

Does Quota System Influence Women's Representation? Evidence from Tanzania

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Abstract

Women's representation in local government is a global development concern given their minority. In response to women's under-representation in local governments, different nations have endorsed electoral quota, or special seats mechanism, to rectify the situation. However, the quota system has masked the governments by perceiving that gender representation will automatically be adhered to, and women's empowerment and substantive representation enhanced. This study employed exploratory research design guided by qualitative and quantitative approaches to ascertain if this is the case. The qualitative approach included in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary review as techniques in collecting data, while a questionnaire was used in the quantitative method. The study involved a total of 610 respondents, including 321 females and 289 males. The findings revealed that the quota system remains as essential in enhancing women's descriptive representation. However, the system is limited to women's substantive representation given the stereotype perceptions implanted to women passing through such a mechanism. This situation favours the continuing male dominance and practice that influence gender inequality in decision-making. It also influences masculinity tendencies in local government structures that cement the marginalization of women's descriptive representation and gender discrimination, hence limiting their effective participation. This has also led to less efforts to support women aspirants and decision-makers. Despite all these, however, the quota system has opened up opportunities for more women to access political power, learn political skills, and advance their interests.

Keywords: *quota system/special seats, women's descriptive representation, substantive representation, local government, critical mass theory*

Introduction

Women's under-representation and their underprivileged participation in political offices is a worldwide concern. Women continue to occupy few seats in local government decision-making bodies (IPU, 2021; IDEA, 2021a) in relation to their population size, and their substantive representation continues to be limited. Women's under-representation and underprivileged participation limits their voices towards sharing and accessing available resources equally; and documenting and institutionalizing their needs and interests in development plans, policies and strategies. In addition, women's under-representation in decision-making bodies perpetuates the patriarchal system and traditions that continue to limit their courage and unity towards their substantive representation. Such a situation has led to continuous global debates that demand for an increased number of women's

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representatives and their substantive representation in government and other decision-making bodies. With such a global concern, a number of nations have modified their constitutions to cater for a quota system that enhances women's descriptive representation in decision-making positions. Such an initiative is also thought to influence women's substantive representation (Sobolewska et al., 2018; Clayton, 2021). Gender equality in representation and participation denotes democracy (Phillips, 1995; IDEA, 2021c) as it enables all citizens to participate in matters concerning their lives. Men and women have different needs and interests, and socio-economically, they are challenged differently. If either is excluded in decision-making it will lead to unfair political processes, hence unequitable policies that automatically limit the whole meaning expected to be brought through inclusive development.

Descriptive representation connotes representatives standing on behalf of a group of people who share a similar background, experiences and identity, race, gender, etc., (Pitkin, 1967; Sobolewska et al., 2018; Lowande et al., 2019). Substantive representation denotes ability to represent the represented needs and interests, and having equal power-sharing with other representatives (Dahlerup, 2006; Sobolewska et al., 2018). In that regard, women's descriptive representation entails their inclusion in decision-making bodies in which their heterogeneity needs feature so that their diverse interests and needs can be advanced (Sobolewska et al., 2018). As Dovi (2002, in Sobolewska et al., 2018) argues, descriptive representatives with commonalities are able to represent group interests and build confidence among themselves that influences their effective participation or substantive representation.

This paper was guided by four specific objectives, namely to: (i) assess opinions on the leadership capability of quota- or special-seats-elected women; (ii) find out respondents' perceptions on the advantages of the quota or special seats system; (iii) identify challenges facing quota- or special-seats-elected women; and, (iv) analyse factors that enhance the enrolment of capable quota- or special-seats-elected women. The study focuses on a rural-urban context. It aimed at making a contribution to the current debate on the impact brought by quota or special seats in local government politics. The study theorizes that the quota system has enhanced descriptive representation at the local level, and transformed the agenda of political parties and local governments from a masculinity to a femininity focus, given the presence of women whose voices were previously unheard. The findings, therefore, challenge the stereotyped perceptions that women are politically incapable and incompetent. In spite of this, however, the system in Tanzania has not managed to challenge the entrenched masculinity tendencies in the electoral process as political parties continue to limit women in elected positions by perceiving quota, or special seats, as the only main door for women to access political positions.

Quota or Special Seats System: Issues and Concerns

The discussions held during the Mexico conference that led to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the Beijing Conference: all

argued for gender quotas globally. However, before this significant move for women, gender quotas were already in place in some nations in Europe. The introduction of gender quotas takes its roots in the Nordic countries in 1975. The Norway Socialist Left Party was the first political party to set 40% as a minimum target for men and women's representation on electoral lists in 1975, a situation that inspired other parties within Norway, as well as in Denmark and Sweden, to introduce party quotas. The quota system in these countries led to an increase of women representatives, even though a significant percentage of female representatives existed before compared to the situation of women in other nations.

Despite the fact that gender quotas are now introduced and applied in many nations, they are practiced and implemented differently. Worldwide, three types of gender quotas in political institutions are recognized, and have been institutionalized in different countries (IDEA, 2014:16; Clayton, 2021). These are:

- (a) *Legislated candidate quotas*: These quotas regulate the gender composition of candidate lists and are binding by law for all political parties in an election. They are mandated either through national constitutions, or by electoral legislations.
- (b) *Legislated 'reserved seats'*: These measures regulate, by law, the gender composition of elected bodies by reserving a certain number or percentage of seats for women members. Implemented through special electoral procedures, they are mandated either through national constitutions or by electoral legislations.
- (c) *Voluntary party quotas*: These quotas are adopted by individual parties for their own candidate lists, and are usually enshrined in party statutes and rules.

The success of gender quotas in some nations (e.g., Rwanda, Cuba, South Africa) has inspired other nations to take significant steps in ensuring women are observed in decision-making positions by implementing the system (IPU, 2021). To date, a total of 132 countries worldwide have institutionalized gender quotas either through constitutional, electoral or party quotas (IDEA, 2021c). So far, 4 countries out of 132 have exceeded 50–60%, 40 countries stands at 40+%, and 30 countries have managed to reach a critical mass of 30% of women in parliament (ibid). In addition, 42 countries range between 29–20%, 29 countries at 19–10%, 8 countries have less than 10%, while 2 countries have no women in their parliaments in spite of having endorsed the gender quota agenda (ibid.). The extent of representation follows the type of quota implemented. For example, *voluntary party quota* only ensures women are nominated as candidates, but it does not guarantee them to be elected. Such a situation makes some nations unable to provide sufficient room for women representation despite the fact that they have institutionalized the quota system.

Currently, however, the gender quota agenda has been integrated in many national policies and constitutions; a situation that continues to inspire other nations that have not implemented the system in one way or another. Globally, gender quotas continue

to influence female representation; and remain the significant method to attain the envisaged 50/50 representation in decision-making bodies (Weeks, 2019; Fernandez & Valiente, 2021; Clayton, 2021). Comparing the trends of women’s representation in national parliaments globally from 2011 to 2021, one sees remarkable differences. In 2011 the first country in global ranking in women’s representation stood at 56.3%, and the fifteenth stood at 39.6% (IPU, 2011); whereas in 2021 the first stood at 61.3% and the fifteenth at 45% (IPU, 2021) beyond the critical mass. This shows that with gender quotas, the percentage is changing more countries as observed in the top 15 global ranks. For example, the following new countries were below the critical mass in the top 15 (Figure 1): United Arab Emirates from 17.5% to 50%; Grenada from 13.3% to 46.7%, Mexico from 26.2% to 50%, and Bolivia from 25.4% to 46.2%. In addition, the percentage dropped only in one country, while the remaining are rising (Figure 1).

