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On: 31 March 2015, At: 23:53

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of Women, Politics & Policy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wwap20>

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Published online: 29 Jul 2013.

To cite this article: Mona Tajali (2013) Gender Quota Adoption in Postconflict Contexts: An Analysis of Actors and Factors Involved, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 34:3, 261-285, DOI: [10.1080/1554477X.2013.820115](https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2013.820115)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2013.820115>

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Gender Quota Adoption in Postconflict Contexts: An Analysis of Actors and Factors Involved

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Adoption of gender quotas is significant in addressing women's political underrepresentation. While low levels of women's parliamentary presence is a global phenomenon, in the past decades developing countries have been at the forefront of gender quota adoption. This article analyzes the process of quota adoption during postconflict reconstruction, a reality that is prevalent in much of the developing world. It argues that the context of postconflict reconstruction provides quota advocates with unique opportunities to demand women's political presence. This article considers the quota adoption processes of two developing countries, Rwanda and Afghanistan, in the context of their postconflict reconstruction, with a particular emphasis on the actors and factors involved.

KEYWORDS *developing countries, gender quotas, postconflict reconstruction, women's movements*

As new opportunities came after 2001 (during the Afghan reconstruction efforts) I realized that I could do something differently for my people, so I decided to run for parliament.

—Fawzia Koofi, Afghan female parliamentarian

I thank the anonymous reviewers, as well as the editors of the *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy*, who provided me with extensive supportive comments to improve this article. I also thank Homa Hoodfar and Kimberely Manning for their helpful feedback and support. I am very grateful to Najia Haneefi, Fawzia Koofi, and various other activists and scholars who provided me with much valuable information and shared their experiences with me.

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2003, Rwanda made history in its first democratic parliamentary elections since the 1994 genocide by achieving near gender parity (48.8% female representatives) in its national legislature. This figure surpassed the performance of Sweden, Finland, and Norway—Scandinavian countries that until then ranked the highest in female representation. In September 2008, Rwanda once again astonished the world by electing a majority of women parliamentarians, at 56.3% (Zirimwabagabo 2008), while the world average for female representation is only 20.8% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013). Similarly, women constituted 27.3% of the Afghan parliament after the first parliamentary elections in 33 years, in a country where roughly 90% of the women were illiterate and had limited access to the most basic rights. Afghanistan and Rwanda's exceptional performances would not have been possible without the adoption and implementation of gender quotas,¹ which are understood as setting a certain number or percentage of women politicians to jump-start women's representation and increase women's opportunities to access the political sphere.²

Today Rwanda is part of a trend of worldwide quota adoption, of which the most rapid increases in the past 15 years have happened in the developing world. It is the purpose of this article to contribute to our understanding of why developing countries, such as Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Afghanistan, are currently at the forefront of recent quota adoptions. More specifically, this article considers some additional variables and factors—aside from the established arguments of international influence (Bush 2011; Krook 2007) and spread of democratic or social justice trends (Dahlerup 2006; Hoodfar and Tajali 2011; Krook 2007)—that contribute to quota adoption in developing countries.

Within developing contexts, a number of additional factors that contribute to the adoption of parliamentary gender quotas deserve further attention. One factor is the occurrence of national crises, such as civil wars, revolutions, or wars of liberation, which interrupt the political and social contexts of the country and require major structural and institutional reforms during reconstruction. I argue that the prevalence of domestic crises, a reality in many parts of the developing world, and the opportunities that arise during their reconstruction efforts have contributed to recent quota adoptions in these contexts. Although previous research has identified the link between postconflict reconstruction and enhancement of women's political presence (Hughes 2009; Jabre 2004; Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna 2006), particularly in developing states, I further expand on this trend by analyzing the role of important actors and factors involved in the process of quota adoption. I discuss the main strategies used by such actors within a reconstruction context to effectively increase women's political representation, such as the role

played by the domestic women's movement, international or transnational forces, and political elites.

Postconflict reconstruction often provides vital opportunities for women's rights activists and quota advocates to ensure women's presence in the political sphere and the ability to negotiate these demands with the political elites. Reconstruction contexts particularly provide advantage to women, whose roles as peacemakers can legitimize their entrance to the public sphere and decision making. However, the successful adoption of quotas depends on the extent to which the women's movement and transnational or international actors are prepared to effectively organize and mobilize around this demand by taking advantage of the available opportunities during a reconstruction. This work explores the political opportunity structures that present themselves in reconstruction contexts and the strategic interactions that take place among different actors regarding quota adoption.

To exemplify this argument I outline some of the opportunities that present themselves at times of postconflict reconstruction through two case studies of postconflict quota adoption, Afghanistan and Rwanda. Although they differ in other aspects, such as history, region, and even political significance for the international community, this comparative analysis sheds light onto the common factors, actors, and strategies that led to quota adoption in these two developing countries during their reconstruction efforts. In my analysis, I illustrate how opportunities created during postconflict reconstruction greatly assist quota advocates in successfully lobbying and campaigning for quota measures during transitional periods, particularly by domestic women's movements.³ These opportunities, which range from restructuring existing political and social frameworks to international and transnational support, are found across many postcrisis or postconflict states. Both Afghan and Rwandan women's movements, as key actors in quota adoption, successfully took advantage of such opportunity structures to ensure women's political presence. Their preparedness and effective organizing was further assisted by other favorable conditions present during postconflict reconstruction, such as the opportunity to rewrite the nation's constitution and election laws, willing political elites, and increased international and transnational support, all of which are discussed further in this article.

