Post-genocide gender equality

Understanding the gender equality process within the political sphere after the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi

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Aleksandra & Sanna
June 2018
Abstract:

Inspired by article 1 of the Human Rights Declaration, which states that every human is born free and equal, this thesis highlights gender equality and the process towards political empowerment, using the example of Rwanda. A country known for being one of the world’s leading countries regarding women’s representation in the parliament. The purpose of the thesis is to explore Rwanda's gender equality process within the political sphere using feminist approaches. Results have been produced through a literature study and some elements of empirical material from interviews with people from Rwanda to give them a voice on the matter.

The results of this thesis illustrate two main factors behind the increase of gender equality and women's political participation; (1) the effect that the genocide against the Tutsi had on the country, and (2) the regime’s commitment to gender equality. Our results also illustrate that there are differences concerning political opportunity and participation between urban and rural parts of Rwanda. Concluding that, even though women have the opportunity to participate in politics and are politically empowered, there are still issues regarding gender equality in the political sphere.

Key Words:

*Changing gender roles, Feminism, Political empowerment, Reconstruction, Rwanda*
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1. Introduction

According to article 1 of the Human Rights Declaration every human is born free and equal. As article 2 states, this is true, no matter one’s sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (UDHR 1948, p.72). Every human in the world is entitled to and protected by the human rights through international law (UDHR 1948, p.71-79).

The United Nations have also highlighted gender equality through the sustainable development goals. For example, goal number five is dedicated to ensure gender equality (UN 2015). Even though the human rights and the sustainable development goals highlight the importance of gender equality, a global improvement is still needed. Due to gender equality being a global development issue, it is important to study the unequally distributed power between men and women. Especially during circumstances as war, violence and conflicts when gender equality is often forgotten and ignored (Chandler et al. 2010, p. 17, 20).

1.1 War and genocide

Due to different beliefs, the world has experienced several wars throughout the history of humanity (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 571-572). All wars share the common characteristics of focusing on legitimating violent urges which persuade people to fight and kill, while at the same time risking their own lives. Without these components, there can not be a war as the crucial point of warfare is a willingness to kill (Black 2007, p. 42-43). Despite peace efforts, there have been increased military spending, increased arms trading and advancements in military technology (SIPRI 2017, p.1). The recent years have also seen an increase in violent conflicts, the majority within states, as well as an increase of intrastate conflicts which makes them international, such as the ongoing Syria conflict (SIPRI 2017, p. 2).

War or conflicts could be defined as “new or old” (Kaldor 2012, p.1). The concept of new wars categorizes conflicts into wars, organized crime, violations of human rights and genocide (Kaldor 2012, p.2). A crucial part of war is an inhumane view of the enemies, especially in civil warfare such as religious wars and genocide. For example, during the Second World War and the Holocaust when this view was an essential part of the Nazis worldview (Black 2007, p. 43-44). During II WW, the Nazi leadership formed a variety of population policies aimed to change the ethnic composition of Europe. By using force and mass murder as a tool, the policies were realized. These policies targeted mainly Jews, but
also the Romani population in Europe, which resulted in an ethnic cleansing - a genocide (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, no date).

The first time Genocide was recognized as a crime under international law was in the year 1946. By 1948 genocide was classified as an independent crime through the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the Genocide Convention). Today, 149 countries have ratified the Genocide Convention, however, the International Court of Justice considers it to be a part of a general customary international law. Which means that states are bound to the Genocide Convention and to the fact that genocide is a crime prohibited under international law, even if they have not ratified the convention. (United Nations no date). The Genocide Convention defines genocide as follows:

“In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” (United Nations, 1948, p. 1).

Despite the Genocide Convention, ethnic conflicts and “new wars” such as genocides have occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. One example of this is the Yugoslavian conflict. Religious differences combined with differing political agendas resulted in a genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the year of 1995. Approximately 8000 men and boys were killed (Kaldor 2012, p.1,33-58; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, no date; Temoney 2017, p.5-6).

1.2 Gender equality and unexpected results

Wars, genocide and violence have both had a big impact on the world and societies, both during and after the conflicts (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, no date; Diamond 2011, p. 313; Temoney 2017, p.5-6; Vinogradova 2015, no page; Mceuen 2016; Giddens et al. 2013, p. 671-673, 677).

In times of war and violence, women and children are the most vulnerable as their rights are violated (Chandler et al. 2010, p. 17, 20). Violence, war and conflict contribute to the loss of lives, mostly male lives due to war duty. During such circumstances, women tend
to step into the roles previously held by men (Brown 2016, p. 231). This is an unexpected result of war and violence (Debusscher et al. 2013, p. 1114)

In the USSR, the government pushed for a change in gender roles before the II WW due to the communist revolution which sparked industrialization and proclaimed equality (Vinogradova 2015, no page; Ilic 1999, p.8). From the First World War, until the 1930s, a large number of women were employed in the USSR industry sector. The women were encouraged to take on jobs and work in sectors previously dominated by men (Goldman 2002, p. 1; Ilic 1999, p. 8, 27, 36,175-176). Women’s opportunity to work changed gender roles in the social and political sphere, as well as within the family (Goldman 2002, p. 1; Ilic 1999, p. 8, 27,175). The expansion of the female labour force continued. At the start of II WW, 43 percent of the USSR labour force in large-scale industries were women (Ilic 1999, p.41-42). Women workers were considered “a reserve army of labour”, since they were able to work and maintain the industrial production during the war (Ilic 1999, p.42). The new opportunities for women in the USSR also gave them the possibility to be part of the army. For example, many young women volunteered to become pilots for the USSR army (Vinogradova 2015, no page).

The same phenomenon occurred in the United States during the II WW. More than seven million women in the USA had to step in and take on the jobs left by the men who entered military service (Mceuen 2016, p. 1-2). The crisis that the war created became a meaningful opportunity for women to engage in roles previously unavailable to them. The wartime opportunities and experiences combined with the new independence affected women directly, as it reinforced women’s empowerment and equality in the society (Mceuen 2016, p. 18-19).