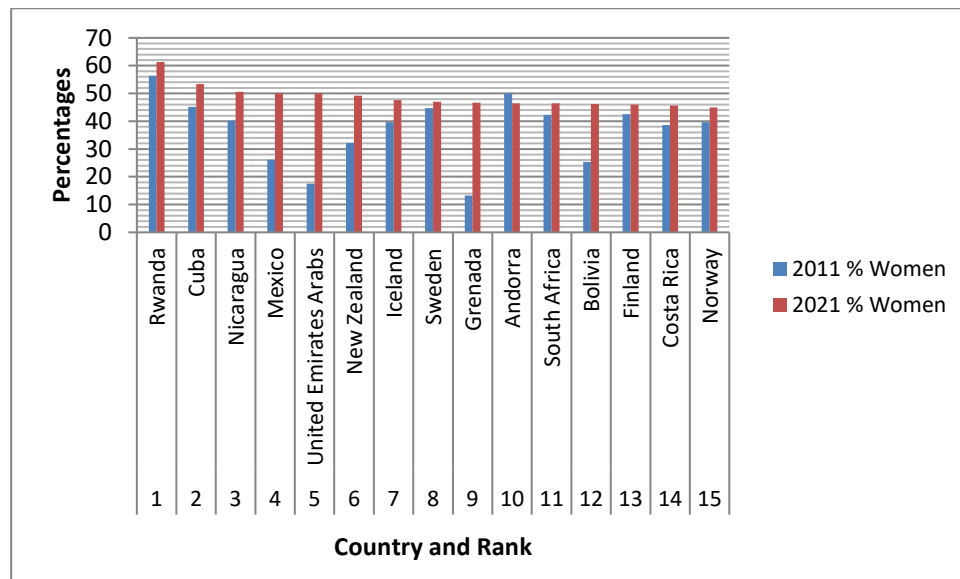


Figure 1: Women’s Representation Situation from Fifteen Countries by Rank: 2011–2021

Source: Modified from (IPU 2011; 2021)

The introduction of gender quotas in different countries in Africa was influenced by regional bodies like the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) that complied with the recommendations of the Beijing Declaration by setting targets for attaining gender equality in representation (UN, 1995), of which Tanzania is a member state. Among the recommendations made during the Beijing Conference in 1995 was that member countries institute an affirmative action policy that will enhance women’s descriptive representation in all governing bodies (UN, 1995). In response to this recommendation, the SADC adopted the Gender and Development

Declaration in 1997 that set 30% as a target for women representation by 2005 (SADC, 1997). The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) further increased the percentage from 30 to 50 (SADC, 2008). Article 5 of the Protocol states: "All parties shall put in place affirmative action measures with particular reference to women in order to eliminate all barriers which prevent them from effective participation in all spheres of life" (SADC, 2008). As stipulated in Article 12(1) of the SADC Protocol, member states are urged to take extra efforts to augment women representation by 50% in the public and private sectors, even by the use of affirmative action measures (SADC, 2008).

The African Union, through its protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, calls upon member states to ensure gender equality, particularly in representation and participation in political institutions. According to Article 9(1) of the Protocol, member states are urged to take specific positive action to promote participative governance and equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action; and to reform all laws and policies to enhance women's equal representation in decision-making institutions (AU, 2003). In addition, Article 9(2) binds member states to ensure women's effective representation and participation in decision-making (ibid.).

The regional instruments on gender parity were successfully ratified by a number of member states due to initiatives by civil society organizations and women's movements. As observed by Tripp et al. (2006), lobby mechanism by women's movements and CSOs made women understand the importance of being included in decision-making positions to change the political institutions that had created social, political, cultural and religious barriers towards their equal representation and effective participation in politics. However, despite the fact that regional institutions ensure gender quotas, only a few countries are members of these regional instruments. In addition, some members have not introduced gender quotas, and for those that have done so the percentage or quota type introduced does not provide sufficient room for women's descriptive representation that influences their substantive representation (Dahlerup, 2006; Clayton, 2021). Currently, the AU has a total of 55-member states; and out of these, at least 40 have institutionalized either one or two forms of gender quotas (IDEA, 2021c). However, only 14 countries out of the 40 have managed to increase women representatives to 30% and 40% (Tanzania inclusive, with 36%), and only one country (Rwanda) has exceeded 50% (IDEA, 2021c; IPU, 2021).

The implementation of the gender quota followed the need for many nations to advocate for women's descriptive representation in governing bodies that were highly dominated by men. As observed by Dahlerup (2006; IDEA, 2021b; Clayton, 2021), gender quotas help to regulate actions by political parties and government institutions that prevent women from accessing leadership opportunities in political institutions. However, the outcomes of gender quotas differ greatly from one nation to another, and from one political party to another. Also, gender quota is not the only measure

of addressing the institutional, socio-cultural and political limitations that impinge on women's descriptive representation towards substantive representation. Yet, since its introduction, it has played a very significant role in ever-increasing the situation of women's representation in political institutions worldwide.

Worldwide, different arguments have been raised in favour of, or against, special seats or the quota system. Yet, the arguments presented for or against quotas by different scholars in different researches, and in different regions, are similar. The arguments against quotas include: the mechanism is based on favouritism rather than ability, whereby incompetent women replace capable men or women (Madanda, 2003; Dahlerup, 2006); it leads to tokenism and patronage politics (Tripp et al., 2006); the appointed become accountable to their bosses and not their voters, and their contributions are shaped by their party and not their capability, observation and analysis of available policies and laws (Reynolds, 1999); it acts as a mechanism to win women's votes and create a strong block of women as parliament supporters (Tripp et al., 2006); it excludes some people in society, and does not go beyond gender distribution in tackling inequalities (Tamale, 1999); women are heterogeneous and hence have different opinions (Dahlerup, 2006); women are able without quotas as what makes them capable is what is in their head and not their sex (ibid.); quotas are non-democratic since they ignore voters' preferences (Geisler, 2004), meaning that those appointed are of the priorities of parties and not of citizens' priorities, the latter being the major beneficiaries; and, special seats or quota mechanism replicates a weakness on how women perceives themselves and exposes the victim syndrome in the political arena (Koda, 2013).

There is limited research to conclude that quotas lower legislators' quality. However, quotas raise concerns at the local level, but have not led to tokenism in the proportional representation at the national level (Tripp et al., 2006). Quotas compensate for the impediments that avert women from their fair shares of political seats, and thus act as an answer to the ongoing discrimination of women (Dahlerup, 2006; Fernandez & Valiente, 2021). Yoon (2008), and Koda (2013), observed that the introduction of special seats in Tanzania has led to more women aspiring for parliamentary seats, and has influenced other women to participate in politics. In addition, it has been observed that gender quotas have led women to work together and advocate for new laws and reforming existing ones, particularly those that hinder the rights of women and children, including on the following issues: gender-based violence, family laws, land rights, and creating women's awareness on various areas (Meena, 2004; Yoon, 2011; Koda, 2013; Weeks, 2019; Clayton, 2021).

Moreover, the increase of women in decision-making levels has led to a gendered perspective during decision-making processes in the legislature and other political institutions, hence gender has been used as a tool in the analysis, planning and in the monitoring and evaluation of government plans, strategies, budgeting and policy formulation (Meena, 2004; Allen & Cutts, 2018). Consequentially, women's presence in decision-making bodies has made people change their stereotype

mindsets as they have acknowledged women's capabilities (Koda, 2013; Allen & Cutts, 2018). Additionally, the special seats system has been a peaceful mechanism for women as they do not threaten chances for male competitors contesting at different local government levels (Koda, 2013). Besides, it has helped in boosting the unity of women leaders as they are able to share their feminine experiences for development purposes (Koda, 2013; Clayton, 2021). However, quota works properly when women's representation, diversity and other disputes surrounding the system are identified and addressed as women are equally as capable as men, and have different concerns that can only be addressed effectively by themselves. The special seats mechanism, or quota system, has played a great role by increasing the number of women at parliamentary and ward council levels. Without the quota system or special seats mechanism in Tanzania, women would only have accounted for less than 10% at the parliament, and 5% at the ward council levels (NEC 2016; 2021).