ADOPTION OF GENDER QUOTAS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Quotas for women in politics are rapidly diffusing, particularly after the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which came about as a result of transnational women's movements' organizing and encouraged government action to increase women in decision-making positions by setting a target of at least 30% (Dahlerup 2006). A majority of the states that

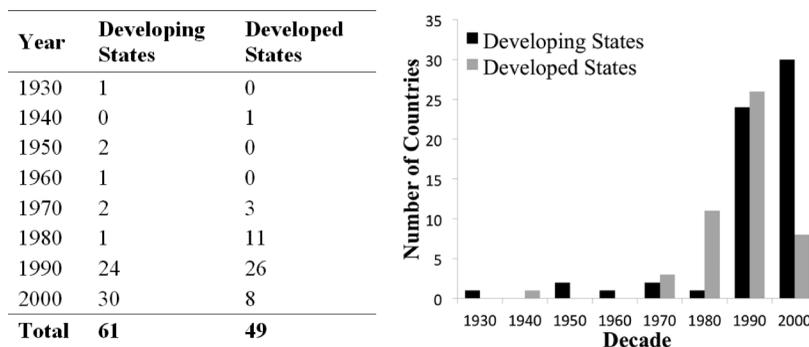


FIGURE 1 Global Trend of Quota Adoption. *Source.* Constructed from Krook 2006, pp. 312–313; UNDP: Human Development Reports: 2008 Human Development Rankings, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>. *Note.* Developing states are those with low or medium Human Development Index (HDI) rankings, while developed states are those with high HDI rankings according to UNDP Human Development Reports for 2009.

have adopted quotas since the year 2000 are developing states, which, for the purpose of this article, are defined as nonindustrialized or third-world nations that the United Nations Development Fund (UNDF) categorizes as having a “medium” or “low” Human Development Index (HDI). As illustrated in Figure 1, in the past decade, 30 developing states (as determined by their low or medium HDI ranking) have adopted gender quotas, while only 8 developed states have done so.

The recent trends of quota adoption contradict the previous scholarly arguments that linked adoption of egalitarian policies, such as gender quotas, to a country’s level of industrialization, democratic development, and cultural values (such as religiosity) (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel 2003; Przeworski and Limongi 1997). While these authors assumed a linear progression for female empowerment by concluding that women’s rights advance as countries modernize, industrialize, democratize, or secularize, in the past decades we have witnessed the adoption of gender quotas in contexts that lack democratic institutions or high levels of industrialization. Developing countries also continue to astonish observers as they increasingly rank higher than some of the most industrialized and democratic countries, such as France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, in achieving a critical mass (or at least 30%) of women in the parliament. As shown in Table 1, from the total of 26 countries that have achieved a critical mass of women in their national parliaments as of December 2010, nine (35%) have low or medium human development indices. All nine of these countries have achieved these high levels of female representation as a result of gender quotas that were adopted within the past two decades.

TABLE 1 Countries with Critical Mass (30% or More Women Parliamentarians) as of December 2010

Rank	Country	Year Adopted (most recent) ^a	Last Election	% W	HDI Rank (very high, high, medium, or low human development) ^b	Type of Gender Quota (national level only) ^c
1	Rwanda	2003	9/2008	56.3%	165 (Low)	Constitutional (30% reserved) and election law quotas
2	Sweden	1972	9/2006	47.0%	7 (Very high)	Party quotas
3	South Africa	1994	4/2009	44.5%	129 (Medium)	Party quotas
4	Cuba	—	1/2008	43.2%	51 (High)	No quota
5	Iceland	1996	4/2009	42.9%	3 (Very high)	Party quotas
6	Netherlands	1987	6/2010	40.7%	6 (Very high)	Party quotas
7	Finland	—	3/2007	40.0%	12 (Very high)	No quota
8	Norway	1975	9/2009	39.6%	1 (Very high)	Party quotas
9	Belgium	1985	6/2010	39.3%	17 (Very high)	Election law and party quotas
10	Mozambique	1999	10/2009	39.2%	172 (Low)	Party quotas
11	Angola	2005	9/2008	38.6%	143 (Low)	Election law quotas
11	Costa Rica	1996	2/2010	38.6%	54 (High)	Election law and party quotas
13	Argentina	1991	6/2009	38.5%	49 (High)	Election law quotas
14	Denmark	1985	11/2007	38.0%	16 (Very high)	No quota
15	Spain	1996	3/2008	36.6%	15 (Very high)	Election law and party quotas
16	Andorra	—	4/2009	35.7%	28 (Very high)	No quotas
17	New Zealand	—	11/2008	33.6%	20 (Very high)	No quotas
18	Nepal	1990	4/2008	33.2%	144 (Medium)	Constitutional and election law quotas
19	Germany	1986	9/2009	32.8%	22 (Very high)	Party quotas
20	Macedonia	2002	6/2008	32.5%	72 (High)	Election law and party quotas
21	Ecuador	Unknown	4/2009	32.3%	80 (High)	Election law and party quotas
22	Burundi	2005	7/2010	32.1%	174 (Low)	Constitutional (30% reserved) and election law quotas

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Rank	Country	Year Adopted (most recent) ^a	Last Election	% W	HDI Rank (very high, high, medium, or low human development) ^b	Type of Gender Quota (national level only) ^c
23	Belarus	—	9/2008	31.8%	68 (High)	No quotas
24	Uganda	2001 ^d	2/2006	31.5%	157 (Low)	Constitutional (20% reserved) and election law quotas
25	Tanzania	2005	12/2005	30.7%	151 (Medium)	Constitutional (30% reserved) and election law quotas
26	Guyana	2000	8/2006	30.0%	114 (Medium)	Constitutional (33% in candidate electoral lists)

Source. Adapted from Inter-Parliamentary Union: "Women in National Parliaments as of December 2010," <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif311210.htm>.

Note. The countries in boldface are those ranked with low or medium human development by the UNDP Human Development Reports for 2009. Total countries with 30% or more female representation: 26.

^aKrook 2009, 227–238.

^bUNDP 2009 Human Development Rankings, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>.

^cIDEA Global Database of Quotas for Women, http://www.quotaproject.org/country_by_region.cfm.

^dUganda's most recent gender quota adoption was in 2001, although it had previously adopted quotas in 1989 and 1995.

Clearly a more complex constellation of factors than was previously assumed by scholars, such as Inglehart and Norris (2003), are at work in the recent rise of quotas in developing contexts. The current trend of quota adoption illustrates that policies of gender equality are not the exclusive domain of industrialized states with a strong history of democracy and social justice. Recent studies on gender quotas are increasingly moving away from simple accounts of diffusion to recognition of the multiple processes and the complexity of factors that result in their global spread (Krook 2006). I aim to contribute to such research by further clarifying the factors and actors that have played a role in recent quota adoptions, particularly the interactions among various actors during postconflict reconstruction. By analyzing the central role of mobilized quota advocates during reconstruction efforts I aim to move away from simplistic conclusions of bottom-up versus top-down or one-sided approaches to quota adoption, which tend to obscure the complexity of actors and factors involved, to one that includes historical and situational contexts.

