Studies*.

<sup>36</sup> Dahlerup (2003), *Quotas are changing the history of women*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2003), p. 4, Phillips (1995), p. 60.

<sup>38</sup> Phillips (1995), p. 61.

### 3.3 Analyzing women's representation

As already noted, women's representation has in previous research been divided into two basic concerns. The first one is about the numerical division between women and men in decision-making bodies. The second aspect is about something else, namely the presence of women's issues or interests in decision-making process.<sup>39</sup> In this study, the latter aspect of women's representation is in focus. The majority of empirical research within the field of women's representation is about variations concerning the number of women in decision-making bodies. In addition, a number of scholars have dedicated themselves to the task to map out explanations for the increased women representation in parliaments. However, the question related to the presence of women's interests in decision-making processes is less explored.

This brings us to the concept of women's interests, which is although frequently debated, regarded as controversial. Within feminist theory and research in general the concept is frequently used, still scholars argue about its applicability and meaning. One of the most problematic aspects of the concept is the conflict between *objective* and *subjective* interests. If subjective interests point to individual concerns how are objective interests determined? And is it possible to talk about women's interests as if there were a universal meaning of the notion addressing all women? Although problematic, Jonasdottir has a good point:

Yet, if we avoided using "contested concepts" altogether, we would neither be able to study nor relate to the realities of political life.<sup>40</sup>

Common for a number of scholars is to approach the question of women's interests by looking at women and men's distinct positions within society, or the controversy between public and private interests.<sup>41</sup> Several factors points to an unfavorable situation for female citizens: Women are over represented in lower paid jobs and carry the responsibility for unpaid work of caring for others. Violence against women and children is seen as a private matter as a result of the sharp distinction between private and public spheres. The picture that emerges in the literature shows a political system that does not deal with women's reality, indicating

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<sup>39</sup> Wängnerud (1998), p. 19, Phillips (1995), Lovenduski and Norris (1993).

<sup>40</sup> Jonasdottir (1991), *Love power and political interests: toward a theory of patriarchy in contemporary western societies*, p. 151.

<sup>41</sup> Jonasdottir (1991), p. 154, Phillips (1995), p. 66, Wängnerud (1998), p. 115.

that female citizens are marginalized.<sup>42</sup> The idea is that there are particular needs, interests and concerns that arise from women's experience. Although problematic, most feminist scholars agree that it is possible to establish a set of interests that is shared by all women, and to maintain a common minimal definition of women's interests in seeking a research foundation to build upon. Rai argues that there is an essential woman created where none exists; she assumes that differences marks all women, but recognizes their inscribed uniformity.<sup>43</sup> Jónasdóttir argues that the interest of fighting patriarchy, by not allowing oneself to be oppressed as a woman can be considered as common for all women,<sup>44</sup> while Skjeie argues for the viability of "establishing a minimum formulation of common women's interests, seen in that case in direct relation to the public political decisions".<sup>45</sup>

As a researcher the task consists of finding a reasonable definition of the concept of women's interests that is relevant to my analysis, and to be consistent in the way of using the definition. What I am looking for is a rather fleshed-out definition taking into account that the Rwandan context differs from the Western context. But as the thesis aims to empirically examine the validity of findings from previous research, a prerequisite is to apply an analytical framework used in previous studies. Otherwise, potential differences in results might derive from the chosen approach rather than from actual differences between the distinct contexts. I have therefore built upon Wängneruds definition of women's interests, which will be discussed in relation to the methodology.<sup>46</sup> But first, we shall take a further look into the content of empirical studies.

### **3.4 Empirical studies**

Several empirical studies have been conducted in order to better understand the impact of gender in representative democracy in Western contexts. In the following section some studies that are relevant for this thesis shall be discussed.

Lovenduski and Norris outline in their study of the British parliament that women have more feminist and radical attitudes than men. In addition they point out that women are more concerned about social policies than their male colleagues. Still,

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<sup>42</sup> Wängnerud (2000) *Testing the Politics of Presence: Women's Representation in the Swedish Riksdag*, Phillips (1995), p. 66.

<sup>43</sup> Rai (1994), *Gender and democratisation*.

<sup>44</sup> Jónasdóttir (1991), p. 156.

<sup>45</sup> Wängnerud (2000), I have used the translation of Wängnerud, Skjeie (1992).

the results demonstrate that party affiliation tend to be the primary concern among MPs, despite gender.<sup>47</sup> The same kind of findings are presented in Esaiasson and Holmbergs examination of the Swedish MPs mind-sets on various political issues: Female MPs tend to hold different views than male MPs concerning social welfare, moral and environmental issues. By examining MPs definitions of their task as representatives the authors conclude that party affiliation tend to be the dominant concern, which does not preclude members from promoting other interests. The conclusion is however that it is not meaningless whether a women or a man is elected to parliament.<sup>48</sup> These results obtain further support in Wängneruds review of whether women to a greater extent than men represent women's interests.<sup>49</sup> Wängneruds study of the significance of MPs gender related to the representation of women's interests in the Swedish parliament serves as a point of reference for this thesis, in the sense that I have applied the analytical framework of her study on the Swedish Riksdag to the Rwandan case. The author examines a number of indicators on MPs attitudes and legislative behavior toward the representation of women's interests. The analysis controls for effects of MPs gender when other factors as party affiliation, age, education and parliamentary experience are taken into account. The findings are clear; on all of the indicators female MPs are more eager than men to represent interests concerning women.

To my knowledge no research has been conducted addressing the same kind of questions in a non-Western context. Still, some scholars have dedicated themselves to study women in politics in non-Western countries. Even if these studies mainly focus on factors affecting women's participation in politics, which is not altogether tied to the purpose of this thesis, they have a certain relevance to the study because they are based on non-Western experiences. Nelson and Chowdhury have conducted a comparative study of women and politics worldwide.<sup>50</sup> They do not consider whether women to a greater extent than men represent women's interests, but they do discuss factors affecting women's participation in formal political arenas. In drawing conclusions from the 43 countries included in their study they suggest political socialization as to women's proper role is a significant factor, but they also argue that

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<sup>46</sup> Wängnerud (2000), p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> Norris and Lovenduski (1993), *Gender and party politics*.

<sup>48</sup> Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996), *Representation from Above. Members of Parliament and Representative Democracy in Sweden* p. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Wängnerud (1998).

political parties and women's organizations engaged in interest articulation determine the degree to which women participate in political life.

Concerning the significance of quota, scholars have concentrated on the process leading to the introduction of gender quota. Nevertheless, some feminist scholars have looked into women elected on quota as political actors. Among them is Tamale who has analyzed the role of women in formal politics in Uganda, finding that the female MPs tend to "make a case for women", regardless of how the women entered parliament (through either gender quota or the traditional way).<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the author claims that the use of gender quota needs to be recognized as a necessary first step on the difficult road toward gender-equality. Tripp found, in her study of women in Ugandan politics, that the introduction of gender quota served many purposes: Firstly it signaled to ordinary women the government's commitment to women's leadership and opened up new opportunities for women to become political leaders. At the same time, it created a bloc of loyalist women who could be used when needed to suppress various demands of the women's movement or of democrats when they ran counter to government wishes.<sup>52</sup> Common for Tamale and Tripp is that they both highlight possibilities and risks connected to the use of quota. Tamale however, does not emphasize differences between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists, while Tripp finds that women elected on quota differ from the remaining women in the sense that they constitute a bloc of women being loyal to the government.

Matland is one of few researchers who has actually tested the explanatory power of Western theories concerning numerical variations in women's representation in less developed countries, primarily Eastern European societies.<sup>53</sup> He applies existing models from advanced industrialized democracies on a sample of democracies in less developed countries, in order to highlight whether factors explaining women's representation in developed countries have the same effect in less developed countries. The results show striking differences across the two samples. While in a proportional representation electoral system, women's labor force

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<sup>50</sup> Nelson and Chowdhury's (1994), *Women and Politics Worldwide*.

<sup>51</sup> Tamale (1999), p. 195.

<sup>52</sup> Tripp (2003).

<sup>53</sup> Matland (1996), *Women's legislative representation in national legislatures: A comparison of democracies in developed and developing countries*.

participation rates, a cultural standing of women variable, and level of development all have positive effects on female representation in developed democracies, Matland finds that none of these variables have a positive effect in less developed countries. His conclusion is that the findings strongly suggest the existence of a threshold of development. Only after that threshold is passed do proportional representation, labor force participation, and cultural standing exert positive influences on the representation of women.

Even though Matland is examining under what circumstances the number of women in parliament increases, his findings are relevant to this study for several reasons: Primarily, the comparison demonstrates that theories based on experiences from Western developed countries do not necessarily contribute to explain the phenomenon in a less developed country. In addition, the study highlights that the variables in focus might mean something entirely different in the new context.

### **3.5 A Western perspective on representation?**

We have so far seen that the research field of representative democracy is rich. Normative aspects of the composition of parliaments have been discussed as well as controversies of the use of quota and women's interests. We have seen that previous research demonstrate that female MPs to a greater extent than male MP represent women's interests, and that factors like party affiliation tend to play a decisive role. As already pointed out, the theories are building upon experiences from Western societies. The term *Western societies* implies in this study European countries and the United States, in the opposite of non-Western societies meaning less developed countries. In the following section, some arguments shall be discussed in order to highlight why it is important to broaden the contextual premises in research about women's representation and on what grounds we can expect the phenomenon to differ in dissimilar contexts:

Primarily, the lack of research from non-Western countries itself motivates the testing of the validity of previous findings. Given that *representative democracy* has been imposed on several African countries, its meaning and nature differ depending upon dissimilar historical, cultural and political traditions.<sup>54</sup> The different nature of political systems might therefore lead to various ways of thinking about

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<sup>54</sup> For further analysis: Mkanawire and Soludo (1998), *Our continent, our future*.

representation. In the Rwandan case, we have seen from the previous chapter that the country, despite its formal political institutions and the implementation of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2003, is characterized as an authoritarian regime.<sup>55</sup> Due to the ruling party's (RPF) dominant position connected with restrictions in freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and frequent violations of humans rights, there are reasons to believe that the existence of a multi-party system and party affiliation in the Rwandan context has a different meaning than in Western democracies. Furthermore, the traditionally patriarchal social structure of the Rwandan society in contrast to the more egalitarian Nordic countries implies that the nature of gender issues differs. The fact that quota has been used as an instrument to increase the proportion of women in parliament might create an additional aspect of representation, that differ from the Western discourse. Against this background the explanatory power of existing theories based on Western contexts needs to be tested in non-Western countries so that research can be brought forward.

### **3.6 Purpose**

The overall purpose of the thesis is to assess the force of Western theories on women's representation in a non-Western context and to provide a deeper understanding of how the use of quota affects women's representation. Within this overall purpose lies my specific purpose: *To empirically examine variations in the representation of women's interests in the Rwandan parliament caused by gender (in terms of the MPs gender) and quota (in terms of MPs elected on quota).*

The larger context of the ongoing reconciliation process after the genocide in 1994 constitutes the overall framework of interpretation.

### **3.7 Research questions**

In order to fulfill the purpose of the thesis the following questions will be answered:

- *Do female and male MPs prioritize women's interests differently?*
- *Do women elected on quota to a higher extent than other MPs represent women's interests?*

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<sup>55</sup> NORDEM 2003.

- *Are women elected on quota representatives for the population in general or women in particular?*

## **4 Method**

In the previous chapter the theoretical framework as well as the purpose and the specific research questions were presented. In the following section, the analytical framework and the methodological considerations of the empirical examination of the representation of women's interests shall be discussed.

