Rwanda: (Limited) Effects of the First Female Parliamentary Majority in the World

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RWANDA: (LIMITED) EFFECTS OF THE FIRST FEMALE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN THE WORLD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Charlene Anita Raman-Preston ENTITLED Rwanda: (Limited) Effects of the First Female Parliamentary Majority in the World BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Raman-Preston, Charlene A. M.A., Department of Political Science, Wright State University 2013. Rwanda: (Limited) Effects of the First Female Parliamentary Majority in the World.

The case of Rwanda provides a laboratory to explore a unique set of circumstances. This thesis builds upon feminist theory, the literature on post-conflict situations and failed states. It finds that although Rwanda's post-conflict situation provided unexpected and historic opportunities for women to enter politics (a record 64 percent of the members of parliament are female), more women in parliament does not mean the end of patriarchy. Since 1994, Rwanda has experienced significant yet limited progress toward gender equality in employment and education. However, much remains to be done and gender dynamics have not changed substantively. Rather, increasing the numbers of women in parliament has been politically expedient for the governing Rwandan Patriot Front, which has not done all it can to empower women. Therefore, Rwandan women are in a precarious position; they owe their opportunity to participate in democratic institutions to a political party that runs an authoritarian state.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMIR Association of Microfinance Institution in Rwanda
ART Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV Antiretroviral
CAPMER Centre d'Appui à la Petite Moyenne Entreprise
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFS Child Friendly Schools
CHW Community Health Workers
CPR Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child
DRC Democratic Republic of Congo
EC Emergency Contraception
EICV Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages
EDPRS Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FAWE Rwanda Forum for African Women Educationalists
GGI Gender Gap Index
GDP Gross Domestic Product
HDI Human Development Index
HEI Higher Education Institutions
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD International Conference on Population and Development
ICT Information Communication Technology
IFAD International Food and Agricultural Development
IFC International Finance Corporation
ILO International Labor Organization
ICGLR International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IPPF International Planned Parenthood Federation
IPU International Parliamentary Union
ISAE Institut Supérieur de l'Agriculture et de l'Elevage
IT Information Technology
ITUC International Trade Union Confederation
IUD Intra-uterine Device
KIE Kigali Institute of Education
KIST Kigali Institute of Science
MDG Millennium Development Goals
MFI Microfinance Institutions
MINECOFIN Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC Ministry of Education
MMR Maternal Mortality Rate
MP Members of Parliament
NGO Non governmental Organization
NISR National Institute of Statistics Rwanda
NRM National Resistance Movement
NUR National University of Rwanda
OLPC One Laptop Per Child

PEACE Promote reconciliation, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, Educate the next generation

PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

RAPID Resources for the Awareness of Population Impacts on Development

RDHS Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey

RIM SA Réseau Interdiocésain de Microfinance

RPF Rwandan Patriotic Front

RPSF Rwanda Private Sector Federation

SDM Standard Days Method

TFR Total Fertility Rate

TVET Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UNAIDS Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS

UNDP United Nations Development Program

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM United Nations Development Fund for Women

UOB Urwego Opportunity Bank

US United States
USAID United States Agency for International Development
USD United States Dollar
WEOI Women's Economic Opportunity Index
WHO World Health Organization
YAM Youth Action Movement
9YBE Nine Year Basic Education
12YBE Twelve Year Basic Education
Introduction

The imbalance of gender in politics has been widely discussed in scholarly literature. The literature on women’s representation in parliament has two main characteristics. First, most research focuses on explanatory accounts of female entry into politics (Devlin and Elgie 238). Consequently, analyses of women in parliament converge on the recruitment of women into parliament as well as causes for female underrepresentation in government (Devlin and Elgie 238). Second, because scholarly examination of women in parliament concentrates on the entry of females into politics, there seems to be an underlying assumption in the literature that once women comprise a larger majority of parliament, there will be a substantial increase and improvement in gender equality. However, are more women in parliament associated with increasing gender equality in society or state policy?

The country that currently holds the highest percentage of female parliamentarians in the world and the focus of this thesis is Rwanda. While the quality of its democracy is debated among scholars, Rwanda is exceptional in its uniquely high percentage of women in parliament. It is mainly known for a devastating and brutal genocide that began in April 1994 in which approximately 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed over a span of 100 days. However, what may be less recognized about Rwanda is that the country ranks first in the world in terms of female representation in parliament at 64 percent, while overall, women held 21.4 percent of all parliamentary seats across the world by the end of 2013 (International Parliamentary Union 2011).
The Research Question

The literature regarding women in parliament is slanted toward causes of female under-representation, while there is little discussion on the effects of women in parliament (Devlin and Elgie 238). With Rwanda's success in being the only parliament where women hold a majority, the country offers a unique opportunity to consider this effect on traditionally patriarchal societies (Devlin and Elgie 238).

With this observation, several questions arise. When percentages of women in parliament increase, does the strength of patriarchal ideology decline? It is often assumed that women members of parliament (MPs) take on the perspective of mothers; does this, in fact, challenge traditional attitudes regarding gender? Similarly, even when the quality of the democratic experience expands for women in traditionally patriarchal societies, does it take top-down leadership to fundamentally change patriarchal views of women?

We often assume increasing the number of women in parliament will lead to increased gender equality, but can it be assumed gender equality automatically improves because more females hold elected office? The aim of this thesis is to analyze the societal implications of increased percentages of women in elected office. The hypothesis presented here proposes that the increased political representation of women is a necessary but not sufficient condition to facilitate gender equality in patriarchal societies. Additionally, because much of the material investigating the impact of increased women's representation in politics comes from developed, Western countries, examining Rwanda, a developing country in sub-Saharan Africa, will add to the literature on female majorities in parliament and the literature on patriarchy in developing countries. Researching the impact of increased female political representation on gender equality
in areas of female economic participation, female literacy and education as well as healthcare also add to the literature on post-conflict and failed states.

**Literature Review**

When examining the literature concerning the impact of women in elected office, findings based in African and Western countries are mixed (Devlin and Elgie 241). There are discoveries that women add new dimensions to legislative agendas such as addressing violence against women and changes to the family code. At the same time, the literature also suggests that struggles persist for women who make up the minority of their political parties and must tow the party line in order to survive politically. Joni Lovenduski and Azza Karam remind us only until recently “institutional masculinity” has been the overwhelming and obvious characteristic of legislatures and it is only quite recently, the second half of the 20th century, that the role of women in politics as well as the masculine biases of governments and institutions have come under scrutiny and become public issues (Lovenduski and Karam 188).

According to Anne Phillips, there are four groups of arguments for increasing the proportion of women in parliament, “those that dwell on the role model successful women politicians offer; those that appeal to principles of justice between the sexes; those that identify particular interests of women that would be otherwise overlooked; and those that point towards a revitalized democracy that bridges the gap between representation and participation” (Phillips 228). However, can it be assumed that by simply electing more females into parliament women’s interests will be better represented (Bauer and Britton 3)? What is the impact when more females achieve election into political office?
Seminal pieces examining increased percentages of women in parliament emerged in the early 1980s with the work of Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Drude Dahlerup. Kanter and Dahlerup explore the theory of “critical mass” by analyzing the experiences of women who make up the small minorities within political and corporate spheres (Childs and Krook 726). Kanter’s research investigates the “token” status of women in large American corporations in the 1970s (Kanter 965; Childs and Krook 726). Dahlerup goes on to expand Kanter’s study to women in politics, examining whether the size of the minority counts in government representation in Scandinavian countries (Dahlerup 275; Childs and Krook 729; Devlin and Elgie 238). Both authors find that the direction of possibilities in political and corporate cases ultimately depends on the willingness and choices of the minority to mobilize within the institution or organization (Childs and Krook 728, 731). The research of Kanter and Dahlerup lays the groundwork that allows us to investigate the challenging experiences and pressures placed on women as minorities within corporate and political spheres.

The subsequent scholarly literature on the experiences and impact of increased female representation in national legislatures makes a distinction between “descriptive” or demographic representation and “substantive” or strategic representation (Bauer and Britton 3). Hanna Pitkin defines the descriptive and substantive variance between one of “standing for” a specific group “as their literal biological copies in public” and the other as one of strategy, “acting for or in the interests of a particular group” (Pitkin 133, 116). Essentially, the literature attempts to demonstrate how changing the composition of elected assemblies in terms of gender, either in numbers or strategy, will affect policy agendas and outcomes.
Though the variance between descriptive and substantive representation is often utilized in the literature on female representation, it is evident that the two distinctions often intersect with each other. The distinction can be overdrawn in that when discussing demographic or “mirror” representation, one cannot escape simultaneously discussing various strategies often used by female parliamentarians to succeed in their roles as political officers. It is important to bear in mind this consideration regarding the two distinctions. Some degree of descriptive representation is “a necessary first step to the institutional transformation that is required if substantive representation is to be achieved” (Goetz and Hassim 5). While scholars do not agree that large percentages of women in politics are required to create transformative change, it is a common assumption among analysts that more women MPs will predict improvements in gender equality. Accordingly, the distinctions between descriptive and substantive representation can become entangled and difficult to separate in the literature.

*Descriptive Representation (Demographic)*

Descriptive representation refers to the symbolic or mirror representation of a group (Pitkin 113). This is a reference to the literal biological makeup of a group of people, in terms of “standing for” a particular ethnicity or gender. Essentially, descriptive representation is a true numeric representation of the people, requiring a legislature that reflects the “exact portraiture, in miniature, of the people at large” (Pitkin 60). Descriptive representation literature investigates whether or not higher numbers of women in elected office have an influence on political policy and agendas.
Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s research introduces the notion of tokenism and discovers that the relative numbers of socially and culturally different people within a group is significant to shaping the strategic dynamics of interaction and how those in minority groups navigate their careers (Kanter 965). Essentially, the relative numbers of individuals can either limit or expand the agency and approach of those in a particular gender or race. According to Kanter, within a group that is skewed in ethnic or gender-based representation, individuals who represent the minority become “tokens” because they frequently get treated as symbols or representatives of their category rather than as individuals, while “dominants” (the numerical majority) control the group and its culture (Kanter 966). Essentially, for Kanter, existing as a minority member in a skewed group generates tendencies in minorities to either overachieve or limit their visibility (Kanter 974). Aware of performance pressures, Kanter finds, many saleswomen either overachieve or become socially invisible, taking every opportunity and putting in extra effort to receive promotions or attempting to minimize their sexual attributes to blend in unnoticed (Kanter 974).

Due to difficulties in building alliances, minorities also experience problems of isolation and have difficulty becoming influential in the group (Kanter 966). Furthermore, tokens experience entrapment into particular stereotypical roles like the seductress, mother or iron maiden and/or other roles based on gender and ethnicity (Kanter 966; Childs and Krook 727). Accordingly, due to the lack of greater numbers capable of creating a counterculture, tokens “become encapsulated in limited roles” and are left with little choice but to accept the culture of dominants, resulting in fewer opportunities for strategic maneuvering to change the culture of the group (Kanter 231; Childs and Krook 727).
Expanding Kanter’s research from women as “tokens” in corporations to women in politics and borrowing the concept of critical mass in physics, Drude Dahlerup tests whether a qualitative shift takes place when women exceed a proportion of about 30 percent within an organization (Dahlerup 276). Focusing her study on five Nordic countries where women are in minority positions in politics, Dahlerup questions the perceived “automatic” change that was believed to be the key to fundamental changes in female political representation once women reached a “critical mass” in politics in the mid-1980s (Dahlerup 275; Childs and Krook 730).

Dahlerup argues the minority status of women outside the workplace interrelates with their status within the workplace (Dahlerup 278). Indeed, Dahlerup points out, large percentages of women are employed in factories; however, this does not enable them to attain higher pay and better benefits or change monotonous work conditions (Dahlerup 278). Dahlerup contends women are paid less in fields that are dominated by women and they are often placed in certain jobs because they are women (Dahlerup 278).

While parallels exist between women in politics and women in corporations, marked differences influence female politicians (Dahlerup 279). According to Dahlerup, female politicians must prove they are just as able or just like male politicians; women politicians also bear the burden of proving that it makes a difference when more women are elected (Dahlerup 279). Dahlerup concludes that what is vital to fundamentally altering the position of the minority in politics is replacing the concept of “critical mass” to one of “critical acts” (Dahlerup 296).

Dahlerup concludes that thirty percent of women in parliament is not a magic number and will not automatically accelerate change for development when reached, rather it is the actions of empowerment (not necessarily the proportion of representation) that initiate progressive changes for those in the minority (Dahlerup 296). For female politicians, critical acts of empowerment
are crucial to improving their situation. Women politicians recruiting other women, implementing quotas for women and instituting new legislation and institutions focused on equality policies create the necessary changes in the social climate that lead to considerable changes and a qualitative shift in the political representation of women (Dahlerup 296-297).

To Kanter and Dahlerup, higher percentages of representation do not necessarily matter, but despite small numbers, the minority has the potential to mobilize institutions. Kanter’s work suggests that the speed and direction of change ultimately depends on the choices of individual women (Kanter 966). To Dahlerup, feminist women are capable of impacting policy beyond their token status if they form alliances with each other despite minuscule numbers, consequently the notion of critical mass is contingent upon the critical actions of particular individuals (Childs and Krook 731).

Jason MacDonald and Erin O'Brien disagree with Kanter and Dahlerup. While studying congressional representatives in the US, MacDonald and O'Brien observe critical mass effects and find that a simple numerical increase in gender does affect policy agenda and outcomes (MacDonald and O'Brien 472). However, the authors agree with the critical mass concept and suggest that as the number of women in congress increases, female representatives will be more likely to place women’s interests on their agendas (MacDonald and O'Brien 482). Unique to MacDonald and O'Brien’s analysis is the finding that women demonstrated attentiveness to women’s interests further when they were surrounded with a relatively higher proportion of women in Congress rather than when they were the minority (MacDonald and O'Brien 482). Similarly, further study of Nordic countries conducted by L. Wängnerud found increased percentages of women were important in determining the political agenda (Wängnerud 150).
She found that as the number of female MPs grew, the welfare state expanded and gender equality became a topic of intense debate (Wängnerud 150). Thus, select cases have demonstrated the fact that increased demographic representation of women does have a distinct and significant impact on the political process and policy outcomes. Though most theorists recognize a politics of presence by itself is insufficient for expanding democracy, a tension emerges in the literature regarding descriptive and substantive representation (Dovi 731).

While Anne Phillips maintains increased demographic representation is necessary to compensate for continued structural discrimination in the past and present, she also maintains, however, descriptive representation can only partially compensate for the unequal representation of women in politics due to conflicting interests between privileged and less privileged groups (Phillips 230-231; Dovi 730). Certainly, Virginia Sapiro’s argument (that one group cannot be trusted to represent the interests of a different group, as husbands in the past were thought best to handle the interests of their wives) strongly supports the fact that democratic accountability requires descriptive representation (Sapiro 701; Dovi 730). Melissa Williams perhaps solves the puzzle, arguing that though demographic representation of marginalized groups is necessary, it is not sufficient because the simple presence of members of marginalized groups in legislatures does not mean they share the same preferences and goals (Williams 6). Simply because a representative is a women, this does not mean she automatically represents the diverse interests of a historically disadvantaged group (Dovi 730).

It is here that the literature on substantive representation emerges. When democracy becomes more a matter of certain policies, programs or ideas, this raises the question of why the sex of the representative even matters (Phillips 233). Though equal representation is implicit in the notion of democratic representation, because they are women, will they know or care what
the women who elected them want (Phillips 235)? Phillips also suggests, however, that past political experience tells us that all or mostly white, male assemblies will be poor judges of priorities and interests for both women and ethnic minorities (Phillips 236). The fact that representatives have considerable agency and autonomy is the reason why it is crucial as to whom those representatives are (Phillips 236). Thus, the notion of substantive representation becomes an important argument encompassing several considerations, namely, the agency and autonomy of representatives along with policy style, agenda, outcomes and interests of women in elected office.

**Substantive Representation (Strategic)**

In the literature, substantive representation, as opposed to symbolic representation, refers to the strategic aspects of representing a historically disadvantaged group. The agent or representative is expected to “act for” and look after the interests of their constituents (Pitkin 116). Less associated with numerical representation, this approach examines strategy; the issue is not whether the leader is elected, but how well she or he acts to further the objectives of the group they are expected to represent (Pitkin 116).

A variety of studies suggest that women are more likely to raise and successfully carry out policies regarding education, equality, childcare, equal employment and pay, the feminization of poverty and violence against women (Squires and Wickham 7, Devlin and Elgie 239). According to Gretchen Bauer and Hannah Britton, female MPs have made diverse and consistent changes to cultures of the parliaments in which they serve (Bauer and Britton 18). The increasing presence of women MPs has helped change cultural and societal perceptions regarding the nature of political leadership (Bauer and Britton 18). Studies on African
parliaments demonstrate women deputies have implemented changes that are comparatively broader than their counterparts in the West and initiated policies affecting both women and men (Bauer and Britton 20; Devlin and Elgie 240). Women deputies in Africa are examining and finding creative approaches to gendered aspects of HIV/AIDS, focusing on land rights, empowering women to gain control over their sexual freedom and pressing issues of violence against women (Bauer and Britton 20, Devlin and Elgie 240).

In a comparative evaluation of women’s political representation in the UK with other European countries, Judith Squires and Mark Wickham-Jones discover, in terms of policy style, that new women MPs were viewed as too passive and loyal to the government (Squires and Wickham-Jones 7). In addition, the study suggests that women tended to work more behind the scenes and were encouraged to pursue strategies of more private intervention rather than publicly challenging in debates (Squires and Wickham Jones 7; Devlin and Elgie 238). Citing Kenyan, Ugandan and South African cases, Hannah Britton argues that several factors may affect the ability of women to succeed in office (Britton 81-82; Bauer and Britton 5). Britton contends that patronage politics, patriarchal social norms and social authoritarianism contribute to hamper the success of female representatives in some African parliaments (Britton 82-83). Aili Mari Tripp, examining Uganda, contends merely employing women in national office does not necessarily mean there is a consistent voice for women’s rights (Tripp 128). She also finds that women MPs are often pressured by the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) because many feel they owe their positions to the government and the existing patronage system (Tripp 118).

Female leaders have had notable success in transforming parliaments and shifting legislative priorities to reflect the interests of the women in their countries (Bauer and Britton 27). However, despite their rising presence, many women MPs face distinct and difficult
challenges that often serve to undermine their equitable and effective participation (Bauer and Britton 27). Bauer and Britton note these leaders often face lack of appropriate skills and training, continued lack of respect and collaboration from male members of parliament, lack of constituencies and lack of independent funding (Bauer and Britton 27).

At the same time, however, Bauer and Britton find in some cases, female parliamentarians have made visible impacts and significant progress in shaping legislative agendas for their countries (Bauer and Britton 20). In Mozambique, Jennifer Leigh Disney contends after years of inaction and fighting for progressive family legislation, women MPs in Mozambique helped form the New Family Law establishing women’s legal equality and expanding their empowerment within the family (Disney 53). Additionally, feminist legislation coming out of South Africa has made significant changes and additions to laws in areas of employment equality and abortion (Devlin and Elgie 240). Sheila Meintjes details how South African women MPs utilized alliances with activists outside parliament and drove the political and legislative process to pass the Domestic Violence Act in 1998, which helped women mobilize around the larger issue of violence against women in South Africa (Meintjes 158).

A study in Sweden reveals a similar situation. Diane Sainsbury conducted a study of the advances of women in appointed positions since the late 1980s in Sweden and found the political presence of women regardless of number was decisive in two aspects (Sainsbury 65). First, elected and appointed female officials redefined and broadened "women’s issues" to one of gender, reframing gender equality, an issue previously regarded as peculiar to women, into major political party issues affecting both men and women (Sainsbury 65; Devlin and Elgie 239). Accordingly, placing gender equality on the public agenda shifted the political discourse from women’s demands to that of greater democracy (Sainsbury 70). The second aspect, brought on
by the increasing proportion of female officials, was strategically reframing the debate regarding the underrepresentation of women (Sainsbury 72). According to Sainsbury, the new women MPs presented the argument that women, who constituted half of the population, were under-represented in parliament, this assertion emphasized the contradiction in democratic principles and strategically converted traditional women's issues into one of a demand for a more full and complete democracy (Sainsbury 72). Thus, Sainsbury's study implies the presence of women in politics has strategically broadened the debate from one about women to one concerning men as well (Devlin and Elgie 239). By broadening the debate to one of gender, the discussion no longer named males as oppressors, but that the problem originated with traditional values and constrained traditional roles in which both sexes were victims (Sainsbury 70).

Analysis of the Literature

According to Bauer and Britton, "achieving a critical mass is not a panacea for undoing the imbalances of societal gender inequality" (Bauer and Britton 5). However, the authors believe there are also clearly recognizable benefits of having a significant number of female political representatives (Bauer and Britton 5). Lovenduski and Karam, on the impact of critical mass, demonstrate that as the number of women in politics grows, it becomes easier to be a woman politician and public perceptions of female politicians change (Lovenduski and Karam 189).