Focusing on the postconflict variable provides us with a useful model to further explain the recent rise in global quota adoption as it clarifies some of the common features that are shared across these countries. For instance, of the nine developing countries listed in Table 1 with the highest percentage of female parliamentarians, eight (all but Guyana) have experienced a domestic crisis or liberation war in recent years. Looking at the year that the quotas were adopted in these states, one notices that the majority adopted them during their postconflict reconstruction era, particularly during the formulation of their new political structure and constitution. A few examples of such postconflict cases are Rwanda, Nepal, and Angola, all of which adopted quotas in their newly drafted constitutions; and South Africa and Mozambique, where the ruling parties adopted quotas as they were forming new governments. Similar observations are also made by other scholars who study African women's political representation: Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna (2006) note that "of the 12 African countries with the highest rates of female representation in parliament, eight (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Eritrea, Burundi, and Namibia) have undergone liberation wars or civil conflict in recent years" (119). Furthermore, when researching quota adoption trends, grouping countries according to political and social contexts (as in postconflict reconstruction) is preferable over regional or geographic divisions, as has conventionally been done (Dahlerup 2006); this is because regional analysis often produces fragmented results as significant complexities of individual quota cases may be overlooked, such as the factors that helped Rwanda achieve 56.3% female representation, while Kenya is lagging far behind with only 9.8%. I do not intend to suggest a universal model which applies to all countries but rather to identify the factors and processes which are considered significant variables across multiple

cases. In the next sections I analyze the specific factors or conditions of postconflict contexts that assist in quota adoption.

GENDER QUOTA ADOPTION: THE IMPACT OF A DOMESTIC CRISIS

Literature recognizes that crises create a number of important opportunities that can assist in increasing women's political representation (Hughes 2009; Putnam 1976) and in gender quota adoption (Sorensen 1998; Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna 2006; Tripp et al. 2010). Political opportunity structures in this sense may include shifts in a state's political framework or institutions as accompanied by regime change, shifts in cultural norms such as acceptable gender roles, or even changes in demographics by a sudden influx of qualified female candidates. These political, cultural/ideological, or structural shifts impact the emergence, strategy, and likelihood of success of a social movement or advocacy campaign (Hughes 2009; Waylen 2007), such as the demand for quotas. Specific opportunity structures present during postconflict reconstruction are reform of the existing political, legal, and social frameworks; existence of organized and prepared women's groups or movements; influence and support from the international community or transnational networks; and the rise to power of new political elites and parties wishing to increase electoral and political appeal.

Postconflict reconstruction offers a clean slate for fundamental structural change. Developing countries tend to adopt constitutional or legislative quotas, which are legally mandated measures (Tripp et al. 2010), more often than voluntary party quotas because political parties and democratic institutions are less established in these countries and quotas are better guarantees of rapidly addressing women's underrepresentation due to their legal weight. Since these quota measures require reform to a country's constitution or election laws, their adoption is assisted when there is an interruption in the political and social context of the country or when the country's political framework is in the midst of a major transition. Postconflict reconstruction or periods following major crises can provide the opportunity structure of rewriting the national constitution or drastically reforming it.

Interruptions in the political framework can also directly impact social and cultural norms. The supply of potential female politicians often increases in the aftermath of a domestic crisis, as such crises alter the very fabric of society and shift the ideals, beliefs, and social positions of its members concerning gender roles. War or other forms of domestic crises enable women to enter the public sphere and access roles that were previously denied to them. Aside from serving in support roles, such as nursing the wounded, women may also serve as armed combatants or participate in social movements that mobilize members for social justice or peace (Paxton and Hughes

2007). Thus, women groups' increased organizational activity during periods of conflict and reconstruction provides them with the will and experience to enter formal politics. Also, women's organized response to a crisis directly impacts traditional assumptions concerning women's proper roles, while their former marginalization from politics can paradoxically increase the public's demand for female leaders and politicians; they are often seen as less corrupt, more peaceful, or a unifying force. The demand for women in decision-making positions can further increase when the domestic crisis has drastically depleted the male candidate pool due to death or imprisonment, or when patterns of political incumbency are disrupted during transitions, opening the gate to the political presence of women or minority groups (Hughes 2009).

Although there is evidence that despite women playing crucial public roles during domestic crises, their involvement in reconstruction efforts is not a given, as they may be sent back to the private sphere (Paxton and Hughes 2007). However, recent research also suggests that an increasing number of women's movements are too prepared to allow political elites to marginalize them from major decision making (Tripp et al. 2010). The successful adoption of gender quota measures in recent years is credited to a large extent to the preparedness and the vigorous organizing of women's movements in postconflict contexts. To ensure that gender issues remain on the agenda of the transition, women's organizations demand a seat at peace talks and on constitutional commissions (Hoodfar and Tajali 2011; Tripp et al. 2010). Since postconflict reconstruction often requires consolidation of a new regime, in which constitutions and parliaments are reestablished from scratch (Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna 2006), women's movements have increasingly learned how to take advantage of these new and unique opportunities and have often successfully pushed for gender quotas and other legislative reforms to guarantee women's political presence after the transitional period.

It is important to note that while constitution building is an essential opportunity structure, the negotiations that unfold throughout the process equally impact women's organizing tactics, demands, and structures. As a result, aside from women's preparedness and persistence, a degree of flexibility is also required on the part of the women's movement to alter its strategies as the political opportunity structures shift. According to Waylen (2007), women's successful organizing is dependent largely on how a movement interacts with other political actors and factors during a transitional period. Such interactions include choosing whether to remain autonomous or to collaborate with existing political parties and structures. It is also recognized that women's organizing is more critical in the early stages of a transition than in the later stages, as party politics and conventional political activity have a negative effect on women's demands and their political involvement (Waylen 2007). Therefore, the political opportunity structures that present

themselves are temporary and require women's strategic decisions on how to pursue their demands under the new conditions while they last.