### **4.1 Type of study**

Empirical studies can be conducted in a number of different ways. One can for instance differentiate between studies that intend to explain or to describe a phenomenon. This study intends to *explain* variations in the representation of women's interests caused by quota and gender. Such studies can further focus on either developing new explanations in existing theories, or testing or consuming the sustainability in current theories. Still, the boundaries between the different types of studies are not always clear: This study is of a theory testing kind in the sense that it aims at trying the explanatory power in existing theories, and of a theory consuming kind in the sense that the specific case and not the theories are in focus. What characterizes a theory testing study is that one in a strict sense is able to predict the exact results for the theory to get support or not. In this study this is possible: Whether previous results indicating that female MPs to a greater extent than male MPs represent women's interests are valid in the Rwandan context will be verified or falsified. However, knowledge about the significance of quota is better understood as a theory *developing* contribution due to the lack of previous research.<sup>56</sup> As such this study is of a theory testing kind, with theory- consuming and developing tendencies.

The study of women's representation in the Rwandan parliament is a case study, which means that no comparisons have been made on the empirical level. This said, Wängneruds study of the Swedish Riksdag serves as a valuable point of reference. Empirical comparisons are advantageous in the sense that similarities and differences can be examined in order to generate or test existing theories. Within the

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<sup>56</sup> Esaiasson, Wängnerud, Giljam and Oscarsson (2002), *Metodpraktikan*, p. 95-148.

framework of a master thesis I consider a case study with a point of reference in previous research as a big enough challenge.

The *most different system* design characterizes the selection of case. I was looking for a case differing from the Swedish context in all regards except for the high level of women's representation in parliament. In other words, Rwanda and Sweden diverge in most aspects apart from the high share of women in parliaments. If I had chosen a case where the number of women in parliament is considerably lower than in the Swedish case (point of reference), the low number of women would possibly have affected variations in the representation of women's interests (dependent variable).

#### **4.2 Approach and material**

To be able to examine variations in the representation of women's interests caused by gender and quota, I have chosen to conduct a survey among the Rwandan MPs as my main method. A survey implies that the respondents are asked to answer a number of standardized questions, and that they can choose between a number of response alternatives.<sup>57</sup> Surveying is a useful method in research aiming at testing theories. The questionnaire will provide me with descriptive data about the frequency of certain ways of answering among the MPs. It is furthermore possible to test why the answers differ within the population, for instance to what degree the differences can be explained by gender and quota. Since I want to find out whether female MPs to a higher extent than male MPs represent women's interests, and whether women elected on quota differ in the matter from the remaining MPs, surveying seemed to be an accurate method to approach the research problem.

This approach is quantitative in the sense that it is based on comparable and equal data that can be analyzed and presented in numbers. It is consequently possible to compare the findings with results from previous research. However, the approach is not exclusively quantitative since some of the questions asked are open, in the sense that the respondents are requested to answer a certain question without given response alternatives. This implies that I have categorized the answers in a qualitative way, on the basis of the content of the responses. Surveys tend to be strong in the generalizability of the findings. The approach has the drawback, however, that the

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<sup>57</sup> Esaiasson, Wängnerud, Giljam and Oscarsson (2002), p. 254.

validity of the measurements is weak. In the attempt of obtaining valid measurements I have carried out a number of interviews as a complementary way of procedure. The methodological considerations of interviewing shall be addressed later on. I shall start to present the survey.

### **4.3 Survey among the MPs**

During a two months field-study in Rwanda (September and October 2004), I conducted a questionnaire among the MPs. Due to the lack of existing material such as statistic data addressing the Rwandan MPs own opinions or experiences I had to collect the data myself. However, this would not have been possible within the framework of a master thesis if I had not been able to take advantage of existing questionnaires. I thoroughly selected questions from parliamentary surveys from 1985, 1988 and 1994 conducted in the Swedish Riksdag. All of the questions have been used as indicators of the representation of women's interests in Wängneurds study. Using existing questions restricted my possibility to influence what kind of questions that were asked, but assured on the other hand that experienced scholars have formulated them. The exact questions will be presented with the individual analyses.

As the majority of the Rwandan MPs do not speak English, the questionnaire was translated to French. Because most of the questions have a certain number of response alternatives, the translation did not pose a problem for the analysis of the answers. However, regarding the open questions where the respondents have answered in their own words; I had to translate the answers from French to English.

Out of a total of 80 MPs 61 MPs are included in the analysis, which corresponds to a response frequency of 76,3 percent. Accordingly is the selection of respondents treated as a total survey, which implies that I have included the entire population in the study. For this reason the results can be regarded as generally valid in the Rwandan case. Whether the results can be generalized into a wider context than just the Rwandan case is more problematic. It would be incorrect to claim that results from one single case study from a non-Western context can be regarded as representative for non-Western countries in general. Still, I consider the results to be generally valid with regard to other African countries emerging from major conflicts.

#### **4.5 Analyzing the surveys**

I have used statistical method to analyze the surveys. In order to fulfill the purpose of the thesis I have analyzed a number of indicators of the representation of women's interests, mainly through bivariate and multivariate cross tabulations. Variations in the representation of women's interests (dependent variable) caused by gender and quota (independent variables) are being analyzed, when party affiliation (control variable) is taken into account. In studies where the entire population is included it is not necessary to, in a strict sense, consider the statistical significance of the results because any difference or relationship, however small, is "true" and does exist. When drawing the conclusions an emphasis has been placed on whether the results of several measurements are pointing to the same direction.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4.6 Independent variables and practical challenges**

In the previous chapters arguments have been presented in order to motivate why it is important to test results from previous research, demonstrating that female MPs to a greater extent than male MPs represent women's interests, in a non-Western context. I have also argued that no academic study has yet examined whether women elected on quota represent the population in general or women in particular, and that the Rwandan case is a unique context to combine these parallel research problems.

One could argue that an analysis of the significance of MPs gender is rather sterile without taking into account the meaning of other factors. Findings from previous research have shown that party affiliation tends to be a decisive factor in order to explain variations in the representation of women's interests, while factors such as age, education and parliamentary experience tend to be less important. This is why I have decided to take into account the MPs party affiliation. Given that the Rwandan context differs from Western contexts it would have been relevant to test the significance of age, education and parliamentary experience in the Rwandan case. However, there are several reasons why I have been prevented from doing this:

First of all, the idea was to encode the surveys so that I would not need to ask the respondents' identity and so that I afterwards would have been able to take into account each of the respondents' age, education, political party and parliamentary experience. This turned out to be impossible in practice. As the members of the

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<sup>58</sup> For further information about statistical methods, see appendix 3.

Rwandan parliament do not have their own offices (the parliamentary building is under reconstruction after the damages from the genocide), and given the fact they are only gathered during plenary sessions I had to hand out the surveys during committee meetings and seminars. Instead I added one page to the questionnaire, where the MPs kindly were asked to report gender, elected on quota or not, political party and geographical belonging. Accordingly did I of practical reasons give up the possibility to identify each of the respondents and therefore the ability to include additional explanatory factors. Why I did not ask the respondents to report additional information like education level, age or parliamentary experience was a question of trade-off: I was worried that the more personal information I required the more unwillingly would the respondents answer my questions honestly.

Another factor that would have been relevant to include is *ethnic belonging*. Given that different ethnic groups traditionally have had dissimilar attitudes toward gender related issues, as for instance women's role, the ethnic background of an MP might influence his or her way of relating to women's interests.<sup>59</sup> On the basis of the law against any form of *divisionism* discussed in the opening chapter, we have seen that the issue of ethnicity is very contentious in the Rwandan context. It would therefore have been highly controversial to include an ethnic perspective, and information about the ethnic background of the MPs would most likely have been impossible to obtain.<sup>60</sup>

#### **4.6 Operationalizations of women's interests**

How do we measure the representation of women's interests? There is no obvious answer to this question. What I am looking for is operationalizations that provide meaningful descriptive information about the representation of women's interests, so that I will have a firm foundation to explain variations caused by gender and quota. As already noted in the theoretical chapter I have borrowed Wängneruds division of the concept of women's issues into three concerns: The recognition of women as a social category; acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes

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<sup>59</sup> Independent of each other, several Rwandans claimed that gender issues have a strong connection to ethnic background. What I was told is that the great mass living in the rural areas (mainly Hutus) tend to hold on to traditional gender-roles, which contrast the more gender-equality friendly educated Tutsi minority mainly living in the capital.

<sup>60</sup> I have included *ethnic group* as a response alternative in a number of the questions in the survey, some respondents wrote that any question relating to ethnic groups is taboo, and shall not be asked.

and the occurrence of policies designed to increase the autonomy of female citizens.<sup>61</sup> I have decided to concentrate on finding indicators on the first two concerns due to time and financial limitations. I also believe that it would have been problematic to find indicators on the last component considering the fact that the parliament has operated for less than a year thus one cannot expect there to be a number of policies designed yet. In looking for indicators I will have to consider the Rwandan context. By translating the theoretical concepts into measurable questions I have a solid foundation to carry out the empirical analysis:

- *The recognition of women as a social category* will be studied via the parliamentarians' task definitions, their view on representation and via their contacts with different organizations and authorities. Do members of parliament (women elected on quota, women elected on party lists and men) separate women as a particular group, which is important for them to represent? Are women's organizations included in their network?

- *The acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes* will be studied via their views on the importance of gender equality, and to the extent they include issues of gender equality in their parliamentary work. Do members of parliaments find more gender equality desirable? Does their parliamentary work reflect their attitudes?

#### **4.7 Definitions**

Through the survey, I shall study the respondents' *attitudes* and *behavior*. Thus the questions asked will assumingly have behavioral consequences. The term *attitude* is used in order to illustrate the parliamentarians' reflections and more general standpoints. *Behavior* characterizes in this thesis the parliamentarians network outside parliament and their political work.

*Gender equality* assumes that women and men have equal access to goods, potentialities, resources and awards on which their society places great value, and that there is no structural discrimination at the individual and social group level.

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<sup>61</sup> Wängnerud (2000).

#### 4.8 Interviews with MPs

In this study, interviews are used in order to better understand how the MPs themselves apprehend their world, with an emphasis on their way of relating to gender issues and the impact of quota. The aim is to provide knowledge about *if* and *how* the Rwandan MPs themselves experience differences between women and men's priorities, and their experiences concerning quota. The interviews are therefore a way of evaluating the validity of the measurements used in the survey. Because the interviews are not the primary material of this study, I shall keep the methodological discussion brief.

An interview can be described as a conversation that has a structure and a purpose.<sup>62</sup> The interview is further illustrated, as more than the spontaneous, everyday exchange of opinions, it is a way for the interviewer to receive carefully tested knowledge. Hence the respondents do not only answer formulated questions, but express in a dialogue an apprehension of his or her world.<sup>63</sup> Since the aim of the interviews is to better understand how the MPs relate to the concepts in focus of the thesis the interviewees are treated as respondents in the opposite of informants, meaning that I am interested in them as persons and not for their specific knowledge.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the interviews touches upon two main themes connected to the purpose of the thesis; potential differences between women and men's political priorities, and views on women elected on quota as representatives. The interview guide is available in appendix 5.

