The Family Planning Programme in Rwanda
Substantive Representation of Women or Smart Economics?

Maria Löwdin
Abstract
The aim of this paper is to explore how the Rwandan state has motivated its increased prioritization of family planning (FP). The paper seeks to understand whether the state’s increased promotion of FP is a result of Rwanda’s strong commitment to gender equality or part of a broader development agenda. By applying theories of substantive representation of women and smart economics, the paper investigates if the state considers enhancing women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as a goal in itself or as a means to reach their broader development goals. The method which has been selected is text analysis. The texts which are analyzed are government documents from the time of the emergence of the FP programme. The main findings of this paper suggest that the state’s main motive for the increased prioritization of FP is driven by the development agenda rather than a gender-sensitive approach. Nevertheless, there are statements in the texts which the paper connects to theories of substantive representation of women, however, the development rational corresponding with the idea of smart economics is more recurrent. The paper finds that the hypothesis building on the theory of smart economics finds the strongest support and therefore suggests that the Rwandan states consider FP to be a means to achieve broader development goals.

Keywords: Rwanda, Family Planning, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Substantive Representation of Women, Smart Economics
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................. 4  
   1.1. Purpose and Aim ....................................................... 4  
2. Background ................................................................. 6  
   2.1. Post-genocide Politics in Rwanda .................................. 6  
   2.2. The Gender-Sensitive Approach ................................... 7  
   2.3. Women's Representation in an Authoritarian State ............ 9  
   2.4. Women's SRHR and Family Planning ............................ 9  
3. Theoretical Framework .................................................... 11  
   3.1. Classical Theories of Women's Substantive Representation .... 11  
   3.2. Rethinking of Women's Substantive Representation ............. 13  
   3.2.1. How States Can Claim to Represent Women .................. 15  
   3.3. Investing in Women as 'Smart Economics' ...................... 15  
4. Hypotheses ................................................................. 17  
5. Research Design ............................................................ 18  
   5.1. Case Selection ......................................................... 18  
   5.2. Choice of Method ..................................................... 20  
   5.2.1. Application of Method ........................................... 21  
   5.3. Material ............................................................... 23  
6. Results and Analysis ....................................................... 24  
   6.1. Results ............................................................... 25  
   6.2. Analysis ............................................................. 30  
7. Conclusion ................................................................. 34  
8. References ................................................................. 37
1. Introduction
Rwanda is frequently cited as a success story both in terms of women’s political representation and the increased promotion of family planning (FP). Subsequently, FP policies have led to an enhancement of women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The most obvious hypothesis would be that as more women are involved in setting the political agenda there will be a greater output of policies addressing women’s issues, such as women’s SRHR. However previous research suggests that even with the increased number of women in parliament, female Members of Parliament (MPs) have not been able to make substantial effects due to the authoritarian system of governance. Thus, as this paper will further argue, the central actor is the state, controlled by the executive branch.

The top led state has been persistent in advocating for a gender-sensitive approach, hence a gender perspective is supposed to be incorporated into all policies. Moreover, the executive branch has also formulated a rather ambitious development vision, aiming to transform the country into a middle-income economy by 2020. The question which arise then is whether it is the overall gender-sensitive approach, seeking to enhance gender equality in all spheres of society or the strong development agenda that has been the most crucial rationale for the emergence of the successful FP programme in the country, which in turn has led to advancements in the area of women’s SRHR. FP has been considered a taboo issue in Rwanda and in some areas still is. But why has the state in a country in which FP has had such strong opposition been so persistent in this matter? Is the promotion of FP a tool in the development pursuit or can it be seen in the light of the increased promotion of gender equality?