Policy Frameworks for Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT)¹ is a signatory to various international and regional instruments that ensure gender equality in decision-making, including the CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union (AU) Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008), and many others. After acceding to these instruments, the URT has taken several initiatives to ensure gender equality in representation and participation in different sectors, particularly in political institutions. The URT has made extra efforts by developing, strengthening and reforming the legal and policy frameworks that adhere to global, regional and national conventions towards gender equality in decision-making bodies. Internationally, Tanzania has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN-CEDAW) of 1979, of which Article No. 7 of the 29th session addresses matters of women's political and public rights. The Article recommends nations to ensure that women are provided with equal rights without discrimination. Such rights have to be well recognized in voting or being voted for in all publicly elected bodies, in all referenda, public offices; and exercised in all public functions at all levels of government, and in the participation in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with public and political life (UN-CEDAW 2003).

Tanzania also adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995, that advocates for women's equality through its twelve areas of concern that contend

¹The local government in Mainland Tanzania is comprised of urban and rural authorities. The former is made up of city councils, municipal councils, and town councils; while the latter consists of district councils. For administrative and electoral purposes, all urban authorities are divided into wards and neighbourhoods (*mitaa*), while rural authorities are divided into wards, villages and hamlets (*vitongoji*). The special seats system is adhered to in all sub-divisions of the local government, but not in all leadership posts. At the ward level, women access quota system or special seats via councillorship; while at the neighbourhoods, village and hamlet levels women access it through committees.

women's rights are human rights. The seventh (or G) area of the BPfA concern focuses on women in power and decision-making, and emphasizes nations to address women's under-representation and disproportional participation in decision-making bodies by taking extra measures, including affirmative actions. Additionally, the BPfA asserts that women's equal participation in decision-making is not only for justice or democracy, but it also furthers their interests to be taken into account (UN, 2001). In view of that, women's representation in governance promotes their union that enhances their substantive representation, which advances political priorities for women, as through their shared experience they are able to raise new political agenda that may lead to new perspectives towards mainstreaming political issues (ibid.). Furthermore, the BPfA proposes a number of recommendations that will enhance women's representation and participation, namely: the introduction of affirmative policy; integrating women in political parties; promoting and protecting women's political rights; reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for men and women; capacity building on leadership and how to become competent; creating assurance on transparency mechanism in decision-making positions; and achieving a gender-balanced composition and gender awareness skills among decision-making officials so as to avoid discriminatory working conditions in hiring (UN, 2001: 138).

Furthermore, Tanzania has been committed in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs-2000), where Goal 3 envisages gender equality and empowerment, an initiative that has been taken on board for women's empowerment in politics. In addition, among the indicators for monitoring progress on the set target (3A)—which explicitly aimed at eliminating gender inequality in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015—was on observing the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament.² Tanzania has also ratified the Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that ensures women's rights in all areas, including politics. Moreover, Tanzania is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (2030), a successor of the MDGs, where Goal 5 specifically focuses on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Accordingly, target 5.5 aims at ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities in leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.³ Such a target will be measured by observing the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments (indicator 5.5.1), and the proportion of women in managerial positions (5.5.2).⁴

At the regional level, Tanzania has ratified the African Union (AU) Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003 at the regional level. Article IX (1b) of the protocol states:

² Millennium Development Goals report, <http://www.unmilleniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal3> accessed 11.10.2017

³ Sustainable Development Goals, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5> accessed 18.6.2018

⁴ Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5> accessed 18.6.2018

States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes (AU Protocol, 2003:12).

Further, Article IX (2) recommends states parties to ensure the increase and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

Moreover, Tanzania is signatory to the 1997 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Declaration. The declaration is explicit on the significance of female participation in decision-making positions where its priority was on female political participation; benchmarking women's representation in parliament at 30% by 2005. Also, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008), through Article 12(1), envisaged women representation in decision-making in the public and private sectors at 50% by 2015. In addition, Article 12(2) urges member states to ensure that all legislative bodies take measures to promote public awareness campaigns, which demonstrate the linkage between the equal representation and participation of women and men in decision-making positions, democracy, good governance and citizen participation (SADC, 2008). Indeed, Tanzania has managed to exceed the 30% benchmark of female representation in the national parliament, and in local government leadership positions like the councillorship position; and it is now struggling to achieve the recommendations of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, and the AU protocol of 50/50 representation. Tanzania is also a signatory to the East African Community Charter (EACC), which targets at advancing women's participation in all sectors; and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women.

Tanzania is guided by its Constitution of 1977 that guarantees equality for all, and in all areas. According to Article 12(1) of the Amended Constitution of URT, all human beings are born free and all are equal (URT, 1977). Article 13(4) is clearly against any discrimination by any person or any authority acting under any law, or in the discharge of the functions of business of any state office. In that regard, despite their differences, men and women have equal rights in all fields. Further, the Constitution provides citizen's equal rights in participation and representation, as stated in Article 21(1):

Every citizen of the United Republic is entitled to take part in matters pertaining to the governance of the country, either directly or through representatives freely elected by the people, in conformity with the procedures laid down by, or in accordance with law (URT, 1977: 17).

Furthermore, Article 21 (2) stipulates that: "...every citizen has the right and freedom to participate fully in the process of decision-making on matters affecting him, his life and those affecting the nation" (ibid: 17). In aligning with international and regional conventions, the Constitution has been amended to incorporate the quota system as well, for

women at the parliament and local government levels. The significant major initiatives taken by the URT are the three Constitution amendments made in 1992, 2000 and 2005 to cater for affirmative measures in the parliament where special seats for women were incorporated (*ibid.*). However, it is worth noting that, the mechanism of incorporating different groups of people in the parliament in Tanzania existed even before the introduction of quotas, or special seats for women. It is only that the earlier mechanism was different from the latter as it included both men and women so as to raise the voices—and incorporate the interests—of special groups of people who were missing in the parliament, namely: women through the Tanzania Women Organization (*Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania*) (UWT); youth, through youth wings; workers through trade unions; farmers through cooperatives; parents through parent's organizations; and soldiers through the army.

Before the 1992 constitutional amendments and the adoption of multi-party politics, the quota system that existed involved only women who were appointed through the ruling party's (CCM) National Executive Committee (NEC). However, this mechanism was not legally binding. The URT constitutional amendment in 1992 led to the set target of 15% for women in constituencies. This was clearly spelt out in section 66 (1) (b) of the URT Constitution of 1977, as amended in 1992. This particular amendment guided the 1995 elections that led to an increase in the number of women from different political parties at the parliamentary level. The URT went further in 2000 to amend its Constitution where, this time, the percentage increased from the former 15% to 20% (URT, 1977). Furthermore, in 2005 the Constitution was revisited and a significant improvement was made by moving from 20% to 30%.⁵

Section 86A (8) of the Local Government (Elections) Act, Chapter 292 (for Councillors' Election); with section 35(1) (c) and 19(1) (c) of the Local Government (District Authorities) Act; the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No. 7 and No. 8 of 1982; Articles 66(1) and 78 of the URT Constitution of 1977; and Chapter 343 of the National Election Laws: all provide the National Electoral Committee (NEC) the mandate to administer and announce the one-third of women's special seats of councillors, and 30% of women's MPs special seats. In that regard, in Tanzania, the one-third of women to be appointed by political parties as special seats MPs or councillors are allocated by respective political parties; and are not publicly elected. Each political party that participates in an elections submits a list of women's names to the NEC before elections to be appointed for special seats. However, each

⁵According to Article 78(1) of the URT constitution of (1977: 48) "...for the purpose of the election of women members of parliament mentioned in Article 66(1) (b), political parties which took part in the general election in accordance with the procedure laid down and obtained at least five percentum of the total valid votes for parliamentary election, shall propose to the Electoral Commission the names of women on the basis of the proportion of votes obtained by each party in the parliamentary election." Article 78(4) specifies that the "... list of names for women candidates submitted to the Electoral Commission by each political party for general election shall be the list to be applied by the Electoral Commission after consultation with the party concerned, for purpose of filling any vacancy of Members of Parliament of this category whenever the vacancy occurs during the life of parliament" (URT, 1977: 49).