Another important political opportunity that greatly contributes to women's organizing in the interactions and negotiations that unfold in reconstruction efforts is the support and aid they receive from regional or international organizations (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2006). Particularly as new constitutions are being written, political elites in developing countries tend to be more amenable to change with respect to international influences and often respond positively to demands for integrating social justice policies, such as those advocated by United Nations (UN) or regional documents, into their country's new legal system (Hughes 2009; Tripp et al. 2010). UN Resolution 1325, which was passed in 2000, was considered a major victory for women's groups in developing contexts, as it emphasized the importance of the inclusion of women and mainstreaming gender into all aspects of postconflict resolution and peace operations (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009; O'Connell 2011). However, having seen the weak implementation of this resolution in many peace negotiations and reconstructions, women as active agents of political change have turned to demanding gender quotas as a way to guarantee their presence in reconstructions and future governments. Gender quotas, which are rapid policy changes, often serve as an ideal condition for enhanced international aid and funding (Bush 2011). This political opportunity structure, however, requires the active involvement of women's groups and other civil society actors, without whose input the quota measures may lack implementation power.

Last, political restructuring often brings to power new political elites, parties, and agendas. As these new institutions depend on public legitimacy to successfully ascend to power, they take measures to increase their electoral and political appeal, which often include recruiting women and minorities into decision making (Jabre 2004). Women's rights activists and groups take advantage of these windows of opportunity by lobbying within these new structures for enhanced female representation and demanding reform of discriminatory legislation and practices that hindered women's access to politics through quotas. During postconflict periods, newly founded political parties may also adopt quotas in an effort to ease ethnic or tribal rivalries and promote long-term peace. Hence, reserved seats that are distributed geographically or across ethnicities in a given country can ensure or assist with women's representation from diverse backgrounds. This opportunity structure benefits the parties seeking electoral appeal and unity in the war-torn public, as well as women's groups that demand a voice for the previously marginalized.

As the following cases studies illustrate, both Afghan and Rwandan women faced a ruined society that needed to be rebuilt after years of conflict and turmoil. While these countries differ in many aspects, from history to the larger sociopolitical context, their reconstruction efforts were similar

in that women's groups of both societies took advantage of windows of opportunities that presented themselves during reconstruction and engaged in strategic interactions that eventually ensured women's long-term presence in the political sphere by adopting quotas. I document the processes of quota adoption in Afghanistan through a close review and analysis of primary and secondary published sources and organizational reports, complemented with personal interviews with Afghan and transnational women's rights activists. To better illustrate the generalizability of this model, I also briefly review Rwanda's account of quota adoption.

THE PROCESS OF QUOTA ADOPTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan's gender quotas, which were adopted in the aftermath of the 2001 United States-led invasion, have been the subject of much scholarly research (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Dahlerup and Nordlund 2004; Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010; Nordlund 2004). However, the findings of such analysis, conducted largely through reference to English sources, vary.⁴ While some studies argue that Afghanistan's quotas were the result of the efforts of the domestic women's movement as well as the international community (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Dahlerup and Nordlund 2004; Nordlund 2004), others argue that quotas in Afghanistan were adopted in a top-down effort—or largely due to international pressure and influence (Bush 2011). My findings suggest that Afghanistan's quota process began as a grassroots initiative during the postconflict reconstruction efforts, while it also received essential support from transnational and international women's networks and forces, which particularly pressured the political elites into adopting these measures.

Efforts of reconstruction that include complete political, legal, and electoral renovation often witness the active participation of different groups and actors. At such times, minority groups, such as women or non-Pashtuns in Afghanistan, or Shi'is and Kurds in Iraq, are particularly eager to voice their demands and ensure that the new system recognizes their interests. Afghanistan's reconstruction period provided valuable and unique political opportunity structures particularly for women, who throughout the decades-long conflict had been the backbone of their communities' survival. Moreover, the fact that the occupying forces partly justified their actions through women's liberation provided women's organizations and activists with legitimate claims to present themselves as a major party to the reformulation process. The Bush administration justified the "war on terrorism" by making reference to saving Afghan women and restoring women's human rights in an attempt to win the support of the American public and feminist organizations (Russo 2006). Regardless of real intentions, such imperialist and orientalist rhetoric had a great impact on the approach and strategies of the

women's rights activists of both states. The Afghan women's rights movement viewed the occupying forces' rhetoric concerning women as an important opportunity to organize around women's issues and hold the occupying forces as well as the international community accountable to their promises. The central argument of the Afghan women's movement was that if the occupying forces land in Afghanistan in the name of freeing Afghan women from the Taliban, then women's rights activists have to ensure that they deliver real change for women (personal interview with Homa Hoodfar, March 5, 2010). The Afghan women's movement, led by key activists, successfully networked with American, European, and transnational feminist organizations to pressure the United Nations (UN) and Western governments to uphold women's issues in the upcoming political gatherings and agreements, and to include them in reconstruction negotiations. For instance, Homa Hoodfar, a member of the transnational feminist network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) who was involved in Afghan reconstruction efforts, pointed to the partnership between the US feminist organization Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) and the Afghan women's movement, as represented by key women's rights activists such as Sima Samar, to ensure that the US government upheld women's demands by including them in postconflict settlements (personal interview, March 5, 2010).