1.1. Purpose and Aim
This paper seeks to analyse the state’s main motives and arguments behind their increased promotion of FP which have subsequently led to improvements of women’s SRHR. Thus the primary focus will be on how the state has argued for the issue in order to strategically advocate for it, rather than how they have practically implemented policies. In this sense, the purpose of the paper is to achieve a deeper understanding of how the Rwandan state has made FP a national
priority. It also seeks to understand whether the prioritization of FP is a product of the increased promotion of gender equality or simply seen as a tool to enhance overall development. In this sense, the paper aims to explore women’s substantive representation rethought. That is, how women’s interests and issues can be advocated for not only by female legislators but also by other actors, in this case, the authoritarian state. Or more specifically, how actors representing women do so by simply claiming to represent women’s interests. Hence classical theories of substantive representation will first be presented, along with more recent theories on women’s substantive representation. For the purpose of analysing the development rationale of the state, the theory of smart economics will also be presented. The theoretical framework will consequently permeate the analysis.

By applying a method of text analysis, the paper aims to further explore the underlying arguments of the state, in order to reach a broader understanding of the emergence of the FP programme in Rwanda. The key data which will be analysed are government documents addressing the issues of FP, development and gender. Hence the following question will guide the paper:

*What has been the state’s main motive for the increased prioritization of family planning?*

By exploring the emergence of FP in Rwanda, this paper aims to make a humble contribution to a broader understanding of how FP or similar issues can be advocated for in developing countries. In many parts of the developing world, the issue of FP is still conceived to be taboo, therefore other countries might be able to learn from the Rwandan case, namely in how the state has strategically advocated for FP in order to successfully implement FP policies. Important to emphasize is that the attempt to generalize the result to a larger population is not the primary purpose of the paper, thus a concluding remark in the end of the paper will discuss the paper’s potential for generalization.
2. Background

Rwanda is perhaps still mostly known for its violent past which culminated in the genocide of 1994. However, in the two decades following the genocide, the Rwandan society has undergone major changes. This part of the paper aims to provide an introduction of the country context, taking into account the political changes that took place following the genocide, specifically focusing on the gender-sensitive approach adopted by the state. It will also discuss why the state is considered to be the crucial actor in this case. The latter section will briefly present the terminology of FP and SRHR, as well as highlighting some of the progress that has been made in Rwanda.

2.1. Post-genocide Politics in Rwanda

The genocide of 1994, in which the Hutu hardliners aimed to exterminate the Tutsi population, can be seen as a result of long ethnic tensions, originating in the colonial strategy of ‘divide and rule’ (Utrikespolitiska institutet 2017). During the horrifying 100 days of genocide, approximately 800,000 people were killed (Powley 2005: 154). Most victims were from the Tutsi minority but Hutu moderates who refused to engage in the killings were also targeted (Ibid.). The killing ended in July when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took military control over the country, but by then Rwanda was a shattered country. The genocide did not only result in the deletion of one-tenth of the population but also had devastating impacts on the country’s infrastructure and economy (Ibid.).

The Rwandan political system is in theory a multi-party system, however, in practice it is a single party system in which the RPF controls most of the power (Burnet 2011: 9). President Paul Kagame, also the leader of the dominating party RPF, officially came to power in 2000 but had already been the de facto leader for six years (BBC News 2000). Since then, the president and prime minister have gained further executive power and amendments in the constitution of 2003 have made it possible for Kagame to sit more than two seven-year terms (Turianskyi & Chisiza 2017: 11). The highly centralised state limits the independence of parliament, as legislation and initiatives require the approval of the executive branch (Ibid.: 9). Freedom House
writes in its annual *Freedom in the World* report of 2017 that “while the regime has maintained peace and economic growth, it has also suppressed political dissent though [sic] pervasive surveillance, intimidation, and suspected assassinations” (Freedom House 2017). Consequently, they rank Rwanda as ‘not free’ (Ibid.). Furthermore, The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (EIU) gave Rwanda a score of 3.07 on a scale from 0 (non-democratic) to 10 (full democracy), thus according to them, Rwanda is classified as an authoritarian regime (The Economist 2016). Moreover, The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs argues that Rwandan politics violate democratic principles and that the emphasis on political inclusion in post-genocide politics has backfired and instead turned the society into one in which public debates and political pluralism are highly disapproved of (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015: 4).