However, Childs and Krook observe that many scholars on gender and politics have become increasingly skeptical of the critical mass concept, suggesting that just a critical mass of female legislators may not be adequate to promote women-friendly policy changes and influence their male colleagues to do the same (Childs and Krook 725). Bauer and Britton further note policies and strategies to increase female representation may be in place to simply support
undemocratic regimes rather than promote progressive or gender equal legislation and institutions (Bauer and Britton 28). Interestingly, while the increased presence of women in parliaments around the world has, to a certain degree, changed social, political and cultural perceptions about women, there is little evidence so far to suggest that increased female representation has made veritable changes to patriarchal norms. Female officials are seen as more pacifist and forgiving and therefore fitting agents for postwar reconstruction, taking the lead on childcare issues and education; however, such emphases may further reflect and reinforce patriarchal assumptions (Wallace, Haerpfer and Abbot 114). Indeed, while women parliamentarians have tackled a range of issues, the emphasis has been issues that bolster attitudes regarding women’s roles as mothers rather than as independent representatives. Unfortunately, as Wallace, Haerpfer and Abbot maintain, taking on what society deems “women’s issues” has not served to challenge traditional gender roles in society (Wallace, Haerpfer and Abbot 114).

The considerable work done regarding women and politics has further to go, especially when one considers how much remains to be done in Africa. Applying the findings of the literature to a country such as Rwanda may yield interesting results and may have implications for understanding the contemporary effects of higher percentages of women in parliament on patriarchy and gender norms in larger society.

**Case Selection: Why Rwanda?**

The single case study examined in this thesis will be the country of Rwanda. The country offers a unique set of circumstances to explore post-conflict literature as well as the literature on patriarchy, failed states and female majorities in parliament. Aside from the fact that Rwanda is
exceptional in its uniquely high percentage of women in parliament, there are three reasons why Rwanda is a useful case for examining the effects of women in parliament. First, although during the 1994 genocide women suffered horrific and dehumanizing acts, such as rape used as a weapon and a means of spreading HIV/AIDS to its victims, men and boys were the primary targets for slaughter (Kantengwa 73). In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the population was 70 percent female, given the demographic disparity, women directly assumed traditionally male roles as financial providers, heads of households and community leaders (Powley 158). In addition, the commitment of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), now the ruling party in Rwanda, has made women’s inclusion a trademark of its program (Powley 158). This contradicts both the common assumption that the inclusion of women is solely a Western value imposed on developing countries and that rebel movements always oust their female counterparts who assisted in a revolution or years of armed struggle (Powley 158). Contrary to the standard model of post-conflict literature, women in the RPF were not forced to surrender their roles in the RPF nor were they dismissed from their positions and replaced by men once the conflict ended (Devlin and Elgie 242). Because Rwanda stands in contrast to many theories in the literature on gender, including studies on post-conflict relations, failed states as well as authoritarianism, democracy and female political representation, it is imperative to research a case that directly defies much of the conventional thinking on liberation movements and gender equality.

The second reason Rwanda presents an excellent case for research is the fact that female political representation has increased so much and so rapidly (Devlin and Elgie 242). During the post-genocide transitional government period (1994 to 2003), a new gender-sensitive constitution was adopted and women’s representation reached 25.7 percent (Powley 154; Devlin and Elgie 242). Following the 2003 election, female deputies constituted 48.8 percent of the
Chamber (Powley 156). Subsequently, Rwanda now has the highest percentage of female elected officials in the world. Consequently, the country offers an excellent case study for examining whether larger numbers of women in parliament is correlated with growing gender equality (Devlin and Elgie 243).

Finally, the third reason to include Rwanda in such a study is the interesting dichotomy of semi-authoritarianism and democratic practices. The nature of Rwanda’s government continues to be debated by scholars and the quality of its democracy is in question; however, Rwanda is a country that incorporates policies that clash with yet at the same time embrace democratic qualities, especially in terms of gender equal representation. Rwandan women as well as women’s movements are in a precarious position, since they owe their opportunity to participate in democratic institutions to a political party that cannot, however, be truly independent of the state and is, therefore, less than fully democratic (Powley 160). Although Rwanda's may be an authoritarian system, it is one in which women enjoy an active and considerable presence (Devlin and Elgie 243). Though it may be difficult to separate out which is having a greater affect on gender equality, if rising gender equality is found to exist, it will be interesting to explore the paradox of increased female representation coupled with top-down gender initiatives implemented by an increasingly authoritarian regime (Burnet 363, 386).

Research Design: Independent and Dependent Variables

Does the increased political representation of women initiate changes in patriarchal gender norms within larger society? The hypothesis in this project proposes the increased political representation of women is a necessary but not sufficient condition to facilitate gender equality norms in larger patriarchal societies. In an attempt to test this hypothesis, this study will
use the increased percentage of women in parliament measured by the percentage of MPs and cabinet members who are women as the independent variable. The dependent variable in this study is gender equality as measured by (1) female economic participation, (2) education and literacy rates and (3) reproductive health.

*Independent Variable and Dependent Variables*

The increased political representation of females, the independent variable in this study, will be defined as the overall percentage of women in Rwanda’s bicameral parliament, including both, the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house) and the Senate. The dependent variable in this study is gender equity measured through an examination of three indicators, (1) female economic participation, (2) education and literacy rates and (3) reproductive health.

To assess female economic participation, this study will research the gender pay gap and occupational segregation by gender in Rwanda using reports from the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI), International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the Women’s Economic Opportunity Index (WEOI) among others to examine more closely whether the increased presence of women in parliament negatively or positively affects female economic participation. Examining occupational segregation can be particularly revealing in indicating whether changes made in the composition of parliament reflect changes in attitudes regarding “appropriate” roles for males and females in the workplace and the home.

To measure changes in gender equity over time, this study will, in addition, compile and analyze education and literacy rates among women and girls in Rwanda using resources from UNDP, UNICEF, HDI and UNESCO. The remaining indicator will be women's healthcare in Rwanda. This thesis will examine the state of women’s reproductive health including maternal
mortality and reproductive rights (including female access to contraceptives, abortion and total fertility rates) drawing from UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), among other organizations.

**Research Methodology**

The aim of this research project is to analyze the impact the independent variable, the increased women in parliament, has on the three named indicators, the dependent variables. This thesis will center on a longitudinal analysis, examining the period from 1993, just before the genocide in Rwanda, through the post-genocide period, to 2010. This project will use process-tracing by dividing a single longitudinal case into a “before and after” case (George and Bennett 81). Specifically comparing periods before and after the genocide (1993, before the rule of the RPF, to post-genocide Rwanda in the years after women reached above 45 percent representation in 2003), this study will employ a within case analysis in an attempt to isolate the effects of increased percentages of female parliamentarians on gender equality.
Chapter 2: Female Economic Participation and Opportunity

Feminist labor economists examine economic conditions to assess gender equality. Accordingly, the research examines indicators such as the gender pay gap as well as occupational segregation by gender to investigate economic impediments to advances in gender equality. Though women and girls have gained further opportunities in education, in both developed and developing countries, this achievement has not been matched in the labor market (Bachan et al. 29). Consequently, young educated women who enter the labor market in much higher numbers are met with obstacles and soon join the disproportionately large numbers of women in low-paid sectors (Bachan et al. 29).

This chapter will consider occupational segregation by gender in Rwanda as well as female access to credit in terms of microfinance loans accessed by women borrowers. Percentages of women borrowers and occupational segregation by gender are significant indicators of gender equality because they assess women's economic empowerment and reveal issues in gender equity that have been previously neglected.

In terms of studying occupational segregation, this chapter will take a brief look at female tertiary education, specifically technical and vocational (TVET) training. The following section of the chapter will make use of EICV1, EICV2 and EICV 3 (Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de vie des Ménages) integrated household reports conducted between 2001-2011 by the National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda (NISR) along with other research to analyze changes in occupational segregation in the Rwandan labor force over time. Equally, any relevant data available, though it is scarce, from the time period before the 1994 genocide will be included for comparisons and analysis. It will also examine female access to credit and female
entrepreneurship to analyze further variables on women’s economic empowerment in Rwanda.

Though the surveys are limited to the post-genocide years, the comparisons can still be informative when considering Rwanda’s implementation of the 30 percent quota for female political representation. If we are able to compare data between years before and after the 30 percent quota requirement, enacted in 2003, it may still yield important information regarding the impact of women in parliament. Whenever data previous to the 1994 genocide is available, this chapter will analyze and draw comparisons using longitudinal analysis.

**Occupational Segregation**

Of the indicators measuring parity between genders, unequal pay is where inequality is at its most stark (Bachan et al. 30). No country in the world has, as of yet, achieved income parity between genders. A study conducted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in 2008 found the world average gender pay gap to be 15.6 percent with Europe, Latin America and Oceania showing more positive results than Asia and Africa (Chubb et al. 10). In addition, regardless of levels of educational attainment and political equality, men continue to earn more money and work higher paying jobs than women (Bachan et al. 30). In fact, though women worldwide are often equally or more educated than men, research in some cases demonstrates the pay gap actually increases with the level of education obtained (Chubb et al. 10).

There is a surprising lack in the availability of global data on economic activity, as many developing countries do not have the means or perhaps the will to keep national records on employment and Rwanda is no different (Chubb et al. 7). This is true for many African nations where much of women’s work, either in the informal sector or unpaid family work, goes inadequately recorded (Chubb et al. 13). Insufficient data exists on the gender pay gap in
Rwanda; still, an analysis on occupational segregation by gender can help shed light on the economic situation of women in the country.

As in every country, the present-day situation for women in Rwanda reflects its history. Going back to the precolonial period, throughout the country, the majority of Rwandan women were responsible for daily subsistence and performed most of the heavy labor of Rwandan agriculture (Jefremovas 382). Rwandan women generally took responsibility for land cultivation and water collection while also being responsible for childcare and domestic labor (Nowrojee 15). Furthermore, prior to the genocide, the sexual division of labor was such that women were expected to contribute to the family by working land that was considered their husbands’, while males in the family were able to sell their labor (Jefremovas 381; Nowrojee 16). This division of labor had the effect of allowing men to work in paid employment in the private sector while further marginalizing women from paid labor in it (Nowrojee 16).

The participation of Rwandan women in traditional female employment has not changed considerably over time; women still work the undervalued, low-paying sectors. Overwhelmingly, Rwandan women participate in traditional female occupations such as hairdressing, tailoring, secretarial work, nursing and food service, while males work higher paying jobs in carpentry, bricklaying, mining and engineering trades (Rubagiza 5). Seemingly, female and male students are channeled or perhaps channel themselves into particular career training programs (Rubagiza 5). A 2009 study of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector in Rwanda reveals nothing new regarding traditional gender attitudes in terms of workplace or on-the-job training (Rubagiza 6).

For example, Table 2.1 shows significant disparities between genders in every course. In both teaching and student positions, statistics from the Kicukiro College of Technology reveal
stark gender disparities, demonstrating a significant underrepresentation of female students and staff in the college within engineering and electrical technicians programs (Tables 2.1 and 2.2) (Rubagiza 10-11). Interestingly, the highest percentage of female students exists in Information Technology at 22 percent with mechanical engineering, automotive mechanics and welding courses holding zero to two percent female students (Table 2.1). The study also reveals that there is not a single female professor or student enrolled in Information Communication Technology (ICT) courses (Table 2.1 and 2.2).

Nonetheless, 22 percent females enrolled in IT is moderately high compared to other courses in technology, in addition, studies by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) find that Rwandan women are increasingly branching out to other technology sectors like information and communication technologies (Cutura 6). This slight increase of females in information and communication technologies can be partly attributed to the work of the Kigali Institute of Science, Research and Technology (KIST), a creation of the Rwandan government to promote Vision 2020, the national policy to construct a competitive, knowledge-based economy by placing greater emphasis on scientific and technological education (Santhi et al. 192). KIST has intervened to increase women's enrollment science and technology by giving priority consideration to women and girls through empowerment programs as well as scholarship programs (Santhi et al. 193; Dejene 26). Additional factors for the increase of female increase in ICT use and education can be attributed to the increase in female entrepreneurship. Many NGOs, along with the support of KIST and the Rwandan government, assist female entrepreneurs by offering IT training programs to equip women in both basic IT knowledge and advanced proficiencies such as creating and maintaining websites (UNIFEM 1-2). Education and knowledge in ICT has allowed female business owners increased access to global markets with
minimum initial investments by providing increased e-commerce through the use of smart phones and websites (Santhi et al. 184).

Table 2.1 Students by Course and Gender in TVET, January - June 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Percentage Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics and Telecommunication</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Mechanics</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT (Information Communication Technology)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 Teaching Personnel by Gender and Department at Kicukiro College of Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Percentage Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical and ICT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Technology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Technology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Predictably, the TVET study found that many more female students than males were
represented in the accounting, hotels, teaching, secretarial and nursing options offered by the school (Rubagiza 11). The reasons for such stark gender disparities in the above courses may reveal social attitudes regarding the lack of ability of girls and women to perform well in scientific and technical courses (Rubagiza 11). The study also suggests the incompatibility of the social image involving the female “mother” role juxtaposed with a career in science or technology as a possible reason for the low representation of women in such courses (Rubagiza 11). Moreover, some employers remain reluctant to hire females as mechanics or technicians because the fields are male dominated, perpetuating the notion that it is “masculine” labor (Rubagiza 11).

The TVET study reveals that Rwanda is no different from many other countries regarding occupational segregation. While percentages of female managers are increasing in Western countries, the data indicate that globally women comprise only 21 percent of senior positions and 8 percent of top managers in the computer industry (Santhi et al. 187). Though stereotypes about the differences in male and female capacity vary according to history and cultural differences, it remains that female dominated occupations in Rwanda are less prestigious and pay less than male occupations (Barker and Feiner 63).

What could be drawn from the small percentages of females in certain occupational categories means that though women have gained numbers in parliament in Rwanda, the idea of women crossing over into male dominated, higher paying, prestigious work has not. Certain jobs are still exclusive to a particular gender though women have gained in political leadership, it seems. If women in developed countries (as in the US and UK) comprise small percentages of those working in the computer industry, the situation will be more serious in developing countries like Rwanda (Santhi et al. 187).
At the time of the genocide, most Rwandan women were based in the agricultural sector as subsistence farmers working on the family plot of land at an estimated 65-70 percent (Nowrojee 15-16). This means that at the time just before the 1994 genocide, women constituted a lower percentage of the agricultural labor force (65-70 percent) than after the genocide. Between 2001 and 2006, however, rates of moving out of family subsistence farming were much more marked for males at 12.3 percent than females at 6.1 percent (see Table 2.3) (Dejene 2). In 2006, females constituted 86 percent of all agricultural work while the rate for men was 71 percent (see Table 2.4) (Ngango 29).

The rate of female workers in the agricultural sector rose dramatically in 2001 to 92.4 percent (Nowrojee 15). Reasons for the increase of women in agricultural labor after the genocide are likely due to the demographic imbalance. In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, women made up 70 percent of the population in Rwanda. Additionally, as many women increased their time in paid labor, men did not assume domestic responsibilities. Thus employment such as agriculture, which allows for a flexible labor force, tends to function in Rwandan society as a suitable fit for women who must make time for domestic responsibilities and often have fewer additional opportunities or sources of support. Interestingly, the flexibility of agricultural work may also explain lower rates of reduction in women in the sector over the past 10 years. Since 2000, men have moved out of agriculture at twice the rate of women, the likely explanation for this may be that men do not readily assume domestic responsibilities even as their wives, daughters or mothers assume paid labor (see Table 2.5). Thus, the move out of agriculture may take longer for women due to domestic responsibilities and reproductive work, men find it easier to move on to new job opportunities because they shoulder much less domestic responsibility than women.
Table 2.3 demonstrates the changes in types of employment by gender between the two EICV reports completed in 2000 and 2006. The distinction is made between agricultural and non-agricultural work. Agricultural wage labor is the poorest paid of all work (Strode, Wylde and Murangwa 23). The nonagricultural sector includes industry labor such as mining, quarrying, oil production, construction and electricity. It also includes the services sector such as retail and wholesale trade, restaurant, hotel, transport, insurance and real estate labor (World Bank 1). Between the years 2000 and 2006, the largest numerical increase of female workers occurred in paid agricultural labor at an increase in 4 percent, again the lowest paid of all work (see Table 2.3) (Ngango 31). In terms of waged nonagricultural sector (i.e. industry and services), males secured 75 percent of the additional employment, with women gaining only a quarter of the increase (Strode et al. 23). Furthermore, females are disproportionately represented in the “unpaid farm worker” category, as this work is often treated as reproductive work. Between the surveys, though men and women moved out of unpaid farming at around the same percentages, 9.5 and 8.5 percent respectively; females still comprise 56.2 percent of unpaid farm work compared to only 19.5 percent of males in the category, demonstrating further inequality in terms of the gender pay gap (see Table 2.3).
Tables 2.3 and 2.4 further demonstrate that as of 2006, females remained disproportionately represented in the lowest paid sectors despite the high numbers of women MPs. Though women’s political representation jumped from 23 percent to 48 percent in 2003, the presence of women in higher paying work such as (senior officials and managers) remained unchanged between 2000 and 2006 in addition to men gaining higher percentages in the skilled services sector than women (EICV 2 data) (see Table 2.4).

Comparisons of the data from the recently published EICV 3 survey reveal similar trends exhibited in the EICV 1 and EICV 2 reports. Both sexes were, again, affected in terms of moving out of the agricultural sector between 2006 and 2011 (Murangwa 94). Comparing moves out of the agricultural sector from 2006 to 2011, transitions were higher for men than women, with about 10 percent fewer men working in agriculture and only 4 percent fewer women (Murangwa 91; see Table 2.4). In Rwanda, women currently comprise approximately 82 percent of the agricultural sector in Rwanda while men make up 61 percent of the sector (see Table 2.4).
Men have consistently transitioned out of agriculture at higher percentages of women since 2001. Overall, women experienced only half the increase men experienced transitioning out of the agricultural sector. Between 2001 and 2011, as the percentages of women in parliament steadily increased, men moved out of agriculture at a faster rate than women at 22 percent with women at 10 percent (see Table 2.5).

In terms of female managers in nonagricultural work, particularly unequal sectors are larger firms in mining and quarrying (4 percent), construction (7 percent), and manufacturing (9 percent) (Establishment Census 9). An examination of the gender composition within the industrial sector reveals a similar situation; women occupied only 17 percent of management positions (Temesgen et al. 36).¹ Eighty-three percent of managers were male (Temesgen et al.

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¹ Based on a 2005 study of the industrial sector in Rwanda.
As in most employment, high percentages of females in the industrial sector are concentrated in low-paying occupational categories (Temesgen et al. 36).

Table 2.5 Percentages of Women MPs and Workers in the Agricultural Sector by Gender, 2001-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage Men in Agriculture</th>
<th>Percentage Women in Agriculture</th>
<th>Percentage Women Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), “Women in Regional Parliamentary Assemblies: Comparative Data by Country 2010”, September 2010 and EICV 1, 2 and 3 Data.

In Table 2.6, the data reveal that despite women acquiring a higher average of years of education at 10.3 years compared to a lower male average of 9.2, only 17 percent make it to the managerial occupation category in the industrial sector (Temesgen et al. 36). Additionally, Rwandan women in this sector on average receive 52 percent of the average weekly earnings of men (see Table 2.6) (Temesgen et al. 37). A comprehensive look into industry reveals that the gender pay gap varies between occupational categories and completed levels of education (Temesgen et al. 37). For example, women in management positions receive 89 percent of the pay males receive in the same occupational category (Temesgen et al. 37).
Interestingly, the less skilled and educated female and male workers are, the smaller the pay gap between genders. In the unskilled production categories, the gender pay gap is 30 percent (Temesgen et al. 37). Even despite comparable years of experience and number of work hours, women's average earnings remain well below that of men (Temesgen et al. 37). Women who have completed the same level education as their male counterparts receive, on average, 83 percent of earnings paid to men, a much larger gender pay gap than that of unskilled workers at a 30 percent gap (Temesgen et al. 37).

While many analysts believe the key to closing the pay gap is education, this study demonstrates that more educated females may find themselves dealing with a larger pay gap than female employees in positions that require less education or skills (Chubb et al. 7). Some scholars hypothesize that parenthood is the reason the pay gap widens as females become more educated, whereas less educated women are more likely to have jobs that call on them to combine these responsibilities. Discrimination against women is also a factor, however, studies have clearly shown that even when women and men produce the same amount of work, complete the same hours and have the same levels of education, women are paid less and promoted less often than men (Miki et al. 413). Therefore, it can be argued convincingly that men receive better pay simply for being male (Miki et al. 413).

Table 2.6 Average Education, Experience and Weekly Earnings in Rwanda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Education</th>
<th>Average Work</th>
<th>Union Membership</th>
<th>Average Work Hours</th>
<th>Average Weekly Earnings (RWF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>42956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>22239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government efforts to promote women’s economic empowerment include the Rwandan government’s National Gender Policy. Rwanda’s National Gender Policy is the institutional framework created to mainstream gender into each national development process and seeks to safeguard (mainly rural) women’s equal control over economic opportunities, including equal access to employment and credit (Dejene 5). Concerning equal pay and occupational segregation, the Rwandan government has ratified the ILO Convention on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining as well as the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration and the Convention on Discrimination (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions 1). Although the Rwandan government has not developed measures to gather statistical information on wage differentials between women and men, section 12 of the Rwandan labor code covers all forms of prohibited discrimination and article 11 of the Constitution specifies that “every person having equal competence and capacity shall have the right, without any discrimination, to equal pay for equal work” (Rwandan Labor Code (2009) 42, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions 4, International Labor Organization 1). In addition, the right to collective bargaining is recognized. Theoretically, female workers could argue for equal pay in the context of collective bargaining, however, the Rwandan government has not taken full legislative action in enacting equal pay laws for women regarding work of equal value as set out in the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions 1).