#### 4.9 Selection of respondents

The respondents were selected on the following criteria: I wanted to interview MPs from each of the three categories who are in focus of the thesis; female MPs elected on quota, female MPs elected on party lists and male MPs. The purpose with this additional methodology is not to generalize the answers of the respondents, but to get an idea about the *occurrence* of certain mindsets among the MPs. Still, to be able to capture the diversity of mindsets it would have been relevant to select respondents according to the *maximum variation*-strategy.<sup>65</sup> But, due to practical reasons the category –criteria were the only requirement of whom to interview. The principle

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<sup>62</sup> Kvale (1997), *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Kvale (1997), p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> Esaiasson, Giljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud (2002), p. 282.

about “less is more” served as a guideline in order to decide the number of respondents.<sup>66</sup> In accordance to the so-called theoretical saturation meaning that the interviews do not contribute with further knowledge or understanding about the phenomenon I interviewed three from each category, nine respondents in total.<sup>67</sup>

All the interviews took place in the parliament, in the MPs offices (only the presidents of the different committees had their own offices) or in one of the conference rooms. I avoid using the term *in debt* interviews since the interviews lasted between 30-40 minutes. Due to the lack of civil liberties and democratic freedoms in Rwanda I considered it wise not to use a tape recorder. Primary, taking notes enabled me to guarantee the respondents anonymity. Taking into account the authoritarian nature of the Rwandan regime protecting my sources was crucial. Secondary, I believed the respondents would speak more freely if I took notes instead of using a tape recorder. However, immediately after each interview I typed the answers. As the interviews were carried out in French, I have translated my notes to English. This means, that the quotes are not accurate reproductions.

Before each of the interviews, I presented my research by emphasizing my interest in the MPs experiences of their roles as representatives, with pronouncing neither the perception of *quota* nor *gender*. The attempt was to prevent the respondents to answer in accordance to the politically correct norm.

#### **4.10 Analyzing the interviews**

When it comes to analyzing interviews with respondents there is no general way of procedure; different techniques and tools are being used depending on the nature of the research problem in focus and the theoretical perspectives.<sup>68</sup> Within the framework of a master-thesis, I have based the analysis mainly upon two questions linked to the purpose of the study. The respondents were being asked *if* and *in what way* they believe that women and men relate to politics differently. In addition they were being asked if there is, in his/her point of view, any differences between women elected to parliament on quota and women elected on party lists. In order to capture the multiplicity of mindsets I have categorized the different ways of thinking, meaning that I have mapped out all the different answers. The interviews can be

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<sup>65</sup> Miles, Huberman (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis. An expanded source book*, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> McCracken (1998), *The long interview*, p.17.

<sup>67</sup> Esaiasson, Giljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud (2002), p. 187.

characterized as quantitative in the sense that I have analyzed the exact answers of the respondents without looking for underlying messages. But contrary to a strictly quantitative approach the categories have been created on the basis of the content of the answers.

#### **4.11 Validity and reliability**

Despite the fact that I have built the analysis upon an analytical framework already used in previous research I have to consider the appropriateness of the chosen measurements. *Validity* implies the extent to which the measures correctly represent the concept of the study, and whether it is free from systematic or non-random errors.<sup>69</sup> How well is the concept of women's interests defined by the chosen operationalizations; the *recognition of women as a social category* and the *acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes*? There is no direct way to evaluate the validity of an instrument for measuring a concept; instead we are left to our best judgments.<sup>70</sup> The most critical element of the measurements in this study is whether they are relevant in the chosen context: Do I really measure variations in the representation of women's interests, or would the concept of women's interests mean something else to the respondents? In trying to avoid this, I have aimed at finding a translation of the concepts of women's interests into empirical questions that can be seen as generally valid. But most importantly have I conducted interviews with a number of MPs to highlight how the ones I am studying relate to gender-issues and quota in greater depth. The interviews bring to light whether the concepts in focus have a different meaning in the Rwandan context, and can therefore be seen as an evaluation of the measurements used in the survey.

*Reliability* implies the extent to which a variable or a set of variables is consistent in what it is intended to measure. In other words, reliability measures to which extent a procedure gives the same result at different occasions. It differs from validity in that it relates not to *what* should be measured, but instead to *how* it is measured.<sup>71</sup> On the theoretical level, the fact that I have built upon measurements that have already been used for the same purpose (although in a different context), strengthens the reliability of the study. However, on the empirical level I have to take

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<sup>68</sup> Esaiasson, Giljam, Oscarsson, Wängnerud (2002), p. 295.

<sup>69</sup> Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black (1998), *Multivariate data analysis*, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Bernard (2002), *Research methods in Anthropology*, p. 52.

into account that a number of elements might have influenced the results, as a consequence of *how* I have proceeded. I shall first discuss reliability-issues related to the interviews, and thereafter the survey.

Since my interviewees have been treated as respondents and not informants, the risk that I have collected biased, tentative or false information is can be considered as low. I have not analyzed the information in terms of what is true and what is false. Instead the information has been treated as a foundation to better understand different mindsets among the MPs concerning women and men's priorities and the impact of quota. One problematic aspect by conducting interviews is however the balance of posing the right questions so that one gets the desired information without leading the respondents' answers. In an attempt to strike the right balance, I deliberately posed straightforward questions, so that the respondents could feel as free as possible in their answers. The ambition was to prevent them from answering in a way they presumed I would expect them to. To avoid misunderstandings I summarized the respondents' answers after each of the interviews and asked if I had understood them correctly.

Since I wanted to include all of the 80 members of parliament in the survey, I had to apply for permission from the President of the Chamber of Deputies. During my meeting with the President, he gave me the authorization to contact each of the MPs, and he wrote a letter that was distributed to all the MPs encouraging them to facilitate my work by completing the questionnaires. In order to obtain this, I had to motivate my inquiry, which put me in a dilemma: I did not want to reveal the purpose of my study, considering that gender-related issues are loaded questions. I was worried that a clearly pronounced gender-perspective would make the respondents answer in accordance to the politically correct norm. On the other hand, I was depending upon the permission from the President of the Parliament to carry out the empirical study. Finally, I said that the topic of my study was to examine how the MPs experienced their roles as representatives (as I had written on the front-page of the survey), and that I had chosen Rwanda due to the high representation of women. I did not mention quota, and I said as little as possible about what was interesting about the high proportion of women in the parliament. In the letter to the MPs, women's representation was accordingly mentioned. This illustrates that practical challenges

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<sup>71</sup> Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black (1998), *Multivariate data analysis*, p. 90.

must be solved, and sometimes at the expense of methodological rules. I shall not exaggerate the gravity of this incident, as I did not mention quota or gender. Luckily, I did not have to present my study in detail for the MPs while I was distributing the survey either during committee meetings, seminars or plenary sessions, as the MPs had received the letter from the President.

As a researcher, one does always represent someone or something, which might affect the subjects of ones study. A beneficial aspect of being a young female student was that I did not appear threatening to any of the respondents, which might have enabled them to answer more honestly than if I had been someone else. This was the case both during the interviews and the survey. On the other hand, I experienced that I was not always taken seriously, as the respondents had expected someone “bigger” and “older” as some of them said.<sup>72</sup> As Sweden is an important development partner for Rwanda many of the respondents had a positive view of Sweden. Representing Sweden was therefore advantageous in the sense that most of the respondents were helpful, as they wanted me to have a good impression of Rwanda, which eased the collection of the material. Concerning the surveys, it was however disadvantageous in the sense that some of the respondents might have answered in accordance to what they thought would put Rwanda in a positive light instead of answering honestly. With all these methodological notes in mind, we shall move on to the presentation of the empirical analysis.

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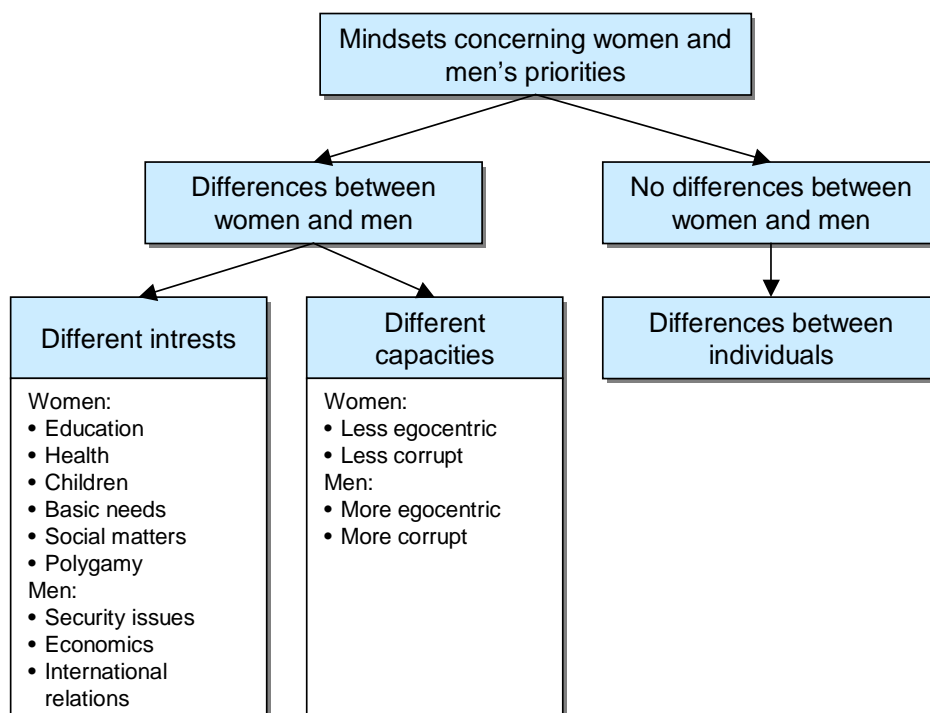
<sup>72</sup> A number of MPs was surprised that I as a young female student had obtained the authorization from the President of the parliament.

## 5 Results, part one: Interviews with the MPs

### 5.1 Do women and men have different priorities?

Theoretically, the main concern of this first part is to highlight whether the concepts in focus of this study are relevant in the Rwandan context. On the empirical level this corresponds to examine the respondents' experiences of women and men's priorities. The categorization of the answers demonstrates three ways of relating to the differences in women and men's political priorities. I shall further explain with quotes from the interviews on what grounds the categorizations have been made.

Figure 5.1: In what way do Rwandan MPs relate to women and men's priorities? A categorization of MPs mindsets based on interviews with nine MPs.



The main distinction is between answers referring to women and men's different priorities and answers referring to no dissimilarities between women and men's priorities. Those who do not experience that women and men have different ways of relating to politics believe that different priorities are better explained by individual dissimilarities. I have argued that frequency is not important, it is however worth noting that only 1 out of 9 respondents did not believe that women and men have different priorities. This respondent claimed the following:

Human beings relate to politics in different ways, because we do all have our individual opinions. But as far as I am concerned this has little to do with gender. (R2)<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, there are different mindsets concerning *how* and *why* women and men relate to politics differently. One way of looking at it is that there are specific needs and interests arising from women's everyday experiences differing from men's. A female respondent articulated:

Women and men have different priorities. Access to water is of great concern to women, because it is a basic condition for human life. Men tend to have more egocentric concerns, thinking more about themselves than their families and surroundings. Children's rights are a typical topic which concerns women. Any question of education and school will be considered as important for women; men care about social affairs to a lower extent. Women fight polygamy, while men do not mind this practice. Women have to negotiate in order to persuade men in these matters. (R3)

Among the answers referring to differences in women and men's interests and concerns are education, health, children, basic needs and social matters being emphasized as women's interests and concerns, while security issues and economics are put forward as men's interests and priorities. A male respondent said the following:

Generally speaking, women are more concerned about welfare and education, about the near things, while men to a higher extent are interested in international relations and world economics. Women tend to be involved in social and moral issues. They do not like things that are too complicated. (R8)

Another mindset is that women and men have different capacities that will influence them as political actors. The respondents highlight that women's role in society and gender relations were fundamentally transformed after the genocide. Women assumed non-traditional social and economic roles, and took on new responsibilities, which forced them to think of themselves differently. Furthermore, some of the respondents hold that most of the consequences of war and violence fall on women. Against this background, they claim that women are more motivated to prevent conflicts, which makes them "better" than men at forgiveness, reconciliation and post-conflict peace building. A female respondent expressed this view:

In Rwanda, women have a stronger will than men to change things positively. Their capacities are as good as men's, and we do all know that women are less corrupt, and that women seek pacifism to a higher extent than men. (R9)

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<sup>73</sup> R2 = respondent number 2.