political party that participates in a general election, and obtains at least 5% of all valid parliamentary votes, is required to propose to the NEC the names of women to be nominated for special seats (URT, 1977). Given such a condition in Tanzania, only the dominant political parties – i.e., CCM and CHADEMA—continue to lead in having special seats for women (NEC, 2021). Yet, the methods used to propose women special seats differ greatly, and are unorganized (Killian, 1996; Meena, 2004; George, et al., 2020). Following the unclear regulations within political parties, only a few political parties are able to appoint special-seats-women at parliamentary and council levels in an equitable and precise manner, thus sometimes bringing in incompetent leaders. Conversely, such a nomination process that lacks clear regulations has also led to conflicts in some political parties, and led to corruption (Chaligha, 2003). In that regard, some women, despite having the needed qualifications, do not have an equal chance to be nominated to contest for special seats positions through their political parties.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Mass Theory

The critical mass theory (CMT) is one among the gender reform feminist theory identified in this paper to explain the continued women's inequality in decision-making. The proponents of this theory (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988; 2006) recommend increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies to a certain percentage as a point of departure in effecting policy outcomes. The proposed mechanism that has currently been implemented by many nations to augment women's descriptive representation is the gender quota system (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988; Phillips, 1991; Rhode, 1994; Weeks, 2019; Catalano, 2019; Clayton, 2021), which is believed to enhance substantive representation (Dovi, 2002 in Sobolewska et al., 2018). However, each nation has implemented the gender quota system differently leading to different outcomes; where for some it has been a success, and a failure for others. For instance, women have occupied minority positions in decision-making bodies, thus making their impact unnoticed. In addition, many nations continue to overlook women's decision-making outcomes given their minority; hence they continue to be marginalized in raising their concerns, which at the end are perceived as merely women's issues.

In assessing the effect of women's representatives, Kanter (1977) proposed at least the group's representation be 15 to 40%, while Dahlerup (1988) proposed 30% as an average. Such recommendations are expected to set a fair political level playing field that advocates for women policies in decision-making bodies (Phillips, 1995; Dahlerup, 2006; Ilesanmi, 2018; IDEA, 2021c). However, other scholars disagree by arguing that women are able to effect policy changes despite being marginalized in decision-making bodies (Reingold, 2000; Towns, 2003, cited in Childs & Krook, 2008). Other scholars go further by arguing for women's substantive representation (Grey, 2006, Dahlerup 1988, Lovenduski, 2001 cited in Park 2017; Mansbridge, 1999 in Arnesen and Peters, 2018) rather than only their descriptive representation. Conversely, it has been argued that women's descriptive representation influences women's substantive representation (Goetz, 2003; Dahlerup, 2006; Ilesanmi, 2018;

Mansbridge, 1999 in Arnesen & Peters, 2018; IDEA, 2021c); as it is through their numbers and diversity that they are able to transform the political agenda, which has been predisposed by patriarchal tendencies. Pro-women policies can be guaranteed by women's representatives who are capable and eager to act for women's issues in accordance to their diversity; which might be brought by party affiliation, race, ethnicity, context, status, class, etc. (Hansen, 1997; Childs & Krook, 2009; Mansbridge, 1999 in Arnesen & Peters, 2018).

It is clear from the foregoing that women's descriptive and substantive representation are imperative for a democratic political culture. It is perceived that, following their shared gendered experiences, women are able to represent fellow women (Phillips, 1995; Mansbridge, 1999 in Arnesen & Peters, 2018; Clayton, 2021). The significance of women's inclusion in decision-making was also emphasized during the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW, 1995). It was maintained that without the active participation of women, and the integration of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace would not be achievable (ibid: 1). However, it has been contended that women are not a homogenous group given their heterogeneity that emanates from class, race, political affiliation, context, ethnicity, etc., and this might make it difficult to represent their interests equally (Dodson & Carroll, 2001 in Childs & Krook, 2009). Such a claim, however, underlines the underlying meaning of increasing women's descriptive representation in decision-making bodies so that a diverse pool of women can include such a diversity, hence enabling it to act for each women's category. Yet, a unifying descriptive representation and substantive representation in making sure women's issues are argued for is significant. This means that even if the number of women in representing fellow women in decision-making bodies is increased, but they are incapable of addressing women's concerns, such an increase cannot significantly foster their interests.

Methodology

Study Area

Two purposively selected areas—Kinondoni Municipal Council, in Dar es Salaam region, and Karatu District Council (DC) in Arusha region—were identified for the study. The data collection was held between September 2014 and March 2015. The context of the identified study areas that is urban and rural made this study to accumulate diverse information. A total of four (4) constituencies, nine (9) wards, three (3) neighbourhoods, and two (2) villages were identified for the study. Whereas three (3) constituencies, six (6) wards and three (3) neighbourhoods were from Kinondoni Municipal Council; one (1) constituency, three (3) wards and two (2) villages were from Karatu District Council.

Sampling and Recruitment of Respondents

The sampling of respondents for the study were grouped into three categories. The first category included purposively sampled men and women who were involved in the 1999, 2004 and 2009 local government elections (i.e., at

neighbourhoods and village council elections) as either aspirants, or those who managed to win. The second category involved randomly selected community members—men and women aged 18 years and above—who had spent at least more than 10 years in the respective study areas. The third category involved purposively sampled respondents from civil society organizations (CSOs) and government institutions. The three categories totalled 610 respondents: 321 females, and 289 males.

Methods

This study employed an exploratory research design guided by qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach included in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a documentary review as techniques in collecting data; while a questionnaire was used for the quantitative method.

Data Collection Techniques and Analysis

As mentioned above, four (4) data collection techniques were involved in the study, namely: in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), a documentary review, and a questionnaire.

In-depth Interviews

The IDIs were guided by open-ended questions. The IDIs involved 30 respondents, and were administered through face-to-face interactions, and by using a recorder. The questions in the IDIs were first designed in English, but were administered in Kiswahili language.

Focus Group Discussions

A total of 80 respondents were involved in eight (8) FGDs that were conducted in the two study areas. Three (3) FGDs were conducted in Karatu District Council, and five (5) in Kinondoni Municipal Council. Unstructured questions designed in Kiswahili language guided the FGDs, which were administered with the support of two research assistants, who also acted as moderators.

Questionnaire

A total of 500 respondents (220 from Karatu, and 280 from Kinondoni) were involved in filling the designed questionnaire, which consisted of open- and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face to allow any emerging clarifications. A pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted in Kinondoni Municipal Council, which supported a modifications of the questions.

Document Review

Associated authentic documents published between 2015–2021 from both the public and private offices, virtual outputs (Internet sources), journal articles, books, research reports and proceedings of meetings were reviewed to support the research findings.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. Given that the IDIs and FGDs were conducted in Kiswahili language and recorded, the collected data were first transcribed, typed and translated into English. All transcripts were then edited and arranged into themes in relation to the research objectives and questions of the study. The content data were also thematically analysed and coded in relation to the research themes for a clear linkage with the IDIs, FGDs and questionnaire findings. For analysing the quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20) was used. This facilitated the frequency distribution and cross tabulations, whereas results were presented in tables and charts.

Validity and Reliability

The designed questions for IDIs, FGDs and questionnaire were pilot-tested to fifteen (15) purposively sampled respondents in Kinondoni Municipal Council. This exercise led to the modification of questions to render them appropriate to the respective respondents in relation to each category.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the research was approved by all respective bodies, namely the University of Dar es Salaam, and the regional administrative secretaries (RASs) and district administrative secretaries (DASs) of the two study areas.