Women’s involvement during and after conflicts has continued to affect gender roles. For example, Bangladesh has made a rapid development regarding women’s empowerment and gender equality since the 1971 Liberation war. After the independence, and despite the strong religious and cultural roots, the view of women changed. This new view helped the Bengali Muslim women toward greater agency and control of their lives after the independence (Hossain 2018, p.104). Another example of empowerment and changing gender roles is the Nepalese Civil War (1996-2006), were women experienced gender shifts both during and after the conflict (Luna K.C et al, 2017, p.175, 178). During the Nepalese Civil War, women participated in combat, a traditionally male duty, and had leadership roles. At the same time, the men took up traditionally female tasks such as cooking, washing and

1.3 Rwanda and changing gender roles

Maybe the most significant change regarding gender roles and empowerment following a violent conflict has occurred in Rwanda (Diamond 2011, p. 313; WEF, 2017, p.10). The genocide against the Tutsi meant that women had to step into the roles previously held by men which changed the gender roles in the country (Brown 2016, p. 231). Many of the women remained in these positions after the end of the genocide (Brown 2016, p. 230). The rapid development in Rwanda since 1994, has attracted a great deal of attention and interest among researchers (Carlson 2013; Cornwall 2015; Sleigh et al. 2013; Sweetman 2013; Zorbas 2009). Most of these researchers have investigated the phenomenon of Rwanda's fast development, reconciliation, democracy and gender equality.

Since the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi in the year 1994, there has been a significant change in gender equality, especially within the political sphere. In the year 2014, Rwanda entered the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report (henceforth called the WEF report, see appendix 1 for more information) at number seven (WEF 2014, p. 8). Three years later Rwanda placed number four in the 2017 WEF report (WEF 2017, p. 10). This accomplishment is also visible in the United Nations Women and Inter-parliamentary Union’s, Women in politics: 2017 statistics, where Rwanda is ranked as the country with the most women within the parliament (61% in lower house) (UN women & IPU 2017).

1.4 Purpose

The aim of this study is to explore Rwanda's gender equality process within the political sphere. Previous research has shown that a change in gender equality began after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi (Brown 2016). Statistics from the WEF, the UN, UNwomen, and the Inter-parliamentary Union, as well as Rwanda’s Gender Monitoring Office, indicate the same (WEF 2017, p.10; WEF 2006, p. 9; UN women & IPU 2017; United Nations Statistic Division 2017; Gender Monitoring Office 2018, 10-11, 56).

Our purpose is to investigate the process behind the rise in gender equality and political empowerment of women between 1994 and 2018 and thereby better understand their
acclaimed statistical achievements as well as examine if the statistics are compatible with the political empowerment on the grassroot levels.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- What are the factors behind the increase in Rwanda’s gender equality within the political sphere, since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi?
- Is the increase in gender equality within the political sphere reflected on the grassroot levels?

By exploring the Rwandan gender equality increase within the political sphere since the genocide against the Tutsi, we hope to be able to better understand the course of this particular development and whether it is reflected on grassroot levels. In this study grassroot levels will be defined as the political bodies that are not parliament or government.

Our contribution to this study area will be to critically consider the gender equality within the political sphere and examine if the political empowerment is mirrored within women's political opportunity and women's political participation on the grassroot levels. We will analyze the political gender equality process in Rwanda through feminist and empowerment approaches using a literature study combined with some qualitative interviews.
2. Theoretical approaches

In this chapter, we will describe the theoretical approaches used in this Thesis. We have chosen a feminist perspective and will start with the history of feminism and describe the feminist ideas in short, before describing the main theories; African feminism and empowerment.

2.1. Feminism

Feminist theory is in short, the belief that there should be social, economic and political equality between the sexes. The feminist movement started in Western Europe and has grown in several waves (Burkett no date; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 152-153; Weiss 2017). The first wave of feminism has its roots in the Enlightenment era during the late 18th century and continued to the middle of the twentieth century (Maschi et al. 2014, p. 152-153). Early feminist philosophers like Mary Wollstonecraft critiqued the liberal philosophers for their lack of inclusion of women in their theories of rights (Volkova 2014; Weiss 2017). The liberal and feminist ideas presented during the enlightenment resulted in the women’s movements of the 19th century and the suffragettes who demanded equal rights as men and the right to the vote (Connelly 2013, p.17). During the first wave of feminism, Alexandra Kollontai challenged the capitalist system, the middle-class feminism and stated that only socialism could liberate women (Roelofs 2018, p.166).

Although the women’s rights movement and feminist theory are said to originate in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and represented by several theories and distinctions (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 421). Feminism generally emphasizes the importance of the social, political and economic structures that shape gender relations. Furthermore, feminism stresses that gender relations and equality must be remembered when investigating oppression, domination and power (Giddens et al. 2013, p.421; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 152). Feminist theorists commonly state that women have less power than men and that a central part of feminism is the belief that women's inferior status depends on social inequalities, for example unequally distributed power. This status is shaped by the economic, political and social power relationships that women should possess (Gemöze 2015, p. 19; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 155; Mies et al. 2014, p. 7; Sweetman 2013, p. 2). Similarly, the belief is that everyone should have the right to fundamental human rights and be free from dominance (Maschi et al. 2014, p. 155). Therefore, feminism fights for e.g. women's sexual and
reproductive rights, equal pay for equal work and requires human rights for all (Maschi et al. 2014, p. 153).

During the 1970s, the second wave of feminism took form and multiple perspectives emerged, such as liberal, Marxist, radical and black feminism (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 73). Discrimination and marginalization of women were acknowledged and pushed onto governments and organizations agenda of development (Sweetman 2013, p. 2). Several different variants of feminism emerged during this period which took inspiration from the first two branches of feminism. For example, mainstream and liberal feminism, which Mary Wollstonecraft already had highlighted in the eighteenth century. The liberal feminism aims to encourage women's individual power to be equal to men through laws and reforms (Giddens et al. 2016, p.421; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 153; Mies et al. 2014, p. 12).

The Marxist, or socialist, feminism on the other hand, emphasizes that unequal access to power have caused the personal discrimination that women experiences. This approach is inspired by Friedrich Engels and his theory about the capitalistic system which creates material and economic factors that contribute to the women's discrimination and, men's patriarchal positions. Engels also states that the capitalist system exploits both the sexes, the men with a low salary and women by not receiving any salary at all due to her free domestic work (Giddens et al. 2016, p.421-422; Maschi et al 2014, p. 153; Mies et al. 2014, p. 12). Radical feminism continues to build on the Marxist feminist approach but implies that men are responsible for women’s subordination as they profit from it. The patriarchal structures in society have made women and men unequal because of women’s ability to birth children and therefore becomes dependent on the man to protection and support. The radical feminists also highlight the sexual harassment and violence directed towards women, as well as the beauty standards that objectify women's bodies and sexuality. These linked inequalities have been presented under the slogan “the political is personal” as the radical feminists mean that the patriarchal structure in society is to blame for the gender inequality (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 422-423; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 153; Mies et al. 2014, p. 12).