This statement might be thought provoking. It is worth noting, however, that the same view appears among the male respondents. A male respondent said the following:

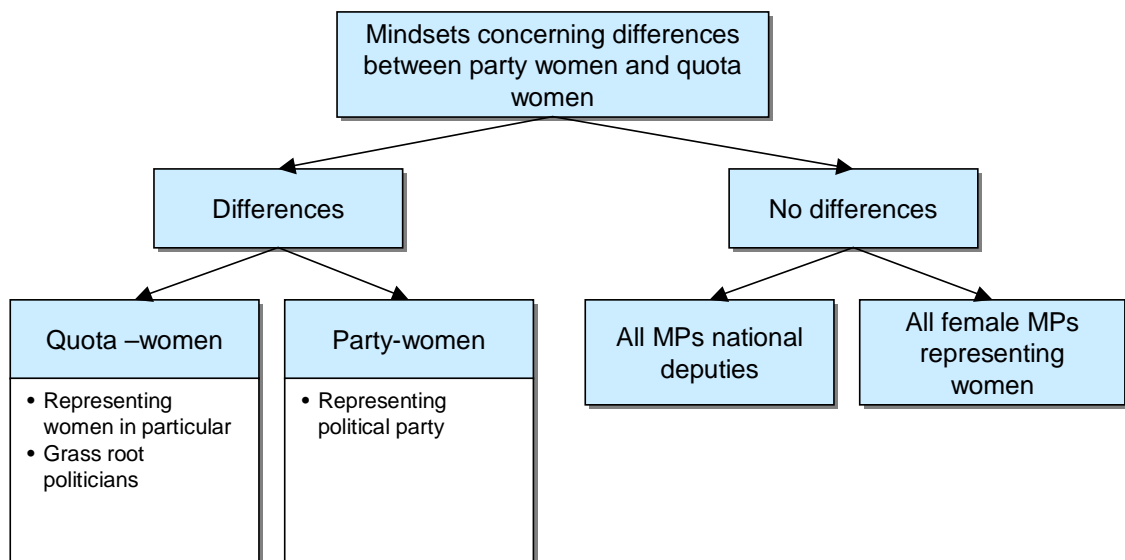
Women are feeding the families, running the businesses and they are taking care of the children. That's why women tend to be less corrupt than men, and they have better moral values. There is no reason to keep them out of politics! (R8)

There are apparently varying opinions of whether women and men relate to politics differently. Those who believe that there is a difference refer to women and men's dissimilar concerns, interests and capacities. It becomes furthermore evident that the respondents outline education, health, basic needs, children's rights and social matters as "women's interests", while security, economics and international relations are regarded as interests concerning men. These mindsets of what characterizes "feminine and masculine political areas" have strong parallels with the attitudes in Western contexts. Still, contextual differences become apparent when issues such as fighting polygamy and access to water are highlighted as women's interests. The most important observation is however that it is relevant to talk about women and men's different priorities in the Rwandan parliament.

## 5.2 Potential differences between “quota-women” and “party-women”

The following analysis aims at highlighting *if* and *in what way* the MPs themselves experience that women elected on quota differ from women elected on party lists. The ambition is to get an idea of how the MPs relate to quota in practice, meaning the women elected on quota. The categorization of the answers show five ways of relating to the relationship between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists. I shall further explain with quotes from the interviews on what grounds the categorizations have been made

Figure 5.2: How do Rwandan MPs relate to women elected on quota in comparison with women elected on party lists? A categorization of MPs mindsets based on interviews with nine MPs.



When I asked the respondents whether they believed there is a difference between women elected on quota and women elected on party lists, article number 64 in the Constitution was referred to:

*Every Member of Parliament represents the whole nation and not just those who elected or nominated him or her or the political organization on whose ticket he or she stood for election.*<sup>74</sup>

Accordingly, the official statement is that all MPs are national deputies. However, it became apparent that the official statement does not necessarily reflect the respondents’ own experiences of the situation. One way of answering was to refer to

<sup>74</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003), article nr. 64.

women elected on quota as representatives for women in particular. A female respondent expressed her view in the following way:

There is no difference between the MPs in theory. Quota is a mechanism to increase the number of women in parliament. But of course women elected on quota in general feel a special commitment to the female part of the population, a responsibility to represent their interests in particular. (R3)

“Quota-women” are elected by a joint assembly composed of members of respective district, municipality and town councils and of the executive committees of women’s organizations at all levels. The majority of the members of the joint assembly are women; only a few men are present.<sup>75</sup> One way of explaining how “quota-women” differ from the remaining MPs was to refer to the unique way in which they are elected. A male respondent said:

Generally the MPs represent a political party which guides their standpoint on different issues. But women elected on quota do not represent a political party, they are elected by mainly women and therefore represent the female population. (...) I was present during the campaigns, and women in the countryside asked the candidates for the women’s seats in what way they could help them. (R7)

During the interviews, I learned that the majority of the women elected on *party lists* were present in the transitional parliament, which I have got confirmed from written sources. None of the women elected on quota were present in the preceding parliament, while 12 out of 15 women elected on party lists were members of the transitional parliament.<sup>76</sup> This implies that women elected on quota in general are new on the political arena, while the majority of the women elected on party lists have longer parliamentary experience. For this reasons, some answers referred to women elected on quota as “grass root” politicians:

Women elected to parliament on party lists were generally already present in the transitional parliament. Most of the women elected on quota live in their provinces. Therefore, one could say that these women to a higher extent can be considered as “grass root politicians” than women elected on party lists. These women tend to know the problems of women and children on the local level well. (R4)

Throughout the interviews I got the impression that the majority of the members of parliament know who among the female MPs that were elected on quota and who were elected on party lists, because women elected on quota tend to have no

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<sup>75</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003), article nr. 76.

<sup>76</sup> UNDP (2002), *The Process of Engendering a New Constitution for Rwanda*, p. 141.

parliamentary experience. Some of the respondents pointed out, however, that my question was controversial in the sense that I was looking for differences, while their aim is to reduce all forms of divisions. A respondent articulated that the creation of the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians, where all of the female MPs are gathered, is a way of building solidarity among women in the parliament, and to make a strong foundation for cooperation. Controversial or not, the answers illustrate certain differences in experience between women elected on quota and the women elected on party lists. A female respondent claimed the following:

According to the article 64 in the Rwandan Constitution, all MPs are national representatives, and no other distinctions shall be made. The main objective with the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians is to eliminate potential divisions being made between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists. Bearing in mind that differences historically tend to create tensions in the Rwandan society efforts are being made to construct unity on all levels. (R5)

It becomes evident that despite the official statement that all MPs are national deputies, there are experiences of certain differences between women elected on quota and women elected on party lists. Due to the unique way “quota-women” are elected to parliament, some experience that they represent women in particular, and that they differ from the remaining MPs as “grass root politicians”. The picture that emerges shows two categories of female MPs, where those elected on quota tends to be new in national politics, while those elected on party lists generally have parliamentary experience. However, on the basis of the preceding analysis we have seen that there are diverse opinions and experiences about women elected on quota as representatives. Whether these experiences have any general relevance will be further examined in the survey.

### **5.3 Contributions of the interviews**

The aim with the interviews was to provide knowledge about *if* and *how* the Rwandan MPs themselves experience differences between women and men’s priorities, and their experiences concerning quota. The interviews would therefore be a way of evaluating the validity of the measurements used in the survey. Have this been achieved, and in what way?

First of all, on the basis of the interviews we have seen that there are mindsets referring to women and men’s different priorities, and that the nature of this division of priorities is comparable to the distinction made in Western societies. We have also

seen that contextual-based differences such as poverty and resource shortage, creates specific interests and concerns. It is therefore relevant to talk about women and men's priorities in the Rwandan context, since the subjects of this study have experiences of this kind.

When it comes to quota, the interviews show different experiences related to women elected on quota as representatives. "Quota-women" are perceived as representatives for women in particular, as grass root politicians, and as national deputies similar to the remaining MPs. Since the empirical research field about quota is limited, the interviews provide a unique insight of various ways of thinking which is a firm foundation upon which to build my further analysis.

The main contribution of the interviews is however the anchoring of the theoretical concepts in the Rwandan context. I will argue that the findings from the interviews contribute to strengthen the validity of the operationalizations of women's interests used in the survey.

## 6 Results, part 2: The empirical findings from the survey

In the following chapter the empirical findings from the survey will be presented.

### 6.1 The recognition of women as a social category

We shall start with the analysis of the first operationalization of women's interests; *the recognition of women as a social category*. On the basis of the theoretical discussion we have seen that the recognition of women as a social category is regarded as a first indicator on women's interests. As already noted, it is not evident how to proceed in order to grasp the MPs' attitudes, as politicians tend to be sensitive to the politically correct norm. I have therefore made a point of *not* pronouncing the gender perspective in the survey conducted among the parliamentarians. I am *not* looking for the politically correct norm concerning the relationship between the sexes; what interests me is the parliamentarians' actual way of thinking about the issue.

I shall start by examining to what degree women as a group is included in MPs state of mind. Do they define women as an important group to represent in their duty as parliamentarians? And do the parliamentarians have frequent contact with women's organizations in their daily political work? In accordance with the purpose of this thesis, I am looking for potential differences or similarities (concerning the representation of women's interests) among the three categories of MPs: Female MPs elected on quota, female MPs elected on party lists and male MPs.<sup>77</sup> The ambition is to find out if female MPs to a greater extent than male MPs represent women's interests, and whether the observations from the interviews, indicating that women elected on quota to a higher extent than those elected on party lists represent women's interests, have any general validity. Do women and men prioritize issues of particular concern to women differently? Is the commitment to represent women's interests stronger among women elected on quota? Do these women have closer contact than other MPs with women's organizations? Throughout the analysis it is imperative to keep in mind that we are dealing with *fine distinctions* of attitudes toward the relationship between the sexes. It is not probable that we will find that parliamentarians are against increased gender equality; what we are looking for is *to*

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<sup>77</sup> In a strict sense I am conducting three comparisons; between women and men, between women elected on quota and the remaining MPs, and between "quota-women" and "party-women". I have chosen to present only two comparisons within the tables, so that the reader can understand the tables more easily. When knowing the results, the comparison between "quota-women" and the remaining MPs has proven to be least decisive, which is why I have chosen to present the comparison in the appendix. The comparison is available in appendix 5.

*what extent* the MPs recognize the representation of women's interests as an important duty and the *frequency-degree* of their contact with women's organizations.

Before continuing, one remark shall be made: In seeking a nuanced picture of the MPs commitment to represent women's interests it would be relevant to understand it against the background of their devotion to other interests. Do the MPs define women as an important group to represent compared to other groups or interests? And what interests and concerns do the MPs consider as most important?

### **6.1.1 MPs' view of their tasks**

In "*Representation from above*", Esaiasson and Holmberg introduce the concept of "job-definition" as a useful analytical instrument in seeking deeper understanding of what is going on within parliaments.<sup>78</sup> The main idea is that MPs are elected to represent diverse interests, and that they organize their performance in accordance with their priorities concerning which interests to represent. The authors claim that for the job-definition approach to be meaningful, MPs views about which interests to promote must have behavioral consequences and an evocative theoretical foundation. In the context of this thesis, the approach is indeed useful to find out whether the MPs define women as an important group to represent. I will argue that the two requirements outlined by the authors for the approach to be meaningful are fulfilled on the basis of the theoretical discussion in chapter 3.