The Rwandan government has established a strong institutional framework that integrates a gender perspective into policies, activities and budgets regarding all sectors of national development (Rwanda ICGLR Report 1). Working closely with women’s civil society organizations and developing institutional arrangements at different levels such as the Ministry
of Gender and Family Promotion, the National Women’s Council, the Gender Monitoring Office and the Office of the Ombudsman, the Rwandan government encourages a perspective of gender to address gender imbalances in society (Rwanda ICGLR Report 1; Dejene 5). The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is active in promoting women’s rights. The Ministry works to provide scholarships for girls and access to credit for rural women (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions 4). In addition, the government has established the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which is a medium-term (2008-2012) framework designed to achieve the country’s long-term development goals (Dejene 9). EDPRS envisions accelerating economic growth and poverty reduction (Dejene 9). One of the main strategies for poverty reduction within EDPRS is to generate more non-agricultural jobs, envisioning the creation of one million jobs, 50 percent of which will be non-agricultural work (Dejene 2). However, the government did not implement specific gender equality targets in terms of the share of women that will benefit from the EDPRS job creation objective (Dejene 2).

The Rwandan government emphasizes the placement of women at every level of the policy process. Nonetheless, it is essential that the government begin gathering statistical information on women’s economic opportunity including the gender wage gap, occupational segregation as well as variations in the wage gap in the context of collective bargaining (among additional measures) to ensure a more complete view of women’s economic empowerment in the country (International Labor Organization 1).

**Female Entrepreneurship**

Of the small businesses operating in Rwanda, nearly 70 percent were established within the last 10-12 years (Cutura 9). Similarly, female entrepreneurship is young in Rwanda and many
women turned to business in the years following the 1994 genocide (Cutura 9). Small business offers one of few opportunities for women to diverge from undervalued and poorly paid sectors, where women tend to be concentrated. The majority of female entrepreneurs are engaged in the retail sector (82 percent) followed by services (17 percent) and manufacturing (1-2 percent) (Cutura 6). For both sexes, small business opportunities in Rwanda increased between 2000 and 2006, most likely due to the Rwandan government's commitment to creating a more favorable climate for business by simplifying business formalization as well as licensing (Strode et al. 24; Cutura 14).

A Human Rights Watch study of Rwanda indicated that female company directors comprised no more than 5 percent of small sector private businesses from 1986 to 1990 (Nowrojee 16). Prior to the genocide, women's capacity to control resources was extremely limited both legally and socially (Jefremovas 379). There was a clear sexual division of labor, in which males were the breadwinners and women were responsible for children and the household (Nowrojee 16). In addition, there were laws in place requiring married Rwandan women to be given their husbands' consent to engage in business (Cutura 6). The period before the genocide, the Rwandan employment code prohibited any employment that required women to work at night (Nowrojee 16). That law has since been amended to allow women to work the same night hours as men (World Bank 1).

In terms of the global informal sector, women comprise a sizable majority at 60-66 percent, according to the International Labor Union (ILO) (Barker and Feiner 118). Women own around 58 percent of informal enterprises in Rwanda, which represents about 30 percent of the GDP (Cutura 6-8; Ngango 29). The overrepresentation of women in the informal sector translates into vulnerabilities in job security and benefits. They must cope with low wages, less
job security and (sometimes) dangerous work conditions specific to their labor (such as gender violence, forced closure or relocation, abuse, crowded conditions and overall lack of regulations or safety and health standards), but a key benefit to informal work is avoiding taxes (Mutangadura 6). In contrast, women own 40 percent of partially formal or formal enterprises in Rwanda (Cutura 6). This suggests that as the degree of formalization increases, women’s share of business ownership decreases, which also means it is much more difficult to access financing to foster further operation and growth (Cutura 21). Clearly, there remains a sexual division of labor in Rwanda, in terms of entrepreneurship.

In both the formal and informal sectors, female business owners commonly dominate more traditional markets such as handicrafts, textiles and the agricultural industries. Yet female-owned businesses in Rwanda are represented in a wide variety of sectors, including transport, agriculture, tourism, travel services and boutiques (United States Agency for International Development 29). It is imperative, however, that female entrepreneurs diversify into construction, transportation and Information Technology (IT) services. These are areas in which further international market opportunities are available. They are much more profitable and remain considerably less penetrated by women (United States Agency for International Development 29).

Today, small business ownership in the Rwandan formal sector consists of more males than females, with men taking up 60 percent of employment in small enterprises and women 40 percent (Ngango 31). Though both genders face similar constraints as business owners, women experience additional challenges that impede the growth of their enterprises (Dejene 2). At

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2 Partially informal businesses comply with some government regulation but not with others. Many informal businesses are subcontracted with formal business firms and are required to document specific transactions making them partially informal (i.e. piecework for manufacturers) (Garcia-Bolivar 4, 10).
present, the sexual division of labor has not changed. As in other sectors, expanded opportunities for female entrepreneurs have simply translated to women working harder in both paid and unpaid labor. On average, Rwandan women work 49 hours per week compared with 41 for men, with women spending additional hours per week on domestic work and family responsibilities (Cutura 11). Moreover, in addition to little access to credit, women face low purchasing power of their main clientele and inaccessibility to affordable and appropriate time and labor saving technologies for domestic responsibilities such as fetching wood and water, grocery shopping, cleaning and child care (Cutura 11). Women in particular must combine paid work with their domestic responsibilities, giving many female business owners no choice but to run a business from home (Cutura 14). Women generally have less free time; with the combination of paid work, domestic responsibilities and lack of childcare options, many attempt to balance the situation by operating their businesses from home to manage domestic responsibilities this, ultimately, leads to a less diversified clientele and a limited market (Cutura 11). Thus, along with numerous domestic responsibilities, women business owners must also find the time to run their establishments. In addition to caring for the home, women business owners must find a way to allocate sufficient time to more lucrative business responsibilities such as research into increasing production, investing in local marketing, starting a new product line, researching new technologies to modernize, exploring networking possibilities and securing loans for business expansion.

Since 2000, the Rwandan government has worked to create reforms designed to provide a more conducive investment climate for expanding businesses (Dejene 13). Government efforts to create a more favorable business environment by simplifying registration, licensing, business formalization and trade across borders earned Rwanda a place on The World Bank’s Doing
Business ranking as one of the top 20 global business reformers in 2009 (Dejene 13). In addition to introducing new reforms to simplify business registration, the government has implemented registration information outreach programs to target women in order to facilitate women’s business registration (Cutura 14). The Rwandan government emphasizes business cooperatives as an important component to the country’s development. As of 2004, the government has supported over 300 cooperatives in Rwanda, providing support services including offering business ideas, training, networking and advice on securing financing (Cutura 10). Government policy to support cooperatives has assisted in generating income for women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas, as women now comprise approximately 50 to 60 percent of cooperative members (Cutura 10).

There are also a number of enterprise development support institutions. In particular, the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF) is a government umbrella organization made up of nine professional chambers of commerce including the Rwanda Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs (Dejene 19). The Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs works to support women entrepreneurs by expanding the skills of female entrepreneurs through underscoring sustainable training and guidance that fosters the creation of income-generating initiatives, including training in business plan development and promoting competitiveness at national, regional and international levels (Ngango 20). In addition, as most women comprise the informal sector and a large percentage of rural micro and small-scale enterprises, the Ministry of Commerce along with the International Food and Agriculture Development (IFAD) have implemented the Rural Small and Micro-enterprise Development Project (Dejene 19). The project seeks to promote skills training and improving access to credit in the areas of handicrafts, tailoring, carpentry and food processing, estimating that 30 percent of the program beneficiaries are women, which is
low considering women’s comprise about 60 percent of the Rwandan informal sector (Dejene 19).

CAPMER, (the Centre d’Appui à la Petite Moyenne Entreprise) is an organization that also supports small and medium-scale businesses (Dejene 18). Though a non-profit organization, the Women Chamber of Entrepreneurs is represented on the board and 50 percent of CAPMER staff is women and 25 percent of its clientele are female entrepreneurs (Dejene 18). CAPMER focuses on the development of entrepreneurship in strengthening management skills as well as technical capabilities centering on training in ICTs and accessing market information (Dejene 19). CAPMER also assists in funding women’s participation in trade expos, formulating business plans and securing financing for both individual female entrepreneurs as well as women’s cooperatives (Cutura 28).

**Access to Credit: Microfinance**

Developing and expanding small and medium-scale enterprises as well as the increased ability to borrow money are central to a country’s economic development (Bachan et al. 30). Similarly, women’s ability to obtain credit is central to women’s agency and autonomy. Collectively, women worldwide lack access to traditional banks due to institutional barriers because they typically have no credit history and are mostly employed in the informal sector, so there is no record of employment (Bachan, et al. 30; Mix Market Exchange 1). Since women in particular often have lower incomes and limited access to other financial services, microfinance institutions (MFIs) attempt to target women with the intention of providing various financial services including loans, savings, insurance and remittance services (Mix Market Exchange 1).
Essentially, the ability of women to access credit and receive financial services may promote increased gender equality by encouraging female autonomy and agency in the market.

Microfinance institutions provide small loans or micro-loans to the poor. Microfinance is recognized as a tool to fight poverty (and has been directed at mostly poor women around the world) to start or expand small business projects (Grameen Foundation 1). In addition, many MFIs also provide personal loans for childbirth, weddings, funerals, education, as well as investment opportunities. Unlike commercial loans, micro-loans are made in smaller dollar amounts, require no collateral and are typically repaid within six months to a year (Grameen Foundation 1). As a member of a microfinance institution, most clients receive financial advice, attend borrowers meetings and receive support from other borrowers in the form of idea exchanges and additional networking possibilities (Grameen Foundation 1).

It should be noted that microcredit has been successful for many of the banks that have adopted it. In terms of whether it reduces poverty, however, the evidence is mixed (Barker and Feiner 125). Studies of MFIs and microcredit offer individual success stories, but it is less clear whether access to microcredit has reduced poverty for women overall (Barker and Feiner 125). The purpose here, however, is to highlight how accessible credit is to women in Rwanda in general. As a minimum, the ability to borrow money on equitable terms makes empowerment possible for individuals, especially women. Access to credit through microfinance institutions provides women with the financial incentives to increase skills, education and investments in addition to access to market infrastructure and technology to increase profits for those who own small businesses (Mutangadura 6-7).

The microfinance sector in Rwanda is relatively young, becoming prominent just after the genocide in 1994 (Bamwesigye 13). Microfinance has grown rapidly in the last decade while
commercial banks in Rwanda still serve approximately 6 percent of the population; consequently, MFIs have attempted to fill the gap in providing financial services to the poor (Dejene 15). Close to $100 million was mobilized in the Rwandan microfinance sector and $85 million was extended to over 600,000 MFI clients as credit in 2005 (Bamwesigye 13; Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 11). Despite this relatively high penetration rate compared to other African countries, however, only 21 percent of the active population has access to such financial services (Bamwesigye 13; Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 11). Similarly, geographical coverage of MFIs in Rwanda is unbalanced. There is more concentration of MFIs in urban areas and trade centers while approximately 80 percent of the population is based in rural and remote areas (Bamwesigye 13; Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 10). Nevertheless, the government is aware of the imbalance and has adopted a national policy to make MFIs available in all sections of the community, with particular attention to the poorest areas of the country (Republic of Rwanda, 2006).

Though women generally have smaller amounts of capital available to start businesses and show a greater need for funding, they also have the most difficulty in acquiring commercial financing for business start ups (United States Agency for International Development 21). A United States Agency for International Development (USAID) study found that 82 percent of Rwandan women business owners self-finance their firms by borrowing from friends and family members instead of seeking out MFIs or commercial institutions (United States Agency for International Development 21). For Rwandan women accessing credit is difficult for various reasons including lack of knowledge regarding available options and ambiguity of bank structure, services and procedures (United States Agency for International Development 21). In addition, commercial lending institutions, often reflecting societal perceptions, make inaccurate
assessments and generalizations about female entrepreneurial and borrowing behavior and discriminate against women (United States Agency for International Development 21). Moreover, many women lack sufficient collateral to obtain financing as land and housing contracts are often in the husband's name (though matrimonial and succession laws in Rwanda changed in 1999 giving women the right to inherit land from their parents) (United States Agency for International Development 21; Cutura 18). Though succession laws have changed in a positive way for women in Rwanda, challenges in implementation remain. Customary traditions prevail in many areas of the country and only women married under the civil law are guaranteed land ownership (Dejene 20). Succession laws do not recognize those married under customary law or those in polygamous unions (Cutura 19; Dejene 20; Social Institutions and Gender Index 1).

**Table 2.7 Percentage Women Borrowers by MFI, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MFI</th>
<th>Number of Clients</th>
<th>Share of Women Borrowers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amasezeno Community Banking SA</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFE Agaseke IMF SA</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IME-Unguka SA</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkingi</td>
<td>6,183</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfinance Al Halal</td>
<td>73,502</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIM SA</td>
<td>4,322</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swoft SA</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urwego Opportunity Bank</td>
<td>29,200</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Finance Company</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As indicated in Table 2.7, some MFIs in Rwanda target women as beneficiaries and have a larger share of female clients (Dejene 15). Table 2.7 also demonstrates a clear variation between the Urwego Opportunity Bank (UOB) and Réseau Interdiocésain de Microfinance (RIM SA). Out of their share of total borrowers, RIM SA is comprised of only 15 percent female
borrowers whereas 87 percent of UOB’s borrowers are women (see Table 2.7). Established in 2004 by the Catholic Church, RIM SA provides access to loans by a process known as “group requirement” (Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 15). This means to access a loan, individuals must form a group and obtain a savings account for six months with repayments made weekly (Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 15). The UOB began operations in 1997 as a World Relief program to alleviate poverty (Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting LLC 15).³ The Urwego Opportunity Bank offers a variety of loan products to clients, including individual loans for business reasons as well as life expenses, such as weddings and funerals as well as community banking group loans (Urwego Opportunity Bank 1).

Accordingly, various explanations can be given for the lower percentages of female borrowers in RIM SA to those of UOB. The UOB specifically markets more loan services to female clients; according to its mission statement, the bank strives for “the improvement of women’s social and economic welfare” (Urwego Opportunity Bank 1). RIM SA, however, makes no such specific claim regarding women. Additionally, both institutions claim a Christian religious affiliation. Although RIM SA is a Catholic organization and UOB a Protestant one, it is not clear whether religious affiliation has implications for the percentage of female borrowers in a bank group. It is likely that UOB’s share of female borrowers are significantly higher because the development bank specifically targets women as clients and offers more flexibility and variations in loan types (i.e. individual and group loans) compared to RIM SA.

³ Urwego was a leading MFI in Rwanda founded by World Relief Rwanda (an international Christian relief and development program) in 1997. In 2007, Urwego Opportunity Bank of Rwanda Ltd. was created as a result of a successful merger between Urwego and Opportunity International (UOB 1).
percent (Dejene 15). A study two years later shows a two percent decline in female MFI borrowers (14 percent) though the average lending interest rate in Rwanda (16 percent) did not change (United States Agency for International Development 21; Trading Economics 1). This two percent decline in female borrowers may be due to two significant factors: high interest rates and short repayment terms (United States Agency for International Development 21). Even when women qualify for loans, short repayment terms can be one of their main challenges with some institutions expecting full repayment within months (United States Agency for International Development 23). Because microfinance institutions are increasingly focused on being financially sustainable (i.e. profitable), many will charge onerous interest rates and Rwanda is no exception (Microfinance Africa 1).

Interest rates for MFIs are often considerably higher than normal bank loans because they lend out a million dollars in 100,000 loans at $100 each (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor 1). This means MFIs charge substantially higher rates than normal banks to cover costs and keep the service available (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor 1). The global average for MFI interest rates was 28 percent in 2006 this was only a 2.3 percent decline from 30 percent in 2003 (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor 2). The Association of Microfinance Institution in Rwanda (AMIR), an organization that works to build the capacity of the MFI industry in Rwanda, found that many Rwandans lost money in 2006 due to poorly managed MFIs that failed to carry out risk assessments, ending up bankrupt and closed by the Central Bank (Microfinance Africa 1). To avoid this problem, AMIR insists on a system that requires transparent pricing of interest rates charged by MFIs (Microfinance Africa 1). With further regulation, organization and transparency of the MFI sector, microfinance could represent greater opportunities for women in the future, especially if it targets them by offering lower interest rates and longer
repayment periods.

In 2006, Rwanda’s Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) drafted a policy agenda to improve the quality of services of the MFI industry and to build stronger institutional capacities of MFIs in Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda 22). The national microfinance policy seeks to create a favorable environment for MFIs while also providing security and regulation of the microfinance sector in order to offer financial services to the low-income population of Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda 23). The policy utilizes a specific gender approach by employing publicity campaigns targeted to women to inform them of the availability and accessibility of financial services and partnering (Republic of Rwanda 23). In addition, the government has partnered with MFIs to create flexible product designs including modifications in repayment terms and interest rates (Dejene 16).

It is essential to place emphasis on the transparency and clear communication of MFI products to their clients (Nyesiga 1). With government regulation and support, microfinance institutions must ensure communication and understanding of the terms and conditions of microloans including clear explanations of total costs, interest rates as well as late fees and penalties (Nyesiga 1). Consequently, the financial education of prospective clients and transparency of MFIs can help ensure financial institutions fix prices responsibly and borrowers can make an educated choice with a clear understanding of the loan terms and conditions (Nyesiga 2).

**Analysis**

In sum, the economic situation for Rwandan women provides a mixed picture. Women are still disproportionately represented in the lowest paid sectors and underrepresented in more
valued sectors, which are traditionally male and continue to be male dominated. Interestingly, Rwanda is listed among countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and Kenya, with the smallest overall gender pay gaps, with women making, on average, 73 percent of the male wage (Bachan et al. 30). Nonetheless, comprehensive research into specific sectors (i.e. industry, agriculture and services) indicates that even if women attain competitive experience and education in male dominated fields, disparities in compensation persist between genders, especially as education levels rise. Additionally, women are overrepresented in unpaid farm work at 56 percent and men at 19 percent, further demonstrating the gender pay gap within sectors (see Table 2.3). Though the Rwandan government has a plan for poverty reduction within EDPRS to generate one million non-agricultural jobs, 50 percent of which will be non-agricultural work, there is no emphasis on gender equality targets regarding the share of women that will benefit from the job creation objective (Dejene 2).

It is evident, with the exception of IT, that the percentages of females in crossing over into higher paying, male dominated work is negligible. More women are moving instead into undervalued agricultural sectors though, since 2008, 56 percent of Rwanda’s parliament has been female. From 2001-2011, women experienced only half the increase men experienced transitioning out of the agricultural sector. As the percentages of women in parliament steadily increased, men moved out of agriculture at a faster rate than women at 22 percent with women at 10 percent (see Table 2.5). In 2006, only 25 percent of women moved into nonagricultural higher paid, secured labor compared to 75 percent of males (Strode et al. 23). Currently, Rwandan women comprise approximately 82 percent of the agricultural sector in Rwanda while men make up 61 percent of the sector (see Table 2.4).

Persistently minuscule percentages of women enroll in training programs for vocational
paths into mechanics and engineering careers both as students and teachers. At the same time, however, studies have found that Rwandan women are increasingly shifting towards training and education into technology and IT sectors (Cutura 6). Along with the increase of female entrepreneurship, several NGOs and the Kigali Institute of Science, Research and Technology have worked to give priority consideration to women and girls by providing scholarships and training programs emphasizing science and technology skills both to encourage girls to build careers in science and technology and allow female business owners to increase profitability by accessing global markets (Santhi et al. 193; Dejene 26).

There have been government efforts to improve women's economic empowerment since the end of the 1994 genocide, including the cultivation of a more favorable small business environment and increasing the rural poor's access to credit. There are six commercial banks and 200 MFIs in Rwanda (Cutura 20). MFIs tailor their financing models to draw and accommodate women entrepreneurs. Whereas commercial banks provide larger loans targeted to more established individuals and entities, MFIs desire to go beyond simply making business loans to reaching the poor (Grameen Foundation 1). The Rwandan government supports the microfinance sector as a strategic instrument in its poverty reduction approach and views MFIs as tools to generate employment (Bamwesigye 12). The added benefit that MFIs specifically recognize women as strategic actors in promoting economic development has led the government to pursue a supportive environment to create sustainable MFIs (Bamwesigye 13). Though the Rwandan government supports the efforts of microfinance, Rwandan women only constitute 14 percent of total MFI borrowers (United States Agency for International Development 21).

The government of Rwanda has also worked to amend credit and lending laws (Diaz 2). Prior to the 1994 genocide, Rwandan women could not secure a loan without the permission of
her husband; in response, the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development organized the Women’s Guarantee Fund (Diaz 2). Established in 1998 in association with Banque Populaire, the Women’s Guarantee Fund offers a program in which loans are disbursed to women engaged in either individual or group income generating projects, focusing on those who have no collateral or credit record (Banque Populaire du Rwanda 1). The government, in addition, has attempted to simplify the lending process by enacting laws allowing the use of all "possible moveable assets to be used as collateral" (Diaz 2; Cutura 22). Extending the classification of collateral to include non-land assets will enable and particularly benefit women in accessing credit since they usually have less access to land (Cutura 22).

