Interogating Women's Participation in Parliament through the Quota System in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract
This paper is a systematic review of literature on the implementation of quota systems by the Sub Saharan African Governments. The literature reviewed is from global, regional and national documents explaining the adoption, implementation and the outcomes of the quota system as a mechanism for creating space for women in politics. The paper discusses theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the understanding and appreciation of the quota system. Armatya Sen's capabilities approach is analyzed in an effort to evaluate factors that contribute towards the effectiveness of the quota system. Taking cognizance of the fact that there is no perfect approach, the paper also highlights the shortcomings of the approach. Themes that emerge from related literature that pertains to women's political participation and their effectiveness is also discussed in this paper. These themes are of importance in this current research because they provide grounded information about context as well as female political actors' lived experiences. For easier referencing the reviewed literature is structured in the following manner: theoretical framework; conceptualization of political participation; historical overview of the quota system; and the mechanisms and strategies adopted by various states and governments to improve the effectiveness of female political actors. The paper ends with a summary of the discussion.
Keywords: women, quota system, politics, parliament, sub-Saharan Africa.

1. Theoretical Background

This paper utilizes Amartya Sen's Capability Approach to assess the effectiveness of the quota system in politically empowering women in sub-Saharan Africa, Clark (2008) identifies the Capabilities Approach as a framework which can be used to think about inequalities and investigate social exclusion. Of interest to this paper are inequalities prevalent in the Sub-Saharan Africa political arena. The paper's main interest is centered on agency, opportunity freedoms which are created by participating in politics. To create a clearer understanding of the approach, an examination of the quadrants offered by Sen (1999) enables the generation of data on the social, personal and environmental factors which can either hinder or encourage female political participation and the extent to which they can fully utilize the opportunities provided by the quota system.

The Capabilities Approach is a cross cutting framework that can be used to explain prevalent inequalities in different disciplines. Despite the fact that Sen did not focus on the political dimension of capabilities in his writings, the Capabilities Approach has been identified as appealing to understanding women's political participation. This paper thus, examines the Capabilities Approach through the evaluative lens of gender mainstreaming mechanism (quota) to assess the extent to which the quota mechanism has been effective in achieving its mandate of politically empowering women.

For Robynes (2003) the Capabilities Approach is a broad normative framework, which sets out to evaluate an individual's well-being. Robynes further argues that the Capabilities Approach prioritizes people's beings and doings and their opportunities to realize those beings and doings such as genuine opportunities to be educated and the ability to move around or to enjoy supportive social relationships. Flavio (2010) believes that the Capabilities Approach focuses on what people are able to do and not to do. The identified variations thus relates to what Sen (1991) explained as conversion factors which include the social, personal as well as the environmental factors. The Social conversions factors are from the society in which one lives such as public policies, social norms, practices, societal hierarchies, power relations to class, gender, race, caste or laws. The environmental conversion factors emerge from the physical or the built environment in which a person lives the examples includes the geographical location, the climate etc. While the extent to which an individual woman gets involved in politics depends largely on personal conversion factors, cultural norms and values. These determine whether women can participate in politics or not, Sen affectionately refers to this as personal agency to political participation. The entire category of factors stated above have a bearing on the effectiveness of mechanisms that can be adopted in an effort to increase the participation of women in the political arena such as the quota system

2. Political Participation

Research by Kwesiga, Madanda, Tarzan and Ward (2003) confirms that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country. These rights have been identified by Kwesigaet.al (2003) to be embedded in the universal declaration of human rights, (UDHR) and several other conventions, legal instruments and

opportunity policies aimed at women advancement. Participation in itself has been defined by Verba, Sholzman and Braghny (1995) as an activity that has the intent or the effect of influencing public action either directly by influencing the making of policies or indirectly by influencing election of political decision markers or through campaigning .

Goertze (2003) opinioned that political participation is important for women as a group and as individuals. Goertze further emphasizes that equal political participation is important for groups because of its capacity to build social trust, capital and its provision of a form of democratic apprenticeship. While at the individual level, political participation is perceived by Goertze (2003) as building civic skills, while lobbying can result in improvements in personal welfare and status. Women's political participation is often measured numerically, that is the focus is on total number of women found in politics, in positions of public office to which they have been elected. This view is reinforced by literature from Matland (1995, 1996 and 1998) focusing on percentage of female members of parliament across National Legislature; Kewsiga et al (2003), focusing on the percentage of women in African National Politics; and the International Parliamentary Unity (IPU) (2008) focusing on the global trends in parliaments. Shevdova (1998) has literature that tabulates women in national parliaments illustrating world and regional averages in the lower and upper houses of assembly.