By using the task-definition approach it is possible to distinguish what kind of interests and concerns the MPs prioritize. As such, the MPs' commitment to promote women's interests can be understood in relation to their devotion to other interests. In the survey conducted among the MPs, they were asked to respond to the following question: *How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?* The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories as for instance individuals/voters seeking their help, their political party, and women's interest/views. The aim was to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. In the

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<sup>78</sup> Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996), *Representation from above*, p. 60.

following table, the proportion of MPs who view it as very important to promote various interests shall be presented.

*Table 6.1.1 Proportion of different groups of MPs who view it as very important to promote various interests. (Percent)*

<i>Type of interest:</i>	Women	Men	Diff	Quota - women	Party- women	Diff
Individual voters	87	87	0	82	93	-11
Personally views	41	43	-2	27	57	-30
Political party	54	83	-29	42	64	-22
Region/constituency	43	30	+13	33	54	-21
Young citizens	63	47	+16	50	79	-29
Women	97	60	+37	100	93	+7
Farmers	60	57	+3	69	50	+19
Landless citizens	60	43	+17	69	50	+19
Catholic Church	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Minimum N</i>	26	30		12	13	

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?” The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories: Working with problems brought forward by individual voters, promoting views you personally consider important, promoting the policies of your own party, promoting the interests/views of your own region/constituency, promoting the interests/views of young citizens, promoting the interests/views of women, promoting the interests/views of farmers, promoting the interests/views of landless citizens and promoting the interests/views of the Catholic Church. The ambition has been to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. The table presents the proportion of the respondents who answered “very important”.<sup>79</sup> (Diff= difference)

Table 6.1.1 illustrates that the promotion of women’s interests/views is considered as the most important task among women, while working with problems brought forward by individual voters is viewed as the most important task among men. Furthermore, the interest that is considered as second most important among women is working with problems brought forward by individual voters and thereafter promoting the interests/views of young citizens. Among men, promoting the policies of ones own political party is considered as the second most important task and thereafter the promotion of women’s interests. There are dissimilarities between “quota-women” and “party-women”: Both categories prioritize the promotion of women’s interests/views and working with individuals seeking their help. But the

<sup>79</sup> Tables including all response alternatives are available in appendix 6.

latter group seems to consider promoting the policies of ones political party as a high priority while the former category prioritize the promotion of farmers- and landless citizens interests/views. One possible explanation is that “quota-women” are not officially representing any of the political parties.

It becomes evident that there are different degrees of commitment to represent various interests. On these grounds, I will argue that we have a better understanding of what groups and interests the MPs prioritize, and the commitment to represent women’s interests compared to the devotion of representing various interests. We shall now focus on the promotion of representing women’s interests within the different categories.

Table 6.1.1 confirms the empirical findings from previous research, pointing out that female parliamentarians to a higher extent than their male colleagues distinguish the promotion of women’s interests as very important: Among the female MPs 97 percent consider the promotion of women’s interests/views to be a *very important* duty, respectively 60 percent among the male MPs. The difference between the sexes is 37 percentage points. Still, it is problematic how to interpret the statistics. Results founded on one measurement alone are a weak ground to draw conclusions upon. Consequently, before making any preliminary conclusions we shall put into effect the additional measurement about the recognition of women as a social group, regarding the MPs contact with women’s organizations. But first the results concerning the significance of quota will be discussed.

Among the female respondents elected on quota, all of them claimed the promotion of women’s interests/views to be a *very important* duty, respectively more than two thirds of the remaining MPs (women elected on party lists and men).<sup>80</sup> According to the my findings there is however a bigger difference between female and male MPs when it comes to attitudes concerning the importance of promoting women’s interests/views (+37), than there is between MPs elected on quota and the remaining MPs (+30).

The analysis of the quota-factor has been taken further through examination of what happens when we compare women elected on quota and those elected on party lists, without including the male MPs. What we see is that the differences between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists is delicate, nearly

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<sup>80</sup> The comparison between “quota-women” and the remaining MPs is available in appendix 5.

insignificant (+7). Despite the fact that we are looking for differences in terms of fine distinctions, the presented numbers cannot alone say anything about the significance of quota. *To be able to draw any conclusions we need to find out whether the results of several measurements are pointing to the same direction.*

### 6.1.2 The MPs' party affiliation

From previous research we have seen that party affiliation tends to be a significant factor in order to explain variations in MPs' attitudes on several political issues.<sup>81</sup> Bearing in mind the preceding discussion about the party-system in Rwanda, we shall look into the importance of party affiliation in the Rwandan case. It is, however, worth noting that the number of respondents within each of the groups is small. For this reason, I shall not place too much emphasis on the strength of the results.<sup>82</sup>

*Table 6.1.2 Proportion of MPs within different groups who recognize the promotion of women's interests as a very important duty. (Percent)*

<i>Groups of MPs:</i>	Women	Men	Difference
All MPs	97	60	+37
RPF	89	53	+36
Other parties	100	64	+36

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: *“How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?”* The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories as for instance individuals/voters seeking their help, their political party, and women's interest/views. The aim was to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. The table presents the proportion of the respondents who answered “very important”. Number of respondents within the different groups, women/ men: RPF 9/17, other political parties 6/11. The party-factor is made into a dichotomy; in line with the main distinction in Rwandan politics; the PRF and the PL, UDPR, PSR, PDI, PDC, PSD gathered as one party (other parties).<sup>83</sup> As women elected on quota do not represent a political party they are not included in table 6.1.2. (Diff=difference)

Table 6.1.2 implies that women are more eager than men to promote women's interests despite political party. There are no indications that the differences between women and men are noticeably smaller within one or another political party; the effect of the MPs gender seem to be stable under control for party affiliation.

<sup>81</sup> Wängnerud (1998), p. 143, Norris and Lovenduski (1995), p. 224, Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996), p. 37.

<sup>82</sup> For further information, see appendix 4.

<sup>83</sup> NORDEM 2003.

So far, the most interesting findings indicate that women's interests are best looked after by female MPs also in the Rwandan case. It is, however, too early to jump to any conclusions at this stage. In what follows, the MPs legislative behavior shall be analyzed. The question is; are the presented results, demonstrating that female MPs to a higher extent than male MPs represent the interests of women, valid with regard to legislative behavior? And what will further examination tell us about the significance of quota?

### **6.1.3 Legislative behavior: MPs' contact with women's organizations**

The previous analysis focused on the MPs preparedness to promote the interests/views of women. In the following section, we shall examine to what extent this preparedness is translated into practical actions. In this study, practical actions are measured by examining MPs frequency of contact with women's organizations. From the theoretical discussion we remember that examining whether women's organizations are included in the MPs network is the next analytical step in order to trace the representation of women's interests. The analysis relies on self-reported behavior; a prerequisite is therefore that the respondents report their true degree of communication. However, the exact levels of contact are not essential; the priority is to get an idea of the contact-frequency between the three categories of MPs and women's organizations. In the survey conducted among the MPs, the following question were asked: *Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?*

Table 6.1.3 MPs degree of contact with women's organizations. (Percent)

Contact frequency:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Once/twice a week	43	3	+40	50	36	+14
Once/twice a month	47	27	+20	44	50	-6
Rare/never	10	70	-60	6	14	-8

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?” The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with 8 categories of authorities, groups and organizations as for instance central or local government authorities in their own constituency, women’s organizations etc. The respondents were offered the following response alternatives: Once a week, once or twice a month, a few times and never. The last two response categories have been put together due to none or very few respondents picking the last alternative.<sup>84</sup> Number of respondents: Women/men 30/30, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 16/13. (Diff = difference)

Table 6.1.3 demonstrates that 43 percent of the female MPs have been in contact with women’s organizations once a week during the last six months. Among the male MPs only 3 percent have had as frequent contact with women’s organizations. From an opposite angle, 10 percent among the women have been in touch with women’s organizations *less than a few times*, and as many as 70 percent among the men. The difference illustrated in percentage points between female MPs’ communication with women’s organizations once a week respectively male MPs is +40. This indicates that women have considerably more frequent contact with women’s organizations than men.

When it comes to women elected on quota’s degree of contact with women’s organizations compared with the remaining MPs, the comparison demonstrates that half of the former group have been in touch with women’s organizations once a week during the last six months, and 14 percent in the latter group.<sup>85</sup> The outcome shows that there are dissimilarities between those elected on quota and the remaining MPs: Women elected on quota have noticeably closer contact with women’s organizations than the remaining MPs (+36). Still, the difference between female and male MPs is more significant than among MPs elected on quota and those elected on party lists

<sup>84</sup> Tables including all response alternatives are available in appendix 6.

<sup>85</sup> The comparison between “quota-women” and the remaining MPs is available in appendix 5.

(+40). This indicates that the variations of contact-frequency with women’s organizations are better explained by the gender-factor than the quota-factor.

When looking for differences or similarities between the female MPs we have seen that 50 percent of the women elected on quota have been in contact with women’s organizations once a week during the last six months. Among women elected on party lists the corresponding part is 36 percent. The difference between women elected on quota and women elected on party lists is minor even with regard to legislative behavior, still it is slightly more significant than in the previous analysis, which is why it is problematic to interpret these numbers in order to give a fair and representative picture of the reality: According to the presented numbers it would appear that women elected on quota have marginally closer contact with women’s organizations than their female colleagues elected on party lists. But due to the small variations, jumping to conclusions would be unreasonable and incorrect.

*Table 6.1.4 MPs within different groups who have been in contact with women’s organizations once a week during the last six months. (Percent)*

Group of MPs:	Women	Men	Difference
All MPs	43	3	+40
RPF	44	0	+44
Other parties	33	9	+24

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?” The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with 8 categories of authorities, groups and organizations as for instance central or local government authorities in their own constituency, women’s organizations etc. The respondents were offered the following response alternatives: Once a week, once or twice a month, a few times and never. The table presents the proportion of MPs who have been in contact with women’s organizations “once or twice a week” during the last six months. Number of respondents within each group, women/men: All MPs 30/30, RPF 9/17, other parties 6/11. The category of other parties consists of the six parties; PDC, PDI, PSR, UDPR, PL and PSD.

In table 6.1.4 the effect of MPs gender is being controlled for MPs party affiliation. Within the RPF, women have significantly closer contact with women’s organizations than men (+44). But within the category of “other parties” is the difference between the sexes degree of contact less apparent (+24). Because of the small number of respondents within this group it is problematic to interpret the results. One possible interpretation would be that party affiliation matters *to some extent* in the Rwandan context. However, the main result is that gender is a more decisive factor.

To summarize, the results from the analysis of the MPs legislative behavior strengthen the validity of the findings from the task-definition approach: Women tend to not only be more committed to promote interests concerning women than men, female MPs appear to have more frequent contact with women's organizations than their male colleagues. The findings also suggest that women elected on quota tend to have more frequent contact with women's organizations than the remaining MPs (+36), still the differences between women and men are more significant (+40). The comparison between the female MPs indicate once more that women elected on quota are vaguely more enthusiastic toward representing women's interests than their female colleagues elected on party lists. Still there is a need to conduct further analysis in order to draw any conclusions.

#### **6.1.5 Correspondence between the MPs attitudes and behavior**

In the previous section, the extent to which MPs attitudes are translated into practical actions was analyzed. Thus we were looking at the general level of interaction between the different categories of MPs and women's organizations. In the following part, we shall take the analysis one step further by examining the *correspondence* between attitudes and behavior. Do MPs who recognize women's interests /views as very important have frequent contact with women's organizations? The idea is that the representation of women's interests is stronger if an MP not only on a theoretical level talks about the importance of interests concerning women, but also promotes these kind of questions in practice.