However, while Afghanistan's reconstruction provided important opportunities for quota advocates, namely the opening to reform political and legal structures and the existence of a prepared and organized women's movement that was supported by international feminist forces, it was soon realized that political elites were insincere in their rhetoric of enhancing Afghan women's rights. This was particularly illustrated by the overwhelming presence of male tribal leaders and warlords in the post-Taliban negotiations, as well as the diplomatic ties that were forming between the Western powers and tribal and religious leaders.⁵ To avoid allowing the coalition powers to use women as a legitimization for their militarization and yet keep women out of important negotiations, feminists launched massive lobby campaigns demanding women's active participation in all postconflict discussions. Both Afghan and transnational organizations objected to the fact that women were being marginalized at the first-ever post-Taliban conference, to be held in Bonn, Germany, and lobbied at national and international levels to include female delegates at the meeting. Among the lobbying campaigns were several consultation meetings organized on the eve of the Bonn Conference by WLUML in cooperation with various Afghan women's refugee organizations. These meetings gathered a group of female activists and scholars from Afghanistan, other countries in the Middle East, Bangladesh, and other countries that had experienced war and conflict to discuss the situation of women in Afghanistan. These meetings produced drafts on the Afghan women's positions and pressured the UN to uphold Resolution 1325 by including women in postconflict negotiations. In cooperation with Afghan

feminists, key feminists in the United States and United Kingdom also pressured their governments to uphold women's rights by including them in the reconstruction conferences (Abdela 2003; WLUML 2001).

Afghan and transnational women's pressure to be included in the first-ever reconstruction meetings illustrates their high level of preparedness and persistence to take advantage of even the earliest opportunity structures. As a result of these efforts, four women (or 5% of the total delegates) were present at the Bonn Conference, which was the first gathering with the intention of establishing the Afghan Interim Authority (Benard et al. 2008; Dahlerup and Nordlund 2004). Despite the low level of women's presence at this conference, the Bonn Agreement⁶—in accordance with UN policies on women's rights—nonetheless pledged to foster women's political representation in the interim government and at subsequent meetings (Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010).

After this initial victory, Afghan women's organizations collaborated with transnational feminist networks to ensure the presence of women in politics, even after reconstruction efforts were over. As a result of women's lobbying efforts, the Emergency Loya Jirga (grand assembly), which elected Hamid Karzai as the head of the transitional government in June 2002, reserved 160 seats among its 1,501 delegates for women. More than 200 women participated in the Emergency Loya Jirga, resulting in 12% female representation in this assembly (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Kandiyoti 2005).⁷ According to Najia Haneefi, an Afghan women's rights activist and founder of Afghan Women's Political Participation Committee, such high levels of women's participation were due to the pressures of international and transnational feminist networks to ensure that political elites remain responsive to women's demands. Haneefi credits the appointment of two female ministers by Hamid Karzai during his transitional government to such pressures (personal interview, March 29, 2010).⁸

Following in the footsteps of other developing countries, Afghan quota advocates sought to guarantee women's political presence through constitutional quota adoption. Hence, the constitution's drafting was a significant opportunity structure for many of these activists who mobilized around it at the onset of early negotiations. The majority of Afghan women's issues were raised at negotiation tables by Afghan women who were activists themselves, and the issues were then merely echoed by transnational and international actors. Sima Samar, Masouda Jalal, Mahboubah Hoquqmal, Suraya Parlika, and Sima Wali were among the key Afghan activists who articulated the demand for quotas as early as during the Emergency Loya Jirga. These educated and active women, some of whom had returned to Afghanistan from exile,⁹ brought with them valuable knowledge about women's political and social rights. In particular, women returning from Pakistan benefited from learning about the long quota experience of their Pakistani neighbors. Afghan activists received support from Pakistani feminist organizations,

such as *Shirkat Gah* and *Aurat*, which in cooperation with WLUML and the United Nations organized conferences and workshops about women's political participation and women's parliamentary quotas.

Through the women's organizations and documents, transnational feminist networks and the international community played a key role in legitimizing and advancing Afghan women's political rights and proved to be important opportunity structures for Afghan rights activists. The support that Afghan activists received from the international community, particularly the United Nations, toward their eventual quota adoption included conferences and campaigns to ensure that women constituted at least 25% of the members of the Constitutional Loya Jirga (CLJ), which was tasked with approving the new constitution. In addition, to increase their political leverage in the long term, Afghan activists lobbied to ensure that in 2003 Afghanistan became the first Muslim state to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) without any reservations. The ratification of this important UN document further emphasized women's political presence. The United Nations' positive influence and support was complemented by the efforts of numerous transnational feminist organizations, such as WLUML and Women for Afghan Women (WAW), which provided Afghan women with important strategies to enhance women's political rights.

One such strategy was compiling Afghan women's most essential demands in a Women's Bill of Rights and presenting it to President Karzai and other important institutions prior to the constitution's finalization (Piatti-Crocker and Kempton 2007; WAW 2003). The Afghan Women's Bill of Rights, which was drafted in a meeting on "Women and the Constitution" organized by WAW in partnership with Afghans for Civil Society and the Afghan Women's Network, was particularly significant as it brought together female leaders from every region of Afghanistan in a major grassroots effort¹⁰ (WAW 2003). To ensure a diversity of voices and to mobilize wider grassroots support for women's rights, the organizers strategically "rejected Kabul as a venue and held the conference in Kandahar, the former Taliban stronghold and arguably the most conservative city in the country, where warlords remain entrenched" (WAW 2003). Each of the demands listed in this document was debated and its wording unanimously agreed upon by its participants, which included Afghan women from all walks of life. One of the 21 demands of the Bill was "equal representation of women in the Loya Jirga and Parliament," or a 50% women's quota (Piatti-Crocker and Kempton 2007). This gathering marked the negotiations entered by women activists with political elites, in which high quotas were purposefully demanded to ensure at least a 25 or 30% quota. According to Homa Hoodfar, "Women's rights activists knew that if they asked for 30% women's quotas in politics, they would receive a lower percentage, sometimes as low as 10%" (personal interview, March 5, 2010). Therefore, Afghan women's groups strategically

asked for a higher percentage to increase the chances of solidifying a lower but sufficient amount of women in politics.

The Afghan Women's Bill of Rights is an important indicator that the demand for parliamentary quotas originated from the domestic Afghan women's movement, rather than being "donor led" or spearheaded by the international community, as previously argued by some scholars (Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010). Afghan feminist groups continued to publicize the Afghan Women's Bill of Rights while simultaneously monitoring the constitution's formulation. In November 2003, with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)'s Gender Justice Program, the Gender and Law Working Group (GLWG), which consisted of mostly Afghan scholars and law experts, released its recommendations for the draft Afghan constitution. Although the initial draft of the constitution included a quota provision for women in the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of the parliament), the group successfully increased the number of women's reserved seats from one to two female delegates from each province (Kandiyoti 2007).