Findings and Discussions

Opinion on the Leadership Capacities of Quota or Special-seats-elected Women

The study findings revealed that out of 500 respondents, 187 (37.4%) said that women leaders who passed through the special seats mechanism were as capable as other women representatives (Table 1). Of these, 111 (59.3%) were females and 76 (40.6%) were males. In addition, 94 (18.8%) respondents indicated that women's representatives through special seats were the ones who have managed to challenge the patriarchal system. Of these, 55 (58.5%) were females and 39 (41.5%) were males. Additionally, 39 (7.8%) respondents said that women have the desired qualities to become leaders. Of these, 17 (43.6%) were females and 22 (56.4%) were males. Also, 72 (14.4%) respondents said that women leaders were competent despite the fact that their work had no boundaries. Of these, 29 (40.2%) were females and 43 (59.7%) were males.

Nevertheless, 54 (10.8%) respondents indicated that women representatives through special seats lack confidence and innovation skills as they were committed to fulfilling their parties' manifestos (Table 1). Of these, 18 (33.3%) were females and 36 (66.7%) were males. A male respondent said that, it is not the society that perceives women as inferior, but women's hesitancy that made them be perceived that way (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015). Other respondents advanced that a majority of women are confident, but still they do not contest through seats that men contest; and only wait for special seats, which are perceived as inferior (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014). 22 (4.4%) respondents said that special seats councillors were

inferior because their roles as leaders were not clearly identified. Of these, 19 (86%) were males from Kinondoni, and 3 (14%) were females from the two study areas. Moreover, 18 (3.6%) respondents from Karatu indicated that women leaders through special seats mechanism have low leadership capabilities. Of these, 12 (66.7%) were females and 6 (33.3%) were males. Likewise, 13 (2.6%) male respondents from Kinondoni Municipality said that women representatives through special seats were too many, especially at the parliamentary level, hence they were wasting government funds. Nevertheless, 1 (0.2%) female respondent from Karatu had no comment with regard to how women representatives through special seats were perceived.

Table 1: Views On Leadership Capacities of Quota-Elected Women (N=500)

Responses	Karatu		Kinondoni		Total	%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
As capable as other women representatives	58	24	53	52	187	37.4
Lack confidence and innovation skills as they are committed to fulfilling the party's manifesto	6	24	12	12	54	10.8
They have desirable qualities to become leaders	6	13	11	9	39	7.8
Are leaders who have managed to challenge the patriarchal system	21	23	34	16	94	18.8
Are competent despite that their work has no boundary	13	12	16	31	72	14.4
They have little scope with regard to leadership skills	12	6	0	0	18	3.6
Are too many hence wasting the government funds especially those in Parliament	0	0	0	13	13	2.6
Their roles are not clearly identified hence they feel inferior	1	0	2	19	22	4.4
No comment	1	0	0	0	1	0.2
Total	118	102	128	152	500	100.0

Source: Field Data (Kinondoni, 2014; Karatu, 2015)

According to the findings, both men and women in areas that were predominantly patriarchal were not voting for women in general positions, but only when women contested through special seats (FGD, Karatu, March, 2015). Therefore, in such areas, both women leaders and non-leaders identified the special seats mechanism as a significant means for them to access leadership positions, and for changing the community's perception in identifying women's capabilities (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015). In addition, the majority of respondents argued that the special seats mechanism has empowered a majority of women and made the local government decision-making process fair and transparent (FGD, Karatu, March 2015; Kinondoni, September, 2014). It was observed by one male respondent that, since women were honest, their increase in leadership positions has made local government decisions fairer (Table 1). In addition, some respondents admitted that the mechanism has accelerated gender equality to a certain level in leadership, and reduced male dominance.

Despite the fact that women representatives through special seats are increasing, they are in reality deprived of their right of decision-making and effective political participation, making them more vulnerable. This was noted during FGDs and IDIs as the majority of respondents argued that special-seats-women representatives were to a large extent still undermined, and their contributions were not provided with enough space to be articulated. Moreover, a majority of respondents reported women representatives as capable as other representatives coming through other mechanisms, and have managed to challenge the patriarchal system in decision-making positions. A few respondents pointed out that the roles and power of women representatives through *special seats* were unacknowledged, particularly efforts done by special seats ward councillors (IDIs, Karatu, March, 2015).

Respondents’ Perceptions on Advantages of Quota or Special Seats

Regarding the worldwide ongoing question on what impact has had the affirmative action that enhances the increase of women representations, particularly the quota or special seats system, respondents were asked to identify its advantages. As presented in Table 2, twelve (12) responses were identified from the 500 respondents from the two study areas. The findings show that a total of 110 (22%) respondents indicated that the mechanism has changed local government agendas and committee's priorities towards gender concerns. Of these, 60 (54.5%) were females and 50 (45.6%) were males. In addition, 93 (18.6%) respondents indicated that it has helped women access lower leadership positions, which made them gain experience, exposure and enhance their capacities. Of these, 34 (36.5%) were females and 59 (63.4%) were males.

Table 2: Respondents’ Views on the Advantages of Quota System (n=500)

Responses	Karatu		Kinondoni		Total	%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Inspired many women to join politics	6	9	2	7	24	4.8
Women unite irrespective of party affiliation to form coalitions in identifying women's collective problems	0	3	14	7	24	4.8
Women gain experience, exposure and capacity enhanced	34	48	0	11	93	18.6
Reduced gender discrimination	3	4	19	10	36	7.2
Increased the capability of women representatives	20	38	8	9	75	15.0
Has changed the local government agendas and committee's priorities towards gender concerns	30	0	30	50	110	22.0
It has stimulated women's development in the society	20	0	25	4	49	9.8
I don't know	0	0	2	0	2	0.4
Has changed women's political and economic status	1	0	3	12	16	3.2
Increased women leaders hence transparent and fair services	0	0	7	34	41	8.2
Has challenged the patriarchal system domination in political parties	2	0	12	3	17	3.4
Has empowered majority of women who have managed to compete with men	2	0	6	5	13	2.6
Total	118	102	128	152	500	100

Source: Field Data (2014; 2015)

Additionally, 75 (15%) respondents said that the mechanism has enhanced women's representative capabilities (Table 2). Of these, 28 (37.3%) were females and 47 (62.6%) were males. Further, 49 (9.8%) respondents were of the opinion that it has stimulated women's development in the society. Of these, 45 (91.8%) were females and 4 (8.2%) were males from Kinondoni only. Furthermore, 41 (8.2%) respondents from Kinondoni said that it has increased the number of women leaders, hence making local government services provided more transparent and fairer. Of these 7 (17.1%) were females and 34 (82.9%) were males. Moreover, 36 (7.2%) respondents said that it has reduced gender discrimination in decision-making. Out of these, 22 (61.1%) were females and 14 (38.9%) were males.

Further, 24 (4.8%) respondents indicated that it had inspired many women to join politics and thus increased their number in decision-making bodies. Of these, 8 (33.3%) were females and 16 (66.7%) were males. Moreover, 24 (4.8%) respondents said that the mechanism has made women unite, irrespective of their party affiliations, and formed coalitions that has helped in identifying women's collective problems. Of these, 14 (58.3%) were females and 10 (41.7%) were males. Further, 17 (3.4%) respondents indicated that it had challenged the patriarchal system domination in political parties. Of these, 14 (82.4%) were females and 3 (17.6%) were males. Also, 16 (3.2%) respondents indicated that it had changed women's political and economic status. Of these, 4 (25%) were females and 12 (75%) were males. Moreover, 13 (18.7%) respondents revealed that it has empowered the majority of women who managed to compete with men in different local government positions, and some had managed to win. Of these, 8 (61.5%) were females and 5 (38.5%) males. Yet, 2 (0.4%) female respondents from Kinondoni said that they did not know of any impact.