Table 6.1.5 Do MPs who recognize the promotion of women's interests as a very important duty have frequent contact with women's organizations? The table presents the proportion of MPs who recognize the arguments to be very important. (Percent)

Contact frequency:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Once a week	43	5	+38	47	39	+8
Once/twice a month	46	39	+7	47	46	+1
Rare/never	11	56	-45	6	15	-9
Number of respondents	28	18		15	13	

**Notes:** A cross tabulation between 2 questions has been done: 1) "How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?" The "very important"-category includes respondents who recognize the promotion of women's interests as "very important". 2) "Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?" The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with women's organizations. The response alternatives were; once a week, once or twice a month, a few times or never. The last two response categories have been put together due to none or very few respondents picking the last alternative.<sup>86</sup> (Diff=difference)

The findings reveal an opposite tendency between the female and the male MPs: Among the female MPs who recognize the promotion of women's interests to be a *very important* duty the greater part (more than 80 percent) have had contact with women's organizations more than *once or twice a month*. Among the male MPs more than half of those who claimed the representation of women's interests to be *very important* have had rare or no communication with women's organizations. The results imply that the female MPs who distinguish the representation of women's interests as *very important* also tend to have frequent contact with women's organizations, which is not the case among the male MPs. In others words; male MPs who supposedly advocate women's interests do not, *to the same degree* as their female colleagues, transfer their attitudes into practice.

The next analytical step is to examine the correspondence between attitudes and behavior among women elected on quota compared to the remaining MPs.<sup>87</sup> Nearly half of the MPs elected on quota who claimed the promotion of women's interests to be very important have had contact with women's organizations once a week. The corresponding part among the remaining MPs is nearly one fifth. This

<sup>86</sup> Tables including all response alternatives are available in appendix 6.

illustrates that the difference between the sexes once more is more distinctive (+38) than between MPs elected on quota or not (+28).

A comparison between the two categories of female MPs, reveals once again a small difference: The connection between attitudes and behavior appears to be vaguely stronger among women elected on quota than among those elected on party lists (+8).

The main result of the analysis is a clear correspondence between women's attitudes and behavior, in the sense that those who claim women's interest to be very important also have frequent contact with women's organization. Among men there is no such connection; male MPs seem to recognize the representation of women's interests as a very important duty and at the same time having a low degree of contact with women's organizations. Therefore, the results support the findings from the previous analysis; the representation of women's interests is stronger among female MPs than among their male colleagues. Once more the quota-factor is significant, but the difference is better explained by the MPs gender. Regarding the two categories of female MPs, the result will be accounted for in the final analysis.

## **6.2 The acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes**

We shall examine the second operationalization of women's interests; *the acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes*. The assumption upon which the following analysis is made, is that the more committed an MP is to achieve gender equality, and the more active he/she is in promoting gender-related issues, the stronger is the acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes. Accordingly, the MPs views on the importance of gender equality and to what extent gender-issues are incorporated in their parliamentary work shall be examined. Bearing in mind that equality between the sexes is considered as a popular topic within political circles (and in general) we would rather formulate questions without pronouncing the term *gender-equality*. Asking the MPs whether or not they are pro gender equality would most probably provide us with answers in line with the politically correct norm. One alternative way of taking hold of their mindsets is to examine their manner of arguing for an equal proportion of women and men within their own place of work; the parliament. The MPs were asked to consider the main

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<sup>87</sup> The comparison between "quota-women" and the remaining MPs is available in appendix 5.

arguments distinguished by scholars in order to increase the number of women in parliament. The justice argument points to women’s right to be represented. The experience argument highlights women’s different life experiences, which again would change the working climate and the interest argument refers to women and men’s conflicting interests.<sup>88</sup>

### 6.2.1 Attitudes toward gender equality within the parliament

The MPs were asked the following question: *There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?* Based on the main arguments in the theory of women’s representation, four arguments were presented: 1) The composition of the Parliament should reflect the most important groups in society, 2) women and men have different life experience, 3) working procedures and climate of discussion will change and 4) there will be consequences on politics. What we are looking for is whether women and men highlight different arguments, and do women elected on quota discern from the other MPs?

*Table 6.2.1 Arguments in favor of an equal distribution of women and men within the parliament. The table presents the proportion of MPs who recognize the arguments to be very important. (Percent)*

<i>Arguments:</i>	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society	68	43	+25	64	71	-7
Women have different life experience	64	40	+24	71	57	+14
Working procedures will change	64	20	+44	86	43	+43
There will be consequences on politics	67	47	+20	85	50	+35

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: *“There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?”* The arguments were: 1) The composition of the Parliament should reflect the most important groups in society, 2) women and men have different life experience, 3) working procedures and climate of discussion will change and 4) there will be consequences on politics. Response alternatives: very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. The “very important”-category is presented in table 6.2.1.<sup>89</sup> Number of respondents: Women/men 28/30, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 14/14. (Diff=difference)

<sup>88</sup> Phillips (1995), Dahlerup (1978), Wängnerud (1998).

<sup>89</sup> Tables including all response alternatives are available in appendix 6.

Primarily, the results indicate that the majority of the MPs *in theory* consider gender equality to be an urgent matter. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish a pattern: There is a considerably higher number of women than men among those who recognize the arguments to be very important. Keeping in mind that focus is placed on *fine distinctions*, the preliminary conclusion must be that female MPs are more enthusiastic than their male colleagues in their support of gender equality within the parliament.

An interesting observation is that both categories highlight the justice argument and the argument that it will be consequences on politics the most. One could say that these arguments are so called poles apart: The former does not imply that the inclusion of women have any consequences; the point is rather that the unfairness of not including women speaks for itself. The latter indicates that the inclusion of women in politics will put marks on the politics of the future. One possible interpretation would be that the support for the two different arguments indicates a strong acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes. A more cynical interpretation would be that the respondents have answered in accordance with the politically correct norm, because these arguments are often discussed. I shall not delve into further interpretations for now; the subject will be taken into account in the final discussion.

When focusing on the comparison between women elected on quota and the remaining MPs we see that those elected on quota have the highest values concerning all of the four arguments.<sup>90</sup> The most interesting finding is that the differences between the female MPs elected on quota and the remaining MPs are bigger than the dissimilarities between women and men regarding all of the arguments except when it comes to the justice-argument. This result diverges from the previous findings; concerning the recognition of arguments to increase the number of women in parliament, the difference between female MPs elected on quota and the remaining MPs is more evident than between women and men.

The results from the comparison between women elected on party list and those elected on quota points in the same direction: Female MPs elected on quota tend to acknowledge all of the arguments to a higher extent than female MPs elected on party lists, with one exception; the justice argument.

It might seem like the results are pointing in different directions. In the attempt at summarizing the results, we shall take into account the findings from the previous analysis of *the recognition of women as a social category*. What we can tell is that the findings support the results from the preceding analysis, in the sense that female MPs to a higher extent than male MPs acknowledge the importance of gender equality within the parliament. Female MPs, even in this regard, are better representatives of women's interests. On the contrary, these results differ from previous findings in the sense that the quota-factor seems to be more outstanding regarding attitudes toward gender equality within the parliament. In the opposite of previous results where the differences between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists have been delicate, the dissimilarities concerning attitudes toward gender equality seem to be more apparent. But can we on the basis of these results conclude that women elected on quota to a higher extent than those elected on party lists represent women's interests? The answer is, in the name of validity, that conclusions must be founded upon the gathered results from each of the analysis. *What we could say at this stage, is that women elected on quota seem to highlight the importance of different arguments in favor of increased female representation in the parliament to a higher extent than women elected on party lists.*

### **6.2.2 The political conviction of the MPs**

I shall in the following part present a more systematic analysis of the previous argument-question. By arranging the different arguments within an index, it is possible to get a more complete picture of the MPs devotion to gender equality. The idea is to measure the MPs conviction in accordance to how important he/she considers the arguments to be. Thus the assumption is that the more important he/she recognizes each of the arguments to be, the more devoted is he/she to achieve gender equality. The index is organized from 4-16 points. 4 points indicate that all of the arguments to increase the equal distribution of women and men in the parliament have been recognized as *not at all important*, and 16 points means that all of the arguments have been regarded as *very important*. The table presents the mean within the different categories.

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<sup>90</sup> The comparison between "quota-women" and the remaining MPs is available in appendix 5.

Table 6.2.2 MPs' attitudes toward gender equality, presented as means on a scale running from 4 (not at all important argument) to 16 (very important argument).

Groups of MPs:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
All MPs	13,8	12,2	+1,6	14,6	13	+1,6
RPF	12,7	12	+0,7			
Other parties	14,3	12,4	+1,9			

**Notes:** The results from the index build upon the following question: “*There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?*” 1) Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society 2) Women have different life experience 3) Working procedures will change 4) There will be consequences on politics. The index is organized from 4 points (all arguments are unimportant) to 16 points (all arguments are very important). Number of respondents within each category, women/men: All respondents 27/30, RPF 9/17, other political parties 6/11, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 13/14. The category of other parties consists of the six parties; PDC, PDI, PSR, UDPR, PL and PSD. (Diff = difference)

The results verify the findings from the previous analysis that women to a higher extent than men are eager to promote gender equality, despite political party. Still, party affiliation matters: The difference between women and men’s attitudes toward gender equality is less significant within the RPF (0,7 levels of measurements),<sup>91</sup> than between women and men within the other political parties (1,9 levels of measurements). The most interesting observation is however, that women elected on gender quota have a higher value on the scale than women elected on party lists.

### 6.2.3 The MPs’ parliamentary work

In order to capture the MPs’ acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes, we have so far analyzed MPs opinions on various arguments in favor of women’s representation within the parliament. Furthermore we have distinguished degrees of enthusiasm in supporting gender-equality. But results based on attitudes only are incomplete in the sense that there is no assurance that they will have practical consequences. Therefore, we need to get hold of the MPs parliamentary work; do they transfer their mind-sets concerning gender equality into actions?<sup>92</sup> The difficulty consists of how to measure the MPs activities when the results are depending upon self-reported behavior. A different strategy was therefore used; unlike the previous analysis where the MPs were asked their opinions on certain

<sup>91</sup> “Level of measurements” signifies the Swedish term “skalsteg”.

<sup>92</sup> There is no guarantee that indications of behaviour translate into real actions. Still, by both measuring attitudes and behaviour the validity increases.

response alternatives, the MPs were asked to specify *themselves* the political questions that are important to them personally. The assumption is that the MPs' political interests indicate the content of their parliamentary work. By not offering the MPs response alternatives the idea is to minimize the risk of getting answers reflecting the politically correct norm and to get a more realistic picture of the MPs' states of mind. The measurement is constructive in the sense that it offers a different approach in order to capture the content of the MPs' behavior. It is therefore particularly interesting whether previous findings will be valid with regard to the MPs' self-definition of their personal agenda.

The MPs were asked the following question: *Which political issue or areas are you most interested in?* In order to conduct the analysis I have encoded the answers in a qualitative manner. What I am looking for is to what extent the MPs identify gender-related issues on their personal political agenda. Answers containing subjects like "women's rights", "gender equality" or "gender-politics" have been categorized as "gender-related issues."<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, I have examined who among the respondents have mentioned "gender-related" issues as first priority. The only assumption made is that the MPs mention the area they consider as the most important first. The problem with such an approach is that the results do not include respondents having mentioned gender-related issues as priority number two or maybe three. In the attempt at getting a more complete picture of the integration of gender-related issues on the MPs personal agendas, I have in addition analyzed how many of the respondents who does include gender-related issues *at all*.