Overall, Rwandan women have gained opportunities in terms of owning their own businesses and facing less restrictions in where and when they can work. The situation has not, however, improved for women in terms of the sexual division of labor. Female workers, especially highly educated females, still face heavy constraints when faced with childcare, yet the flexibility that agricultural and informal sector labor offers keeps women mired in these fields. The traditional notion that women must carry the primary responsibility for children and the home creates a problem for women’s pay and careers in Rwanda as elsewhere. It remains to be seen whether a female majority in parliament will assist in improving or equalizing the sexual division of labor in the future. Despite the Rwandan government’s commitment to promote gender equality at all levels, traditional attitudes and practices that discriminate against women persist (Dejene 32). The lack of gender statistics and gender equality targets in various aspects of women’s economic empowerment makes evidence-based planning and resource allocation challenging and can have serious implications on efforts to improve women’s economic status in
Rwanda (Dejene 32).

Rwanda is not alone in the world in sustaining this type of occupational segregation in gender and disparity in pay. It may be an indication, however, that even as women’s political representation rises, female majorities in parliament do not necessarily lead to better economic opportunities or improved gender equality for women. With a 23 percent improvement in women's political representation since 2003, developments in economic opportunity do not seem to correspond with the dramatic hike in overall political representation.
Chapter 3: Education and Literacy Rates among Young Women and Girls

Education is essential in addressing gender inequality. The significance in education lies in the fact that its benefits grow in tandem with the level of education reached. Higher levels of education increase the likelihood that young women will participate in formal paid employment, increasing their earning potential as well as delaying the marriage of girls and the age at which they have their first child (Bachan et al. 14). The right to an education and literacy is included in several key international conventions. The 1975 Persepolis Declaration, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recognize not only education but specify literacy as an explicit right of children and adults (UNESCO 136). 4 Literacy skills, in addition, contribute to informed decision-making, increased political awareness and participation as well as improved health (UNESCO 142). Women who participate in an adult literacy campaign are more likely to seek medical assistance for themselves and sick children, participate in preventative health measures and are more informed about family planning methods (UNESCO 141).

As of 2009, the average global literacy rate for adult women was 79.2 percent and 86.8 percent for girls. According to UNESCO, the number of illiterate persons has declined over the past decade, but 793 million adults still lack basic reading and writing skills; 64 percent of illiterate adults around the world are women (UNESCO 1). Parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia exhibited the lowest literacy rates (UNESCO 1). Eleven countries had literacy rates below 50 percent (including Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Haiti, Mali, and Sierra Leone) (UNESCO 2). However, regional averages can conceal higher literacy rates by individual country. For example,

4 Rwanda signed the CRC in January 1990 and ratified it January 1991. Rwanda also signed CEDAW in May 1980 and ratified the convention in March 1981 (University of Minnesota Human Rights Library 1).
Mali’s literacy rate is 26 percent whereas Equatorial Guinea has a literacy rate of 93 percent (UNESCO 2). The two countries possess specific factors that effect literacy rates. Equatorial Guinea has large supplies of oil and a higher GDP per capita, which may contribute to higher rates of literacy while Mali is considered one of the poorest countries in the world and is currently experiencing political unrest, contributing to low literacy rates (African Economic Outlook 18; Pringle 10).

Rwanda falls just under the global average for literacy rates among adult females and girls at 67 percent and 77 percent, respectively (UNESCO 1; Index Mundi 1). Since 1978, the literacy rate of adult women and girls in Rwanda has slowly increased (see Table 3.1). Rwanda ranks slightly above average in relation to sub-Saharan Africa, which shows an average literacy rate of 53 percent among adult females and 67 percent among female youths as a region (Trading Economics 1). As of 2009, literacy rates between genders have become more equal in Rwanda; nevertheless, it is imperative that literacy rates continue to increase for both sexes (UNESCO 1).
The educational experience of girls worldwide has been comprised of an education that prepares them for a future as a wife and mother caring for the home, though this has been changing in many parts of the world. In addition, when confronting financial difficulties, parents in developing countries are more likely to remove their female children from school rather than males often due to the need for labor. Particularly in rural areas, when work burdens increase girls are removed from school more often than boys to help with farming and household labor (Nowrojee 15).

Improving women’s economic status and gender equality overall requires a multifaceted approach at various levels. Addressing issues such as women’s earning capacities, occupational segregation and entrepreneurship must involve consideration of underlying causes that place females in disproportionately economically disadvantaged positions (Dejene 3). Accordingly, this chapter will examine education in Rwanda as another facet of gender equality. This purpose of this chapter is to examine female education rates in primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Rwanda. Assessing the education of women and girls in Rwanda will also include an
examination of female attendance and dropout rates as well as efforts of the Rwandan government to promote the education and literacy of women in the country in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide to the present.

**Rwanda: Education Background**

In Rwanda, formal education was first introduced by the colonial system. The first schools constructed by the Germans in 1900 were opened exclusively for boys; it was not until almost 40 years later that the first secondary school for girls was opened in 1937 by Roman Catholic nuns. Various schools were later set up and managed chiefly by missionaries with the objective of evangelization and training administrators for the colonial power (Uworwabayeho et al. 95). Initially, the education of girls focused on skill development that reinforced socialized gender roles including secretarial skills, home economics and general hygiene, while boys were trained to work in the colonial administration (Huggins et al. 16).

Traditionally, Rwandan women were treated as dependents of their male relatives, expected to be managed and protected by their fathers, husbands and their male children and preparing for a future in managing a household and working farmland (Nowrojee 14). Before the 1994 genocide, Rwandan women were underrepresented in education; girls comprised about 45 percent of students in primary schools in the 1980s. At the secondary education level, boys outnumbered girls 9 to 1. By the time they reached university the number of women decreased further and men outnumbered women 15 to 1 (Nowrojee 15). Undoubtedly, the genocide devastated an already weak educational system. In the end, a disquieting 75 percent of teachers were killed or imprisoned in connection with the genocide (Cole and Barsalou 7). Furthermore, the number of girls and women whose education was interrupted prematurely is unknown. The
number who gave birth as a result of rape was undetermined; it was very likely the same girls were attending school just months before and it is unknown how many ever went back to school. The entire educational system came to an abrupt halt as many teachers and children fled or were killed. Schools and colleges were completely destroyed and looted (Obura 46-47).

Though the new RPF government did not have financial resources, equipment, supplies or enough workers, the Ministry of Education re-opened primary schools in September 1994, two months after the genocide ended (Obura 56). Using the destruction of the school system as an opportunity to take a fresh start, the new RPF government restructured the education system, removing anything it called "the errors of the past" (Obura 55). Since then, the new education policy claims to emphasize national unity and reconciliation, removing Hutu and Tutsi labels, and shifting instead to promoting identity as a single homogenous group of Rwandans (King 4).

From 1995 to 2010, the government placed a moratorium on teaching history due to the realization that history taught prior to the genocide was divisive and biased. The postponement of teaching Rwandan history has been controversial; although the government says it is an endeavor to nation build, it is accused of hiding contrasting narratives rather than truly uniting Rwandans (King 5). In 2008, a new textbook on the history of Rwanda was produced, but it has been difficult to secure official approval due to concerns about a biased curriculum. Rwandan schools resumed teaching history in 2010; however, there were only teachers’ guides and no student resources (Hilker 2). When the Ministry of Education re-opened Rwandan schools immediately after the genocide in September 1994, the government repudiated the past curriculum and had no immediate textbook replacements (Motel 12). The lack of sufficient formal textbooks continues today to some degree, especially textbooks about Rwanda's history as
a result of the top-down nature of the government’s history discourse and its censorship of alternative accounts (Motel 11).

The Rwandan government claims to give the educational system a pivotal role in creating the “new Rwanda,” directing schools to train citizens free of any type of discrimination, exclusion and favoritism so as to promote peace (King 4). The government is also enforcing more gender equal lessons into the curriculum and approving textbooks on the basis of gender sensitivity so as to promote gender equality (Barwell et al. 63). This is easier said than done. Overall, a tension exists between a commitment to provide more democratic, student-centered teaching methods and the Rwandan government’s attempt to impose a singular “official” narrative of Rwandan history (Hilker 2).

**Primary Education**

Primary education for Rwandans is compulsory and made up of nine years, consisting of six years of primary education and the first three years of secondary school (also know as *Tronc Commun*) (Republic of Rwanda 5). The school age for children in primary education ranges from 7 to 12 (Republic of Rwanda 12). In 2009, the Rwandan government launched the Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) Reform Program, making primary and lower secondary school free and compulsory for all Rwandese children (Embassy of Rwanda 1). In primary grades 1-3, students study nine subjects and those in levels 4-6 study 11 subjects including courses such as Kinyarwanda, English, French, math, political education, art, moral education and religious studies (Republic of Rwanda 10). As of February 2012, students who reach the end of the 9YBE program were entitled to a further three years of basic education for free in upper secondary education, which includes TVET and teacher training programs (Paxton 15).
The Rwandan government has enacted a range of policies to achieve universal primary education (Huggins and Randell 2). In 2009, the government accelerated reform by increasing spending on education in the national budget from approximately 14.2 percent in 2004 to 17 percent in 2010 (UNICEF 2). Rwanda’s public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.6 percent in 2011 (UN Data 1). Globally speaking, the highest spending on education as a share of GDP was in North America and Western Europe at 5.2 percent, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 4.9 percent (Assad et al. 72). Rwanda is just under Africa’s regional average at 4.6 percent, well under top spending African countries like Burundi and Lesotho who spend 8.3 and 12.4 percent of GDP on education, respectively (Provost 3). Furthermore, Rwanda is heavily dependent on foreign aid; about 50 percent of the country’s education budget is financed from external sources (UNESCO 22).

Rwanda’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) also entails specific activities to promote gender equality in education (Huggins et al. 2). The government is specifically working to improve the educational experience for girls by increasing the number of female teachers, sensitizing communities on the importance of educating girls, awarding scholarships to disadvantaged female students, sensitizing teachers to gender disparities in education, developing a physical learning environment that is more accommodating to female students and carrying out further gender-specific research to collect qualitative and quantitative data on girls’ education (Huggins et al. 3).

Incorporated into Rwanda’s Vision 2020 (the national policy to construct a competitive, knowledge-based economy by placing greater emphasis on scientific and technological education) is the aim to alleviate the historic marginalization of girls from the education system.
(Huggins et al. 2; Santhi and Kumaran 192). The government’s goal in Vision 2020 is to transition the country of Rwanda from an agricultural to a knowledge-based economy. In 2007, the government collaborated with the organization One Laptop per Child (OLPC) with a long-term vision of delivering access for all to the Web (Rwanda Report 1). Through assistance from donors, the program has so far provided 100,000 computers to children and teachers across Rwanda and in 2010 President Kagame committed to provide primary schools with 500,000 laptops over the next five years (Rwanda Report 2). Furthermore, Rwanda’s education ministry has run workshops country-wide in over 100 schools and assists teachers in developing lesson plans to build creative uses for computers in the classroom (Rwanda Report 2).

In the first half of the 1970s, primary school enrollment stagnated at around 0.4 million pupils and steadily began to climb at a yearly average rate of 3.9 percent from 1975 to 1993 (World Bank 31). Rwanda achieved gender parity in terms of access to schools in 1990, with less than a 1 percent gender gap (Obura 40). Rwanda has one of the highest primary school enrollment rates in Africa, with 95.94 percent of all children enrolled in primary school (Republic of Rwanda 12). In terms of gender, as of 2010, the primary school enrollment rate for boys was 94.3 percent compared to that of girls at 97.5 (UNICEF 1). In the distribution of gender in primary education, girls and boys are almost equal with 50.9 and 49.1 percent respectively (Republic of Rwanda 12).

With regard to completion rates, defined as students completing the last year of primary school, since 1971, the primary school completion rate for girls has steadily risen from 17 to 71 percent in 2010 (Index Mundi 1). Table 3.2 demonstrates the completion rates of primary school children by gender. Statistics reveal a marked change in 2008 in which girls begin to exhibit a higher completion rate, breaking a 37-year trend of falling behind boys in completion rates since
1971. The same year, women gained a 56 percent majority in the Rwandan parliament and girls in primary school began to outperform boys in primary school at 71.4 percent compared to boys’ completion rate of 64.6 percent. As of 2011, completion rates for girls stood at 82 percent with boys at 79 percent (Index Mundi 1). It appears the system is working. More girls than boys complete primary school; however, data for upper secondary education show completion rates for girls dropping significantly (Rwanda Girls Initiative 1).

In 2008, the percentage of female students completing primary school surpassed that of males, the same year, female representation in parliament eclipsed that of males. Moreover, as of the 2010-2011 academic years, about 76 percent of all Rwandan children completed their primary school education (Kwizera 1). It is unlikely that the female increase in parliament and girls surpassing boys in primary school completion are directly linked. There is the possibility that parents felt more confident in their daughters’ futures as more women comprised a majority in parliament that same year. However, an additional likely explanation for the increased completion rates of girls could be the anticipation and implementation of the nine years basic education program (9YBE). The 9YBE program began in the 2009 academic year and guaranteed Rwandan children receive fee free schooling for nine years, increasing parents’ sense of surety that their children could continue to secondary education (Kwizera1; Mugarura 2). Likewise, with the expectation of nine years of free basic education, the Rwandan government built more schools and added 3,000 additional classrooms to increase access to the program (Kwizera 1). This meant the likelihood of schools being located in closer proximity to home and the improved safety of female students (considering the shorter commute to school) (Mugarura 2). In addition, extending the 9YBE to 12YBE was one of the campaign pledges made by president Kagame for the 2010 elections (Rwirahira 1). Coupled with the already implemented
free 9YBE and an additional extension of the program to 12 years, parents may have been given
the right incentives to keep their daughters in primary schools.

**Table 3.2 Primary School Completion Rates by Gender, 1971-2011**

![Bar chart showing primary school completion rates by gender, 1971-2011.]


**Secondary Education: Lower and Upper Secondary Levels**

Also known as *tronc commun*, the lower secondary education level is comprised of students from 13 to 18 years old (Republic of Rwanda 21). *Tronc commun* can be considered a continuation of the primary education level, as it is a continuation of general education with subjects like mathematics, English, Kinyarwanda and social studies, while upper secondary education is a preparatory phase for students to be groomed for higher education and jobs in the modern economy such as technology, innovation or education (World Bank 4, Republic of Rwanda 24). At independence in 1962, Rwanda had hundreds of primary schools with only about 40 secondary schools (almost all private, owned by churches) (Hilker 5). Transitions from
primary to secondary levels, lower to upper secondary and entry into higher education are subject to passing national exams. National exams at the end of primary education push the majority of children (ages 12-13) out of the education system because only a few places are available for upper secondary education due to the limited number of schools and inferior test scores at the end of primary and tronc commun cycles (Uworwabayeho et al. 97). In upper secondary education students can select general secondary school, teacher training college or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) options; this level is considered a preparatory phase for higher or tertiary education (Paxton 16; World Bank 4). Upper secondary education is three years long and consists of students ages 18-21 (Uworwabayeho et al. 95).

The Rwandan government works to promote gender equality in secondary education. In 2008, MINEDUC collaborated with FAWE Rwanda and UNICEF to create and disseminate the National Girls’ Education Policy (FAWE Rwanda 1). In accord with the National Gender Policy, the Girls’ Education Policy introduces measures to ensure that issues of gender are mainstreamed in the educational system at national, district and community levels (Republic of Rwanda 1). The overall objective of Rwanda’s Girls’ Education Policy is to promote and guide sustainable action in the gradual elimination of gender disparities in education and training including strategies to improve girls’ enrollment in non-traditional fields of study, in particular, science and technology (Republic of Rwanda 1). Furthermore, the National Girls’ Education Policy serves as a helpful tool to facilitate gender-responsive pedagogy, developing teaching practices that prompt equal treatment and participation of girls and boys in the classroom as well as the wider community (Mweseli 11). Working with UNICEF and FAWE, the Ministry of Education has held workshops across the country to disseminate the Girls’ Education Policy for
over 120 district officials in charge of education, including headmasters and headmistresses (FAWE Rwanda 1). The workshops helped train and sensitize education officials to identify challenges that affect girls such as cultural barriers, poverty, early marriage, lack of career guidance, limited interest in TVET School and poor performance which limits girls’ attendance in government schools (FAWE Rwanda 2).

MINEDUC has also revised primary and secondary school curriculum to include units on gender sensivities (Uworwabayeho et al. 102). Studies have found that boys often receive more attention and praise in the classroom, teachers also have internalized patriarchal gender roles and textbooks often reinforce traditional gender roles and depict gender stereotypes (Heng 27). Revising primary and secondary school curricula to include gender sensitivity training will allow Rwandan educators to explore their own gender biases, examine how teachers perpetuate gender inequality as well as develop new strategies to make education more equal (Heng 8). Through the National Development Curriculum Development Center MINEDUC has prioritized revising curricula and textbooks on the basis of gender sensitivity in order to facilitate equality in education (Uworwabayeho et al. 102).

Rwanda’s Ministry of Education has also adopted the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) package introduced by UNICEF in 2004 (Clover 1). Together with UNICEF, the Rwandan government has put in place a plan to promote health and hygiene in primary schools to ensure fewer students drop out (Clover 1). There have been significant renovations to schools that are part of the CFS program. Between 2009 and 2011 the Rwandan government built over 5,500 classrooms and 11,000 latrines with the help of UNICEF (Yale 2). Further renovations have included upgrades for safe water for drinking, benches, desks, ventilated classrooms, improved
playgrounds, brighter classrooms, improved water sanitation and environmental sanitation as well as adequate and separate sanitation facilities for female and male pupils (Clover 1; Yale 2).

Despite government efforts, female students in Rwanda consistently perform worse than boys in national examinations; this harms their chances in gaining competitive positions in public higher education (World Bank 89). In upper secondary exams, 43 percent of girls passed national exams in comparison to 57 percent of boys in 2007 (MINEDUC 10). Upper secondary school capacity is limited. As a result, only those with the highest test scores can attend (Rwanda Girls Initiative 1). Though girls show positive enrollment rates (97 percent) and completion rates (82 percent) at primary and lower secondary levels, the percentage of girls drops significantly when transitioning to upper secondary school (Rwanda Girls Initiative 1). In general, secondary school enrollment is low for both girls and boys and stands at 25.7 percent overall with girls at 27.2 percent and boys at 24.2 percent (Republic of Rwanda 21). Given the small number of secondary schools and that the majority of Rwandans live in rural areas, secondary school enrollment for both sexes tends to be marginal (Latham et al. 21). Moreover, the female secondary enrollment rate is lower than the average rate of 30.6 percent for sub-Saharan Africa (Trading Economics 1).

Because of the limited number of secondary schools and high costs of secondary and tertiary education, only wealthy, elite individuals have access to school beyond the primary level (Hilker 5). The situation since is largely unchanged since 1994, in terms of the disparity in secondary and tertiary enrollment between the rich and poor (Hilker 9). In 2006, children in the lowest income quintile made up 2.6 percent of those in secondary education; percentages of children from the highest income quintile were ten times higher at 26 percent (Hilker 10). As is the case elsewhere, socioeconomic status correlates with performance on leaving examinations.
As a result, fewer needy children become eligible for the limited public secondary school scholarships or openings (Latham, Ndaruhutse and Smith 69).

For girls who do enter secondary school, their participation in lower secondary education is comparable to that of boys. The enrollment of girls at primary and lower secondary levels has been consistent since the 1990s, the distribution of gender in primary education shows that girls and boys are almost equal with 50.9 and 49.1 percent respectively (Republic of Rwanda 12). Though enrollment rates between genders are almost equal, statistics reveal girls in both tronc commun and upper secondary are more likely to access private (rather than public) education. Unlike standard distinctions between public and private schools regarding quality, public secondary schools in Rwanda are run by the government and tend to be of a higher quality and less expensive than private schools (Uworwabayeho 98). Comparing public and private school enrollment, statistics show 44.6 percent of girls and 38.4 percent of boys are enrolled in lower quality private schools (MINEDUC 18). Girls in both tronc commun and upper secondary schools are more likely to access private, lower quality education due to distance (most private schools are near households so this reduces costs). In addition, these are day schools, allowing for girls to continue household responsibilities and stay at home overnight instead of residing in boarding schools (Latham et al. 69).

Despite significant progress in enrollment, completion rates for girls continue to be low, this is because girls perform less well than boys on primary exams and, as a direct result, girls are enrolled in greater numbers in inferior private schools, where the entrance criteria are lower than public secondary schools (Uworwabayeho et al. 99). Admission into secondary school and higher education in Rwanda is largely based on student performance and boys consistently test better than girls in each level. An added barrier to gender parity in secondary education is the
prevalence of seminary schools, which only admit male students. Seminary schools also attract the highest quality teachers and regularly rank in the top schools, resulting in a higher number of actual available openings for males than females (Huggins et al. 8).

Even as female students transition into upper secondary school not only is there a continuation of previous barriers (i.e. added household responsibilities, safety issues, parents keeping daughters rather than sons from going to school to care for younger siblings) but also a new set of factors that contribute to the overall low performance of female students. Many schools lack appropriate and separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls. Deficiencies in schools such as access to sanitary pads and separate restrooms cause increased absenteeism among adolescent girls who are more likely to stay home during menstruation to avoid embarrassment (Randell 14). Additional socio-cultural factors that further obstruct the education of females as they age are early marriage and pregnancy (Randell and Fish 6).