Finally, on January 4, 2004, the Constitutional Loya Jirga approved the new constitution; this included the final version of Article 83, which reserved 27% of seats for women in the lower house as well as 17% of seats for women in the upper house.¹¹ For the elections to the lower house, the Electoral Commission required the election of *at least* two women from each province. In the cases that the minimum number of women did not win outright in the general elections, the top two female candidates who received the most votes in each province were placed in the reserved seats. However, for the upper house, one-third of its members were to be appointed by the president, 50% of whom must be women (Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010, 68). No sanctions were determined in case of noncompliance to the quota provision; therefore, if no women competed in a particular province, that province would not have any female representatives—although this has not yet happened. For the 2005 parliamentary elections, a total of 2,702 candidates ran for the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga, 328 of whom were females and competed in all districts. In that election, 68 women entered the parliament, 19 of whom won seats on their own. For the 2010 parliamentary elections, 405 of the total 2,577 candidates were women, 69 of whom succeeded in winning seats. More than ten of these women received the highest votes in their provinces, meaning that "even if there were no quotas in place, we would have seen the election of a sizable amount of women, despite the lack of history of women's political representation" (personal interview with Fawzia Koofi, April 23, 2011). The high percentage of votes Afghan women received indicates that their inclusion in the political structure was not just an external demand.

Therefore, although there were important coalitions and partnerships among quota advocates in Afghanistan, I argue that their ultimate quota adoption in the constitution was not merely a top-down measure,

particularly because the demand to include women in reconstruction negotiations was articulated by Afghan feminists as early as 2001, before UNIFEM and the international community were involved in the debates. In addition, if Afghanistan's women's quotas were merely a top-down measure, they would not have found resonance with the domestic women's movement and the different groups of women, including rural women. The successful implementation of these reforms illustrates that they benefited from the general public's support. Parliamentary quotas, although extremely controversial, were successfully implemented in the patriarchal Afghan society; a total of 19 female candidates received the highest votes in their districts in the first post-Taliban elections and were elected to parliament without relying on the quota provision (Kandiyoti 2007, 191).¹²

Najia Haneefi considers women's quotas a great gain for Afghan women, given the country's patriarchal and traditional context. "I am confident that if we did not have quotas, no more than a few women would reach parliamentary positions, although some women candidates have received among the highest votes in the country. Therefore quotas in Afghanistan were an important start as they would gradually prepare the ground for women's increased participation and eventually provide Afghans with the choice to elect from among those who were not involved in the bloodshed and corruption, a perception that is associated with many Afghan women" (personal interview, April 22, 2011). Fawzia Koofi, a current female parliamentarian who was the first woman to serve as a deputy speaker of the house and a presidential candidate for the 2014 elections, echoes Haneefi's view that "people of Afghanistan want to experience new faces and new generation of politicians" (BBC 2011). When asked why people of Badakhshan, one of the poorest provinces in Afghanistan, have voted for her twice more than any other male candidate, Koofi credits it to the fact that she grew up with the people of her community and understands their problems and how to solve them from within the community (BBC 2011). Koofi further states that "women in Afghanistan are capable politicians and have recently excelled in so many different areas, such as good governance, rule of law, and decision making, a major reason for which is the current parliamentary quota system that encourages and enables women to become political actors" (personal interview, April 23, 2011). Koofi, along with other female members of parliament, is active in extending Afghanistan's quotas to other branches and levels of government as well, including the judiciary, through introduction of bills and continuous lobbying of political elites (personal interview, April 23, 2011).

Overall, Afghanistan's quota adoption was successful because of Afghan women's preparedness to take advantage of the political opportunity structures available to them that arose from a postconflict context. These women were involved in their communities even during the harsh Taliban years and were well aware of Afghan women's demands. However, this success would

not have been possible without the close interaction between Afghan women activists and transnational and international feminist networks.

PARLIAMENTARY QUOTAS IN RWANDA

In July 1994, as the Rwandan genocide—which resulted in the death of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 100 days—was coming to an end, the women of Rwanda, who now constituted 70% of the population, stepped in to reconstruct their devastated country and provide much-needed services for the traumatized population (Burnet 2008; Powley 2005; Uwineza and Pearson 2009). The shortage of men in postgenocide Rwanda led to the politicization of ordinary women as they entered the reconstruction efforts and negotiations, particularly because a majority of these women now served as heads of their households. According to Burnet (2008), the actions of women in civil society in the aftermath of the genocide were “nothing short of remarkable” (371). Women’s organizations were at the forefront of rebuilding their war-torn society not only by providing for women’s basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) but also through setting up networks to attend to the needs of the most vulnerable people in society. These efforts positioned them as one of the most active sectors of civil society between 1994 and 2003 (Burnet 2008). The Rwandan women’s movement, which existed long before the genocide, organized itself under the umbrella organization Pro-Femmes and demanded that the new constitution respect women’s interests and adopt gender-sensitive provisions, namely by adopting a quota system to ensure women’s representation in the government (Powley 2005). Due to such efforts, the transition government—in office from July 1994 to May 2003—drafted a new constitution that set a quota for women of at least 30% for all decision-making positions, in addition to reserving 24 of the total of 80 seats for women in the national assembly (Schwartz 2005). These legal provisions, as guaranteed in the 2003 Rwandan constitution, resulted in Rwanda achieving near gender parity in parliament, with 48.8% in 2003, its first democratic election since the genocide (Zirimwabagabo 2008).

Similar to Afghanistan, gender quotas in Rwanda were adopted in a postconflict reconstruction effort in which the domestic women’s movement played a key role. However, an analysis of the process of quota adoption in Rwanda reveals different strategies and actions of quota advocates given Rwanda’s postgenocide context. Rwanda’s political context differed from Afghanistan’s in that the international community, or its emphasis on women’s rights, played a less dominant role in the postconflict negotiations, which in turn impacted the political opportunity structures available to the quota advocates. Rwanda faced a drastic reduction of its male population, which opened the door for Rwandan women, particularly as they entered the public sphere and changed traditional perceptions concerning gender roles.