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<sup>93</sup> When it comes to defining the category of gender related issues I have tested whether the results differ if *social affairs* are included in the category. This would mean a more generous definition of the gender related issues category. The test show that the results differ in the sense that the proportion of those who include gender related issues increases, but most important, that the distribution in terms of sex remains.

## 6.2.4 Gender-related issues as first priority

Table 6.2.4 Proportion of MPs who mention gender-related issues as a first priority. The table presents those who mention gender-related issues or economic issues as a first priority. (Percent)

Type of priority:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Gender -related issues	20	0	+20	23	17	+6
Economic issues	12	40	-28	8	17	-9

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “Which political issue or areas are you most interested in?” The respondents were requested to answer with their own words. Number of respondents: Women/men 25/30, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 13/12. (Diff=difference)

The most striking observation is that the number of MPs who seem to transfer their attitudes toward gender-equality into their parliamentary work is noticeably low. Table 6.2.4 shows that one fifth of the female MPs have put gender-related issues as the first priority on their personal political agenda. None among the male MPs have done so. Assuming that the MPs personal agenda will have behavioral consequences, the results indicate that gender equality is a relatively higher priority in the female MPs’ parliamentary work, than within the male MPs’ work. Another interesting finding is that the male MPs tend to incorporate economic issues more than female MPs in their parliamentary work, which is in line with the results from the interviews concerning the MPs’ own experiences of women and men’s different political priorities. As none among the male MPs acknowledge gender-related issues as their main concern, there is no doubt that the dissimilarities are more significant between women and men than between those elected on quota and the remaining MPs.

In table 6.2.4 we see that the difference between women elected on quota and those elected on party lists is too small to be taken into account. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the results from the different indicators examined so far, a pattern is emerging: Although the dissimilarities are small, there is a tendency pointing toward women elected on quota as more committed to representing women’s interests than those elected on party lists.

However, these findings point to the number of MPs who define gender-related issues as their number one interest. The next analytical step is to examine how many among the respondents who actually mention gender-related issues *at all*.

## 6.2.5 Including gender-related issues?

Table 6.2.5 Who among the MPs have included gender-related issues on their personal agenda? (Percent)

Group of MPs:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
All MPs	28	7	+21	31	25	+6
RPF	26	6	+20			
Other parties	40	9	+31			

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “Which political issue or areas are you most interested in?” The respondents were requested to answer with their own words. Numbers of respondents, women/men: All MPs 25/30, RPF 8/17, and other parties 5/11, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 13/12. (Diff=difference)

The results confirm that nearly one third of the female respondents integrate gender-related issues in their parliamentary work. On the contrary, one can tell that the male respondents do incorporate issues like gender equality on their political agenda *to a low extent*. An interesting observation is that there is a considerably larger group of female MPs who support arguments in favor to increase the proportion of women in parliament, than those who promote gender-related issues in their parliamentary work. Within both the RPF and the gathering of the remaining parties do female MPs to a greater extent than male MPs promote gender-related issues.

One can tell from table 6.2.5 that there is a small difference between women elected on quota and women elected on party lists: The former group has a vaguely higher value of percentage with regard to those who include gender-related issues in their parliamentary work.

To summarize, we have analyzed indicators on MPs commitment to achieve gender equality and the promotion of gender issues in their parliamentary work. According to the results, women’s dedication to gender-equality is stronger than men’s, both on a theoretical level (attitudes) and in a practical sense (parliamentary work). Female MPs acknowledge to a higher extent than male MPs, the unequal balance of power between the sexes. Still, the indicator of attitudes toward gender-equality points out that the main distinction is not between women and men, but between women elected on quota and the remaining MPs. Between women elected on party lists and those elected on quota the differences are small; it is time to put the results in a systematic relation to each other.

## 7 Conclusions

In the following section I will return to the questions that were initially posed and discuss the results in accordance to them. Furthermore, I will discuss how the results can be related to existing theories and the initial research problems. The research questions were:

1. Do female and male MPs prioritize women's interests differently?
2. Do women elected on quota to a higher extent than other MPs represent women's interests?
3. Are women elected on quota representatives for the population in general or women in particular?

The main results from the examination of variations in the representation of women's interests in the Rwandan parliament caused by gender (in terms of the MPs gender) and quota (in terms of MPs elected on quota) are that *gender* better explains variations in the representation of women's interests than *quota*. The findings demonstrate that women in the Rwandan parliament to a higher extent than men represent women's interests. Furthermore, the findings indicate that women elected on quota are slightly more eager than women elected on party lists to represent women's interests. Why I have come to these conclusions, and how these results can be related to the initial research problems will be addressed in the discussion that follows.

The conclusions are based upon the overall results from several measurements. Whether or not the results from various measurements point to the same direction have been decisive. The operationalizations of women's interests into 1) the recognition of women as a social group, and 2) the acknowledgement of the unequal balance of power between the sexes, were examined both through MPs attitudes and legislative behavior. On all of the indicators, female MPs turned out to be more enthusiastic than their male colleagues: Women are more committed to the promotion of women's interests than men are, and they also have more frequent contact than men with women's organizations. Furthermore, women seem to support gender equality within the parliament to a greater extent than men, and they include gender-related issues in their parliamentary work more than men. It is worth noting, however, that there is a considerable gap between the proportion of MPs who theoretically support increasing gender equality within the parliament and those who

actually include gender-issues in their parliamentary work. This illustrates the importance of focusing on both MPs attitudes and behavior in order to obtain a more balanced picture of the situation. Nevertheless, this does not change the main results that women prioritize women's interests to a higher extent than men. When it comes to the significance of quota, gender has proven to be a more decisive factor on six out of seven indicators. I have therefore come to the conclusion that the gender-factor better explains variations in the representation of women's interests than the quota-factor. Concerning the MPs party affiliation, I have come to the conclusion that it is a less significant factor than MPs gender. On all of the indicators are women, despite political party, more enthusiastic than men in order to represent issues of particular concern to women. There are, however, some marginal variations: Within the category of "other political parties", the difference between the sexes degree of contact with women's organizations is relatively small, and the dissimilarity between women and men's attitudes toward gender equality within the parliament is less apparent within the RPF. Nevertheless, the main result is that the effects of MPs gender remain significant under control for party affiliation.

To be able to answer the second research question, whether women elected on quota to a greater extent than women elected on party lists represent women's interests the comparison between the two categories will be addressed. On all of the indicators, the results demonstrate that women elected on quota are slightly more committed to the representation of women's interests than those elected on party lists: "Quota-women" tend to be vaguely more enthusiastic than "party-women" in their commitment to promote interests of particular concern to women and they have slightly more frequent contact with women's organizations than those elected on party lists. They also support increasing gender equality within the parliament to a higher extent than women elected on party lists, and they include gender issues somewhat more than those elected on party lists. Although the differences between the two categories of MPs are small, the pattern is consistent in the sense that women elected on quota have higher values on all of the indicators. But can we, on these grounds, conclude that women elected on quota to a higher extent than women elected on party list represent women's interests? Such a conclusion is problematic due to the very small differences between the two categories on each indicator despite the pattern that has emerged. My judgment is, however, that the conclusion can be drawn due to the gathered results, but with certain reservations: The results can only be regarded as

valid in the Rwandan context, and should be further examined with different approaches. The conclusion that women elected on quota are slightly more eager to represent women's interests than those elected on party lists cannot be generalized to other countries where quota has been implemented. The findings constitute, however, an interesting starting point for further examination concerning the significance of quota.

Where does this lead us when it comes to the last research question; whether women elected on quota represent the population in general or women in particular? Can we on the basis of the previous analysis highlight what kind of representatives women elected on quota are? As already discussed, there is no accurate way of interpreting the results from the analysis. The results open for the interpretation that women elected on quota are representing women in particular. On the other hand, I have not measured to what extent these women are committed to represent the population in general. Therefore, this last research question cannot be answered in strictly accurate terms. What we have is indications pointing toward women elected on quota as particularly dedicated to representing women.

Now that I know the results, I shall ask one self-critical question: How valid are these findings? How can I be certain that the MPs have answered in accordance to their personal opinions and not the politically correct norm? The answer is, that there are no guarantees for this. However, since the survey consisted of questions indicating both attitudes and behavior, and because the method has been used for the same purpose in previous research I will argue that the findings should be regarded as valid.

## **8 A wider perspective**

In the first chapter of this thesis, I discussed two parallel research problems that I wanted to highlight in this study. The first problem was related to whether previous findings from Western contexts concerning the representation of women's interests could be regarded as valid in a non-Western context. The second problem was connected to the impact that quota has on women's representation. How can the conclusions be related to these initial research problems? In what way can the results be understood in a wider perspective?

Primarily, the findings confirm results from previous research in Western contexts: Female MPs represent women's interests to a greater extent than male MPs in the Rwandan parliament. I will argue that this study contributes to strengthen the

generalizability of existing theories about the significance of gender in representative democracy. The findings indicate that the explanatory power of existing theories is appropriate also in a society with authoritarian tendencies such as Rwanda. As already pointed out, I will argue that the results from this study can be applied to other African countries emerging from conflicts.

Secondly, the findings indicate that the use of gender quota in Rwanda have created a number of MPs that experience a special commitment to the female part of the population. One might question how the findings could be extended to the impact of quota when I have not controlled for factors such as level of education, parliamentary experience, ethnic background or age. However, the ambition has not been to isolate the impact of quota from other factors or to evaluate normative aspects of the use of quota; an emphasis has been placed on highlighting women elected on quota's commitment toward the representation of women's interests in comparison with the remaining MPs. The findings indicate that the use of quota in the Rwandan context has contributed to the presence of MPs with a strong commitment to representing women.

How then, can these results be understood in a wider perspective? What does it mean that women to a greater extent than men represent women's interests, and that women elected on quota are slightly more eager than those elected on party lists to represent issues of particular concern to women? Does it guarantee a society where women and men are treated as equals? Above all, this thesis contributes to confirm previous research demonstrating that a parliament with a high proportion of women is more likely to give equal consideration to women's interests than a male-dominated parliament. In other words, the findings illustrate that it matters who our representatives are. In this study, possibilities related to the use of quota as an instrument to increase the number of women in parliaments have been highlighted. It is however important to keep in mind that there are a number of risks related to the use of quota that I have not been able to consider. It is critical to distinguish between the findings of this study and the MPs actual abilities to influence politics. There are reasons to believe that the authoritarian tendencies in Rwanda are restricting politicians freedom of action. Therefore, the results do not imply that a high number of female parliamentarians translate to cultural and social reality overnight. However, the findings of this study indicate that the introduction of quota to increase the number of female parliamentarians needs to be regarded as a necessary first step on the

difficult road toward gender equality. This said, future research should look into the long-term consequences of quota, both for the women elected to parliament and the female population.

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Global Database of Quotas for Women:

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National Electoral Commission of Rwanda:

[www.comelena.gov.rw/francais/depiteabagore](http://www.comelena.gov.rw/francais/depiteabagore).

Rwandan Parliament:

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## **Legal documents**

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003).

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Electoral law: Organic law N. 17/2003 of 07/7/2003 governing Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

## Appendix 1: Women in parliaments

### *World average of women in parliaments*

Total MPs	42'704
Men	34'703
Women	6'436
<i>Percentage of women</i>	<i>15,6 %</i>

**Notes:** The table shows both houses combined.

### *Regional average of women in parliaments (percent).*

Nordic countries	39,7 %
Europe-OSCE member countries, including Nordic countries	18,7 %
Europe- OSCE member countries, excluding Nordic countries	16,6 %
Americas	18,5 %
Asia	15,2 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	14,5 %
Pacific	10,9 %
Arab States	6,8 %

**Notes:** The table shows the percentage of women in single- or lower house.

Source: [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

## **Appendix 2: Article 9 in the Rwandan Constitution**

Article 9: The State of Rwanda commits itself to conform to the following fundamental principles to promote and enforce the respect thereof:

(4) building a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty percent of posts in decision making organs.