What is striking about Shevdova's literature is its bias towards numerical depictions of women's involvement in politics. It is from such an observation that literature by Goertze (2003) castigates numerical participation as an extremely crude measure of female participation. The argument being put forward by Goertz centres on the view that, the number of women in political representation by means of the quota system is not the best indicator of the extent and intensity of women's political participation. It is in line with this observed gap that this paper has been propelled towards evaluating the effectiveness of the quota system by analyzing the individual and group capabilities as contributory factors towards the achievements of the goals of the quota system.

Research findings by Burns (2001) were that men's advantage in political participation is linked to a much stronger endowment of two key factors which are education and the types of jobs that provide the resources and contacts needed in politics. This has been the observed gap in the case of the literature provided by scholars such as Gaidzanwa (2008) and Chiroro and Sachikonye (2005).The scholars do not give a full analysis of the factors that contribute towards the ineffectiveness of the quota system. Their observed strength is basically on the adding 'women and stir' concept. This paper therefore, seeks to look into the individual, systematic, formal and informal aspects that contribute towards the effectiveness of the quota system within the Sub-Saharan Africa region political arena. The paper is motivated by the realization that there is a dearth of literature concerned with the capabilities and the relationship between the quadrant and female participation in politics.

According to Tripp (2013), Literature exploring the development of women's participation in politics has shifted from the conventional scholar who draws women's experiences from Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia. These countries have had the Scandinavia examples of female representation through the Nordic Model. However research findings by Tripp (2013) have evidenced a shift to what has been referred to as the 'Fast Track' Model, which has seen dramatic jumps in increase in female parliamentarians. The visible jump has been credited to the adoption and implementation of the quota system by the majority of the Sub- Saharan African states for example Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Mozambique and many others.

3. Mechanism to Improve Women's Presents in Politics

Seckinelgin and Klot (2013) refer to the role of the United Nations in support of increasing women's participation in politics. According to the above duo, the United Nations called for a comprehensive approach towards the attainment of gender equality especially in the area of political representation. It is as a result of the call by the United Nations that there has been a rapid expansion in the adoption of the quota system the world over in an effort to adhere to the Global perspective of democratic governance and equality. In support of this view of equality Ballington (2008) states that the attainment of gender equality and full participation by women is a key indicator of democracy. The involvement of women into political life produces more equitable societies and delivers a strong and more representative democracy. Chiroro (2005) sums up the argument for the quota system by stating that no country in the world has managed to achieve at least 30% of female decision makers without a legislative quota system.

Dahlerup (1998) is a renowned scholar for defining the quota system. Dahlerup (1998) defines the quota system as the recruitment of women into political positions so that women are not isolated in the political life. In support of the view, Seckinelgin and Klot (2013) regard the quota system as a measure of restructuring the political and social landscape. Therefore the quota system becomes a practice and activism set to increase women's political participation. On the other hand Kwesiga et al. (2013) viewed the quota system as a tool for change instituted to assist disadvantaged groups whether based on gender, geographical location, ethnicity, etc. The quota system is thus perceived by the above scholars as providing additional opportunities to individuals to minimize existing disparities and to correct the historical imbalance by raising the number and the status of the

recipient groups. The observed gap that the current research seeks to fill in the defining literature is the need to incorporate the significant factors which are detrimental to the effectiveness of the elected individuals to participate in politics.

Dahlerup (1998, 2008) identifies three different types of quota systems that have been adopted by different states and governments to advance the status of women in the political field. Below is the table that depicts the types and their characteristics.