A lot of criticism has been directed against all the different approaches mentioned above. This has created a third wave of feminism with additional input from marginalized groups in a new social context. The third wave emerged from the middle of the 1990s until the start of the twenty-first century. It was influenced by globalization, the fall of communism, multiculturalism, terrorism and religious fundamentalism, digital revolution
with widespread internet and new ways of communication. In this new age, new theories such as queer theory and black feminism took form within the feminist context and built upon the second wave of feminism (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 430). Queer theory starts with the idea that it is theoretically possible to separate sexuality, sex and gender from each other and the traditional gender identities, therefore, can be questioned (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 426).

Black feminism emphasizes the fact that traditional feminism does not take ethnicity into account, therefore the second wave of feminism automatically assumes the position of white, western middle class women (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 422). Black women encounter a dual oppression, with both racial and gendered struggles. This is ignored in the mainstream definitions of feminism (Loomba 2015, p. 163-164; Sweetman 2013, p.2). Black feminists often stress the historical aspects of slavery, segregation and the civil rights movements influence on the inequality of the black population in America (Giddens et al. 2016, p. 422).

2.2. A postcolonial feminist perspective

Postcolonial theories are diverse, but all focuses on examining how the European colonization has, and continues, to affect societies and academics long after independence. Postcolonial theory wants to change the traditional theories that do not include colonial perspectives and relations as they do not represent an accurate view of the world (Giddens et al. 2016, p.75). Postcolonialism and feminist theory have similarities since they both are studying marginalized groups and people (Gandhi 1998, p. 82-83). However, postcolonial theorists have critiqued the mainstream western feminism as they take the privileges of whiteness, middle class and heterosexuality for granted. Although the same argument can be reversed as feminist theorist critique postcolonial theory for not having a feminist context (de los Reyes 2011, p. 21). A third critique is presented by de los Reyes (2011) in the form of postcolonial feminist researchers, who argues that the reasoning of feminism lacking racial perspectives and postcolonialism lacking in feminist perspectives is true. However, de los Reyes (2011, p. 22) also states that it is not necessarily a bad thing (de los Reyes 2011, p. 23). Both disciplines have their own historical background and both emerged under individual and special social circumstances. Even though feminism took great impression of racism during the 1970s, it would be wrong to claim that feminism had a core of anti-racism from the beginning. Such claims would depoliticize the fact that (western) feminism recreates the hegemony of whiteness, middle class and heterosexuality as positions within feminism. These claims would also maintain the problematic hegemony which is sustained in women’s
movements and academics as well as diminish the ones who have critiqued feminism for the lack of racial perspectives within (western) feminism (de los Reyes 2011, p. 22).

De los Reyes (2011, p. 22-23) argues that the same is true for postcolonialism where a feminist perspective has not been a part of the traditional discourse. However, to claim that postcolonial theory does not have a female perspective, would paint the postcolonial field of research as predominantly male without feminist input or relevance. The works and input of female postcolonial researchers would in this description of the theory be overlooked and reduced (de los Reyes 2011, p. 22-23). The main focus of postcolonial feminist thinking is, therefore, not to link the theories of postcolonialism and feminism, but to offer a new way of thinking where both postcolonial theories and feminist theories can agree and complement each other under a postcolonial feminist approach. This postcolonial feminist view could offer an intersectional view of development and include more perspectives then the already established postcolonial and feminist discourses do today (de los Reyes 2011, p. 21-23).

A theory that has a postcolonial feminist perspective is the African feminism, which will be presented below.

2.3. African Feminism

In the late 1980’s, additional influences emerged from Africa and other postcolonial areas where feminism manifested as primarily anti-colonial movements rather than traditionally feminist movements (Maschi et al. 2014, p. 153). In previously colonized countries there are often factors beyond the patriarchal structures playing a role in the gender structures, for example, neo-colonialism, racism and prejudices (Loomba 2015, p. 164). The traditional view of feminism has been critiqued by both the post-structuralists, post-colonialists and black feminism as well as African feminism (M’Cormack-Hale 2015, p. 86-88).

The concept of African feminism holds several viewpoints but generally critiques liberal and western feminism and argues that there is not only a gendered struggle but a wider struggle including neocolonialism and capitalism (M’Cormack-Hale 2015, p. 86-88). Additionally, African feminism rejects the universalism of western feminism and call for a more intersectional view of women which include historical and cultural contexts, class, ethnicity, race, age as well as gender. In practice, this means that African women engage in these social spaces on their own terms, which does not privilege the western feminism as the ideal (M’Cormack-Hale 2015, p.88). Another difference is that African feminism often is more practical and collective as it focuses on the welfare of the group rather than on
individuals. This is because the issues are more centered around survival as well as economic and social justice (M’Cormack-Hale 2015, p.88-89).

Even though the different feminist perspectives differ in some aspects, they all share the same objective; to explain the uneven power relationship between the two sexes, and the forces that maintain these over time (Maschi et al. 2014 p, 153). Since we are studying a country in Africa, we wanted to highlight the intersectionality by applying the approach of Postcolonial feminism in the form of African Feminism.

2.4. Empowerment

Empowerment has become an essential part of the feminist theory and is connected to several of the feminist perspectives (Maschi et al. 2014, p. 152). According to Carr (2003, p. 8-9), empowerment can be seen as either an outcome or a process, however, most theorists see empowerment as a process, and so will we in this study. Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as a process of change, meaning that those who exercise choices in their lives may be powerful, but they are not empowered. According to Kabeer, the process of empowerment refers to those who have been denied the power to make choices, and then acquire such power (Kabeer 1999, p. 437). This process increases the personal, political and interpersonal power so that communities and individuals have the opportunity to take action and improve their own circumstances (Carr 2003, p. 10-11; Maschi et al. 2014 p. 151-152,158). Empowerment attends to both the socio-political and psychological aspects of change (Carr 2003, p. 8-9).

When a feminist approach is applied to empowerment, the steps in the process become more interconnected and reinforced (Carr 2003, p. 12-13).

The cyclical nature of empowerment starts with a position, often assumed to be a position of human misery, oppression, powerlessness or deprivation. The next step in the empowerment process is called conscientization. This step aims to uncover the political roots of people’s individual experiences of oppression and powerlessness (Carr 2003, p. 15-16). The conscientization step involves three sub-processes, interpretation, identity and mobilization (Carr 2003, p. 16-18). The third step, political action, continue the empowerment process, which conscientization mobilizes for. The political action may be a personal commitment or a group action. Whether it is a failed action that leads to a reveal of information, or a successful action that results in social and personal change, both will lead to a change (outcome) (Carr 2003, p. 18). Empowerment may be seen as a process of self-optimising the individual or group (Cornwall et al. 2015, p. 397). For example, women are
now seen as active agents and promoters of social change (Sen 1999, p. 189). The increased free agency and empowerment of women is affecting all people and may help to remove inequalities both within the home and in the society through for example education and employment (Sen 1999, p. 191-192, 202; Slegh et al. 2013, p.16).
3. Methodology

Since the focus of the study is to investigate Rwanda's gender equality process within the political sphere, we have chosen to do a literature study combined with a limited number of qualitative interviews. Due to the limited time and resources, for the conduction of this thesis, a field study was not possible, even though the ideal would have been to do a field study. As we still wanted to have at least some empirical elements, we chose to enrich the study with some real voices from Rwanda through a few qualitative interviews to add validity.