### Appendix 3: Statistical methods

#### Cross-tabulation

As this thesis is aiming at examining the relationship between several variables it is appropriate to use cross-tabulations. Cross-tabulations can be defined as a table in which data are compared using a row and column format. Cross tabulations are very useful in order to compare the results from different subsets of the respondents. For instance, it allows me to compare how the responses are depending on the respondents' gender.

#### Statistical inference and significance

Nearly all multivariate techniques are based on the statistical inference of a population's values or relationships among variables from a randomly drawn sample of the population. Since I have conducted a census of the entire population (total sample), statistical inferences are unnecessary, because any difference or relationship, however small, is "true" and does exist. In my study, statistical significance can be interpreted as whether the results are differing from what could be random. However, when drawing the conclusions an emphasis has been placed on whether the results of several measurements are pointing to the same direction.

#### Missing data

A respondent's refusal to answer leads to missing values. Missing data might influence the results, and as a researcher it is important to identify any patterns in the missing data. Are the missing data scattered randomly throughout the observations or are the distinct patterns identifiable? In my study, the number of missing cases varies from one to five. As five cases missing are rare in the study, I have not been able to identify any patterns of the missing data that would eventually affect the results.

#### Sample size

A researcher using multivariate techniques should always assess the results in the light of the sample used in the analysis, as the sample size has a substantial impact in achieving statistical significance both in small and large sample sizes. For smaller sample sizes, such as in my study, the sophistication and complexity of the multivariate technique may easily result in either too little statistical power for the test to realistically identify significant results or too easily an "over fitting" of the data such that the results are artificially good because they fit the sample very well, yet have no generalizability. Sample sizes also affect the results when the analyses involve groups of respondents; unequal sample sizes among groups influence the results and require additional interpretation.<sup>94</sup> In this study, the size of the MPs within different political parties is most critical. The category of "other political parties" consists of only 6 female respondents and 11 male respondents. Within the RPF-category there are 9 female respondents respectively 17 male. For this reason, I have not emphasized the importance of the results where these groups are involved.

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<sup>94</sup> Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998).

#### **Appendix 4: Interview guide**

- Could you describe for me, how you got involved in politics?
- In your point of view, are there any differences between women elected to parliament on quota and women elected on party lists?
- Why, in your point of view, is it important to involve women in politics?
- In your opinion, do women and men relate to politics differently?
- Could you describe your daily work as an MP for me?

## Appendix 5: Tables including the comparison of “quota-women” and the remaining MP

Table 6.1.1 Proportion of different groups of MPs who view it as very important to promote various interests. (Percent)

Type of interest:	Women	Men	Quota - women	All MPs except quota	Party-women
Individual voters	87	87	82	89	93
Personally views	41	43	27	48	57
Political party	54	83	42	77	64
Region/constituency	43	30	33	37	54
Young citizens	63	47	50	57	79
Women	97	60	100	71	93
Farmers	60	57	69	55	50
Landless citizens	60	43	69	46	50
Catholic Church	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum N	26	30	12	43	13

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament” The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories: Working with problems brought forward by individual voters, promoting views you personally consider important, promoting the policies of your own party, promoting the interests/views of your own region/constituency, promoting the interests/views of young citizens, promoting the interests/views of women, promoting the interests/views of farmers, promoting the interests/views of landless citizens and promoting the interests/views of the Catholic Church. The ambition has been to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important.

Table 6.1.2 Proportion of different groups of MPs who view it as very important to promote women’s interests/views. (Percent)

	Women	Men	Diff	Quota women	All Mps except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Very Important	97	60	+37	100	70	+30	100	93	+7

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?” The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories as for instance individuals/voters seeking their help, their political party, and women’s interest/views. The aim was to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. (None of the respondents answered *not at all important*, and very few *not very important*, which is why the three categories; *fairly important*, *not very important* and *not at all important* is put together as

important.) Number of respondents: Women/ men 30/30, women elected on quota/ the remaining MPs 16/44, women elected on quota/ women elected on party list 16/ 14. (Diff = difference)

Table 6.1.3 MPs degree of contact with women's organizations. (Percent)

Contact frequency:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	All MPs except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Once/twice a week	43	3	+40	50	14	+36	50	36	+14
Once/twice a month	47	27	+20	44	34	+10	44	50	-6
Rare/never	10	70	-60	6	52	-46	6	14	-8

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: “Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?” The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with 8 categories of authorities, groups and organizations as for instance central or local government authorities in their own constituency, women’s organizations etc. The respondents were offered the following response alternatives: *Once a week, once or twice a month, a few times and never.* The last two response categories have been put together due to none or very few respondents picking the last alternative. Number of respondents: Women/men 30/30, women elected on quota/the remaining MPs 16/44, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 16/13. (Diff = difference)

Table 6.1.5 Do the MPs who recognize the promotion of women's interests as a very important duty have frequent contact with women's organizations? The table presents the proportion of MPs who recognize the arguments to be very important. (Percent)

Contact frequency:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	All MPs except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Once a week	43	5	+38	47	19	+28	47	39	+8
Once/twice a month	46	39	+7	47	42	+5	47	46	+1
Rare/never	11	56	-45	6	39	-33	6	15	-9
Number of respondents	28	18		15	31		15	13	

**Notes:** A cross tabulation between 2 questions has been done: 1) “How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?” The very important category includes respondents who recognize the promotion of women’s interests to very important. 2) “Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?” The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with women’s organizations. The response alternatives were; *once a week, once or twice a month, a few times or never.* The last two response categories have been put together due to none or very few respondents picking the last alternative.

Table 6.2.1 Arguments in favor of an equal distribution of women and men within the parliament. The table presents the proportion of MPs who recognize the arguments to be very important. (Percent)

Arguments:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota women	All MPs except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society	68	43	+25	64	52	+12	64	71	-7
Women have different life experience	64	40	+24	71	46	+25	71	57	+14
Working procedures will change	64	20	+44	86	27	+59	86	43	+43
There will be consequences on politics	67	47	+20	85	48	+37	85	50	+35

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: *There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?* Response alternatives: very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. The *very important*-category is presented in table 6.2. Number of respondents: Women/men 28/30, women elected on quota/remaining MPs 14/44, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 14/14.

Table 6.2.2 The MPs attitudes toward gender equality, presented as means on a scale running from 4 (not at all important argument) to 16 (very important argument).

Groups of MPs:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota-women	All MPs except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
All MPs	13,8	12,2	+1,6	14,6	12,5	+2,1	14,6	13	+1,6
RPF	12,7	12	+0,7						
Other parties	14,3	12,4	+1,9						

**Notes:** The results from the index build upon the following question: *There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?* 1) *Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society* 2) *Women have different life experience* 3) *Working procedures will change* 4) *There will be consequences on politics*. The index is organized from 4 points (all arguments are unimportant) to 16 points (all arguments are very important). Number of respondents within each category, women/men: All respondents 27/30, RPF 9/17, other political parties 6/11, women elected on quota/the remaining MPs 13/44, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 13/14. The category of other parties consists of the six parties; PDC, PDI, PSR, UDPR, PL and PSD. (Diff = difference)

Table 6.2.5 Who among the MPs have included gender-related issues on their personal agenda? (Percent)

Group of MPs:	Women	Men	Diff	Quota women	All MPs except quota	Diff	Quota-women	Party-women	Diff
All MPs	28	7	+21	31	12	+19	31	25	+6
RPF	26	6	+20						
Other parties	40	9	+31						

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: *Which political issue or areas are you most interested in?* The respondents were requested to answer with their own words. Numbers of respondents, women/men: All MPs 25/30, RPF 8/17, and other parties 5/11, women elected on quota/remaining MPs 13/42, women elected n quota/women elected on party lists 13/12. (Diff=difference)

## Appendix 6: Tables including all of the response alternatives

Table 6.1.1 The promotion of women's interests/views. (Percent)

Promoting women's interests:	Women	Men	Quota-women	Remaining MPs	Party-women
Very important	97	60	100	71	93
Fairly important	3	30	0	22	7
Not very important	0	10	0	7	0
Number of respondents	30	30	16	44	14

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: "How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?" The respondents were asked to rate the importance to them personally of promoting the interests of nine representational categories as for instance individuals/voters seeking their help, their political party, and women's interest/views. The aim was to cover the major categories discussed in the literature on representation and at the same time present proposals that are applicable in the Rwandan context. The MPs were offered the following response alternatives: Very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important.

Table 6.1.3 MPs degree of contact with women's organizations. (Percent)

Contact frequency:	Women	Men	Quota-women	All MPs except quota	Party-women
Once a week	43	3	50	14	36
Once or twice a month	47	27	44	34	50
A few times	10	64	6	48	14
Never	0	7	0	4	0
Number of respondents	30	30	16	44	14

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: "Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?" The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with 8 categories of authorities, groups and organizations as for instance central or local government authorities in their own constituency, women's organizations etc. The respondents were offered the following response alternatives: Once a week, once or twice a month, a few times and never.

Table 6.1.5 Do the MPs who recognize the promotion of women's interests as a very important duty have frequent contact with women's organizations? (Percent)

	Women				Men			
	Very important	Fairly important	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Fairly important	Very important	Fairly important
Once a week	43	0	6	0	0	0	6	0
Once/twice a month	46	100	38	11	0	100	38	11
A few times	11	0	56	89	33	0	56	89
Never	0	0	0	0	67	0	0	0
Number of respondents	28	1	18	9	3	1	18	9

	Quota-women			All MPs except quota		
	Very important	Fairly important	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	
Once a week	47	0	19	0	0	
Once/twice a month	47	0	42	20	0	
A few times	6	0	39	80	33	
Never	0	0	0	0	67	
Number of respondents	15	0	31	10	3	

	Party-women	
	Very important	Fairly important
Once a week	39	0
Once/twice a month	46	100
A few times	15	0
Never	0	0
Number of respondents	13	1

**Notes:** A cross tabulation between 2 questions has been done: 1) "How important are the following duties for you personally as a member of the Rwandan Parliament?" The very important category includes respondents who recognize the promotion of women's interests to very important. 2) "Disregarding how the contact was taken, how often have you during the last 6 month, personally or by letter, been in touch with any of the organizations, groups or authorities listed below?" The respondents were requested to specify their contact frequency with women's organizations. The response alternatives were; once a week, once or twice a month, a few times or never. The last two response categories have been put together due to none or very few respondents picking the last alternative.

Table 6.2.1 Arguments in favor of an equal distribution of women and men within the parliament. (Percent)

	Very important		Fairly important		Not important	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society	68	43	14	43	18	13
Women have different life experience	64	40	21	40	16	20
Working procedures will change	64	20	25	40	11	40
There will be consequences on politics	67	47	11	30	21	23

	Very important		Fairly important		Not important	
	Quota	Party	Quota	Party	Quota	Party
Parliament should reflect the most important groups of society	64	52	7	36	29	11
Women have different life experience	71	46	21	34	7	21
Working procedures will change	86	27	7	41	7	32
There will be consequences on politics	85	48	0	27	15	25

**Notes:** The respondents were asked the following question: *There are different reasons to argue for an equal distribution of men and women in the Parliament. How important do you consider the following arguments to be?* Response alternatives: very important, fairly important, not very important and not at all important. The *very important*-category is presented in table 6.2. Number of respondents: Women/men 28/30, women elected on quota/all MPs except quota 14/44, women elected on quota/women elected on party lists 14/14.