Type of quota	Characteristics of the quota	Countries that have adopted the quota system
Statutory quota system	1. Women make up the minimum proportion of elected representatives. 2. Quota system is transitional. 3. The quota system lays the foundation for the acceptance of female representation.	1. Italy 50% representation. 2. Uganda 42% representation. 3.Argentina30%representation. 4. Brazil 20% representation. 5. India still at proposal stage.
Electoral quota system	1. Political parties field a stipulated number of female candidates. 2. Extra 'proviso' that women must be placed in winnable positions. 3.Based on proportional representation	1.Belgium 2.Namibia 3.Argentina 4. Zimbabwe
Informal quota system	1. Political parties adopt own informal quotas	1.Labour Party (L-P) –United Kingdom 2.ConfedeciaonDeportiva De Honduras (CONDEPA) 3. African National Congress (ANC) - South Africa. 4.Partido Justicialista (P.J) and Union Civica Radical (UCR)-Argentina

Source: Dahlerup (2008)

4. Implementation of the Quota System

Available literature on the quota system from scholars such as Goertze (2003), Genovese and Sterkenridge (2013) reveal a total bias towards the process of quota implementation. This augments the observation by the current researcher that there is a process gap, where individual and contextual particularities that would make women more effective in executing political duties are not dealt with, with due diligence. It is from this premise that the researcher thus carries out an evaluation which coalesce with in-depth analysis of the Zimbabwean political situation. This being done with the view of bringing to the fore the analytical emphasis on women's political capabilities which would ensure the effectiveness of the quota system.

Literature from Indernberg (2004), Baven (2008) and Abdullar (2011) shows that a tendency towards the researchers focus on the quota system as a mere mechanism for the attainment of the 'critical mass' in politics is rife. Further review of related literature on the quota system has highlighted researchers such as Mshemeza (2009) and Nia`olain (2009) to have homogenized women in particular country contexts. The gap that the current researcher identifies is that there is not much consideration of the individual women's political capabilities and agency, as well as consideration of the systematic, formal and the informal aspects which either hinder or enhance participation especially among those on the quota ticket. Therefore in the subsequent chapters a thorough examination of various contextual factors that may be influential to the effectiveness of the quota system and women' political participation is sought after.

Research findings by Genovese and Steckenrider (2013) are that despite stipulations by the international community and the mandates by the global instruments such as Beijing Platform for Action (1995), women are comparably fewer in positions of political leadership. Low female political representation is explained by Blondel (1987) cited in Genovese and Steckenrider (2013) as a result of perceived taboos. This paper relates these perceptions to the informal arm of the quadrant where cultural practices play an important role in determining the effectiveness of female participation in politics. Findings from the above duo's article, women as political leaders (2013) are that by 2005 women constituted 11% at global level, a percentage which depicts an extremely wide gender disparity at global level.

On a different note the International Parliamentary Unity (2013) observed a rather increase in female participation. Highly celebrated action and attainment on the political rights by men were 18, 6% has been archived and this has been credited to the adoption of the quota system. Genovese and Steckenrider (2013) however argue that failure to reach the 30% stipulated by the Beijing Platform for Action calls for aggressive work towards creating an eligible pool of candidacy. The gap that the current researcher seeks to address is the recognition of the importance of going beyond the numerical value of political representation to an evaluation of the significance of factors such as the capabilities as well as the agency and manipulation of the opportunity freedoms to realize archived functionings in politics as stipulated by Armartya Sen. The IPU (2013) argues that the success of the female political representation lies in the implementation of the quota system as celebrated in the Nordic countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, as well as in some Arab states.

Evidence from the research by the IPU (2013) shows a definite increase in the number of female legislators since 2005. Regional statistics from the IPU (2013) revealed the Nordic countries such as Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to have topped the global rankings in terms of women's parliamentary representation. Research further reveals that the take off to women's participation in the Nordic states dated back to the 1970s, way before the introduction of the quota system**.** The IPU further states that by 2005, 45% of Parliamentary seats were occupied by women. In Sweden women occupied 45%, Denmark 37%, Norway 36%, Finland 38% and Iceland 30%. What is significant about all the above increases was the fact that the states had all adopted the quota system.