Our study relies on previous research by researchers from various disciplines, although the majority comes from a background of social sciences, with different areas of expertise. Our literature study will consist of scientific articles, books and elements of statistics, to answer the research question. To ensure that the literature we used was relevant, we have used the following limitations; the literature must be scientifically reviewed, the literature can not be older than 10 years (exception for the historical and theoretical literature) and the literature must touch upon the theme of the study. The data collected for the study was found both digitally and physically, depending on the type of data. The collection of data is described more thoroughly in the following section.

3.1. Literature

The scientific articles used in this study was found by searching in Google Scholar and only scientifically reviewed articles where used in the thesis. We used the following keywords when searching for scientific material; empowerment, conflict, feminism, gender equality, genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda, politics, political empowerment, post-conflict changing gender roles, post-war and genocide gender roles, war, women’s empowerment. Several articles have also been found by looking at recommendations by the portals. This material has provided us with general information about war, genocide, gender roles as well as information about these topics in direct relation to Rwanda. The articles have also been used to describe the theoretical approach and in chapter four where the Rwanda's history and gender equality process is described. See table 1 for a detailed description of where the different articles have been used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Thesis</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>War and genocide</td>
<td>Black 2017; Kaldor 2012;</td>
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<td>Gender Equality and unexpected results</td>
<td>Temoney 2017</td>
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### Theoretical Approaches

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<tr>
<th>Feminism</th>
<th>Burkett, no date; Connelley 2013; Gemöze 2015, Giddens et al. 2016; Loomba 2015; Maschi et al. 2014; Mies et al. 2014; Roelofs 2018; Sweetman 2013; Volkova 2014; Weiss 2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postcolonial feminist perspective</td>
<td>Gandhi 1998; Giddens et al. 2016; de los Reyes 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>African feminism</td>
<td>M’Cormack- Hale 2015; Maschi et al. 2014; Loomba 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Carr 2003; Cornwall et al. 2015; Kabeer 1999; Maschi et al. 2014; Sen 1999; Sleigh et al. 2013</td>
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### The context of Rwanda

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<tr>
<th>Historical background</th>
<th>Buckley-Zistel 2009; Landguiden 2016; Reyntjens 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>The split view of the equality process</td>
<td>Ansoms et al. 2012; Burnet 2008; Debusscher et al.2013; Finoff 2015; Gaynor 2015; Hasselskog et. al 2015; Reyntjens 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Description of where we have used the different scientific articles in this thesis.

The literature in form of books was found both digitally and physically at the university library, similar keywords (see above) where used as for the articles. By doing this, we found
additional material relevant to our research in the same section of the library. The books are foremost used to describe the theory and method in this study. For example, books on feminism and postcolonial theory were used for the theoretical approaches. To better understand which method was most suitable for our research topic we used books describing the different research methods in the social sciences. Some books were also used in the introduction, such as the book *Women, war and violence* (Chandler et al. 2010) which describes women’s exposure and vulnerability in war, with a chapter dedicated to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Apart from articles and books, we have also used some statistical reports such as the World Economic Forum’s gender gap reports from 2014 and 2017, the Gender Equality Status report of Rwanda 2018, from the Gender Monitoring Office in Rwanda, UNwomen, Inter-parliamentary Union, United Nations Statistic Division 2015 & 2017. We have also used information from organizations like the UN, USaid and SIDA. The official reports from the government of Rwanda as well as the information from the UN, USaid and SIDA, were found via their respective web pages. The information and statistics from these organizations and the Government of Rwanda are used in both the introduction and in chapter 4.

3.2 Interviews

When conducting the interviews, we used two different methods. The reason for this is that we were not able to perform face-to-face interviews with all the respondents, and therefore had to conduct an interview via email. The method most suitable for an interview conducted via e-mail is a structured interview, which consists of questions that are written prior to the interview and asked in a structured way (Frankfort-Nachmias et al. 2015, p. 194). The interview conducted via email consisted of approximately 25 questions (see appendix for the interview questions).

For the face-to-face interviews, a semi-structured interview was most suitable. This type of interview is more flexible as it allows for follow up questions and discussion, although controlled by the person asking the questions. The questions are asked from a flexible guide or checklist and are followed with further supplementing questions (Mikkelsen 2005, p. 89 & 169). The questions are open-ended, and not followed by any specified choice (Mikkelsen 2005, s. 89; Frankfort- Nachmias et al, 2015, p. 218, 462).
In total four qualitative interviews have been performed, both semi-structured interviews and structured. See table 2 for a detailed description of the interviews and respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and title of respondents</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Place of Interview</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alphonse Rurinda</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Stockholm 2018-03-25</td>
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<td>A former communications</td>
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<td>officer for the RPA</td>
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<td>(Rwandan Patriotic Army)</td>
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<td>and the RDF (Rwanda Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement Kirenga</td>
<td>Structured interview via e-mail correspondence</td>
<td>E-mail (Stockholm-Kigali) 2018-04-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Manager of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic governance and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Embassy Gender Focal Point at</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the Swedish embassy in Kigali</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Elise Umulisa</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Stockholm 2018-04-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First secretary at the Rwandan embassy in Stockholm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Stockholm 2018-04-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance photographer from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Description of interviews.

The checklist used for the semi-structured interviews include subjects such as; genocide against the Tutsi, gender equality in Rwanda, the process of gender equality in Rwanda from 1994, political empowerment of women, the political empowerment of women on grassroot levels, as well as the situation in Rwanda today.

3.3. Ethical considerations

When doing interviews, it was important to inform the respondents, about the purpose of the study, but also the purpose of their specific interview and how their answers would be used in the thesis. The option to be anonymous was also be presented, which is utterly important to do when interviewing nonpublic persons (Svensson et al. 2013, p. 21). When asking and formulating the questions it was important to have in mind that the subject touches on the effects of the genocide against the Tutsi and the aftermaths of the violence. Therefore, it is a sensitive topic, especially since some of the respondents have experienced the genocide directly. As we have not experienced such violence or conflict, we have adapted our questions
to the sensitive topic and not asked questions or behaved in a way that may upset our respondents.