2.2. The Gender-Sensitive Approach

Though the devastating consequences of the genocide were immense, scholars have argued that it can also be seen as a catalyst for the changes that took place in the years that followed (Debusscher & Ansoms 2013: 1114). Furthermore, although the notion of Rwanda as an authoritarian state is rather univocal across the world, the post-genocide state led by the RPF has also been internationally praised for their work in the area of gender equality. For this reason, this section of the paper will present changes in the political context in terms of the increased political focus on gender equality.

Gender equality as a concept is often defined through a Western understanding of equality between the sexes. However, gender is often recognized as a socially constructed concept (see for example Butler 1990; Scott 1986), therefore it is also context specific. The Rwandan conceptualization of gender has vastly revolved around the division of labor rather than equality between the sexes (Uwineza et al. 2009: 8). Nonetheless, as a result of the genocide Rwanda experienced a shift in gender roles. Women who had before the genocide been extensively tied to the household now had to take on new roles in order to survive and for the society to function. As Debusscher and Ansoms put it this was simply due to the fact that “the men had been killed,
were in prison or had fled the country” (Debusscher & Ansoms 2013: 1115). Furthermore, as Powley argues, women in the genocide aftermath were forced to develop new skills and take on ‘male responsibilities’ (Powley 2005: 158). The women’s movement also grew stronger and stepped in to provide social services when the state failed to do so (Bauer and Britton 2006: 16). The Rwandan women’s movement also gathered across ethnic borders to advocate for women’s interests (Ibid.: 157). The changes in gender roles and the strong and united women’s movement were contributing factors to the state’s adoption of a more gender-sensitive approach.

Moreover, in the nine-year period of transitional government post-genocide, the state saw the crucial need to rebuild the Rwandan society on principles of inclusion rather than division (Abbott & Malunda 2016: 7). The strategy of inclusion favored women as it made gender equality a cornerstone in the new constitution which was officially adopted in May 2003 (Powley 2005: 155). The constitution clearly states that a minimum of 30 percent of posts in the parliament’s two chambers (e.g. the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) ought to be occupied by women (Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda and its Amendments of 2003 and 2015: articles 75 & 80). The gender electoral system rapidly resulted in an increase of female MPs and in the elections of 2003, Rwanda became the first country in the world with female majority in parliament (Debusscher & Ansoms 2013: 1117). Today women comprise 61.3% of the seats in the Deputies and 38.5 % in the Senate (IPU 2017). Additionally, the government's strong commitment to gender equality has led to the establishment of the ‘gender machinery’, that is several government agencies working with gender issues. These include Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office and the National Women’s Council (NWC) (Abbott & Malunda 2016: 21). Furthermore, female MPs have gathered across party lines and formed the Rwandan Women Parliamentary Forum (RWPF), aiming to unite female politicians as women despite differences in political views (Powley 2005: 160).
2.3. Women’s Representation in an Authoritarian State

Rwanda has been praised for its commitment to gender equality and the high number of women in parliament, however, scholars have argued that female MPs have still not been able to make the substantial effects expected from them. In their article *The Effect of Increased Women’s Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda*, Devlin and Elgie set out to explore the effects women have made in Rwandan politics. Firstly they find that the increase of female MPs has contributed to a change in social climate within the political institutions. Their study suggests that “larger group numbers bring greater individual confidence” (Devlin & Elgie 2008: 245). Secondly, they argue that the inclusion of women in parliament has not established a new gender agenda but due to the large number of women the existing gender agenda is now perceived as guaranteed (Ibid.: 251). Lastly, their research shows that the area that has been most resistant to the effect of women in parliament is that of policy output. Further, they argue that policies addressing “gender issues seem to have been established as part of the agenda prior to the increase in numbers” (Ibid.). Hence they argue that the strong commitment by the RPF to gender equality and the promotion of women’s interest have been most crucial for promoting women-friendly policies (Ibid.). Furthermore, as argued by Powley, the parliament is much weaker than the executive branch, thus it is difficult for the parliament to oversee the work of the executive branch and effect and control the output of national policies (Powley 2006: 14).