Hence, both Rwandan and Afghan women took advantage of the different opportunity structures that presented themselves during the reconstruction period in each of their respective contexts. In this section, I outline the nature of the interactions that took place among the various actors involved in Rwanda's quota adoption and the impact of the postcrisis political and social context on these interactions.

While gender quotas in Rwanda were adopted due to a combination of factors, ranging from civil society and women's activism, to regional and international support, to the willingness of the political elites, I argue that a central force behind this adoption was the strategic efforts of the Rwandan women's movement as it made the initial demand for women's political presence at the time when a new government was being formed. These civil society actors entered into a dialogue with political elites, who illustrated the will to integrate gender equality provisions in the national constitution. The efforts and actions of both of these actors met the support of international and transnational advocacy networks (Powley 2005). The cooperation and interactions that these three groups of actors entered into during the process of Rwanda's quota adoption were greatly impacted by the opportunities created during the country's postcrisis reconstruction era.

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, "Women immediately assumed multiple roles as heads of households, community leaders, and financial providers, meeting the needs of devastated families and communities" (Powley 2004, 5). As leaders in reconstruction, Rwandan women also became powerful unifying forces between Tutsis and Hutus. Thus, to ensure long-term peace and reconciliation for the new government, the victorious Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)—a predominantly Tutsi political party that had committed itself to a platform of unity—was forced to consider women's increased political representation. RPF leaders placed women in strategic and critical political posts and declared that women must be central to the process of governing, reconciling, and rebuilding the country (Powley 2004). Furthermore, considering that the Rwandan genocide was gendered, in that women's reproductive ability was particularly targeted through rape and sexual torture to blur the ethnic lines, women used this as grounds to demand a gendered reconstruction. Women succeeded in leading important bodies such as the Unity and Reconciliation Commission as well as the Gacaca jurisdictions, which are community-based alternative justice systems (Powley 2008). Women's actions in the postgenocide reconstruction period not only proved women's worthiness of accessing important decision-making positions but also provided them with the opportunity to reverse various traditional assumptions concerning women's roles in the society.

The RPF-led transitional government, which had promised unity and reconciliation, was another important political opportunity structure to the women's movement because it demanded a constitution-building process that included input from the civil society. Hence a two-way street existed

between the women's movement and party elites during Rwanda's reconstruction, as parties depended on women's support to gain domestic and international legitimacy while the women's movement capitalized on the party's alternative image of "peace and justice." The strategic interaction between these two groups of actors is particularly evident during the process of drafting of the new constitution.

At the time of drafting the new constitution, the coalition of women's movements, Pro-Femmes, actively mobilized to ensure that gender equality became a cornerstone of the new document. In the end, the National Assembly of the transitional government appointed the 12-member Constitutional Commission to draft the new constitution in 2000, three members of which were women, including Judith Kanakuze, who was a representative of civil society and a gender expert. Kanakuze brought her background as a consultant for the National Women's Network and represented the Rwandan women's movement at the Constitutional Commission. Among her central demands for the new constitution was to include a quota to guarantee at least 30% female representation in parliament and in cabinet.

Despite Kanakuze's presence on the Constitutional Commission, where she served as an important liaison between the commission and women's groups, the women's movement continued to look for additional channels through which to pressure the transitional government to guarantee women's long-term integration into politics. They found these channels in the appointed female politicians of the transitional government, which consisted of female parliamentarians (who constituted 27.7% of the transitional parliament), and a Ministry of Gender. Pro-Femmes' lobbying of these female politicians led to the organization of a seminar in June 2001 in Kigali on "The Process of Engendering a New Constitution for Rwanda." This seminar, which was organized by the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP) in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UNDP, brought together members from the women's movement, the transitional government, and international and regional actors, including parliamentary delegations from Burundi, South Africa, and Tanzania, to present their experiences with constitutional gender quotas (Ankut 2005; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2001). This three-day event produced a document for the Constitutional Commission's consideration that outlined the recommendations and guidelines identified by the seminar's participants. The Constitutional Commission welcomed this document and followed it with additional efforts to receive the public's input on potentially controversial areas of the constitution, among which were women's rights and affirmative action.

The comprehensive nature of the constitution's drafting process illustrates the extent to which civil society, particularly the women's movement, was prepared to take advantage of the available opportunity structures. Their grassroots mobilization during the reconstruction period also encountered

the political elite's willingness to put in place structures and bodies that take account of women's demands. The eventual gender quota measures adopted in the Rwandan constitution were equally comprehensive in that they covered all levels of government from local to national; required that the parliamentary reserved seats be filled by delegates from the women's movement (referred to as women's councils) to ensure representation of women's interests rather than party interest; and introduced a new balloting system to encourage female candidates.¹³ Rwanda's innovative quota measures proved extremely effective: the first two postgenocide parliamentary elections resulted in 48.8% and 56.3% women's representation, respectively.¹⁴

As in other cases, there is no single or conclusive explanation for quota adoption in Rwanda. Factors from below (such as the women's movements), and above (the political will of RPF elites) were complemented by the postconflict context, which provided the necessary preconditions for drastic change, namely institutionalization of gender equality through quotas. It is also at times of crisis followed by the establishment of new regimes that international and transnational actors are better able to influence or pressure political elites to abide by international or regional norms. In the Rwandan case, the transitional government's policies of inclusion can also be credited to RPF's exposure to gender equality measures in Uganda, where the party members spent years in exile, as well as to similar gains for women in regional bodies and other countries. Quota advocates also received increased legitimacy from the international and regional models that emphasized women's political presence, such as the United Nations documents or the regional organizations of African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), both of which had recently adopted a form of women's quota (Hoodfar and Tajali, 2011).¹⁵ These developments served as a lobbying and mobilization tool for those advocating for quotas within national and municipal political structures (Kethusegile-Juru 2004). Thus, the role of the international community may be twofold in this context: it may help spread the notions of gender equality and women's empowerment through its international documents while also providing the necessary resources or support for various actors advocating for gender quotas.