3.4 Methodological limitations

As this study partly relies on previous research, it is important to ensure the reliability of the information. Which is done by confining and defining the sources that have been used in the study. When doing a literature study there is often more time to learn about the phenomena being studied. As there is more time to read and research the already existing articles within the research field, contributing to a deeper understanding of the phenomena (Desai et al. 2006, p. 104-106). Negative aspects of working with previous research is that the data could be old and that there is lack of recent data. Researchers could also present information that has errors or biases (Desai et al. 2006, p. 66). To minimize the risk of errors and contradictions, multiple scientifically reviewed sources have been used. To avoid old information, only articles from the last decade (2007-2018) have been used, with the exception for some literature on methodology and theoretical approaches, as well as on the women workers in the USSR during the II WW.

Email interviews provide advantages such as the respondent had more time to answer the questions, especially when the questions need a thoughtful answer. Apart from this aspect, the effects of the presence of the interviewer are removed from the situation, hopefully reducing eventual biases. On the other hand, the absence of an interviewer can also contribute to a lack of answer, low flexibility and the potential for misunderstandings about the questions (Frankfort- Nachmias et al. 2015, s. 188-189; Mikkelsen 2005, p. 171-172). A personal interview (face-to-face interview) contributes to more flexibility, it is less structured and there is always the possibility to clarify questions or answers that are unclear. This also means that the interviewer has control over the interview and at the same time can observe important body language and facial expressions. The negative side of doing a semi-structured interview may be that because of the high flexibility the interviewer may not always stay objective in discussions and could therefore potentially influence the answers through eventual biases (Frankfort-Nachmias et al. 2015, p. 198-200). To limit the misunderstandings that can emerge during the interviews, we have asked all our respondents if it was alright to contact them again and clarify if there were any misunderstandings regarding the interview. We have also asked the respondents to contact us if they experience any uncertainties.
4. The context of Rwanda

In this chapter we will describe the results of our literature study, the information will then be abstracted and presented in chapter 5. Abstracting the results, where we will be answering our research questions.

Rwanda is a small landlocked country in middle-eastern Africa with a population of approximately 12 million (Reyntjens 2015, p. 19; UN Statistic Division, 2017). Rwanda is officially a democracy with a multiparty system, however, the president has much power and influence. The president is elected in public elections for a period of seven years, the sitting president, Paul Kagame (Front Patriotique Rwandais, FRP, or in English Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF), has been president since the year 2000. The law was recently changed to enable Kagame to run for president a third time in 2017 (Landguiden 2017) where he was reelected with over 90 percent of the votes (Burke 2017).

The parliament consists of two chambers, the deputy chamber (lower house) which consists of 80 members with a five-year mandate, and the Senate which consist of 26 members with an eight-year mandate. In the deputy chamber, 53 members are chosen by the people while the remaining members are chosen indirectly through an electoral college consisting of local politicians and representatives for women's organizations. In the deputy chamber, women are guaranteed 24 seats (30%). The Senate is only chosen

Box 1: General information about Rwanda (Globalis 2014; Landguiden 2017; United Nations Statistic Division, 2015 & 2017; UNDP 2016, p. 3).
through an electoral college (Landguiden 2017).

Apart from the ruling party, the Rwandan patriotic front (RPF), seven more political parties are active. The seven parties are; Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR), United Democratic Forces (UDF), Parti Social Imberakuri, Parti Démocratique Vert, Parti Social Démocrate, Parti Libéral and Rwanda national congress (RNC). Of these parties, only the RPF, Parti Social Démocrate and Parti Libéral has mandate seats in the lower house of the parliament, with 41, 7 and 4 seats respectively (Landguiden 2017).

Rwanda is divided into five provinces; Kigali, the north, the south, the eastern and the western province, all consisting of 30 districts in total. The provinces are run by governors who are appointed by the government, today there are 25 % female governors (Landguiden 2017; Gender Monitoring Office 2018, p. 54). The districts are divided into 416 sectors which each consist of 9 000 “cells”. The districts, sectors and “cells” are run by representatives chosen by the people (Landguiden 2017). For a detailed view of women in governance institutions see table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage (2016/2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament (chamber of deputies)</td>
<td>61% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>38% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Ministers</td>
<td>40% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>25% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District mayors</td>
<td>16,7% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of district council</td>
<td>45,2% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Executive Secretaries</td>
<td>7% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Executive Secretaries</td>
<td>11% women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Executive Secretaries</td>
<td>35% women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Percentage of women in governance institutions 2016/2017 (UN women & IPU 2017; Gender Monitoring office 2018, p.54, 56).

4.1 Historical background

There are three main ethnic groups in Rwanda, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa. The ethnic groups had different occupations; the Hutu were farmers; the Tutsi were herders while the Twa were hunters and gatherers. In the 15th century a Tutsi monarchy had been established, and in the 19th century it had control over most of Rwanda (Landguiden 2016). However, the structure of the ethnic groups and the society changed when Rwanda became colonized. Germany first colonized the area (1890-1918) and after the First World War the area became a Belgian trust territory (1918-1962) (Landguiden 2016; Reyntjens 2015, p. 20).
According to the Rwandan Republic, the German and Belgian colonists changed the way the ethnic groups interacted (Republic of Rwanda 1999, p. 21). Due to the racial research in Europe, the colonial anthropologist that arrived in Rwanda “discovered” several ethnic groups. The colonizers divided the Rwandan population into three groups: Ethioped (Tutsi), Bantu (Hutu) and Pygmoid (Twa). With this divide they introduced the so-called “hamitic hypothesis”, this hypothesis argued that the Tutsi came from northern Africa and therefore were seen as immigrants while the Hutu and Twa were seen as the indigenous population of Rwanda (Buckley-Zistel 2009, p. 35). The Belgian colonizers further consolidated the social divide by introducing ID cards where the ethnicity was indicated (Landguiden 2016), this practically classified the Hutu as second-class citizens. Hutus access to social and economic sources such as education became limited or even excluded. This sort of discrimination, exclusion and pressure, turned the ethnic groups against each other (Buckley-Zistel 2009, p. 36).

Colonialism had a great impact on the social, political and economic composition of Rwanda. When the Tutsi elite in the country demanded independence in the 1950s, the Belgian colonists changed allies from Tutsi to Hutu. The colonialists made the Hutu believe that it was time for revenge on the Tutsi (Buckley-Zistel 2009, p. 36). In the year 1959 the Tutsi king, Mutara the III died which lead to the outbreak of the “social revolution” (Landguiden 2016). The emergence of political parties contributed to tension and the Tutsis were attacked, resulting in 1000 deaths and 10 000 people emigrating abroad, mainly to Uganda and other neighboring countries. The order was later restored in 1961 when the Tutsi monarchy was removed and the Hutu party MDR-Parmehutu was installed after a referendum. In the year of 1962, Rwanda gained independence. However, the ethnic tension between the Hutu and the Tutsi continued (Buckley-Zistel 2009, p. 37).