The majority of the responses from IDIs and FGDs were similar to those from the questionnaire. During the IDIs, some respondents noted that the special seats mechanism had empowered a majority of women and made local government decisions fairer and more transparent. As it was revealed by one male respondent, many of the women representatives had been ensuring the practice of justice in local government decisions since their incorporation in leadership positions. As such, people's problems had been solved on time regardless of status: poor or rich, man or woman (IDI, Kinondoni, September, 2014). In addition, the mechanism had accelerated gender equality to certain levels in leadership, which had enabled challenging the patriarchal domination (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014).

Although traditional culture in Karatu was still the main factor behind conceiving women as inferior, the situation was slowly changing following the few women leaders who became leaders through 'special seats', and managed to inspire the community to change this outlook (FGDs, Karatu, March, 2015). It was revealed that the special seat MP had been inspiring a majority of women in Karatu (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015), who were starting to show the desire to contest for different local government leadership positions. One female respondent argued thus:

... there is a situation that we women were provided with opportunity but in our Iraqw society women were perceived as inferior, we are disregarded; and the majority of both men and women perceive us as incapable. It is this perception that we currently see special seats as significant. It has provided us with women representatives in the local councils who represent us in the general meetings, and hence a lot of women issues are recognized. For example, in the last meeting a special seat-elected woman asked the committee to make sure the market place is clean because food vendors are faced with challenges in such a situation. She inspired the leaders, such that at the next day, the market was in a different situation. In cases like this, women are able to articulate issues that are not only for women, but for the whole community (IDIs, Karatu, March, 2015).

Moreover, it was indicated during IDIs and FGDs that when women were present in decision-making, women's issues were articulated as reported by one female respondent who said:

Since we elected a hamlet committee member under the special seats model, I came to discover that it was because there were few or no woman in decision-making that's why women's issues were not articulated ... for example, the issue of widows inheriting their husbands' properties, a widow cannot present such an issue to a leader who is a man; and that is why this issue has not been addressed effectively. If women were present and knew the procedures, and where such issues could be presented ... hence, women leaders create a linkage between women and their problems in the local government (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015).

Also, another woman respondent revealed:

Since women started to take leadership roles the local government has been working towards creating an opportunity for all people in the community ... people are no longer segregated during decision-making and the decisions made are fair, a situation that has made the community to perceive women as loyal, transparent and not corrupt (IDI, Kinondoni, September, 2014).

Further, it was learnt that the community expected female leaders to uncover community problems as they spend more time with the community and experience more violence compared to men (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014). Moreover, it was found that the majority of women were involved in the informal sector, which faces more challenges, e.g., the lack of space for conducting business, lack of land rights, gender-based violence, and even incidences of children violence (FGD, Karatu, March, 2015). In this regard, special-seats-women are able to articulate such issues because they are aware of them (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014).

Some respondents argued that special-seats-elected women in the local government played leading roles like being involvement in development-related activities; creating community awareness in different issues, particularly in epidemics like cholera; and in solving community problems. However, in spite of these, it was noted that women representatives were still treated as subordinate to men in different respects such as in decision-making and planning (IDIs, Kinondoni, 2014; Karatu, 2015).

Studies have noted the quota method as a major means in augmenting women's descriptive representation and in transforming women's policy outcomes (Weeks, 2019; Allen & Cutts, 2018; Fernandez & Valiente, 2021; Clayton, 2021). Accordingly, it has influenced decision-making agendas to cater for gender equality issues, such as women's rights, which were previously ignored (Weeks, 2019). However, following men's domination in some decision-making bodies, women are still limited to challenge male prejudice (Valdini, 2019).

Respondents' Opinion on the Disadvantages of Quota System

According to the findings, eleven responses were identified from the 500 respondents as the disadvantages brought by the special seats system (Table 3). The first, with a total of 123 (24.6%) respondents, indicated that the mechanism might bring in unqualified people if the set guidelines to appoint candidates for special seats were not observed. Of these, 81 (65.9%) were females and 42 (34.1%) were males. The second response, with 122 (24.4%) respondents, said that it hindered the right of self-expression as most of the time the appointed candidate remained mostly accountable to their parties. Of these, 37 (30.3%) were females and 85 (69.7%) males. The third response involving 56 (11.2%) respondents indicated that the mechanism satisfied few women who were in certain networks, hence it influenced corruption during election. Of these 51 (91.1%) were females and 5 (8.9%) were males.

Table 3: Views on the Disadvantages of Quota System (n=500)

Responses	Karatu		Kinondoni		Total	%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Women via this system were party's choice and not the community's	11	4	8	7	30	6.0
It might bring in unqualified people if the set guidelines are not observed	36	20	45	22	123	24.6
Hinders the right of self-expression the appointed remain accountable to the party	13	30	24	55	122	24.4
It has led to women to disrespect men at home	20	0	13	9	42	8.4
Through the mechanism women become arrogant instead of learning from fellows	3	0	6	1	10	2.0
Satisfies few women in certain networks hence influences corruption during elections	30	5	21	0	56	11.2
I don't know	0	0	2	1	3	0.6
Inhibits women to contest for other mechanism	0	26	1	27	54	10.8
It has led to conflicts among women especially during elections	0	2	1	6	9	1.8
Favours educated, long-time party's members and well-off financially while side-lining the poor	2	0	6	7	15	3.0
Makes women feel inferior, as they have no wards nor constituency to represent	3	15	1	17	36	7.2
Total	118	102	128	152	500	100

Source: Field Data (2014; 2015)

The fourth response consisting of 54 (10.8%) respondents indicated that it had hindered women from contesting through other mechanisms (Table 3). Of these, 1 (1.9%) was a female respondent from Kinondoni, and 53 (98.1%) were males from the two study areas. The fifth indicated that the system led women to disrespect men at home. This included 42 (8.4%) respondents, and of these, 33 (78.6%) were females and 9 (21.4%) were males. In the sixth response, 36 (7.2%) respondents said that it made women feel inferior because they had neither wards nor constituencies to represent.⁶ Of these, 4 (11.1%) were females, and 32 (88.9%) were males.

The seventh response involved 30 (6.0%) respondents who said that women who contested through this system were choices of their parties and not of their communities. Of these, 19 (63.3%) were females and 11 (36.7%) were males. The eighth indicated that the mechanism favoured educated and rich women, while sidelining the poor; and prioritized long-serving political party members. This was mentioned by 15 (3%) respondents; 8 (53.3%) of whom were females, and 7 (46.7%) were males from Kinondoni. The ninth had 10 (2%) respondents who said women representatives that came through this mechanism became arrogant instead of learning from fellow women. Of these, 9 (90%) were females and 1 (10%) was a male from Kinondoni. The tenth, which was mentioned by 9 (1.8%) respondents pointed out that it led to conflicts among women, especially during nominations. Of these, 1 (11.1%) was a female from Kinondoni and 8 (88.9%) were males. The last response, with 3 (0.6%) respondents from Kinondoni, said they did not know. Of these, 2 were females and one was a male.

As it was noted during FGDs and IDIs (Kinondoni, 2014; Karatu, 2015), the communities were not aware of the roles assigned to special-seats-elected councillors since their roles were not stipulated anywhere. In this regard, it was observed that not all the people could identify the advantages and disadvantages that were brought by the special seats mechanism. It was noted that it was not the special seats system that made special-seats-women be perceived as inferior, but rather being less informed on women, and community issues at large. It was also revealed that a majority of the women aspiring for local government leadership through the quota system possess lower education, and perceive leadership chances as learning experiences. This was why those who had participated in local government politics for some time excelled despite having lower education, and were identified as competent, hence being elected frequently (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015). Thus, it was through participation that women became more familiar with women's and community issues (IDI, Kinondoni, September, 2014).