As previous research suggests, the executive branch is the most powerful political actor. Although the number of women in parliament is considerably high, it is the overall gender-sensitive approach adopted by the state that has been most influential in promoting women-friendly policies. Hence this paper will also argue that the state has been the uttermost central actor for the promotion of FP. The state will be defined as the executive branch, as all political decisions are ultimately made by the top level.

2.4. Women’s SRHR and Family Planning

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) which was held in Cairo in 1994 can be seen as a milestone for the integration SRHR into the development discourse. The
event resulted in The ICPD Programme of Action which was adopted by 179 member states of the United Nations (UN). The programme emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship between development and population and furthermore emphasizes women’s empowerment as both a goal in itself but also as a means to achieve a better future for all people. Consequently, it underscores both the intrinsic and instrumental value of targeting women, thus stating: “The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development” (United Nations Population Fund 1994: 22). So, in order to address women’s intrinsic and instrumental value, investing in women’s SRHR through FP programmes is seen as crucial (Ibid.: 18). SRHR is a multifaceted concept, however, this paper will comply to the common definition borrowed from the UN Foundation, which broadly defines it as: “the right of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. Specifically, access to SRHR ensures [sic] individuals are able to choose whether, when, and with whom to engage in sexual activity; to choose whether and when to have children; and to access the information and means to do so” (UN Foundation 2012). In order to improve SRHR, the programme emphasizes the importance of access to safe, affordable and acceptable methods of FP, defined as reproductive health care services, including “methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases” (United Nations Population Fund, 1994: 45f).

Since the mid-1990s when this conference took place, international development cooperations have placed greater focus on women’s SRHR and the importance of universal access to FP is now recognized by more and more states (United Nations Population Fund 2016: 79). Rwanda has a long history of FP but much of the progress that had been made in the area was lost in the genocide. For instance, the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) fell from 13% in 1992 to 4% in the year of 2000 (Solo 2008: 7). The issue of FP has generally been considered taboo in Rwanda.
This is much due to deeply embedded traditional pronatalist beliefs, the desire to replace the people lost in the genocide and the religious opposition (Ibid.: 26). However, the RPF led state has made the issue a priority and consequently several FP policies have been created with widespread results. The unmet need for FP has steadily decreased as the demand has increased, indicating that FP has substantially become a cultural norm in the country (USAID Africa Bureau 2012: 5f). Subsequently, the FP programme has led to dramatic gains for women’s SRHR. For instance, according to the Demographic and Health Survey 2014-2015, the contraceptive use among married women increased from 17% in 2005 to 53% when the survey was conducted (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda 2016: 89). As outlined by the USAID Africa Bureau, there are two key reasons for the Rwandan FP success. Firstly, strategic and efficient financing and health systems have made the FP more accessible to the population (USAID Africa Bureau 2012: 21). One example is the ‘Mutuelles de santé’, a community-based health insurance which has increased the access to health facilities providing both preventive and curative care. As a result, more clients have been brought into the health system (Ibid.: 24). Secondly, the success has also largely been due to the strong commitment and leadership by the state which has ultimately guaranteed the perseverance of FP in the country (Ibid.: 21).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Classical Theories of Women’s Substantive Representation