In the year 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) (which at that time mostly consisted of Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda) invaded the country, leading to a civil war. Peace negotiations were held in 1992, where the Hutu government and the RPF agreed on forming a “transitional power-sharing” government by September 1993. However, the transitional government had still not been established in February of 1994 which lead to street violence and culminated on the 6th of April when the Hutu president Habyarimana’s (president between 1973-1994) plane was shot down and all passengers, were killed. This was the trigger for the next 100-day long genocide against the Tutsi where 800 000 people died.
and over a million fled from the violence (Buckley-Zistel 2009, p. 37-38; Reyntjens 2015, p. 20; Landguiden 2016).

4.2 The post-genocide gender equality process in Rwanda

The effects of the violence meant a great loss of mostly male citizens, compelling women to step into the roles previously held by men. For example, women could now access areas of public and private life which they prior to the conflict had no contact with or power over (Brown 2016, p. 231). The women in Rwanda remained in these new positions, where they were able to strive for gender equality and gender-mainstreaming (Brown 2016, p. 230-231, 233). For example, the women’s movements had a great impact on rebuilding the society and civil life as they helped make up for the loss of social support systems which had been destroyed due to the violence of the genocide (Burnet 2008, p. 371-372). Women and girls were not forced to return to old gender roles and unequal structures that existed in the country before the genocide against the Tutsi (Brown 2016, p. 230).

Since the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) took power in 1994, they have had a strong commitment to expanding women’s rights and representation, with the goal to increase women’s participation in politics. For example, the RPF appointed women to various positions in the government (Burnet 2008, p. 367) and added women’s issues to the parliamentary agenda in order to promote gender equality (Devlin et al. 2008, p. 251-252).

The importance of gender equality has together with the importance of reconciliation been recognized in the 2003 Rwandan Constitution which was implemented by the RPF to ensure women's equal protection under the law (Devlin et al. 2008, p. 251-252; Kagaba, 2015, p.574; Zorbas, 2009, p. 127-128, 143). For example, the constitution states that “at least thirty percent (30%) of Deputies [in the deputy chamber/lower house] must be women” (The constitution of the Republic of Rwanda 0f 2003 revised in 2015 (2015), p. 76-77; Burnet 2008, p. 367, 369). Advocates for gender quotation believe that these reserved seats may help to normalize the idea of women in electoral positions (Bauer 2012, p. 375; Barnes et al. 2012, p.768-769; Devlin et al. 2008, p. 251).

Apart from the Constitution, the RPF also introduced the Ministry of Gender, with the purpose to promote gender equality. The Ministry of Gender integrates gender analytical frameworks into all areas of politics, policies and legislation, as well as reinforce the knowledge of these analytical frameworks within the state structures (Burnet 2008, p. 367-
This has contributed to new significant laws such as the inheritance law (Devlin et al. 2008, p. 251-252), which enables women to inherit land and property but also own property in their own name (Bauer 2012, p. 376; Kagaba 2015, p.578).

Rwanda’s successful increase of female representation in governance and electoral positions is impressive and much praise has been directed towards the RPF for implementing these gender equality policies (Burnet 2008, p. 369-371, 386). The Gender Monitoring Office’s Gender equality status report of Rwanda 2018, illustrates that apart from the approximately 60% women in parliament, there are 45.2% female members of district councils, and 35% female Cell Executive Secretaries (see page 23, table 3) (Gender Monitoring Office 2018, p.56). The representation of women in politics encourages women's political participation on the grassroot levels, by sending the message that politics is also a field for women (Barnes et al. 2012, p.767-768, 770, 774,783-785).

**4.3 The split view of the equality process**

The image of Rwanda is debated and Reyntjens (2015, p. 20-21) describes the current view of Rwanda as split. One view is more positive towards the country's development and is often held by international organizations and aid agencies (Reyntjens 2015, p. 20-21). For example, aid agencies such as the USaid and SIDA highlights the country’s economic progress and market-oriented policies, effective reforms in education, health and agriculture as well as the empowerment of women (USaid 2018; SIDA 2016). The other view is more critical and held by several researchers as they are questioning Rwanda’s development and whether it is as successful as it seems (Reyntjens 2015, p. 20-21). For example, according to Finoff (2015), Rwanda is still a relatively poor country. Despite the economic growth, a large proportion of the population is experiencing poverty and consumption inequality (Finoff 2015, p. 209-210, 266). Another big concern regarding Rwanda's development is the political climate. Ansoms et al (2012), state that the democratic freedom is far from accomplished in Rwanda.

According to Ansoms et al (2012), the democratic situation has not had any larger change since 1996, as elections continue to be sabotaged for oppositional candidates (Ansoms et al. 2012, p.432). The government have also been receiving criticism for their central leadership and for being repressive and exclusionary (Hasselskog et al. 2015, p. 951).

Efforts to decentralize and distribute the power to local governance has been made, but so far not successful. Thus, making the grassroots inclusion inefficient (Gaynor 2015, p. 50-56) as neither the local participation nor the accountability was improved (Hasselskog et
The lack of bottom-up participation has also contributed to the gap between the elite and the people, which makes the gender equality questionable (Debusscher et al. 2013, p. 1130-1131). The policies are still implemented in a top-down manner. There is no real opportunity for other actors with different objectives than the regime, to influence the government's agenda (Burnet 2008, p. 365-366; Debusscher et al. 2013, p. 1129-1130). With an increasing intolerance to political dissent and independent expression, the regime has suppressed human rights organizations and removed political opposition. Often under the pretext that these interventions are made to increase security or good governance (Burnet 2008, p. 365-366).
5. Abstracting the results

After reading scientific articles and conducted a few empirical interviews, we can draw the following conclusions about our research questions. Our first question highlights the factors behind the increase in gender equality within the political sphere between 1994 and 2018. When looking at Rwanda's historical context and gender equality process, it is clear that there are several factors behind the increase. However, since these are so interconnected, we have chosen to divide them into two main factors.