Indeed, contributing factors such as traditional attitudes regarding gender and the high rate of absenteeism entrench girls’ low performance; this has a cyclical effect as girls are then admitted to lower quality secondary school and universities in lower numbers (Randell 17). As we will see in tertiary education, gender discrimination in admission poses an additional barrier as girls who pass their exams are being excluded in greater numbers from public universities than their male counterparts (Randell 18).

**Tertiary Education**

Tertiary education in Rwanda is a minimum of four years and is comprised of TVET, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and specialist institutions such as colleges of technology, colleges of education and nursing colleges (Paxton 16). Just before the genocide, Rwanda had 13
HEIs (World Bank 135). Since 1994, expanding tertiary institutions has been a high priority by the Rwandan government (Obura 114). There are now 31 higher learning institutions, 17 are public institutions and 14 are private (Republic of Rwanda 35). Prior to the establishment of the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in 1963, the Catholic Church facilitated higher education in Rwanda (Bridgeland, Wulsin and McNaught 13). Other major universities in Rwanda include the Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), founded in 1999 to train teachers and the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) (Bridgeland et al. 13).

Student enrollment has also increased significantly improved and expanded since the genocide (Obura 117). Enrollment in the NUR gradually rose from 921 in 1980 to its peak enrollment of 8,082 in 2006 (Bridgeland et al. 13). HEIs in general grew to 100 students for every 100,000 by 2000 and this rate doubled to 200 by 2004. By 2009, there were approximately 450 students enrolled in higher learning institutions for every 100,000 Rwandans (Bridgeland et al. 14). Other improvements to the higher education system since the genocide include the development of quality standards for the accreditation of higher education institutions as well as strategies to provide more loans and grants to students in priority disciplines such as science and technology (World Bank 24). Compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, Rwanda’s tertiary educational system is doing quite well in terms of enrollment; however, there are socio-economic as well as gender disparities that need to improve (Bridgeland et al. 14-15).

Currently, total spending on education as a percent of GDP is at 4.7 percent in Rwanda (UN Data 1). Comparatively, governments in North America and Western Europe invested the highest shares of national resources in education at 5.6 percent of GDP, followed by the Arab States (4.9 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (4.5 percent) (World Bank 7). Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Central and Eastern Europe spend 4.4 percent and 4.2 percent of GDP
respectively (World Bank 7). The lowest levels of public spending are found in Central Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific – both of which report only 2.8 percent of GDP. Rwanda places just above the global average of education expenditure (4.4 percent) as well as sub-Saharan Africa's average of 4.5 percent (UN Data 1). Spending on primary education as a percent of the total is 45.3 percent with spending on secondary education at 19.8 percent. In most countries, public expenditure is much higher for tertiary education compared to secondary education and Rwanda is no different, expenditure for tertiary education in the country is 29.2 percent of the total budget (Provost 3).

The budget for higher education increased from an allocation of 2 percent of the government's total recurrent budget in 1990 to over one-third of budgetary allocation for the education sector in 2000 (Obura 115). However, the government's budgetary focus on tertiary education has been a source of tension. It is argued that high levels of spending on tertiary education perpetuate structural inequality in the education system because the government spends much more on each local tertiary student than on primary school pupils (Hilker 9). Accordingly, more money is devoted to higher education although only a small percentage of Rwandans ever reach that level (Bridgeland et al. 19). As a result, the government is reducing the share of the budget allocated to higher education and reallocating it to primary and secondary education in an attempt to rebalance budgets between all three sectors (Uyttersprot 17).

The government of Rwanda participates in the Women’s Leadership Program in conjunction with US NGO Higher Education for Development and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Higher Education Development 1). This program provides grants to Rwandan women in order to increase access to advanced degrees by attending US universities (Higher Education Development 1). Under the Women’s Leadership Program
Rwandan women pursuing advanced degrees in teaching or agricultural sciences can partner with and attend higher education institutions in the US to earn a masters degree (Higher Education Development 1). Other grants supported by USAID include partnerships between KIST and the Durham Technical Community College as well as the University of the Pacific (UOP) with Rwanda's School of Banking and Finance, providing grants for $50,000 to develop plans to address regional and national economic growth (Bridgeland et al. 24). Though these grants fund advanced degrees in agriculture as well as banking and finance (which are traditionally female degrees) these are lucrative, high demand fields and the programs attempt to promote expanded educational opportunities for Rwandan women at home and abroad.

Other foreign universities also support female Rwandan higher education by offering scholarships and opportunities to study abroad. Beginning in 1999, Dundee University in Scotland offered free tuition and living expense support to Rwandan women. Colleges and universities in the US including Oklahoma Christian University, Carnegie Melon, University of Texas and William Penn have developed a relationship with the Rwandan Embassy to provide study abroad opportunities for Rwandan students (Bridgeland et al. 25). While study abroad programs provide an excellent opportunity for female students to gain a quality education, selection is left for only a few top students; it is also very expensive (Bridgeland et al. 25).

Improved technology has allowed for additional creative forms of connecting universities in the US with those of Rwanda. For example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has made several courses available online allowing Rwandan university students to participate in advanced technology courses. This program was created to assist any Rwandan student (not just female students). Classes are available online; costs are significantly reduced and can be accessed at the student's convenience (making higher education cheaper and more accessible to
women and men). Furthermore, this type of online education provides extensive learning opportunities in various science and technology, subjects that often lack faculty in Rwanda (Bridgeland et al. 24). Several drawbacks to these types of programs are the assumption that each student has consistent access to a computer as well as a dependable Internet connection. Indeed, this can create an even larger gap for poorer female students living in rural areas who may have trouble accessing online courses due to unreliable or nonexistent Internet connections in addition to limited instructor-student interaction and limited social interaction with other students.

Disparities in gender are documented in tertiary education in Rwanda. With the distinct emphasis on promoting science and technology career fields to build the country’s competitiveness in global markets, these disciplines become prioritized at the university level and in the allocation of government scholarships; nonetheless, many young women are either not choosing these subjects or qualified in them (Huggins et al. 12; Dejene 26). Though there are government efforts to promote science and technology education among girls, female enrollment in these fields is decidedly low (Dejene 26). Of students enrolled in science and technology fields at the KIST and the Institut Supérieur de l’Agriculture et de l’Élevage (ISAE), just 20 and 23 percent of students, respectively, were female (Muhumuza and Mulindahabi 2). However, nearly half of undergraduate students at the School of Banking and Finance are women. While this is an encouraging statistic, this also means female students in Rwanda still tend to avoid lucrative science and technological fields and choose already female-dominated careers such as banking and finance where women obtain entry level jobs at approximately the same rate as men, but are vastly outnumbered at the top (Huggins et al. 10).

In general, females make up 34 percent of students in public higher learning institutions with a higher percentage of females (52.9 percent of students) enrolled in private higher learning
institutions (Republic of Rwanda 34). Therefore, females account for a much smaller percent of students in public universities while they hold a slight majority in poorer quality private institutions, which offer few or no science or technology programs (Republic of Rwanda. 12; Masanja 6).

**Table 3.3 Secondary Leaving Examination Results in Rwanda, 2003-2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary Examination Pass Rate (%)</th>
<th>Transitioned to Tertiary Institutions (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>15.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An analysis of transition rates to higher education helps reveal discriminatory practices that may underlie the disparity in gender. Secondary leaving examinations 2003/04 showed 48.3 percent of those who passed were girls and 52 percent were boys, that is only a four percent gap between genders (Dejene 26). Only 19.1 percent of those who passed leaving exams were admitted into public higher learning institutions (Huggins et al. 10). Of the 19 percent, 15.16 percent of boys transitioned to higher education, while only 8.18 percent of all girls who passed were admitted (Randell et al. 3).

Despite just a four percent gap between girls and boys passing national exams, out of every 100 girls who passed the exams, only 8 were accepted into public higher education institutions while of every 100 boys who passed, 15 were accepted (Huggins et al. 10). Essentially, female enrollment rates for 2005 in public universities are not proportionate to the number of females passing their secondary exams (Randell 20). These statistics demonstrate a
concerning gender disparity. It also indicates the presence of a strong bias toward admitting men into higher education than qualified female students.

An additional study examining the 2005/2006 school year captured a similar trend of gradual gender disparity as female and male students' progress from primary to higher education. For example, in 2006, girls' enrollment in primary school was 51.3 percent and boys' at 48.7 percent (see Table 3.4). While girls have higher enrollment rates in primary school, their percentages significantly decreased as they progressed to higher levels of education showing 41.6 percent, a 10 percent decrease in transitioning to higher education (see Table 3.4). At the same time, boys' enrollment rates increased 10 percent as they progressed through to tertiary education.

Table 3.4 Students and Staff Indicators in Education, Rwanda All Levels, 2005/2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Girls Enrolled (2006)</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>41.5% total</td>
<td>Tertiary by institution, 30% public, 50.6% private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Boys Enrolled (2006)</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>58.4% total</td>
<td>Tertiary by institution, 70% public, 49.4% private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Transition Rates (2005)</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>8.18%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Transition Rates (2005)</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>15.16%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Examination Pass Rate (2005)</td>
<td>37.91%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Examination Pass Rate (2005)</td>
<td>62.09%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Measures</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Women Faculty</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Concentration of women faculty members at the tutorial level and within particularly gendered fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Qualified Women Faculty</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>Data unavailable at national level</td>
<td>2.7% of all PhD holders at NUR are women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Randell, Shirley and Jennifer Fish, “Promoting the Retention of Women and Faculty and Students in Higher Education”, Women’s World 2008 Conference, Madrid (July 2008).
An additional aspect of tertiary institutions and a potential reason for the bias toward accepting male students at this level is that men overwhelmingly staff them. The number of female faculty reflects the number of female students in tertiary education (Randell et al. 4). Table 3.4 shows the decline in female faculty from 45.9 percent of faculty in primary school to 12 percent in higher education (Huggins et al. 10). Institutional inequality in universities reflects the prevailing climate in higher education where male leadership is the standard; this sends a message to females and males and poses barriers to female faculty members as well as female students (Randell et al. 4). Female students find fewer female role models in tertiary institutions and female faculty in higher education find it difficult to move beyond positions as lecturers. Female faculty who are promoted within HEIs are often considered anomalous and atypical, rather than the norm. Without more female role models in both faculty and institutional leadership, Rwanda's higher education system appears to sanction male authority roles (Randell et al. 4).

Though data show there has been an increase in both the number of female and male graduates, an analysis of bachelor degrees awarded from 2000 to 2010 indicates that male graduates have continually outnumbered females since 2000 (Sindayigaya 14). Of the women attempting to finish a bachelor’s degree, 30 percent failed to finish their degrees in 2007 (Huggins et al. 10). In 2010, males graduated with a bachelor’s degree at a rate of 65 percent, which was almost double the percentage of females who earned undergraduate degrees (at a rate of 35 percent) (Sindayigaya 15). Since 2008, the number of students with advanced degrees has increased significantly, but the number of males in postgraduate studies is almost three times that of females (76 percent) with females earning 24 percent of postgraduate degrees in 2010 (Sindayigaya 16).
In summary, a strong bias remains toward accepting more men than women into public universities. Though enrollment and graduation rates have steadily increased for the past 10 years, women continue to be underrepresented in higher learning institutions (Huggins et al. 10). Even as female students pass secondary leaving examinations at a comparable rate to male students, acceptance rates are higher for males than females in university admissions. Furthermore, as the Rwandan government continues to make science and technology a key component of economic development, it is essential that tertiary institutions promote gender equality in terms of pedagogy and acceptance of female students to public universities (Muhumza 3). The retention of female candidates in science and technology majors as well as higher education institutions in general not only assists in improving gender equality but also effects a reduction in poverty by educating future female scientists and engineers.

Analysis

Education in Rwanda is in many ways at a crossroads. Because compulsory education has been extended from 9 years of free basic education to twelve years, more Rwandan children are enrolling in school. Moreover, enrollment in both the public and private school has grown at an average of approximately 20 percent a year since 1996 (World Bank 132). As a result, the educational system in Rwanda is quickly changing from one that once served a small, elite clientele to one that is increasingly expected to cater to the masses. In addition, the increasing flow of primary school leavers is generating pressure to increase the capacity of secondary schools, especially upper secondary education (World Bank 132).

Even as more females attend primary school they continue to trail behind males in educational attainment, an issue that intensifies significantly at the upper secondary and tertiary
levels (Huggins et al. 2). As we have seen, this leads to occupational segregation where most women are employed in lower paid sectors such as agriculture and remain grossly underrepresented in higher paid employment in general and certainly in science and technology career fields (Masanja 8). The comparatively poor performance of girls in Rwanda can be traced to the lack of female role models in tertiary education, an outdated curriculum that promotes traditional gender roles and the conservative attitudes of teachers, church educators, and those in broader management of schools, including school committees (Obura 75). Female students transitioning into upper secondary and tertiary education continue to face these obstacles plus their enrollment and performance is affected by a variety of other factors such added household responsibilities, safety concerns as well as schools lacking appropriate and separate sanitary facilities.

Various non-profit organizations and programs exist to improve girls' enrollment in Rwanda. MINEDUC's partnerships with non-profit organizations like the Imbuto (Seed) Foundation and the Rwandan division of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE Rwanda) attempt to inspire and motivate girls to excel academically to eradicate societal misconceptions (i.e. of the sciences and mathematics as male-only specialties) to promote gender equality in education at the upper secondary and tertiary levels (Uworwabayeho et al. 101). Nonetheless, the Rwandan government does not have a specific government policy aimed at improving girls' lower test scores or improving female enrollment rates in higher quality public institutions.

A major obstacle in implementing gender equality reform in education in the country is funding (Kinghorn et al. 13). Financial constraints means the Rwandan government must make decisions of where to spend limited funds, this creates tradeoffs between girls dropping out of
secondary and tertiary education and the government's larger economic goal of becoming a knowledge-based economy through higher education (Bridgeland et al. 21). Even with 45.3 percent of the total budget spent on primary education, the problem for female students in Rwanda generally begins in secondary education where the budget allocation is just 19.8 percent compared to 29.2 percent in tertiary education (Provost 3). This means that funding for education is lowest at the point female transition rates begin to drop off.

One of the RPF government's leading priorities is reducing poverty. To the Kagame government, higher investments in tertiary education leads a workforce that can contribute to development and infrastructure needs and accelerated economic growth (Bridgeland et al. 22). Unfortunately, this translates to a larger allocation of the education budget devoted to tertiary education than secondary, leaving programs devoted to improving gender equality in secondary education underfunded and ineffective. As a result, the government relies more and more on NGOs and limited sources of funding to address gender inequality, which, for girls, occurs at the outset of secondary school (Bridgeland et al. 25). Because of the Kagame government's distinct emphasis and prioritization of science and technology career fields to build the country's competitiveness in global markets, these disciplines become prioritized at the university level meaning girls are negatively affected both in attaining higher education and in underrepresentation in science and technology careers in the country. Accordingly, focus needs to change to secondary schools and getting girls more interested in science and technology.

While Rwandan women have achieved remarkable victories in public representation, prevalent institutional inequalities continue to exist. Analyses of women in tertiary education present sharp disparities regarding access and retention (Randell et. al 1). The percentage of women in parliament increased 400 percent from 1994 to 2003 (Huggins et al. 5). Yet overall
projections for expanding percentages of females in science and technology in tertiary education from 2004 to 2010 proposed an increase of just 7-10 percent in a span of six years (Huggins et al. 4). Furthermore, as of 2011, females comprised approximately 17.4 percent of the students enrolled in colleges of technology, while forming 82.2 percent of nursing and midwifery schools (Republic of Rwanda 5). This gender segregation raises the question of the extent to which traditional notions of gender have actually changed in the daily lives of women and girls in Rwanda. As the evidence in this chapter suggests, females continue to face distinct and overlapping disadvantages in Rwanda’s education system largely due to tradeoffs in budget decisions and economic priorities driven by the Kagame government.
Chapter 4: Reproductive Health

Contraception and family planning empower women to achieve healthy outcomes for themselves and their children, advancing gender equality and dignity for women and families. Yet, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), reproductive health problems remain the principle cause of death and ill health for women of childbearing age in developing nations. Limited access to healthcare, harsh gender inequality, lack of political will, legal and regulatory restrictions, and cultural taboos all put women at risk of unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion and childbirth and sexually transmitted diseases all over the world (Planned Parenthood 1).

Reproductive rights are defined as individuals having the right to exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives (UNFPA 1). Reproductive rights as human rights were clarified and endorsed internationally in the Cairo Consensus in 1994. At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, 179 countries agreed that all couples have the right to (1) determine the number, spacing and timing of their children and have the information to do so and (2) make decisions regarding reproduction free from coercion, discrimination and violence (UNFPA 6). As signatory to ICPD, the Rwandan government has committed itself to achieving the goals agreed to by the international community in terms of eliminating gender inequalities by implementing sound population strategies such as increasing the provision and quality of services for reproductive health, family planning and primary health (Common Country Assessment 1).

Rwanda’s health sector has undergone a fundamental transition in the last century. Before the colonial era, healthcare consisted of traditional African healing methods (Rwanda Health Sector Policy 4). During the German and later Belgian colonial period, healthcare provided by
missionaries emerged and with it the introduction of modern Western treatment methods (Rwanda Health Sector Policy 4). After independence and before the genocide, Rwanda's health system was highly centralized, meaning decisions regarding healthcare rested largely with the government (Rwanda Health Sector Policy 4). In 1988, Rwanda was in the process of developing a decentralized (healthcare initiatives decided by health facilities instead of the government) locally based healthcare infrastructure that could deliver free healthcare to all Rwandans (Mahalingam-Dhingra 1). However, the 1994 genocide set an end to any progress made to Rwanda's developing healthcare system (Mahalingam-Dhingra 1). The 1994 genocide decimated Rwanda's healthcare facilities and workforce, many healthcare workers either fled before the genocide or were killed (McNeil 1).

The first years following the war were spent rebuilding basic healthcare and human resources. With a life expectancy of only 30 the year after the genocide, Rwanda looked poised to continue in a downward spiral (Emery 2). In the years since the genocide, however, changes to Rwanda's healthcare system led to dramatic developments and success in the country (McNeil 2). One of the first acts of the new post-genocide regime was to implement patient cost sharing to Rwanda's health plan in an effort to prevent the complete dissolution of healthcare in the country (Mahalingam-Dhingra 1). The government implemented user-fees in 1994 to supplement a meager health center budget. However, utilization of primary care declined to just 23 percent of the population due to widespread poverty and health outcomes began to deteriorate (Kayonga 1). Rwanda's healthcare system saw an improvement in health outcomes and increased utilization due to changes implemented to the healthcare system in 1999. The current healthcare system provides universal health coverage and is a national network of Mutuelles (community-based
health insurance supported by member premiums and government funding) in which 90.6 percent of the population is covered (Westoff 169).

This chapter will examine reproductive health in Rwanda from the period just before the 1994 genocide to the present. The following sections will research family planning in Rwanda by examining advances in safe motherhood and maternal mortality as well as reproductive rights in the country. An additional section will examine the problem of HIV education, considering contraceptive use and reproductive rights education for women and girls.

Maternal Mortality and Safe Motherhood

In the last 20 years, the issue of safe motherhood has evolved from a neglected issue to an essential and integrated element of the women’s health agenda. The event that set this change in motion was a landmark worldwide movement launched in 1987: the Safe Motherhood Initiative. The Safe Motherhood Initiative began as a collaboration between the World Bank, WHO and UNFPA to sponsor the Safe Motherhood Conference in 1987 in Nairobi, Kenya to help raise global awareness of the inadequacy of maternal healthcare in many countries (Hogan, Foreman, Naghayi, An, Wang, Makela 1609). The ICPD conference in 1994, along with the reduction in maternal mortality as one of the eight goals in Millennium Declaration (MDG 5), sharpened international focus and commitment to reproductive health (Hogan et al. 1609). Safe motherhood programs work to ensure that all women receive the care they need to remain healthy and safe throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Research shows that small and affordable measures can significantly reduce health risks for pregnant women and most maternal deaths could be prevented if women had access to appropriate healthcare during pregnancy, childbirth and immediately afterwards (safemotherhood.org 2).
In the developing world, pregnancy-related complications are among the leading causes of death and disability among women aged 15-49 as well as nearly all (about 99 percent) maternal deaths (safemotherhood.org 1).\(^5\) Seventy-five percent of maternal deaths occur during childbirth and the postpartum period, and the vast majority of maternal deaths and injuries are avoidable when women have access to healthcare before, during and after childbirth (CARE 1). In 2008, an estimated 358,000 women died due to complications developed during pregnancy and childbirth in the world; in 2010 this number dropped to 287,000 due to increased international focus and commitment of international communities on maternal health (WHO 17).

The WHO has classified 68 "Countdown Countries" to provide an assessment of progress toward improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health and achieving MDGs 4 (reduce child mortality) and 5 (improve maternal health by 2015). These countries account for 90 percent of all global maternal deaths, 45 of these countries are African (African Progress Panel 12). As reported by the World Health Organization, regions in Asia and North Africa and a number of sub-Saharan African countries halved their levels of maternal mortality since 1990. However, the global maternal mortality ratio (the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) declined by only 3.1 percent per year, a percentage well under the annual decline of 5.5 percent required to achieve MDG5 by 2015 (WHO 1). Comparatively, South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world at 2,054 per 100,000 live births, this represents a 1 in 7 chance of a woman dying during her lifetime from pregnancy related causes (UNDP 1).