⁶According to the special-seat system, there is no quota for wards per se. Once nominated, a woman councillor becomes a special seat councillor at the district level, and has no direct authority over a ward. This means she has to consult a ward councillor (who has been elected by the people) first, before she could do anything concerning a particular ward. This undermined their positions as the elected ward councillors perceived themselves superior the special-seats-women councillors.

Moreover, the findings from FGDs and IDIs revealed that the special seats mechanism had enabled a number of women to become leaders who, in turn, had managed to influence other capable women to contest for different leadership positions; some of which they had managed to win (Field Data Kinondoni, 2014; Karatu, 2015). During IDIs, a male respondent revealed:

The mechanism in reality has changed the status of women in the community because there were women whom we never thought were capable of becoming leaders, but after being in power, the issues they raised through the meetings made us to change our perception towards women's issues and their capabilities. But we are also afraid that they were coming up and we would lose ... if more women would be empowered and be ready to aspire for leadership, they will manage to reach the 50/50 percentage even without the special seats mechanism (IDI, Karatu, March, 2015).

This further shows that, if properly trained, women are capable of participating effectively in leadership, and hence inspiring other women to join politics.

Challenges Facing Quota or Special-seats-elected Women

With regard to obstacles facing special-seats-women, the findings were as Figure 1 shows. Out of the 500 respondents surveyed, 124 (24.8%) indicated low level of education amongst women representatives as an obstacle for not influencing decision-making towards their concerns (Figure 2).

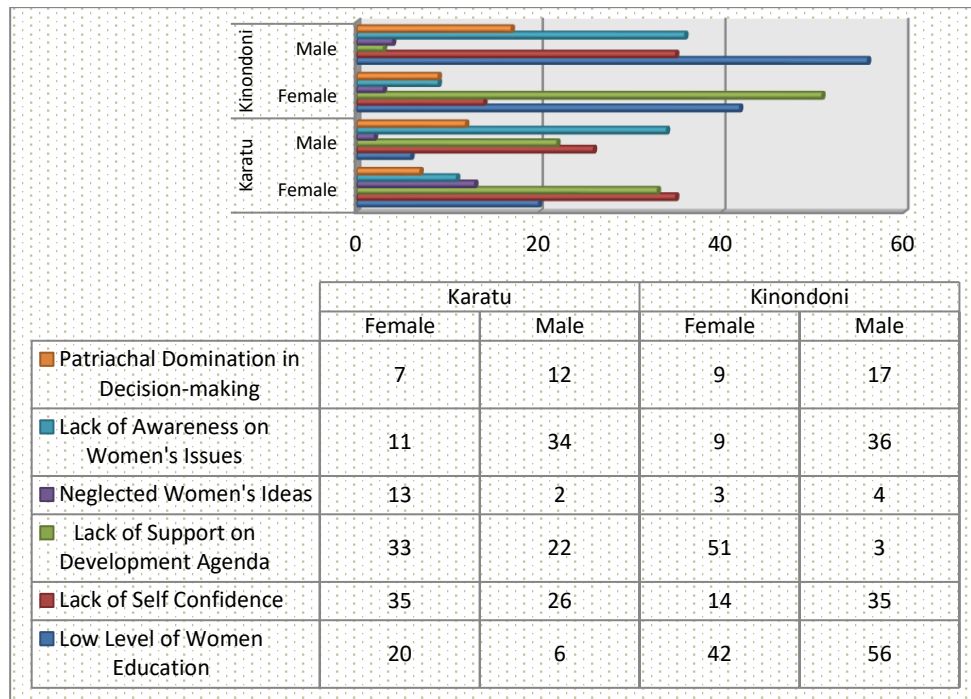


Figure 2: Views on Obstacles Faced by Special-seats-elected Women by Sex
 Source: Field Data (Kinondoni, 2014; Karatu, 2015)

Of these, 62 (50%) were females and 62 (50%) were males. In addition, 110 (22%) respondents indicated that women lacked self-confidence. Of these, 49 (44.5%) were females and 61 (55.5%) were males. Additionally, 109 (21.8%) said that women lacked support towards fulfilling the development agenda they proposed during the meetings. Of these, 84 (77.1%) were females and 25 (22.9%) were males. Given their minority and the positions they occupy, women were unable to participate effectively. Furthermore, 90 (18%) respondents indicated the lack of awareness of women's issues and community problems. Of these, 20 (20.2%) were females and 70 (77.8%) were males. Moreover, 45 (9%) respondents revealed that leadership decisions in their areas were patriarchal-dominated. Of these, 16 (35.6%) were females and 29 (64.4%) were males. Additionally, 22 (4.4%) indicated that women-representatives' ideas were ignored and neglected by some men due to patriarchal norms in the society. Of these, 16 (72.7%) were females and 6 (27.3%) were male respondents.

However, some interviewed women revealed that sexual corruption was among the major factors hindering the majority of women leaders from fighting for women's concerns in their local governments (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014). This stemmed from the way they were perceived to have been given entry qualifications to vie for the positions. Yet, some of the respondents argued that women lacked enough time to present women's issues in local government meetings. It was said that there were only six annual meetings. Given women's multiple roles, sometimes they were unable to attend such meetings. In addition, the findings indicated that a majority of the women leaders were ignorant of the issues facing fellow women that needed to be presented and addressed in local government decision-making processes, as observed by male respondents during IDIs:

I thought these women—elected either through special seats or those representing wards—would have come with special women's concerns, but we have not heard anything important from them. Most of them wait for us men to speak for them I think women need a particular organisation that would help them because, if not, they will continue facing the same problems. A good example is that Councils are responsible of putting aside 10% of their budget for supporting women and political parties; but such an amount is not provided, and I have never heard any woman complaining. I don't understand if women were aware of such an amount or they were afraid of asking for such money Nowadays there are many women representatives and the majority attend all the meetings at the local level, yet we have not heard new issues, except they keep on talking on health issues. Even if 90% of the health sector is for women issues, but if you come to water issues they are silent, though they are the ones who fetch water. I am still confused as to what they prioritize (IDIs, Karatu, March, 2015).

According to Weeks (2019), the presence of women in decision-making bodies have increased the attention of social justice topics such as gender-based discrimination. Other scholars observe that women priorities in policy differ greatly with that of men as women have been prioritizing more on issues of their traditional roles like healthcare and poverty (Kittilson, 2008; Miller, 2008; Swiss et al., 2012; Gottlieb et al., 2018; Clayton et al., 2019 in Clayton, 2021), while men have put

more focus on productive roles like agriculture and employment (Gottlieb et al., 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006 in Clayton, 2021). In that regard, women priorities depend much on their heterogeneous preferences as they are not homogenous. The diversity might be in relation to age, context, class, status, race, etc.

From the findings, it was noted that not all women were unaware of women issues to be presented in decision-making bodies, but rather the male-dominated politics and men continue to influence the political processes that hinders women's political participation. A few women leaders interviewed pointed out that there were women leaders who were more competent than men, but their voices were overshadowed by men because of their minority. Despite the fact that women have less experience, low level of education and face different challenges, their presence and what they have managed to do in local governments has generated multiple outcomes. Likewise, the community has shown a high trust and expectation from women leaders towards bringing development changes. However, for women to become more competent the government has to take extra initiative of training those in leadership, and address the identified obstacles that continue to limit their participation. It was also identified by some respondents during IDIs that women's poor participation in local decision-making was due to their inhibitions and not their lack of experience, as they are more experienced than men given their daily involvements in community issues as they interact directly with the community (Kinondoni, September, 2014).

Yet, it was noted that the majority of women leaders at the local level are positioned in lower government levels as committee members, and not as councillors or chairpersons. Given the challenges in contesting for the seats, the small amount paid as salary/allowances, as well as the little recognition and respect that go with the positions, educated women hesitate to join politics at the local level. Thus, governments should not only put more efforts in creating space for women to access political seats, but should also support them through political training so as to be able to participate effectively in effecting policy outcomes in relation to their needs. In addition, there is a need to consider the modification of how local governments operate towards providing adequate time for women to exercise power with the aim of changing male chauvinism tendencies that continue to limit their substantive representation.