5. Factors Contributing towards Increased Female Political Participation.

Research by Dahlerup (1998) emphasizes the importance of constitutional and electoral laws which include the quota and special temporary measures in increasing women's political engagement. According to Bush (2011) and Seckinelgin and Klot (2013), over a 100 countries have introduced the quota system as a strategy to increase female participation in formal political processes and institutions. Of the 46 countries who used quota systems by 2008, an average of 21,6 % female representation was achieved as opposed to the 15,3% for the rest of the countries who did not adopt the quota system. Quotas have thus been observed as important for grunting women the right to vote and run for election. For instance research by Dahlerup (1998) found out that it took Lebanon and Morocco over 30 years to win seats in the national parliament despite the fact that they had been grunted political rights in the 1940s and 1950s respectively. This brings in the question of capabilities in relation to women's agency towards political participation.

In Asia, Wolkontz (1987) cited Indra Pradesh in India as a case study for women's access to political power. The research by Wolkontz presented a philosophical insight on the female political representation. The argument being put forward by the scholar was that failure to hold political office by most women was due to their ineffectiveness in issues dealing with social construction. Also the findings in this research as that women's political participation was bounded by accommodating ideologies. Shevdova (1998) in Karam (1998) emphasize that these ideologies hold only descriptive representative powers without much influence to decision making which is a substantive form of political representation. A research finding by Wolkontz (1987) cited in Afshar (2008) also draws attention to familial relations where the findings bring out the systematic bias in female representation revealing how family ties can be used to elevate woman into public office. An example cited by Wolkontz is that of Indra Gandhi who inherited the position of prime minister after the death of her husband. Wolkontz regards this political representation as merely ceremonial, devoid of any decision making powers. The gap in this regard is that the scholar focused on help got from relations and did not detail how these biases can compromise the effectiveness of the female representation in politics

6. Africa

The African region is acting in partnership with the global world in bringing attention to the women and political participation [Kwesiga et al. 2003]. The view is supported by Tripp (2013) who concluded that developments in African politics have seen an increase in women's political participation. An analysis of women's political space and the experience of affirmative action by Kwesiga (2013) reiterate that it has not only been the issue of increasing women's political numbers, but there has been special interventions established to make the representation effective and representative. Policies on African representation have been reflected in the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa (UNECA 1994), the African Platform for Action and the African Position the advancement of women. These policies call for positive action, more specific and critical measures to ensure women's fuller participation in decision making and policy formulation. The adoption of the quota system as a measure to bridge the political gap becomes a means for offering political hope to aspiring female political actors. What the above scholars focus on is basically the idea of increasing women political numbers, there is not a time when the scholars identify or give recommendations as to how the selection of the individuals to represent other women would be carried out.

Goertze (2003), Cole (2011), Tripp (2013), Ntawuboni (2013) have reflected on African countries that

have had successful implementation of the quota system. The scholars are all in agreement that quota system has played a critical role in enhancing new trends in women's participation in politics. Procedures such as political party quota and reserved seats have accounted for the higher female representation in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania.

Literature focusing on Uganda reveals an analysis of the effectiveness of affirmative action for women's participation in politics as well as examining the legitimacy of gender related policies. A comparative analysis of South Africa and Uganda shows how the two countries managed to adopt inclusionary policies (quota) which elevated the political status of women. Goertze (1998) draws attention to the role of Yoweri Museveni's administration in assisting women to become politically visible. In as much as Goertze highlights the strides taken in enhancing female participation, there is however a knowledge gap in as far as assessing the pillars that contribute towards women's participation in politics. Not much has been said by Goertze in as far as women and men's conscious role in political issues as stipulated in Sen's quadrants of formal, informal, individual as well as systematic categories of political empowerment. Ntawuboni (2013)'s research findings also supports Goertze (1998)'s view as the scholar observes that, despite calls by the Ugandan government to elevate women's status and the political willingness of the Museveni's administration, women's voices are totally silenced in decision making and there is also evidence of the genderedness of access to higher political positions. This has drawn attention to the shortcomings of the quota system in Uganda.

Similarly the Zimbabwean government has through the recommendations of the international community and dectates such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) , The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) adopted the politics of the presence. However there is a political literature gap as prominent Zimbabwean political academics such as Chiroro (2005), Sachikonye (2005) and Gaidzanwa (2008) have not clearly articulated issues pertaining to men and women's capabilities, Neither have they been articulate in addressing the quadrant as stipulated by Armatya Sen. This is despite the fact that the quadrant has a huge bearing on the effectiveness of the quota system mechanism of empowerment.