\(^5\) According to the World Health Organization (WHO), maternal mortality is defined as the deaths to females that occur during the reproductive process (during pregnancy, childbirth or within two months after the birth or termination of a pregnancy).
The maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Rwanda was estimated at 1,300 in 1990 and is trending toward its MDG target of 325 by 2015 (Abbot and Rwirahira 2). A look at Rwanda's MMR since 2000 indicates that it is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that has reached an average yearly reduction of 4 percent per year (Africa Progress Panel 6). The maternal mortality rate in Rwanda was 1,071 in 2000 then dropped to 750 in 2005, 540 in 2008 and to 476 in 2010 (RDHS 2010 238).

A combination of factors have contributed to the marked reduction in maternal mortality rates in the country. Increased awareness and surveillance has allowed the Ministry of Health to better statistically track the causes of maternal deaths throughout Rwanda, leading to improved and targeted policies, strategies and programs (UNFPA Rwanda 2). Furthermore, an increased

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6 Measuring maternal mortality has been difficult because of incomplete data in the past. The rate for 1990 is the revised estimate for Rwanda developed by WHO and UNICEF to use as a benchmark towards achieving the MDG for maternal mortality, which has also been used in this paper for analysis (Abbot et al. 19).
budget devoted to healthcare, community based health insurance (Mutuelles) and performance based funding has contributed to lower MMR rates (Lu, Chin, Lewandowski, Basinga, Hirschhorn, Hill 1; Africa Progress Panel 9).

As one of the countries with the highest percentage of budgets devoted to health in Africa, several high level initiatives specifically aimed at improving maternal health have taken place in Rwanda. Reproductive health, including family planning and maternal health, has been a priority of the Ministry of Health's Strategic Plan since 2007. In its 2008 annual report, the Rwandan Ministry of Health listed maternal health as the second principal priority for budget support after family planning (UNFPA Rwanda 1). Average expenditure on health as a proportion of total government spending in Africa is 9 percent, compared to the European average of 15 percent (African Progress Panel 12). African government spending on health ranges from as low as 2 percent in Burundi to 19 percent in Rwanda (African Progress Panel 12). The Rwandan budget provided for the construction of 45 new maternal centers as well as enhanced transportation systems to service pregnant women in rural areas including the purchase of 64 ambulances for 45 districts (African Progress Panel 14). As of the latest health financing analysis in 2012, Rwanda spends approximately 20 percent on healthcare (Africa Public Health 1).

The majority of reform in MMR has been imposed through top down leadership from the government. In effect, though Mutuelle clients (effectively the majority Rwandan citizens) are represented in joint health advisory and oversight committees, reform regarding reproductive health in Rwanda is chiefly driven by the state (Chambers 3). While top down influence does

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7 There is little data on Rwanda's healthcare program and expenditures prior to the 1994 genocide. The earliest World Bank data show health expenditures rising from 7.9 in 1995 percent to 13 percent in 1998 (World Data Bank 1).
not obstruct grassroots engagement in healthcare, the government's objectives take priority. Accordingly, the majority of reform in Rwanda concerning health services does not arise utilizing a bottom up approach; policy driven from the top down appears to be a critical condition in facilitating progress in reproductive health at grass roots levels in the country (Chambers 4).

The decentralization of the Rwandan system has reinforced the link between state and local government in health service delivery rather than weaken it. Local actors delivering maternal healthcare services remain accountable to the government and, therefore, it remains driven by top down performance pressure (Chambers 3). As a result, upward accountably has ensured the promotion of the government's maternal health policy. This reflects the tension between democratic political competition and top down policy implementation that we see in other areas of policy. The political leadership has created a tradeoff between political liberties for development results.

Therefore, led by the government, several high-level advocacy initiatives aimed at improving maternal and newborn health have taken place in Rwanda. However, even with Rwanda's impressive progress in reducing maternal mortality, there is still room for improvement. In terms of health coverage, the government of Rwanda, as other countries worldwide, faces the challenge of ensuring the poorest benefit equally from the national health insurance plan. Those enrolled in Mutuelle at the poorest quintile still show significantly lower rates of utilization of services, this is likely due to fees for doctor visits and treatment (Lu et al. 15). This may leave pregnant women who live under the extreme poverty line of $1.25 a day marginalized and unable to acquire necessary reproductive care (Lu et al. 15).
Reproductive Rights: Access to Contraception, Access to Legal Abortion and Total Fertility Rates

Access to reproductive rights includes the use of and access to modern contraception as well as access to abortion services. Globally, many women have difficulty accessing quality contraceptives and legal abortion services. Women may be unable to access contraceptives for a variety of reasons including a lack of education or knowledge of contraceptives, social expectations, high costs, distance to services and cultural objections. Similarly, many areas of the world have highly restrictive abortion laws and often women must resort to dangerous methods or face criminal penalties for terminating a pregnancy. Both the use of contraceptives and the grounds upon which abortion is permitted have been extended around the world; however, there remain countries in which women and healthcare workers can be jailed for homicide if they have or perform an abortion. The next section considers gender equality in Rwanda by studying women's access to and use of contraceptives, total fertility rates as well as abortion services and legislation.

Contraceptive Prevalence

Contraceptive prevalence is widely understood as an indicator of health, population, development and women's empowerment. The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is a measure of current use of modern contraceptive methods by married or unmarried women of childbearing age (between ages 15-49) (Ayad and Hong 3). According to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the use of contraceptives has increased in many parts of the world. Meanwhile, contraceptive use by men is relatively low. Globally, contraceptive use increased from 54 percent in 1990 to 63 percent in 2007 (IPPF 2). Asia and Latin America have experienced significant increases in contraceptive use; however, use continues to be low in sub-
Saharan Africa and Oceania (Hills 7). Moreover, approximately 222 million women have unmet contraceptive and family planning needs (almost one quarter of which live in sub-Saharan Africa) (Hills 7). It is estimated that 20 percent of women in relationships in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to contraception (Hills 7). Access is not the only issue; use of contraceptives in Africa was at 17 percent in 1990 and increased to only 28 percent by 2007 (IPPF 2). In many countries, low rates of contraceptive use can indicate the continuing problem of public perceptions regarding the safety of modern contraception as well as the media to accurately inform and educate people (especially women) of family planning methods.

In East Africa, the Society for Development's 2012 Report showed contraceptive use rates doubling in Burundi from 9 percent to 22 percent. In addition, CPR in Tanzania and Kenya were approximately 24 percent and 28 percent, whereas Uganda reported a decline in CPR among women from 17 percent to 15 percent. Among these Eastern African countries, Rwanda ranks at the top in contraceptive use at 52 percent, which tripled from 17 percent in 2006 (Umutesi 1).

Globally, methods are generally limited to sterilization (vasectomy), condoms and withdrawal. Approximately 11 percent of women worldwide aged 15-49 report that they rely on one of these methods in marriage or formal union (IPPF 2). In various regions, female sterilization is widely utilized, while in others women choose the IUD (intra-uterine device), female condom, injectables or the pill (Hills 7). In addition, access to emergency contraception has recently increased. Efforts to increase emergency contraception access have included removing restrictions on over-the counter sales, providing emergency contraceptives for women who have been raped and providing it through family planning initiatives in public hospitals
(Hills 7). Women in over 140 countries can buy emergency contraception; it is also readily available over-the-counter in 60 countries (IPPF 2).

Prior to the genocide, the 1992 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) found that modern contraceptive use among women was 13 percent. By 2000, the rate dropped 9 points to only 4 percent (RDHS 6). In 2005, contraceptive use increased to 10 percent and by 2008 CPR was at 24 percent (Solo 4). Currently at 52 percent CPR, about 46 percent of Rwandan women use modern contraception while 6 percent use traditional methods (Umutesi 1).

In Rwanda, modern contraceptive methods include the pill, injectables, intra-uterine devices (IUD), implants, male condoms, female condoms, Standard Day’s Method (SDM), female sterilization and male sterilization as well as emergency contraception (EC). Traditional methods include periodic abstinence or rhythm, withdrawal and other folk methods such as the use of herbs to prevent pregnancy (RDHS 85). Sterilization in Rwanda is unusual, with less than 1 percent of married women having had a tubal ligation and no measurable use of vasectomy (Basinga et al. 20).

Table 4.2 Changes in Modern Method CPR among Married Women in Rwanda, 1992-2008

![Graph showing changes in CPR from 1992 to 2008](image)

Currently, the most commonly used contraceptive methods among married women in Rwanda are injectables (26 percent), the pill (7 percent) and implants (6 percent) (RDHS 87). The least known modern method among women of reproductive age is emergency contraception but at least one type of EC is available in public sector clinics in Rwanda (International Consortium for Emergency Contraception 1). EC knowledge among women of reproductive age is 23 percent (RDHS 87). Modern contraceptive use varies by age among married women; percentages gradually increase from 31 percent among women aged 15-19, peaking at 52 percent among women age 35-39 and dropping to 21 percent among women aged 45-49 (RDHS 87).

There are several explanations for the sharp decline in CPR in Rwanda between 1992 and 2000. In addition to high birth rates common after war along with the dismal economic situation, disorganized family planning services were partly responsible for the drop in contraceptive prevalence between 1992 and 2000 (Ayad et al. 9). In addition, the genocide in 1994 had a devastating impact on much of Rwanda's infrastructure including health services (Solo 4). Added constraints to modern contraceptive use in Rwanda's past included traditional attitudes toward family size and fertility and, of course, a strong desire to rebuild the population after the war. In a 1985 survey, Rwandan couples placed a high value on transmitting life, especially through sons, as a sacred duty to family, ancestors and lineage (May, Mukamanzi and Vekemans 23). Moreover, children were viewed as the only security for old age in addition to the idea that many children bestow honor, prestige, social, economic and political strength to the parents (May et al. 23). In addition to being a strongly pro-natalist culture, the Catholic Church has been an influential vocal critic and barrier to family planning in Rwanda's past (Solo 5).

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8 Data is unavailable as to whether age restrictions apply in purchasing emergency contraception in Rwanda (International Consortium for Emergency Contraception 1).
By 2005, modern contraception use among married women in Rwanda increased to 10 percent then nearly tripled to 27 percent in 2008 (see Table 4.2). It is important to note that initial family planning efforts were in place through the *Mutuelles* community health insurance scheme and government funding in Rwanda since the 1960s, though it was unsuccessful at first due to low utilization (Pose et al. 22). Yet, largely due to Rwandan leadership recognizing family planning as a major tool of development and President Kagame declaring the issue "priority number one" in 2007, the country has made strides in increasing access to and affordability of health services (Solo 5). Additionally, because of significant donor support from Western countries as well as national government programs, 2005 was a turning point for the systematic implementation family planning on a national scale in Rwanda (Solo 5).

Contraceptive use nearly doubled between 2008 and 2010 from 27 to 52 percent (Muhoza et al. 5). Though they are not directly linked, interestingly, contraceptive use significantly increased during the same time women reached record percentages of females in parliament.

Women achieving record percentages in parliament at the same time percentages rose in contraceptive prevalence cannot be attributed to the increase in female members of parliament alone. Work to increase contraceptive use in Rwanda did not begin from the premise of gender equality; rather it was a concern over population density (Solo 5). Despite losses during the genocide, Rwanda has the highest population density in Africa with 416 people per square kilometer (Musoni 2). The total population in relation to the rest of the country is small, but its population density is the highest on the continent compared to the average of 32 people per square kilometer in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Thaxton 3).

In the 2000s, projects focusing on the health sector were expanded and international donors began implementing family planning projects, including service delivery and logistics
and technical support (Madsen 3). Both coordination and partnerships between the Rwandan government and NGOs as well as substantial donor support have had a significant impact on Rwanda’s contraceptive use rates (Solo 5). USAID's contributions to family planning more than tripled, from less than $3 million in 2004 to $9 million in 2009 (Madsen 3). Furthermore, the RAPID Model, a computer-based tool that quantifies the effects of rapid population growth on different sectors and the benefits of family planning programs, led to changes in attitude and policy regarding family planning in Rwanda (USAID 1). Parliamentarians as well as Ministry of Finance officials began to understand that high population rates would inhibit poverty reduction efforts (Madsen 3). Rwanda's Minister of Health framed "family planning [as] a tool of development" (Solo 4). As a result, over the past several years the country has targeted family planning services as essential in poverty reduction, environmental issues (due to overpopulation) and to developing the country economically after the genocide (Solo 4-5).

Furthermore, in 2005, the Ministry of Health designed and implemented a new integrated system of community health workers (CHW) (Bertrand 5). On average CHWs serve each village and act as primary health agents in their communities, working closely with their respective district health center leadership (Bertrand 5). Community health workers have systematically impacted the country on a national scale by bringing family services to local communities and providing education about preventative health practices such as family planning, HIV prevention and antenatal care (Weintraub 2). They are important to the Ministry of Health's strategy for reaching rural populations and improving knowledge of family planning services as well as the quality of care (MacDowell 1). There are approximately 45,000 volunteer community health workers providing home-based care, educating women and families in Rwanda in basic health, maternal health and family planning (Bjerregaard and Crigler 3).
The government also increased the budget for family planning activities and extended the number of partners represented by USAID and UNFPA, the main partner being the *Twubakane* project (Muhoza, Rutayisire and Umubyeyi 4). The budget increased six-fold between 2004 and 2007, rising from $91,231 USD to $5,742,112 USD (Muhoza et al. 4). *Twubakane*, meaning “let’s build together” in Kinyarwanda, was a project launched in 2005 and integrated many partners including the Rwandan government, USAID, nongovernmental organizations, healthcare providers and local communities (Intrahealth 1). Among the various factors that contributed to increased CPR rates, the *Twubakane* project was the most innovative in streamlining delivery of health services to local districts (Solo 14).

*Twubakane* met two specific challenges in expanding the use of modern contraceptives: decentralization through training and construction of secondary posts (Muhoza et al. 4). Through decentralization, the development of district trainers has helped strengthen the capacity of health facilities to manage resources and increase client trust, community access, participation in and ownership of contraceptive health services (Intrahealth 1). With government campaigns and coordination at local levels the Rwandan government and its partners have managed to successfully introduce the concept of family planning to the population. A particular challenge in Rwanda is the fact that approximately 38 percent of public health facilities there are faith-based and as a result do not offer modern contraceptives (Pose et al. 19). To address this problem the *Twubakane* project began constructing secondary posts near faith-based health facilities offering modern methods of contraception in 2006 (Pose et al. 19). A total of 31 secondary posts were constructed between 2006 and 2009 as well as 15 new health centers and five new hospitals between 2005 and 2011 (Muhoza 6).
With religion playing a dual role in shaping attitudes regarding fertility as well as providing social services (particularly in education and healthcare) a key challenge for the Rwandan government includes combating pronatalist traditions in Rwanda (Ndaruhuye 123). In light of this, the Minister of Health has been outspoken against religious leaders, publicly reprimanding their lack of support and opposition to condom use and family planning (Solo 28). While relations between the government and religious institutions in Rwanda regarding family planning are tenuous, they are also not actively opposing one another (Solo 13). A 2007 meeting with religious leaders led to a joint declaration citing the dangers of overpopulation and helped neutralize religious leaders as an active barrier to family planning efforts (Solo 27). Though this has not led to active support for family planning by religious leaders, faith-based health facility respondents say they often willingly refer patients to secondary posts (Pose et al. 19).

In sum, there have been numerous additional factors that contributed to changes in fertility and contraceptive prevalence over time in Rwanda which have been motivated more clearly by a concern over population density than gender inequality. The adoption of the National Population Policy in 1990 led to a plan of action that increased CPR from two percent to 48 percent by 2000 (Solo 10). The establishment of Mutuelle has indeed increased access to contraceptives and family planning education (Chambers 3). As with maternal mortality efforts, performance-based funding has also aided in motivating better performance of health facilities giving the Rwandan population quality family planning services (Solo 20). Contraceptive use in Rwanda exceeded projections for the year 2010 and the Ministry of Health set an ambitious goal of reaching 70 percent CPR by 2012 (Muhoza 22).9 Exposure to family planning through

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9 Statistics for Rwanda’s contraceptive prevalence rates in 2012 have not, as of October 2013, been released.
increased access and acceptance to services has been an important determinant of the increased use of modern contraception in Rwanda (Muhoza 22).

Access to Legal Abortion

One of the key causes of maternal mortality worldwide is unsafe abortion. Presently, more than 60 percent of the global population lives in countries where induced abortion is permitted either without restriction as to reason or for a wide range of reasons (Center for Reproductive Health 1). By contrast, approximately 26 percent of the world's population lives in countries where abortion is generally prohibited regardless of reason (Center for Reproductive Health 1). Between 1996 and 2009, 46 countries extended the number of grounds on which abortion is permitted whereas 11 countries restricted the grounds on which abortion is permitted (UNFPA 2). In addition to restrictions established by laws or regulations, many countries uphold procedural requirements that must be met before an abortion may be legally performed such as gestational limits, types of medical facilities, mandatory counseling, parental and spousal consent, and mandatory waiting periods (UNFPA 2). In countries where it is restricted, there are seven conditions under which abortion is scrutinized: the safety to a woman's life, preserving a woman's physical and/or mental health, cases of rape or incest, fetal impairment, economic or social reasons or on request (UNFPA 1). While trends show many countries expanding the grounds on which abortion is permitted, abortion regulations and laws are considerably more restrictive in developing countries (Center for Reproductive Health 1).

An estimated 13 percent of maternal deaths worldwide are due to complications with unsafe abortion procedures (WHO 1). Almost all abortion-related deaths occur in developing countries, the highest are in Africa (WHO 1). In Africa, approximately 92 percent of females of
childbearing age in 2008 lived in countries with restrictive abortion laws (Guttmacher Institute 2). The WHO estimates that unsafe abortions account for one in six maternal deaths in Eastern Africa (Basinga, Moore, Singh, Carlin, Birungi and Ngabo 11). Abortion is not permitted for any reason in 14 African countries (Guttmacher Institute 2). Three countries in Africa (Cape Verde, South Africa and Tunisia) allow pregnancy termination without restriction as to reason, but with gestational limits (Guttmacher Institute 2).

Rwanda's abortion law was put into effect in 1977 when it enacted a new penal code and remains very restrictive (Basinga et al. 11). Until recently, earlier penal code dictated abortion was illegal in Rwanda except in cases of medical emergency (Bumwe 2). The Rwandan government lifted its reservation to Article 14(2) (c) of the Maputo Protocol in August 2012 (Center for Reproductive Rights 1). By lifting its reservation, the government of Rwanda is now required to "protect the reproductive rights of women by authorizing medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the fetus" (Center for Reproductive Rights 2). Under Rwanda's revised penal code published in June 2012, Article 165 decriminalized abortion under same four circumstances named in the Maputo Protocol, when pregnancy is jeopardizes the health of the unborn baby or the mother and cases of rape, incest or forced marriage (Rwanda Abortion Law 208-209). Women seeking legal abortions must go through an arduous process of obtaining consent for the procedure from two doctors even though it is common practice for nurses and clinic officers to safely provide abortions (Basinga et al. 11). The revised code further requires women to prove how they became pregnant by going to court to certify that the pregnancy is the result of rape, incest or forced marriage. This can
involve significantly high expenses and delays when timing is critical (Center for Reproductive Rights 2).

Recent research indicates that an estimated 60,000 induced abortions take place every year in Rwanda (Basinga et al. 11). Moreover, approximately 20 percent of Rwandan women will require treatment for complications from an unsafe abortion in their lifetime (Suarez 2). Even under legal circumstances, obtaining an abortion is a challenge in Rwanda; consequently, many women resort to illegal abortion to terminate unwanted pregnancies (Basinga et al. 11). Indeed, the act of seeking abortion care has led to prosecution and jail sentences from 5-10 years in Rwanda (Basinga et al. 17). Data collected by the Rwanda Youth Action Movement (YAM) found that 21 of 114 women in Karubanda prison, a large prison located in Southern province, were being held for having illegal abortions and about 90 percent were age 25 or younger (Umahoza, Oosters, van Reeuwijk and Vanwesenbeeck 51). Criminal penalties for women who obtain illegal abortions can range from one to five years and the penalty for helping a woman abort outside of legal circumstances can vary from five to ten years (Rwanda Abortion Law 208-209). With these steep criminal penalties in mind, many medical doctors refuse to provide abortion even when medically permitted, resulting in even further obstacles to legal abortions and fewer numbers of safe, legal abortions for women in Rwanda (Basinga et al. 11). What is more, considering in 2012 the ratio of doctors to population was 1 to 16,000 with most doctors practicing in urban areas, securing the permission of two doctors will be a very difficult challenge for women seeking to terminate a pregnancy (Umahoza et al. 49).

Abortion in Rwanda remains dangerous for most females seeking abortions because many who need or want the procedure do not fall into the necessary legal categories. Though abortion can be legally accessed to save and protect the life of a woman and its cost is covered
under *Mutuelle*, current legal guidelines make it so difficult to carry out that safe abortion is likely beyond the reach of most women (Basinga et al. 19). Since the amendments to abortion law in 2012, no known case has been filed with the courts regarding legal medical abortion, yet figures for abortion related deaths are up (Umutuesi 1). This raises the question of whether the new law actually helps to reduce unsafe abortions or pushes them further underground because of the arduous process of obtaining consent for a legal abortion. In addition to court expenses and lengthy court processes, that no one has brought a case for medical abortion before the court may indicate that Rwandan women are not aware of the new changes in abortion law or seeking abortion remains highly stigmatized. Instead, less privileged women continue to cross the border to the dangerous and war-torn East in Democratic Republic of Congo to undergo clandestine abortion (Muhenga 2).