Factors to Enhance the Enrolment of Capable Quota-Elected Women

On factors that would enable the selection of competent women through the quota or special seats system, eleven responses were identified from the 500 respondents (Table 4). Accordingly, 146 (24.6%) respondents said that the selection of women through the mechanism should follow a candidate's competency, and not only the single factor of party membership. Of these, 60 (41.1%) were females and 86 (58.9%) were males. In addition, 109 (21.8%) respondents said that the qualifications for women to be selected have to be reviewed to encourage capable and educated women to contest. Of these, 47 (43.1%) were females and 62 (56.9%) were males.

Table 4: Factors to Enrolling Capable Quota-Elected Women (n=500)

Responses	Karatu		Kinondoni		Total	%
	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Encourage gender equality in decision-making	6	2	1	2	11	2.2
I don't know	0	0	4	2	6	1.2
Leadership skills should be provided to women from primary school level	9	22	0	0	31	6.2
Frequent capacity building seminars and workshops	16	0	2	11	29	5.8
Frequent community sensitization about the importance of gender equality in leadership at all levels	2	12	0	0	14	2.8
Curbing corruption during opinion polls and election	0	0	46	27	73	14.6
The qualifications have to be revisited to encourage capable and educated women to contest	25	35	22	27	109	21.8
Their official roles and boundaries should be specified to eliminate the inferiority complex they faced.	0	19	0	0	19	3.8
Special seats leaders should not pass through political parties	17	5	33	4	59	11.8
Provide advanced education to women leaders	3	0	0	0	3	0.6
Selection should base on candidate's competency and not Party membership only	40	7	20	79	146	29.2
Total	118	102	128	152	500	100

Source: Field Data (2014; 2015)

In addition, 73 (14.6%) respondents from Kinondoni said that there was a need to curb corruption during opinion polls and elections (Table 4). Of these, 46 (63%) were females and 27 (37%) were males. Further, 59 (11.8%) respondents indicated that special seats leaders should not pass through political parties. Of these, 50 (84.7%) were females and 9 (15.3%) were males. Furthermore, 31 (6.2%) respondents from Karatu were of the opinion that there was a need to provide early leadership skills for women at younger ages. Of these, 9 (29%) were females and 22 (71%) were males. 29 (5.8%) respondents indicated that all women through special seats should be provided with frequent capacity building seminars and workshops. Of these, 18 (62.1%) were females and 11 (37.9%) were males. Also, 19 (3.8%) male respondents from Karatu said that their official roles and work boundary has to be specified to eliminate the inferiority complex attached to the special-seats-elected women.

Moreover, 14 (2.8%) respondents from Karatu indicated that there must be frequent community sensitization about the importance of gender equality in leadership at all levels. Of these, 2 (14.3%) were females and 12 (85.7%) were males. Likewise, 3 (0.6%) female respondents from Karatu revealed that there was a need to provide funds to women leaders for advanced education. Only 6 (1.2%) from Kinondoni

responded that they do not know. Of these, 4 (66.7%) were females and 2 (33.3%) were males. The IDIs findings from the two study areas indicated that, for a long time education for women has not been a priority in most households, making many women illiterate. It may happen that such women might be eager to aspire for leadership positions but they cannot do so since they cannot read or write. In such a situation, there is need first to sensitize more women to join adult education to be in a better position to contest for leadership even through the special seats mechanism.

It was further indicated that, when it happens that women representatives through special seats fail to adhere to the rules and regulations of their positions, it is difficult to call them to account because there are no specified guidelines showing to whom are they responsible (IDIs, Karatu, March, 2015). Therefore, it was indicated that there is a need for such guidelines to be legally specified. Furthermore, it was indicated that there is a need for political parties to specify the qualifications for women who want to contest through special seats to inspire more women to join politics (IDIs, Kinondoni, September, 2014).

A number of suggestions were proposed by respondents to make special seats effective in bringing capable women leaders on board. These included the need to provide leadership skills regularly to women at the grassroots level who have low level of education and are unaware of burning community issues; and the need for the government, institutions and women themselves to overcome the socio-cultural and political hindrances facing women. Also, since the majority of women representatives in local governments were elected or appointed through political parties, the respondents noted the need for political parties to adopt appropriate strategies in recruiting women through special seats in their respective constitutions. Furthermore, some respondents argued that the government should spearhead a commitment by political parties to mainstream gender in all areas of their party systems, be it leadership or membership.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to understand how the quota system, or special seats mechanism, has enhanced either women's descriptive representation or substantive representation, or both, in decision-making at local government organs. In addition, it tried to see to what extent has the increased number of women representatives or descriptive representation influenced local government decision-making towards women's concerns (i.e., substantive representation). The findings shows that the special seats mechanism has contributed to an increased number of women representatives in local governments. The study has also noted the significant efforts made at global, regional and national levels for gender equality and women's descriptive representation in political institutions through the quota system, which has provided space for women to access political leadership, gain political knowledge and experience, and to inspire more women to join politics. In addition, the special seats mechanism has empowered women not only politically, but also socially as it has changed people's stereotypical perception of women's

capabilities. The mechanism has also made some women distinguishable and confident in performing different community activities, which has in turn raised the community's confidence in them. However, despite such significant results, women continue to be under-represented at the local government level; and still face some obstacles that hinder their effective participation in decision-making, particularly on issues of women's concerns.

Moreover, the study found that the presence of women at local government level has—to a less extent—influenced their substantive representation. However, there are still challenges that limit women's substantive representation, including low level of education, lack of leadership skills, minority in decision-making bodies, inhibition, lack of awareness of women's diverse issues, and patriarchal domination. Women have been reluctant to participate fully and effectively in politics due to their inferior education and political inexperience despite the fact that they have important issues to articulate. In addition, given the patriarchal domination in political parties, women continue to occupy lower leadership positions at the local level. Still, in Tanzania, not all leadership positions at the local government level provide for special seats, hence women continue to be the minority at that level. Therefore, the extent of women's representation in enhancing women's ability to influence decision-making on their concerns seems to be limited by different factors that need a quick intervention by the government, political parties and women themselves.

Hence, the government of the Tanzania needs to design a long-term strategy that will go beyond increasing the number of women politicians and decision-makers to ensure that women representatives have a space to participate and make local governments accountable to women's rights and gender equality at all levels. With regard to the special seats mechanism, the government needs to transform the way women are nominated as the findings indicated that there are competent women left out only because of the way political parties select nominees. The implementation of the special seats mechanism should transform political institutions that are largely dominated by men in different local decision-making positions in political parties, particularly in top positions like chairpersonship at the village, neighbourhood and hamlet levels: these are positions in which women's participation would be noticeable. In turn, their contribution in such positions will inspire more women to aspire for political leaderships, and both men and women to change their perceptions on women's leadership capabilities. In addition, there is a need to set a reasonable amount of emoluments for local leaders to attract more educated and competent women. Finally, to make women special seats leaders acceptable and more effective, their roles and work areas have to be well specified in the local government Acts and policies.

Further, an increase in the number of women representatives cannot be accomplished solely by the *special seats* mechanism, but rather by also focusing on factors that will facilitate more women participating in politics, including: capacity

building; awareness-creation; institutions' desire to facilitate women's access to leadership positions; and acknowledging women's diversity, status and vulnerability. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, the significance of the quota system in Tanzania is visible and appreciable. It has opened up doors for women to access grassroots local leadership positions that influence their desire to aspire for higher local government positions like chairpersonship and councillorship at the village, neighbourhoods and ward levels; and even for parliamentary seats. Also, some women issues would have been ignored if women were absent in decision-making bodies that decide on such matters. In Tanzania, the achievement made through women's inclusion in local government through the special seats mechanism, therefore, is an appreciation of the mechanism in empowering women.

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