The first factor is the effect that the genocide against the Tutsi has had in causing unexpected changes in gender roles and promotion of gender equality. After the genocide, the country was in ruins, the RPF and the women's movement built a new Rwanda where gender equality was an important point on the agenda. According to the respondents of our interviews, common sense had a large part in the reconstruction of Rwanda. They describe common sense as people realising that there had to be a change in order to move forward. The combination of fewer men in the society and more women stepping into new roles opened for new opportunities. Thus making, for example, the inclusion of women in politics common sense (Rurinda 2018; Umulisa 2018; a Freelance photographer from Rwanda 2018). The second factor is the effects of the 2003 Constitution and the gender equality laws that made women's political empowerment possible. These new laws enabled more women to participate in politics. As Clement Kirenga states:

“Since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, new Laws, policies and strategies that empower women, in particular, have been put in place. Implementation of such documents aligned with International treaties has led to among others results: increased proportion of numbers of women in parliament and other key decision-making positions; women’s rights on property e.g. land has increased women’s access to finance and reduced disproportionate poverty; increased women’s access to education.” - Clement Kirenga.

Our second question highlights whether the increase in gender equality within the political sphere is reflected in grassroot levels. According to the 2003 Constitution both women and men are equal to the law, thus the opportunity for women to participate in politics exists. However, women's participation in the political sphere on the grassroot levels is limited. Which means that the gender equality and representation of women visible in parliament and
higher political bodies are not reflected at the grassroots levels. One of the reasons for this is the centralized power in Rwanda. Our interview with Mr. Kirenga highlighted additional reasons.

“The difference is brought by the existence of more negative cultural practices in rural compared to urban, limited awareness in rural compared to urban, limited education in rural; limited access to finance and productive employment, gender roles in rural are not shared compared to urban, access to information and literacy levels differ”- Clement Kirenga

There are two clear views when it comes to Rwanda's development from 1994 and onwards, one positive and one more negative view. The positive view indicates that Rwanda has made great progress when it comes to rebuilding the country, gender equality, education and poverty reduction. This is also something that Marie Umulisa highlighted. During our interview, Ms. Umulisa stated that the combination of more women being educated together with new laws and policies which are in women’s favor have contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of the Rwandan women (Umulisa 2018). The more negative view indicates that a development has occurred. Although this development has not been fully democratic and that it is not reflected throughout the country.

5.1 Analysis

To better understand our result, we will now with the help of the theoretical framework, illustrate the empirical and literary observations that have been made.

Postcolonial theory and African feminism point out, that there are several reasons, such as class, ethnicity, race and age, as to why western feminism can not be applied in previously colonized countries, such as Rwanda (M'Cormack-Hale 2015, p. 86-88; Loomba 2015, page 164; de los Reyes 2011, p.21-23). However, features of classical western feminism are evident in Rwanda's gender equality process. For example, the efforts of women's movement in Rwanda after the genocide against the Tutsi, is similar to the struggles which the suffragettes had in the 19th century (Burnet 2008, p. 371-372; Connelly, 2013, p. 17; Brown 2016, p. 233).

Women's movements and the new regime (RPF), made it possible for women to continue to take place, as one of the RPF’s goals was to increase female participants in politics (Burnet 2008, p. 371-372, 367; Brown 2016, p. 230; Zorbas 2009, p.127-128,143).
Another aspect that indicates feminist ideas is that a large part of the increased gender equality in Rwanda is due to common sense, as several of our respondents explained (Rurinda 2018; Umulisa 2018; Anonymous 2018). Meaning, that it is clear that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities in the society, which, in short, is the theoretical foundation of feminism (Gemöze 2015, p.19; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 152, 155; Mies et al. 2014, p. 7; Sweetman 2013, p. 2).

Both during and after the genocide against the Tutsi, women took on roles that were previously unavailable to them (Brown 2016, p. 231). Rwanda's government is working to ensure equal rights and opportunities for both sexes. Despite this, struggles regarding the implementation of the new laws and policies prevail (Hasselskog et al. 2015, p.962; Gaynor 2015, p. 50-56). This is due to i.a. a cultural context which maintains a patriarchal system. As African feminism points out, inequality is not due to gender only, but also due to other contexts that may hinder women's empowerment (M'Cormack-Hale 2015, p. 86-88; Loomba 2015, p. 164). For example, women in the rural areas are prevented from exercising their rights due to cultural contexts (Kirenga 2018). African feminism points out that women’s struggles are about much more than the visual struggles, such as inequality. As African feminism argues, it is more about the hidden setbacks, even though women gained more and better opportunities in Rwanda, their lives did not automatically become better or easier (M'Cormack-Hale 2015, p. 86-88).

Empowerment, on the other hand, refers to those who have been denied the power to make choices, and then acquire such power (Kabeer 1999, p.437), and this is exactly what happened in Rwanda. During and after the genocide against the Tutsi, women's movements contributed to a change in the society (Brown 2016, p. 233; Burnet 2008, p. 371-372; Rurinda 2018; Umulisa 2018). In 2003 women’s struggles were recognized by the government through the constitution, the new laws about inheritance and the quota which reserves 30% of the seats in the deputy chamber (lower house) for women (Bauer 2012, p. 376; Kagaba 2015, p.578; The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda 2015, pp. 76-77; Burnet 2008, p. 367, 369). These two laws, together with the fact that more girls and women participate in higher education, increase women's power and political participation in Rwanda (Devlin et al. 2008, p. 251-252; Umulisa 2018). Women’s political power and the knowledge that they hold decision-making positions, promote both gender equality and continued political participation (Barnes et al. 2012, p.767-768, 770, 774,783-785; Cornwall et al. 2015, p. 397).
Having women in decision-making positions sends a message throughout the country that politics is a field for women too, this in turn, may contribute to the political participation on the grassroot levels (Barnes et al. 2012, p.767-768, 770, 774,783-785). It is this kind of process that leads to empowerment. The Rwandan women have undergone a process which has contributed to a change in both the society and individuals. Their gender equality process has increased political and social power which has enabled women to change their own circumstances and become empowered (Carr 2003, p. 10-11; Maschi et al. 2014, p. 151-152, 158).

The gender equality and women's empowerment has improved in Rwanda, although a divide still exists between rural and urban parts of the country. This is due to, among other things, cultural contexts, poverty and illiteracy (Kagaba 2015, p.575; Kirenga 2018). Which has contributed to the gap in empowerment between the elite and most women in the rural parts of Rwanda (Debusscher et al. 2013, p. 1130-113).
6. Discussion

The genocide against the Tutsi was a turning point for Rwanda. The government have since then invested in women’s political empowerment and gender equality, which can be seen in Rwanda’s high statistical placement in international reports. However, the overall picture is different. Rwanda is formally a democracy with multi-party systems, although earlier studies illustrate that the government's strong policies leave little room for other political parties and actors to express themselves, especially if they have a different agenda than the government. Nonetheless, a strong government could implement laws and policies which could normalize the thought of women in high positions, as we have seen in Rwanda. This opens for a discussion about whether a strong government is necessary to implement gender equality in the political sphere. The case of Rwanda illustrates that such a push can have a good effect concerning women in decision-making positions.