There is an immense body of research concerned with the issue of political representation, not least within the academic field of gender and politics (Celis et al. 2008: 99). The majority of research draws upon the work of Hanna Pitkin. In her highly influential seminal work The Concept of Representation from 1967, Pitkin sets out to further question the concept of representation, that is, what it really means. She makes distinctions between four types of representation; formalistic, descriptive, substantive and symbolic. She defines formalistic representation as formally authorizing people to act on behalf of others (Pitkin 1967: 11) while descriptive representation can be seen as a reflection of the characteristics of the population, in which the representatives should mirror the represented. Furthermore, she argues that symbolic representation can be seen as the meaning the representative has for those who are being
represented (Ibid.). The last type is substantive representation which happens when the representative actually acts on behalf of the represented by advocating for their interests (Ibid.: 12). Pitkin further emphasizes that in order to comprehensively understand what we mean when we talk about representation we must specify the context (Ibid.), henceforth, for the purpose of answering the research question the focus will solely be on women’s substantive representation.

In her prominent work *The Politics of Presence* published in 1995, Anne Phillips outlines four main arguments for the inclusion of women in politics which can easily be connected to Pitkin’s theories of representation. These are the following; *justice argument*, *role-model argument*, *resource argument* and *interest argument* (Phillips 1995: 62). Since the two latter are the arguments often linked to women’s substantive representation the paper will not go into further detail about the first two. Phillips argues that women have different *resources* and *interests* than their male counterpart based on the assumption that women have shared experiences and interests (Ibid.). In this sense, it can be argued that female legislators can achieve different outcomes than their male colleagues due to their possession of other resources. Moreover, the interest argument is based on the fact that in heterogeneous societies there is no such thing as a homogenous ‘public interest’ but rather often conflicting interests which must be dealt with by the representatives (Ibid.: 65). Further, Phillips outlines that women have a unique set of interest based on their experiences as women, such as being the primary responsible for the unpaid work in caring for others and experiences of violence and sexual harassment (Ibid.: 66f). It is important to emphasize that women are not an utterly homogenous group with entirely similar interest, however, the argument is based on the notion that women have at least some interest in common, distinct from and sometimes in conflict with those of men (Ibid.). The interest and resource arguments are then incentives for women’s substantive representation which constitutes that women are more likely to address women’s interests and make political decisions which will benefit women. Hence, as argued by Wängerud, women are more qualified to represent women than men (Wängerud 2009: 52).
Scholars have built on Pitkin’s idea of substantive representation as activities rather than characteristics. Susan Franceschet writes in her contribution to the collaborative work *Gender, Politics and Institutions - Towards a Feminist Institutionalism* that women’s substantive representation can be understood as both ‘process’ and ‘outcome’ (Franceschet 2011: 59). This line of thought is extended as Franceschet argues that “women’s interests are promoted when legislators introduce women’s rights bills, when they try to mobilize for these bills (either behind-the-scenes, or publicly in committee and chamber debates), and when women’s rights laws are adopted” (Ibid.).

The majority of previous research suggests that there is a link between the number of women in an elected body and their ability to push for women’s interests. In other words, an increase in women’s descriptive representation should naturally lead to an increase in women’s substantive representation (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005: 424; Wängerud 2009: 52; Celis et al. 2008: 99). A study by Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, in which they looked at an integrated model of women’s representation in 31 countries, found that as women’s descriptive representation increases so does the outputs of policies responding to women’s concerns (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005: 424). This corresponds with the hypothesis which states that as the number of women increases it will be easier for female legislators to form strategic coalitions which can more effectively push for women’s interests (Franceschet, Krook & Piscopo 2012: 8). However this notion is not undisputed and as this paper outlined in the background, this is not always the case. Therefore the following section will outline new perspectives of women’s substantive representation which will help form one of the hypotheses of the paper.