Literature obtained from Faisil (2011) observes that Rwanda is amongst the vanguard of nations making progress in gender equality and women empowerment, especially in decision making. According to Tripp (2013) Rwanda claimed the world's highest ratio of women in parliament. In 2008 parliamentary election women had 48%, and in 2013 the percentage went up to 64% where women hold 51 out of 80 parliamentary seats. The success in Rwanda can be attributed to the country's strict adherence to the post conflict constitution which stipulates that women should constitute 30% of all decision making positions. Faisil (2011) also draws attention to Rwandan constitution which has enshrined the Affirmative Action through conforming to the SADC Gender Protocol which has called for a 50/50 political representation. Rwanda created a National Council of Women (NCW) which has been observed by Tripp (2013) as a forum for dialogue, advocacy and mobilization of Rwandan women. The current research regards the creation of the NCW as relating to the aspect of social conversions. The Rwanda government also provides for a gender observatory to monitor indicators of gender equality in national development planning.

The effectiveness of implementation of the quota system is observed by Tripp (2013) to have resulted in a breakthrough for women. Tripp (2013) opinions that, women in Rwanda have successfully taken over ministerial positions. Examples of positions taken up by women include e.g the defense, finance and the foreign affairs ministerial positions. In support of the above literature, the Compendium (2009) concludes that Rwanda has had a break from the past where women headed ministerial positions in soft ministries of education, community development, sports and youth to hard portfolios. The effectiveness of the Rwandan quota system and women's political participation has been evidenced by significant changes in the law on matrimonial causes and liberalities as well as laws of the land. According to the Compendium (2009) the effectiveness of the created forum for Rwanda Women's parliamentarians is evident in the promotion of gender equality and capacity building for women in decision making, law and budget systems.

Muyakayaka-Manzini (1994) explained that out of the 490 members elected into the national assembly and senate, 117 were women. 109 in the national assembly and 8 were in the senate. The increase in the number of women was significant from the previous apartheid government in which Muyakayaka- Manzini (1994) states that women only constituted 2.8%. The percentage increase has been alluded to two main factors which included women's collectives under the active work of woman in the African National Congress (ANC).Also the success and effectiveness of the political mainstreaming in South Africa has been attributed to the New constitution which acknowledges women's political rights as stipulated by the women's charter adopted under the 1994 women's coalition. Muyakayaka- Manzini (1994) also draws attention to the efforts by the South African Government of National Unity that has sought to develop and refine an effective overarching policy on women to guide government departments in their work. The above efforts signal South Africa's visible effort towards mainstreaming through the use of quota system.

7. Historical background to the constitutional legal quotas in Zimbabwe

Research findings by Zungura and Nyemba (2013), draw attention to the 1980, constitution of Zimbabwe and the electoral laws of the country where the researcher's findings were that, the 1980 constitution was silent on the advancement of women within the political arena. This view was also supported by the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (2000) which stated that the constitution did not have any provisions for quotas to advance the representation of women in publicly elected bodies thus resulting in the constitution being male biased. Efforts by the Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) agitating for a 30 per cent representation of women in leadership positions have according to *thezimbabwean.com* been negatively impacted upon by the three main political parties in the country, Zanu (PF) and the two MDC formations. The conclusion has been that Pressure groups in Zimbabwe anticipate slim chances of an increased women involvement in politics without legal quotas, therefore the constitutional quota systems have become the only apparent means to increased women participation in politics.

Women's low political representation has been highlighted by Chiroro (2005) illustrating the following statistics of female political representation.

YEAR	WOMEN'S SEATS	TOTAL SEATS	% OF WOMEN
2013	85	185	45.9
2008	30	210	44.9
2005	20	120	16.6
2000	14	150	9.3
1995	22	150	14.6
1990	21	150	14
1985	08	100	8
1980	09	100	9

REF: Chiroro, B (2005) Persistent inequalities.

The observed gap in the literature is the lack of a critical analysis of the contributory factors such as issues pertaining to capabilities that the current research seeks to address.

8. Conclusion

This paper highlights scholarly views and works relating to the concept of political participation. From the above discussion it can be seen that political participation and the implementation of the quota systems is influenced by a complex array of factors such as capabilities, agency, opportunity freedoms, functionings as well as conversion factors which all have a bearing to the extent to which the implantation of mechanisms such as the quota system can be effective.

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