The greater representation of women in politics and in public life, promotes a change in both cultural and social conceptions of gender roles, as it leads to acceptance of women in positions of authority. The gender equality laws together with the regimes strive for the empowerment of women, may help women to further challenge the existing power relations and gender roles.

In Rwanda, the effects of the genocide combined with the regime's quota law and authority, have meant that the process of women's political empowerment has accelerated. Rwanda’s, historical contexts such as culture, class and ethnicity, contributed to the genocide and its later effects on the Rwandan society. These historical contexts also mean that the gender equality process in Rwanda is unique. Even though similar events, with much violence and dissent, have occurred in other places in the world, the reconstruction, reconciliation and development are unique to Rwanda, making the outcome equally unique.

The 2003 constitution and laws have promoted equality between men and women and lead to new and more opportunities for women in Rwanda. For example, more women are attending higher education, women now have an equal right to land, more women are employed in decision-making positions, and there is a remarkable 61% women in the parliament. Although researchers question Rwanda's development, gender equality and democracy, it is still important to have in mind that they have accomplished all this in just 23 years (1994-2017). The pace of Rwanda's development makes them even more unique,
especially when compared to other countries in the world which have not experienced conflicts for several decades, and still not progressed as much as Rwanda, regarding women’s representation in politics.

Another important point we would like to discuss is that the concepts of gender equality and political empowerment are not the same. Political empowerment indicates the process in which individuals or groups, move through a process of self-optimizing. For example, the women in Rwanda overcame the obstacles of marginalization, they expressed themselves through political actions which in turn gave them the opportunity to make a change. Gender equality on the other side indicates that men and women are equal in all aspects of life. It is harder to achieve gender equality, both within the political and the private sphere. For example, there are few organizations and companies that have 50% men and 50% women in their leadership, the same applies to governments and parliaments. Women could be politically empowered, but it does not necessarily mean that it will result in gender equality.

The phenomenon of gender equality and in particular the gender equality in Rwanda is a phenomenon which requires further research. We have discovered that there is much left to research in order to understand the gender equality process and the distribution of power in Rwanda. For example, further research would require questioning whether the political participation of women in Rwanda is authentic or just formal? In other words, do women in Rwanda have the power to fully optimize their positions? However, such research would require extensive fieldwork with in-depth interviews with women in decision-making positions. But also, participatory observations and questionnaires to fully understand the “success” of gender equality and political Empowerment in Rwanda.
7. Conclusion

After completing our study, using the chosen methods and theories, we have found that there are two main factors describing Rwanda's gender equality process in the political sphere following the genocide against the Tutsi. The first factor is the effect that the genocide had on the country and its population. It can be said that the effects of the genocide initiated the rapid process of gender equality in the country. The second factor is the regime’s commitment to gender equality which has been illustrated through i.a. the 2003 constitution and the gender equality laws. These laws have had a direct effect on women’s political empowerment in the parliament (lower house).

With the help of the theoretical approaches, we have interpreted Rwanda's gender equality process as partially successful. Women have taken place in decision-making roles and thus have become politically empowered. Despite their unique development, this empowerment is not visible throughout the country, there is a clear split between urban and rural parts of the country. There is also a split between the female elite and the female majority as well as a split between the political empowerment and the actual gender equality between men and women. Therefore, the statistical gender equality that appears is questionable, even if it is impressive.
References


Appendix 1

The world economic Forum

The World Economic Forum, WEF, is an independent international organization working foremost with politics and business to shape global, regional and industry agendas (WEF, no date). The Gender Gap Report measures countries progress towards gender equality by the use of statistical data “compiled and/or collected” by the World Economic Forum itself (WEF 2017). To determine gender equality the WEF uses the following indicators: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival and political empowerment (WEF 2017, p.10).
Appendix 2

Structured interview questions

For the structured interviews, which was performed via email, we used the following questions:

Demographic data:

- Can you please tell us about yourself?
  - Where are you from?
  - What is your occupation?
  - Age?
  - Sex?
  - Do you wish to be anonymous in or study? If no, may we use your full name (and title)?

Questions about gender equality and political empowerment:

- How would you describe the gender equality in Rwanda today? Do women and men have equal rights in Rwanda? In what way?

- Have women's and men's rights changed since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi? In what way?

- What has contributed to these changes? Which factors? For example:
  - Politics?
  - Domestic responsibilities?
  - Education?
  - Work opportunities?
  - Other?

- In which sphere/spheres have you noticed equal rights between men and women? For example:
  - Political sphere?
  - Domestic sphere?
○ Educational sphere? Is there a difference in the educational levels? If yes, in what way?
  ○ In the workplace? For example, high income/low income?
  ○ Other spheres?

● Are there differences between urban and rural women’s empowerment/gender equality/ rights? If yes, in what way?

● Do all the women across the country (for example in urban or rural parts) have equal opportunity to participate in political dialogue or action? In what way?
● Does the political participation of women stretch across the whole country or is it more centralized?

● Are the decision-making positions on the grassroots levels in the country equally distributed between men and women (gender equal)?

● Have you experienced wage differences between men and women at your workplace? If you have, what are your thoughts on that?

● What are the biggest obstacles when striving for equal rights for men and women in Rwanda? In what spheres/areas? For example:
  ○ Political sphere?
  ○ Domestic sphere?
  ○ Educational sphere? Is there a difference in the educational levels?
  ○ In the workplace?
  ○ Other spheres/areas?

● Do you have any other thoughts (about equal rights, gender equality or women's political empowerment in Rwanda) that you would like to share with us?
Appendix 3

Description of the writing process

In accordance with the instructions for this thesis, it has been written collectively by the two authors. We have written the thesis in Google Docs, which have enabled us to write together in a shared document, where all the changes made by both writers are visible. To ease the joint work, we have spoken on the phone while writing which has given us the possibility to share thoughts and suggestions with each other while writing. The daily work of has consisted of several points which we discussed and worked on. This work has been both collective and individual, although we want to emphasize that we constantly discussed all the material and texts that were read and used during the writing of the thesis. Because we have written the thesis in this way, it is difficult to explain more thoroughly whom of us have been responsible for the different parts.

In general, Sanna has taken notes during the interviews, seminars and meetings with our supervisor as well as making sure that the content of the thesis is correct. Aleksandra has focused more on the collection of the literature as well as discussed more during interviews, seminars and meetings with our supervisor.

We found that this method was most comfortable and suitable for us, since we were unable to meet every day. The collaboration has worked very well as we have could discuss all our thoughts and ideas with each other without any problems. In this way, we have produced a thesis which we both are equally responsible for.