CONCLUSION

Developing countries are currently at the forefront of global quota adoption. Although the dominant quota literature has identified the main reasons that led to its adoption around the globe, it is still limited in that various key factors that impact quota adoption in the developing world have been left out of extensive consideration. The reason for this limitation may be that the quota literature has not yet fully analyzed the factors influencing the more recent adoptions of quotas since the 2000s, the majority of which are

from unindustrialized contexts and are located in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. I have addressed this gap by arguing an additional factor that deserves further analysis when considering the reasons behind the rapid diffusion of quotas in the developing world is the reconstruction opportunities arising in postconflict contexts.

The correlation between postconflict reconstruction and gender quota adoption is illustrated by the fact that most developing states with gender quotas have adopted them in the aftermath of a domestic crisis. The domestic crisis serves as a defining moment and a catalyst for change, a context in which new opportunities are created for women to increase their political representation. Depending on the preparedness of political actors, including members of civil society, these opportunities can result in substantial reform for the newly established state. Specifically, postconflict reconstruction provides new opportunities for radical reforms, which can be effectively utilized by quota advocates. As illustrated, postcrisis reconstruction in Rwanda and Afghanistan enabled already-organized activists to engage in the peace process and take advantage of such opportunities to demand women's political representation in the new government. An analysis of the process of quota adoption in these contexts suggests that reconstruction periods enable strategic interactions and negotiations among different actors and, in so doing, may lead toward successful quota adoption.

As demonstrated in the case studies in this article, the organized Afghan and Rwanda women's movements successfully took advantage of the available opportunity structures during their postconflict reconstruction, which ranged from institutional reforms to international and transnational support. For instance, both women's movements strategically and persistently campaigned to ensure that the new constitutions guaranteed women's political presence, though in different ways. Afghan women greatly benefited from international and transnational feminist support, particularly from the United Nations and neighboring Pakistan. Rwandan women, on the other hand, benefited more from a willing group of political elites within RPF who were exposed to successful gender quotas in Uganda while in exile. Indeed, the regional quota experiences in Pakistan and Uganda (as well as other South Asian and African countries), legitimized the grassroots demands of Afghan and Rwandan women's rights activists. In addition, as both states suffered greatly from ethnic and tribal conflict throughout their political past, the postconflict reconstruction context provided women with the opportunity to enter the public as unifiers and forgivers. These women's movements successfully championed women's political presence to the public by campaigning for gender quotas as a strategy to help promote long-term peace in addition to democratization and gender equality.

At the time of this writing, domestic crises continue to unfold across the developing world in various regions. Constitutions and political structures in a number of Middle Eastern and North African countries are in the midst of

extensive modifications following mass demonstrations and revolutions that toppled authoritarian regimes beginning in spring 2011. These reconstruction periods have opened the gates for enhanced civil society integration, including women's groups, a majority of which have also pursued adoption of gender quotas.

NOTES

1. Gender quotas are meant to rectify the historical exclusion of women and are divided into three broad categories: reserved seats quotas, which are adopted in the national constitutions; national legislative quotas, which are adopted through legal reform at the constitutional or electoral law levels; and political party quotas or targets, which are voluntarily adopted by parties (Krook 2009).

2. For the purpose of this article *representation* refers to women's descriptive (as opposed to substantive) representation because this work concerns quota adoption. I argue that the mere adoption of quotas is a significant accomplishment of a state or party, as it acknowledges that women's political marginalization deserves affirmative action measures to reverse various discriminatory treatments against women.

3. Quota advocates can include civil society, state, or international and transnational actors, though much of the quota literature identifies domestic women's movements as initial and primary actors in quota adoption (Krook 2006, 2009; Lovenduski 2005).

4. A significant limitation of these studies on the process of quota adoption in Afghanistan has been the researchers' limited accessibility to non-English sources, which has resulted in obscuring Afghan women and the civil societies' contributions to these efforts.

5. According to one Afghan activist in 2001, "While diplomats all talk about having to achieve a balance of tribal interests, there have been no official statements regarding the need to bring women into the negotiating process" (as quoted in WLUMI 2001).

6. This agreement laid the groundwork for the establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was charged with mainstreaming gender into the policies and programs of the ministries (Kandiyoti 2005).

7. According to Kandiyoti (2005), although women participated in the Emergency Loya Jirga to elect the transitional government, they nonetheless faced intimidation by being banned from speaking as their microphones were cut off. Despite such harsh treatments, a female candidate, Masouda Jalal, ran against Hamid Karzai for president.

8. In an attempt to address women's issues, the interim government appointed two key women's rights activists: Sima Samar as the minister of women's affairs and Suhaila Seddiqi as the minister of public health (Benard et al. 2008).

9. Various Afghan women of the diaspora formed women's nongovernmental organizations during their years of exile to attend to refugees' issues. Their activities led to the establishment of women as civil society actors (Kandiyoti 2007).

10. This conference "brought together 45 ethnically diverse women, community leaders in the movement for women's and human rights in Afghanistan, many of whom were grassroots women's rights activists, both educated and under-educated, from rural provinces all around the country" (Women for Afghan Women 2003).

11. Drafting of the constitution rested with three bodies: the Constitutional Drafting Commission, the Constitutional Review Commission, and a Constitutional Loya Jirga; these groups revised and approved the draft constitution (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006). Due to extensive women's lobbying, women's representation in each of these bodies never fell below 20%.

12. Despite the fact that some female candidates were able to receive higher votes than their male competitors, the Afghan quotas act more as a threshold on women's representation, since it rarely happens that more than two women from a single province receive the highest votes (Dahlerup and Nordlund 2004, 9).

13. A triple balloting system was introduced to encourage female candidacy and make voters comfortable with voting for women. This system designated one ballot just for women so that female candidates compete with one another (Powley 2004; International IDEA and Stockholm University 2011).

14. In addition to the 24 reserved seats, Rwandans in 2003 voted in 15 women, followed by 21 women in 2008.

15. Although Rwanda is not a member state of the Southern African Development Community, the rhetoric of gender quotas was nonetheless apparent in the developmental and political discourses across the continent, which in turn positively influenced country-specific advocacy work.

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