Rwanda remains a traditional and religiously conservative country. Perhaps even a modern leader like Paul Kagame, having won 93 percent of the vote, must remain sensitive to traditionalists in the country. While recent changes in abortion legislation have been hailed as the promotion of women's rights by the Rwandan government, churches see it as a violation of the fundamental right to life (Muhenga 1). During the passing of the new abortion legislation in April 2012, seven female representatives abstained from voting because they were against decriminalizing abortion in any way; this is an example where more women in parliament does not necessarily lead to legislation expanding women's choices (Haddadi 1). Though women hold a majority in parliament, traditions and patriarchal beliefs regarding women's bodies and their autonomy persist as higher percentages of female representatives serve in parliament. Even in this authoritarian system, the road to providing safe, legal abortions will be difficult as has been elsewhere. An open discussion of the negative impact restrictive abortion laws have on
unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortion is necessary to further develop abortion law reform and improve women's lives by removing one of the major causes of maternal death.

Rwanda is in many ways an emerging yet incomplete success story. Essentially, concerns over population density indirectly promote gender equality. Furthermore, while recent trends in Rwanda indicate improved and increased access to health services and family planning, development challenges remain. The country remains a very high-fertility country and must continue to expand contraceptive prevalence among both women and men to manage population growth (Madsen 4). Despite Rwanda's many improvements in population and health indicators, women's health status remains compromised by early and repeated pregnancies (Thaxton 3). Furthermore, even if the average family size falls below four children per woman, Rwanda's population is still projected to nearly double over the next 25 years (Madsen 3).

**Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**

According to the World Bank, the global fertility rate is currently 2.41 births per woman. Low fertility rates are not universal, however. High fertility rates persist in sub-Saharan Africa at approximately 4.94 births per woman (Teitelbaum et al. 1; World Bank 1). Slow progress has been made in Rwanda's total fertility rate (TFR), which declined from 6.1 children per woman in 2000 to a remaining high level of 4.6 in 2010 (Pose et al. 18). Moreover, 2012 TFR estimates remain high at approximately 4.81 children per woman (Index Mundi 1).\(^{10}\) Furthermore, the genocide had a radical effect on fertility and skewed its demographic trajectory for several years (Madsen 2). After approximately 800,000 people were killed and more displaced or fled, the

\(^{10}\) According to demographers, an optimal replacement fertility rate is two children per woman; fertility rates above two children may be associated with difficulties for families to feed and educate their children as well as difficulties for women to enter the labor force (UN Population Division 101).
population fell from 7.1 million in 1990 to 5.6 million in 1995 (Madsen 2). By 2010, the population had doubled since 1995, if unchanged it will do so again in 25 years (Wadhams 81).

Reducing fertility rates is not an easy task. Despite sensitization campaigns and awareness raising in Rwanda, a large family was once (and still is in many ways) considered a sign of wealth and status and a way to provide extra workers for farm owners (Wadhams 81). It is clear that many Rwandan women continue to face major challenges in using contraception due to the inaccurate view (usually of men) that birth control makes women fat, uninterested in sex or that they will not be able to conceive once off of contraception (Wadhams 82). Nevertheless, what most Rwandan women stated as the ideal (desired) number of children declined from 4.9 to 3.3 over the past decade, with the most rapid change in 2005 (Westoff 171). Such disparate attitudes about family size between women and men emphasize the need for further reproductive education in the country.

Though fertility data in the period immediately following the genocide in 1994 are lacking, the onset of Rwanda's fertility decline was altered by the genocide (Ndaruhyu, Broekhuis and Hooimeijer 122). Demographic and Health Survey data show that the ideal number of children rose from 4.4 in 1992 to 5.0 in 2000 (Ndaruhyu et al.122). By 2005, the ideal number of children had returned to the level of the early 1990s (approximately 4.5 children) (Ndaruhyu et al. 123). At present, Rwanda's estimated ideal number of children is 3.3 (Westoff 171). An examination of the distribution of reported ideal family size in the latest DHS survey (2010) reveals the ideal number of children for 85 percent of Rwandan women ranges from 2 to 4. Thirty-six percent of women surveyed reported 3 as their ideal number of children and approximately 26 percent report 2 children (DHS 81). A very low proportion of women (about 2 percent) visualized fewer than 2 children as the ideal number of children while 6 percent
reported either 5 or 6 children as ideal (DHS 81). Interestingly, the ideal number of children is the same in urban and rural areas (3.1 and 3.3 respectively) (DHS 82).

The government developed a national population policy in 2003 to reduce the birth rate. To address Rwanda's high total fertility rates, in 2007, the government of Rwanda announced that it was considering legislation to limit family size to three children per woman (Muhoza et al. 122). However, the plan never made it to parliament due to high sensitivity to forced family planning. To avoid the appearance of forced family planning the government characterized it as a family planning sensitization campaign (Muhoza et al. 122). A 2008 revision of the 2003 population policy emphasized the environmental degradation and poverty implications associated with continued population pressure and began media campaigns such as radio and television programs to increase awareness of the detrimental results of growing population pressure (Westoff 175-176). In 2012, the government also set a new TFR goal at 3.4 children per woman by 2020 to promote the small family ideal (Westoff 175).

Essentially, for the majority of Rwandan women (85 percent), the ideal number of children is significantly lower than the actual TFR of 4.8 in the country. Furthermore, findings from a national study on unintended pregnancies in Rwanda show that nearly half (47 percent) of all pregnancies in the country are unintended (Kinzer 1) This means that the majority of women in Rwanda (and the Rwandan government) desire a lower cumulative fertility yet women continue to have a higher number of children than desired. Although (for Africa) contraceptive prevalence is high in Rwanda (52 percent among women) the wishes of Rwandan women to have smaller families are not realized. This is an indication that societal pressure, attitudes of family members and husbands remain a considerable influence on women's agency regarding fertility in the country. Indeed, while women parliamentarians have tackled a range of issues, the
emphasis has been issues that bolster attitudes regarding women’s roles as mothers rather than as independent individuals. It appears that women and men in Rwanda continue to participate in and adhere to patriarchal ideas of motherhood despite record female political representation in the country. This may also indicate that gender power balances are still held by Rwandan men in households.

**HIV/AIDS and Sex Education**

Most academic research positively correlates higher levels of education with decreased rates of HIV, adolescent pregnancy and fertility as well as increased rates of modern contraceptive use. Nevertheless, the quality of education specific to sexuality and reproductive education must also be present. In view of the high HIV prevalence and high total fertility rates (TFR) in Rwanda, it is important to examine the state of sexual and reproductive education and the impact on women in the country. This may reveal how the lack of HIV and/or reproductive education negatively impacts gender equality.

Globally, approximately 0.8 percent of the world's population lives with HIV (UNAIDS 1). Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest adult HIV prevalence rate of 4.9 percent as of 2011 (Kaiser Family Foundation 3). The Caribbean ranks second with an HIV prevalence of 1 percent (UNAIDS 1). A generalized HIV epidemic is defined as a country having a national adult HIV prevalence rate greater than 1 percent (Kaiser Family Foundation 3). Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence in the world at 26 percent though such high percentages are not common in many African countries (Kaiser Family Foundation 3).

At the end of 2005, HIV prevalence in Rwanda was 3.1 percent among adults and women were the majority of those infected (Dude 142). In the most recent Demographic Health Survey
no changes occurred in HIV prevalence between 2005 and 2010 in Rwanda. As is the case in most sub-Saharan African countries, HIV prevalence remains higher among women than among men (3.7 percent compared to 2.2 percent) in Rwanda (UNAIDS 18). The highest HIV prevalence is among women aged 35-39 (7.9 percent) and among men aged 40-44 (7.3 percent) in the country (UNAIDS 18).

With the epicenter of AIDS identified in the Great Lakes region in the early 1980s, Rwanda's early response to its HIV/AIDS epidemic was rapid and sustained (Kayirangwa, Hanson, Munyakazi and Kabeja 27). The first case of AIDS in Rwanda was reported in 1983 (Vogel 781). In 1985, Rwanda's Ministry of Health began working with the Red Cross to establish one of the first and most effective blood donor screening programs in Africa (Allen, Lindan, Serufilira, Van de Perre and Rundle 1657). In 1986, it was also the first country in the world to conduct a national HIV seroprevalence study to determine the level of HIV prevalence in its population (Kayirangwa et al. 27). Furthermore, in collaboration with the Norwegian Red Cross, Rwanda began implementing extensive AIDS education programming through radio and public health educators (Allen 1657).

During the genocide, much of the country's health infrastructure shattered. Widespread rape caused HIV infection to spread quickly, especially in refugee camps (Vogel 781). The healthcare infrastructure has since been rebuilt and, today, Rwanda's overall strategy is aimed at prevention. The country has scaled up national education and awareness programs through media and slogans, prevention activities and access to treatment (Vogel 781). For example, from July 2007 to August 2009, there was a broadcast of a radio serial drama, *Umurage Urukwiye* (Rwanda's Brighter Future) designed to generate public discussion and awareness about

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(DHS 2010) HIV seroprevalence is defined as the level of the HIV pathogen in a population as measured in blood serum (Reference.md 1).
reproductive health and HIV/AIDS (Barker, Connolly and Angelone 76). Moreover, in a new public awareness campaign, the slogan "I am not for sale" is being used on billboards, radio, television and various media to warn Rwandan youth who are at high risk for HIV/AIDS because of "sugar mommies" and "sugar daddies"; this is variously known as transactional or cross-generational sex (Kinghorn et al. 35; Kenny 1). The campaign attempts to address the growing problem of older Rwandans offering money or gifts to younger Rwandans in exchange for sexual relations, which has been linked to HIV transmission and unplanned pregnancy (Kenny 1).

In terms of providing HIV awareness as part of the educational system, the Rwandan government has discussed offering sexual and reproductive education in public schools since 2007, but it has yet to initiate comprehensive sexual and reproductive education to adolescents attending school (Kinzer 2). Therefore, HIV/AIDS prevention programs are severely limited in schools (Kinghorn, Kgositintsi, Schierhout and Gatete 24). Courses on sexual and reproductive health in schools are virtually nonexistent in Rwanda and parents speaking to their children about the subject is culturally taboo though most primary and secondary schools attempt to incorporate the subject of HIV/AIDS into science, moral education or home economics curricula to some extent (Kinghorn et al. 24). Various groups such as FAWE, the Forum for African Women Educationalists, a pan-African NGO working to create gender equal learning environments for girls, are attempting to incrementally introduce reproductive education into schools, particularly to adolescent girls (though there was only one three-day training of 40 adolescents from different schools in 2013) (Rwembeho 1).

Instead of comprehensive education the government of Rwanda has relied on a peer education strategy to prevent HIV infection among in-school youth (Michielson, Beaucclair, Delva, Roelens, Van Rossem and Temmerman 1). The peer education strategy uses well-trained,
motivated young people to mentor their peers through informal or organized educational activities (Michielson et al. 1). Since 1998, the Rwandan government has put in place anti-AIDS clubs in secondary schools, which function like after school clubs (Michielson et al. 1). Anti-AIDS clubs are part of the "Life Skills Clubs" offered in school to teach children about the dangers of HIV and how to avoid transmission of the virus (UNICEF 1). There are more than one thousand anti-AIDS clubs, which have been made mandatory in all secondary schools by the Rwandan government (Binagwaho 45). Furthermore, MINEDUC has included HIV/AIDS issues in school textbooks and, by 2009, 238 secondary schools were equipped with at least one teacher trained in teaching a life-skills based approach to HIV/AIDS education (Binagwaho 45).

There are several significant limitations in Rwanda's current school prevention programs. Anti-AIDS clubs often remain inactive due to a lack of material, financial support and guidance (Michielson et al. 2). In addition, basic materials and information are not available in many schools; indeed an overall comprehensive curriculum on the subject is not available in the country (Kinghorn et al. 25). Also, while 80 percent of school directors report that their teachers are comfortable discussing the subject of HIV/AIDS, only 45 percent of teachers have received training in HIV/AIDS and the government does not require teachers to receive training on the subject (Kinghorn et al. 25). As a result, most teachers report low knowledge and confidence about the issue, particularly when students asked difficult questions (Kinghorn et al. 25).

With only about half of young people in Rwanda aged 15-24 knowledgeable about ways to prevent sexual transmission of HIV, changing sexual behavior in this group is crucial (UNAIDS 24). Within this age group, 3.8 percent of young women and 11.3 percent of young men reported having sex before the age of 15, yet fewer younger males are infected (0.4 percent) than females (1.6 percent) (UNAIDS 10, 24). This increased difference in HIV prevalence
among girls compared to boys represents a major challenge in HIV education for young Rwandans, especially females.

While anti-AIDS clubs may assist in forming a less-stigmatizing climate regarding discussion of sexuality, sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS, peer education alone cannot sufficiently change sexual behavior at a national scale (Michielson et al. 9). There is limited staff support for school based HIV/AIDS activities and few anti-AIDS clubs are actually functioning with membership at approximately 10 percent learners attending and limited, sporadic activities (Kinghorn et al. 25). Peer education is currently the only method of HIV/AIDS education for students in the country. Analysts contend this method is not effective as a stand-alone; the government of Rwanda must incorporate this into its larger strategy and implement a complete curriculum to aid students and teachers.

Rwanda has made progress in constraining the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The country has successfully decreased adult HIV prevalence from an overwhelming 13 percent in the 1990s to 3 percent (Vogel 1). In addition, the country has expanded preventive testing and counseling services so that now 85 percent of health facilities around the country offer voluntary testing and counseling services (Vogel 2). Furthermore, Rwanda has achieved one the highest rates of antiretroviral therapy coverage in Africa; about 95 percent of those eligible receive therapy (USAID 2).\textsuperscript{12} Testing among Rwandan couples is much more commonplace rising from 13 percent in 2003 to 84 percent in 2009 (Vogel 2). Nearly all pregnant women in antenatal care (98 percent) are tested for HIV and receive their results (USAID 2). Additionally, by the end of

\textsuperscript{12} Standard antiretroviral therapy (ART) consists of the combination of at least three antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to suppress the HIV virus and stop the progression of HIV disease. Huge reductions have been seen in rates of death and suffering when use is made of a potent ARV regimen, particularly in early stages of the disease. Furthermore, expanded access to ART can also reduce the HIV transmission and preserve families (World Health Organization 1).
2007, 60 percent of HIV-infected pregnant women in Rwanda were receiving antiretroviral drugs to prevent transmission to newborns (USAID 2).

Nevertheless, challenges remain to reduce Rwanda's HIV prevalence, particularly for women and girls in the country. There is a marked difference between men and women ages 15-49 in HIV prevalence, with women at 3.7 percent compared to men at 2.2 percent (UNAIDS 18). Additionally, HIV prevalence diverges widely when comparing urban and rural areas in the country, with women continuing to dominate in both settings. In urban areas, HIV prevalence totals 7.6 percent (UNAIDS 18). Over 8 percent in women and 5.4 percent of men live with HIV in urban areas while the prevalence in rural areas totals 2.3 percent where women are 2.8 percent affected compared to 1.6 percent of men (UNAIDS 19). Distance from care remains an issue as well. There are still many Rwandans who must travel long distances to get to facilities that offer HIV/AIDS health services (Vogel 2). A study examining the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child reported long distances from health centers as the largest obstacle to mothers receiving medication (Lim, Kim, Rich and Stulac 3).

Limited knowledge of HIV/AIDS remains an obstacle to decreasing HIV prevalence among Rwanda's female population. Essentially, difficulties surrounding the very discussion of sexuality as well as the false notion of parents and school staff that students are not engaging in sexual behavior results in limited effectiveness and stagnancy in Rwandan HIV/AIDS prevention programs (Kingham et al 24). It is additionally important to note the RPF government's reserve and reluctance to implement a comprehensive curriculum on the subject of HIV/AIDS. The Rwandan government faces financial constraints in HIV/AIDS education delivery. Teachers in Rwanda already face low salary levels, irregular payment and limited availability of materials and infrastructure (Kinghorn et al. 13). Consequently, there are few incentives to take on
additional unpaid work such as running the anti-AIDS program or other life skills clubs. Furthermore, non-staff budgets (including materials and books for campus clubs and extracurricular activities) are very limited (Kinghorn et al. 13).

Still, more than any sector, education has the most opportunities to influence levels of HIV infections among students because of direct contact in the classroom and extracurricular activities, yet the Kagame government has not taken decisive action in formulating a comprehensive curriculum or requiring teacher training on the subject of HIV/AIDS (Kinghorn et al. 23). On the surface, it may seem as if there is government inaction due to lack of finances in Rwanda, however, an effective government response could also be constrained by a combination of political motivations and (incorrect) assumptions about the disease (Huang 4).

Not only in Rwanda, but around the world, many people inaccurately associate HIV/AIDS with homosexuality and promiscuity (Huang 4). Similar to the issue of abortion, the Kagame government appears to be sensitive to conservative, traditionalists in the country. A particular issue among many staff and students in Rwanda is the conflict between teaching safe sex and abstinence. Students report most emphasis is placed on abstinence and an effective exclusion on condom use and safe sex when discussing HIV (Kinghorn et al. 24). In addition, school staff tends to place great confidence in the belief that students' sexual activity can be controlled or delayed by moral education, strict codes of conduct and tight policing of students, when the reality is that students engage in risky sexual behavior at an early age (Kinghorn et al. 24).

Bearing in mind that Rwanda remains a religiously conservative society and HIV/AIDS is often still associated with homosexuality and promiscuity, it is likely that the RPF government desires to politically distance itself from writing a curriculum that traditionalists will perceive as government-approved promiscuity instead of abstinence. Peer education is an attractive tool for
governments in HIV prevention because it uses existing social processes and actively involves young people (Michielson et. al. 9). Peer education also allows the Rwandan government to officially distance itself from the potentially politically damaging perception that it is promoting promiscuity by encouraging safe sex and condom use among its student population. It is clear that younger Rwandans are engaging in sexual activity and the momentum to train teachers and create a curriculum on HIV/AIDS is limited in the country (Kinghorn et al. 25). The quality of HIV/AIDS education among students in Rwanda is lacking. It is important that the government and schools implement a new curriculum and engage parents and communities in conversations about safe sex and preventing HIV.

**Analysis**

Rwanda is making progress in almost every area of reproductive health, especially reducing maternal mortality and increasing contraceptive prevalence. However, several areas remain in need of the government's attention. Rwanda must implement comprehensive sex education to reduce HIV prevalence among female students. Currently, there is no official curriculum for adolescent reproductive education. To reduce maternal mortality, it is essential for the country to decriminalize abortion (Basinga et al. 25). It is also necessary to expand contraceptive choice, increase access to emergency contraception, expand HIV education and continue improvement of family planning availability and campaigns.

Obtaining a female majority in parliament may lead to the notion that Rwandan women enjoy substantial agency and autonomy over their reproductive health, yet this is not the case. Though the knowledge of contraception is high, the use of contraception appears low when considering the rate of unwanted pregnancies. This may indicate that gender power balances in
households are still held by men, which may have a strong effect on the demand and actual use of contraception (Muhoza 123). Record numbers of women in parliament may mean that knowledge of contraception and family planning exists among Rwandan women, yet existing traditional societal and cultural attitudes still have considerable influence.

Therefore, although there still is work to do, in many ways Rwanda continues to make progress in promoting women's well being. The current leadership often stresses its strong commitment to promoting family planning and has made it a priority in the Vision 2020 development framework (Westoff 177). By framing family planning as economically sensible for families, the government does not antagonize traditionalists and policy falls in line with the Rwandan government's priority- economic development results. Furthermore, Rwanda is expected to be one of the first African countries to reach its MDG 5 goals in maternal mortality (African Progress Panel 22). Nonetheless, as discussed in this chapter, there remain several areas in the health sector in which the country appears beholden to traditional patriarchal interests regarding women's health. Rwanda must expand access to education, particularly to women, on smaller family ideals, contraception, abortion and HIV/AIDS.
Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings

According to Freedom House, Rwanda is not free. Although Rwanda’s may be an authoritarian system, it is also one in which women enjoy an active and considerable presence (Devlin and Elgie 243). The country raises the question of whether authoritarian style government can accelerate gender equality in larger society using top down leadership. Despite accusations of fueling the conflict in neighboring DRC (along with doubts about its own democracy and multiparty system) Rwanda largely remains the "Darling of the West" (Reyntjens 2). Yet, the situation in the country offers two conditions that may hasten gender equality: the efficiency of an authoritarian government that values gender parity and a skewed sex ratio with a larger percentage of female survivors, the result of the devastating genocide.

President Paul Kagame, the leader of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party has been characterized as a gallant leader especially in Britain and the United States, which, between them, have provided half of Rwanda's government budget (McGreal 2). For years the heroic view of Paul Kagame has prevailed. Kagame has been hailed by Bill Clinton as "one of the greatest leaders of our time" and a "visionary leader" by Tony Blair (McGreal 1). In recent months, however, there has been a very public shift from the previous unequivocal support of Rwanda's leadership. To some, Kagame remains the valiant figure, rising above the country's old divisions and preaching reconciliation yet to others he exploits Rwanda's tragic past and the West's guilt over inaction during the genocide in order to establish a new Tutsi-dominated authoritarian regime and cover his human rights violations (McGreal 2).

According to Human Rights Watch, the human rights record of the Rwandan Patriotic Front government has been dismal. Though credited for ending the 1994 genocide, the RPF has been accused of committing its own atrocities, such as killing thousands of civilians in Rwanda
in September 1994 after the genocide ended (Reyntjens 194). In addition, a 2010 UN report showed evidence of war crimes committed by Rwandan government forces in incursions in the DR Congo from 1996 to 1997 and 1998 to 2003 (Freedom House 2). Furthermore, in 2012 UN investigators revealed Kagame's troops crossed into Congo to fight with the M23, a rebel group that has committed serious international human rights abuses and humanitarian law violations, including murder of civilians and gang rapes (Gettleman 12). The RPF government's poor human rights record, exile of former allies, assassinations and imprisonment of political opponents, have further weakened Kagame's claims at being viewed as an enlightened, modernizing and democratic leader (McGreal 3). Kagame repeatedly rejects UN reports and the claim that his government supported or ordered troops into Congo.

Human rights groups including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House also report repressive environments for media and politics under the Kagame regime. Issues of freedom, as with many issues in Rwanda, are tied to the legacy of genocide. Allegations of "sectarianism" or "genocide ideology," a vaguely worded law that criminalizes any act inciting ethnic hatred or advocating for the commission or support of genocide, have been misused to criminalize legitimate dissent and criticism of the government (Waldorf 111). Essentially, any challenges to the government's narrative on the genocide and reconciliation or criticism of the government can be interpreted as an attack on unity or reconciliation efforts, deeming it divisive and as genocide ideology (Waldorf 118). The government often equates criticism of the RPF-led government with allegations of divisionism and promoting genocide ideology, reducing political opposition parties, driving government critics into exile and pushing most NGOs and political parties to curtail their activities (Freedom House 2). Kagame repeatedly denies any involvement in politically motivated killings, yet a pattern of
imprisonments, disappearances and deaths continues to develop (McGreal 2).

Rwanda's presidential elections since 2003 have all been characterized by a distinct lack of political choice and absence of opposition to Paul Kagame and the ruling RPF party (Freedom House 2). President Kagame won the 2003 presidential elections with a 95 percent majority and the 2010 elections with 93 percent (Tertsakian 2). Parliamentary elections are similar, with the RPF dominating in 2008 and 2013 elections with 78.76 and 76 percent of the vote, respectively (Tertsakian 2). Strictly speaking opposition parties exist in Rwanda, however, they usually align with the platform of the ruling party and actively support it (Childress 1; Tertsakian 2). Leaders of the two other opposition parties, Victoire Ingabire of the FDU-Inkingi and Bernard Ntaganda of the PS-Imberakuri parties have been imprisoned since 2010 and were prevented from registering in the 2010 elections as they were accused of promoting "genocide ideology" (McGreal 3).

Though Kagame has the power to essentially do what he wants, he is still constrained by traditionalists. The religious landscape has changed considerably in Rwanda since the genocide (Lazaro 2). During the genocide, churches were major sites of massacre and some church personnel and lay leaders aided in the killing (Longman 163). Many Rwandans felt betrayed by the Catholic Church's involvement and began to embrace Protestant churches (Newhouse 2). A 2010 study by the Pew Foundation found Rwanda's religious makeup is about 93 percent Christian (Pew-Templeton 1). Approximately 53 percent of the country is Catholic, with Protestants making up the difference (Pew-Templeton 1). Numerous new, so-called "charismatic" churches have emerged across Rwanda since the genocide, many funded by European and North American sponsors (Lazaro 2). Furthermore, many Anglican clergy returned to Rwanda after years of exile to rebuild the church and join in the government's effort
to promote recovery and reconciliation (Cantrell 339). These churches have capitalized on the virtual collapse of the pre-genocide Christian church and now share a close relationship with the Kagame government (Cantrell 339). Kagame uses and controls the church to his advantage, the government has been known to intervene in the selection of church leaders in Rwanda (Cantrell 351). Nonetheless, churches also stand to gain being in close alignment with Kagame. As long as churches keep to the RPF government's agenda of promoting unity and reconciliation they have ample opportunity to put forward their conservative agenda.

In 2005, several American "mega church" pastors traveled to Rwanda and met with Kagame and Rwandan church leadership to outline a plan to mobilize American churches to address issues of poverty and disease in Africa (Cantrell 347). In particular, one of the most recognized individuals among American evangelicals, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback in California and author of the book The Purpose Driven Life, launched the PEACE Plan initiative in 2005 to promote reconciliation, poverty assistance and education improvement in Rwanda (Van Biema 1). Kagame and Warren have pledged to make Rwanda "the first purpose-driven nation" and "harness business people, politicians and pastors against the nation's biggest social problems." (Van Biema; Cantrell 347). Kagame can control the church. However, the church-state alliance has implications for Kagame's development strategy for the country. Together with the fact that most Rwandans claim Christianity as their religion and that the church is politically relevant to the state because of its wide geographical influence and extensive resources, it is advantageous to Kagame to cater to traditionalism (Longman 187). Similar to keeping up a democratic appearance to appease international aid donors, Kagame is beholden to assistance from evangelical "mega churches" in America and their largely traditional views regarding women. Therefore, he must remain sensitive to traditional ideals of American evangelicals to
continue the flow of resources.

Repression in Rwanda is not a secret. Many African countries have been plagued by leaders who refuse to hand over power and the US overlooking human rights violations around the world in support of a dictator is not uncommon. Despite reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch detailing the human rights violations in Rwanda including exile and imprisonment of political opposition and restriction of press freedom, Western aid continues, though the US (for the first time) cut $200,000 in military aid drawing a line at Kagame's involvement in the Congo (Gettleman 12). While on the one hand, Western countries are critical of Rwanda for its democratic shortcomings, until recently their diplomatic missions in the country seem to praise Kagame for his single-minded, authoritarian leadership in rebuilding it (McGreal 3). In Rwanda's case these shortcomings are overlooked because it has become a rare symbol of progress concerning international aid, especially in Africa, with Kagame at the helm (Gettleman 3). Western aid continued to flow due to Western guilt and the country representing a major success story for international development aid (Gettleman 3).

In four years, the Rwandan constitution requires President Paul Kagame to step down and by that time he will have served as president for 17 years (Burke, Calzonetti and Fuisz 1). As 2017 approaches, many in the country are wary of the day he leaves power due to the belief that his strong hand contains imminent ethnic conflict. Alternatively, amidst discussions of amending the constitution to keep Kagame in power, many in the country are concerned that an extension will further undermine chances of democratic governance in Rwanda (McGreal 2). Yet in the midst of the Kagame government's complicated leadership and dichotomous semi-authoritarian, democratic facade lies the successful recovery and transformation of Rwanda. While Rwanda is still very poor, more than one million have been lifted out of poverty since 2006, access to
healthcare and education has increased and the country's economy has expanded by an average of 8 percent annually over the past five years (Gettleman 1).

Moreover, Kagame is credited for encouraging female leadership in the country. Having already achieved record percentages of women in parliament in the world at 56 percent since 2008, Rwanda reached 64 percent female parliamentarians in the recently concluded elections in September 2013 (Gogineni 1). The paradox of increased female representation and top-down gender initiatives carried out by an authoritarian regime contributes to the literature on women in parliament by demonstrating the effects of women in parliament on larger societal and patriarchal norms in Rwanda.

The nature of the RPF government is that President Kagame holds unchallenged power. It has been noted that political leadership in Rwanda has created a tradeoff between political liberties for development results. Some human rights activists further contend that in Kagame's leadership there is also a tradeoff between human rights violations for economic development (Tertsakian 3). In addition, activists claim that civil society organizations operating in the country are made up solely of those that actively promote government programs and submit to the Kagame government's agenda. This may be true of women MPs in the country. Rwandan women as well as women's movements are in a precarious position; they owe their opportunity to participate in democratic institutions to a political party that cannot, however, be truly independent of the state and, therefore, is less than fully democratic (Powley 160). Both female and male representatives must also contend with possible imprisonment, exile or assassination should they challenge the Kagame government agenda (Tertsakian 3).
Discussion

This thesis proposes that the increased political representation of women is a necessary but not sufficient condition to facilitate gender equality norms in patriarchal societies. Certainly Rwanda demonstrates the notion that as the number of women in politics grows, it becomes easier and more acceptable for women to become politicians. This is evident in national as well as local elections in the country. In the September 2013 elections, women won 64 percent of seats in the lower house; this is up 8 percent from the 2008 elections. Moreover, in elections for district and sector council officials in 2011, women won 43.2 percent of district and Kigali City advisory posts and women lead a number of Rwanda's ministries, including agriculture and health (Bikorimana 1). The impact of more women in parliament within the echelons of the Rwandan government itself, however, appears to be minimal. Female MPs in Rwanda continue to take the lead on issues that are considered "women's issues" such as education, family issues and violence against women. A look at gender parity in political representation shows that just 38.5 percent of women serve as senators and 36 percent serve in ministerial positions (Ndungu 2). Furthermore, only 23 percent of Rwandan ambassadors are women and moving further away from the capital, disparities in political representation become more apparent. Of mayors in the country, 93.3 percent are male and women make up just 25 percent of governors on the country (Ndungu 2).

Since 2003, the Constitution of Rwanda guarantees gender equality (Cooper 3). Women and men have equal rights before the law and must be accorded the same treatment by the law (Nussbaum 15). Though in practice women have to fight hard to retain their property rights, the government has taken steps to strengthen women’s property rights through a 1999 Inheritance Law that grants equal inheritance rights to sons and daughters, and provides for the protection of
property rights within marriage (Brown and Uvuza 1).

Women's economic empowerment is also on the rise. Studies have found that Rwandan women are increasingly shifting towards training and education into technology and IT sectors (Cutura 6). Female entrepreneurship is also growing, though most female entrepreneurs comprise the informal sector. In addition, women's access to credit is increasing in the country. The Rwandan government has also worked to simplify the lending process to increase women's access to support female entrepreneurship and independence.

In education, statistics show Rwandan girls outnumber boys in primary and lower secondary enrollment. Furthermore, the country has seen marked success in reducing maternal mortality and increasing contraceptive prevalence. It is expected to be one of the first African countries to reach its MDG 5 goals in maternal mortality and the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that has reached an average yearly reduction of 4 percent per year in maternal mortality rates (Africa Progress Panel 6). Among Eastern African countries, Rwanda ranks at the top in contraceptive use at 52 percent (Africa Progress Panel 19).

Still, achieving a female majority in parliament has not necessarily meant the undoing of gender inequality in the country. More Rwandan women in parliament may have more to do with political expediency for the RPF government than with a concentrated focus on actually empowering women in the country (Ndungu 3). Policies and strategies to increase female representation have more to do with the appearance of democracy and simply supporting Kagame's undemocratic regime rather than promote progressive or gender equal legislation and institutions. Kagame could accomplish his goals with a male majority in parliament; however, establishing a majority of females in Rwanda's parliament allows the RPF government to maintain the facade of a democratic and modern government. As scholars Wallace, Haerpfer and
Abbot maintain, taking on what society deems “women’s issues” does not necessarily serve to challenge traditional gender roles in society (Wallace, Haerpfer and Abbot 114). In the case of Rwanda, having more women in parliament allows the government to appear supportive of democratic ideals such as open and equal representation, while at the same time only minimally challenging traditional gender roles by placing women in token positions such as ministry heads of gender, education or women's health (token women's issues), though it should be noted that Louise Mushikiwabo has served as Foreign Minister of Rwanda since December 2009 (hardly a token position) (The Guardian 1).

Although it has become more acceptable for women to become politicians in Rwanda, perceptions of female politicians as quiescent and loyal to the government have not changed. However, studies elsewhere indicate that when there are more women in legislatures, city councils and boards, they speak more and bring up the needs of the poor and vulnerable (Mendelberg 2). When it comes to Rwanda, both sides are right: female parliamentarians in Rwanda have certainly influenced policy changes in inheritance law, land rights, poverty, violence against women as well as girls education; however, the gender dynamics have not necessarily changed in Rwandan politics.

Despite high percentages of women in parliament, there are concerns regarding the actual extent of transformation so far in gender equality in Rwanda. The economic situation for Rwandan women is mixed at best. Women remain disproportionately represented in the lowest paid, traditionally female sectors (i.e. agriculture and secretarial work) and underrepresented in more valued sectors, (i.e. computer science, engineering, mining, oil production) which are traditionally male sectors and remain male dominated. Rwandan women are also
disproportionately represented in unpaid farm work and are moving out of the industry at a slower pace than men.

Though it has become more acceptable for women to become politicians, the idea of women crossing over into higher paying traditionally male occupations in Rwanda, has not. Scholars suggest that public perceptions of female politicians change in a positive direction as more women become politicians; however, this is not the case in Rwanda (Lovenduski and Karam 189). This study finds that increased acceptance of women politicians in Rwanda is contingent upon their ability to perform traditional duties in the home and maintain the traditional view of women's primary role as mothers. This notion is reflected in occupational segregation in the country. Women are concentrated in underpaid agricultural work; this is likely linked to flexibility in this type of work, allowing women to maintain domestic responsibilities while working. In addition, men do not want this work because of low pay. Men have transitioned out of agricultural work at twice the rate of women since 2000 (EICV3 28). Difficulties in transitioning out of agricultural work for women is an indication that traditional gender norms and sexual divisions of labor still apply in Rwanda, as men find it easier to move on to new and better job opportunities because they shoulder much less domestic responsibility than women. Women shouldering the double burden of children and work is nothing new and occurs worldwide; this demonstrates further that the increased percentage of women in parliament has had little or no significant effect on patriarchal norms in Rwandan society.

In education, girls have reached parity in primary enrollment; however, gender parity decreases as they progress to upper secondary and tertiary education. Female students transitioning to upper secondary school face a number of barriers that contribute to lower enrollment and transition rates in the country such as safety issues, keeping daughters rather than
sons from going to school to care for younger siblings or because of lack of finances and schools lack of appropriate and separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls leading to absenteeism. The transition to higher education is accompanied by a continuation of previous barriers and the addition of discrimination in higher education institutions; there is a gap in the number of girls who qualify for higher education and those who actually get accepted (Dejene 34).

As we have seen, the historic marginalization and discrimination of girls in education continues in Rwanda. This is evident in the fact that the government devotes the smallest budget allocation (19.8 percent) to secondary education, the level of education where percentages of girls' enrollment and transition distinctly begin to drop off. In addition, there is currently no specific policy aimed at improving percentages of girls' transition or enrollment rates to upper secondary and higher education, this is due to the country's vision of becoming a knowledge based economy.

With the Kagame government's marked prioritization of science and technology career fields to build the country’s competitiveness in global markets, these disciplines become emphasized in the university admissions process and in allocation of government scholarships. The Kagame government has made a conscious decision to focus on tertiary education and less on upper secondary because recent studies by international development organizations like the World Bank are beginning to acknowledge the importance of tertiary education in fostering economic development--- the Kagame government's highest priority (Bridgeland et al 21). Subsequently, girls are negatively affected both in accessing higher education and in underrepresentation in science and technology careers as many young women are either not choosing these subjects or qualified in them.
Indeed, while women parliamentarians have tackled a range of issues in Rwanda, the emphasis has been issues that bolster attitudes regarding women’s roles as mothers rather than as independent individuals. Traditional gender roles have not been challenged in the country. In various areas of reproductive rights, increased numbers of females in parliament has not necessarily led to veritable changes in entrenched patriarchal norms. Societal pressure, attitudes of family members and husbands remain a considerable influence on women's agency regarding fertility and motherhood in the country. Patriarchal beliefs regarding women's bodies and their autonomy have not changed in Rwanda as higher percentages of female representatives serve in parliament. This is evident in Rwanda's total fertility rate and access to legal abortion. Even as women in the country desire smaller families, women continue to have a higher number of children than they desire. As we have seen, though abortion laws in the country have been extended slightly, allowing it to include protecting the life of the mother, in cases of rape and forced early marriage, it remains quite difficult to attain legal permission to terminate a pregnancy in Rwanda. Furthermore, figures for abortion related deaths are up and not one case for medical abortion has been brought before the court since amendments to the law in 2012. This indicates that seeking abortion remains highly stigmatized, pushing women to remain secretive and seek to induce an abortion on their own or seek help from an inadequately trained provider in unsanitary conditions.

As a result, women and men in Rwanda continue to participate in and adhere to patriarchal ideas of motherhood. This is a further indication that gender power balances are still held by Rwandan men in households despite record female political representation in the country. In the nearly 20 years since the Rwandan genocide, the country has experienced rapid and affecting change, in some ways most dramatically for women. Still, Rwanda is
underdeveloped and the great majority of Rwandan women are disadvantaged compared to men with regard to education, legal rights, health and access to resources (Powley 161). Furthermore, wins Rwandan women have gained in political representation tend to obscure the under-representation and gender inequality of women in other areas of development in the country. Women in Rwanda are continuing to consolidate their impressive numerical gains in parliament, though there is less than compelling change in policy. The numerical increase of women in parliament encourages more women to participate in an active political life in Rwanda, however major feminist reform has not occurred in Rwanda. As the number of women in parliament has increased, the impact has not been significant enough to solve gender inequality issues in Rwanda. Rwanda has achieved a lot of progress, but there is still work to do because of the tenacity of patriarchal traditions.

Impact on the Literature

There is an underlying assumption in scholarly literature on gender inequality in political representation that once women comprise a larger majority of parliament, there will be some form of substantial or even an "automatic" increase and improvement in gender equality. Certainly, this case study adds to the literature and confirms Lovenduski and Karam's notion that as the number of women in politics grows, it becomes easier to be a woman politician, but increased percentages may not necessarily lead to feminist policy (Lovenduski and Karam 189). Rwanda as a case study adds to the literature by demonstrating that despite record percentages of women in parliament, changes in gender equality and patriarchal norms do not necessarily come at a faster pace than governments with lower levels of female representation in government.
This case study of Rwanda, however, does add to the literature by showing that authoritarian style government can accelerate gender equality in certain cases. The conclusion here is that authoritarian governments can accelerate gender equality using top down leadership if it first falls in line with the authoritarian government's policy agenda. In the RPF government context, development results trump everything. This is demonstrated in the issue of creating a curriculum on HIV in Rwanda. An unanticipated finding in this study was that the Kagame government, in various areas, particularly in reproductive health, demonstrated sensitivity to traditionalism rather than behave tyrannically and force policy decisions. This is noted in the reluctance to form an HIV/AIDS curriculum for students in the country as well as in putting forward policy to lower total fertility rates and legalize abortion. This is surprising because Kagame has been hailed as a visionary as well as a modern, enlightened leader (McGreal 2). Kagame's relationship and donor support from American evangelical churches limits the scope of feminist legislation in various controversial areas, particularly women's health.

The locus of power lies with Kagame. Along with tradeoffs between political liberties and human rights violations for development results, he must also maintain some appearance of democratic practice to reassure Western donors and investors that they are not bankrolling a dictator (Gettleman 3). This thesis demonstrates that while the RPF advocates for more female MPs, it is not for the purpose of promoting a feminist agenda; rather, more females in parliament functions to provide a facade for democracy and the appearance of enlightened leadership in Rwanda and that Kagame is not as in control as some might think because he has to cater to patriarchal interests. Kagame desires to be seen as democratic, modern and enlightened yet he struggles with his own sexism and caters to traditional elements, particularly to groups from whom he receives funding for the nation's development.
Although having a female majority in parliament alone is not a panacea for Rwanda's problems, it has been a key element in long-term development in the country. Having made impressive gains in women's political representation and successfully rebuilding the country after a devastating genocide, Rwanda has work left to do (Bridgeland et al 31). Notwithstanding violations of human rights and an authoritarian government, Rwanda has demonstrated its resolve in improving education, creating a knowledge based economy and improving gender equality in the country. If and when Rwanda democratizes, it will be interesting to watch how gender equality continues to evolve and expand in the country, though democracy does not necessarily facilitate gender equality, the ability of female parliamentarian to form accountability to a popular base will help develop more focused feminist policy.

There are limited yet significant changes in gender equality in Rwanda, however cultural change lags behind policy changes. Rwanda reveals the need to cultivate the talent, train potential female candidates in campaigning, agenda setting and accountability to constituencies. Female MPs in Rwanda must reach parity at every level in government and bring about comprehensive institutional change in issues that are traditionally not "women's issues". Female politicians in Rwanda need real power in government. The fight for gender equality in Rwandan society must also be framed where issues of gender involve both sexes, where men and women equally share the tasks of caring and earning instead of framing policy around the traditional notion of women as mothers (Sainsbury 82). In the case of Rwanda gender dynamics have not changed and semi-authoritarian government and democratic practices coincide with each other. The Kagame government alters feminist policy to make it less costly and contentious, using it to their advantage when necessary. Government mechanisms in autocracies and democracies may help put women in office, but they are rarely enacted so that both women and men in Rwanda
assume political positions that are not gendered. In Rwanda, the accountability of female MPs is structured upward to the regime rather than downward to constituents. This isolation from a popular base emphasizes tokenism rather than effectiveness in policy (Horowitz 14). Women are achieving higher percentages in politics at a greater rate than ever before, yet as this study has shown, academic understandings of the specific mechanisms that strengthen the position of women in larger society and putting an end to patriarchy once women gain a majority in parliament is still in early stages.


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