### 3.2. Rethinking of Women’s Substantive Representation

Recent work on women’s substantive representation questions the traditional beliefs presented in the previous section. In the article *Rethinking Women’s Substantive Representation*, the authors suggest a shift in the discourse, from “traditional questions like ‘Do women represent women?’ or ‘Do women in politics make a difference?’ to questions like ‘Who claims to act for women?’ and ‘Where, why, and how does substantive representation of women (SRW) occur?’” (Celis et
al. 2008: 99). Subsequently they argue that a substantial increase of female parliamentarians, what is often referred to as a ‘critical mass’, will not necessarily result in policy gains for women as there might be other factors such as institutional norms or constraints, which may play equally important parts (Celis et al. 2008: 102). This line of thought rather focuses on ‘critical actors’, both men and women, who push for or emboldens others to promote policies concerning women’s interests (Ibid.). The focus is thus not only on who the actors are but also on what they do (Celis & Childs 2008: 419).

Furthermore, feminist literature has also looked into the relationship between women’s movements and state agencies, what is often termed ‘state feminism’ (Ibid.). In the introduction of the book State feminism and political representation, Lovenduski writes that state feminism, also known as Women’s Policy Agencies (WPAs) is the establishment of agencies which promotes the women’s movements demands from inside of the state (Lovenduski 2005: 4). In this sense, WPAs might enhance women’s substantive representation by asserting women’s interests in public policies (Ibid.). Moreover, this approach does not limit representatives to be only formal political actors, but actors who in one way or another promotes women’s substantive representation by “prioritising and ‘constructing’ women’s interests and conceptions of the female citizen, and engaging in intra-party strategies.” (Celis & Childs 2008: 421). As outlined by Lovenduski, research on policy-making concerned with women’s interests should not look at the state institution as a whole, but rather identify core activities in the decision making process that led to policy changes (Lovenduski 2005: 5).

In addition, this approach takes a different stance in their view of women’s interests. The majority of existing literature on this issue originates from Pitkin's idea of women’s interests in which the representatives are “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin 1967: 209). More recent feminist writing on this issue has instead argued that the substantive representation of women is more complex and can have different motives and aims (Celis et al. 2008: 106). In this sense, substantive representation of women is much about claim making in “which acting for women involves claiming to represent women and framing issues as
being of importance to women” (Ibid.). This notion of substantive representation of women is found most relevant for the purpose of this paper as it seeks to understand the actor’s motivation in raising women’s interests as well as how they claim to represent women.

3.2.1. How States Can Claim to Represent Women

This paper sees the state as the critical actor for representing women’s interests, due to its authoritarian nature. Thus the paper defines substantive representation of women as state actors claiming to represent women’s rights. According to this understanding of substantive representation of women, in framing issues as being of importance to women, actors can claim to address women’s interests as being intrinsically important or as a means to achieve broader goals. Hence promoting women’s interest can be seen as a goal in itself or as a strategy in the pursuit to achieve more deeply embedded political and economic targets (Celis et al. 2008: 106). The paper will further highlight the ‘claim’ aspect of substantive representation of women. In this sense, the paper will argue that substantive representation of women, in this case, happens when the state claims to represent women by framing the issue of FP as a women’s issue. The state’s promotion of FP is thus seen to be motivated by the state’s idea of women’s SRHR as being of intrinsic value.

3.3. Investing in Women as ‘Smart Economics’

During the financial crisis of the 1980s scholars within the field of Women and Development (WID) began discussing empowerment of girls and women as a strategy to achieve an overall greater development which was later termed the ‘efficiency approach’ by Caroline Moser (Chant & Sweetman 2012: 518). Moser further outlined that supporters of the WID approach adhered to the idea outlining that “women are an untapped resource that can provide an economic contribution to development” (Moser 1989: 1800). Furthermore, WID has also been argued as “‘incorporating’ women in development, to a situation in which improvements in women’s lives became secondary to improving conditions for societies more generally” (McIlwaine & Datta 2003: 370).
Since the 1980s there has been a shift in discourse. Feminist scholars of development have gone from focusing on women to instead encompass a broader gender perspective, often known as the Gender and Development approach (GAD) (Ibid.). Moreover, the GAD approach emphasizes women’s rights rather than needs (Ibid.: 373). Furthermore, GAD acknowledges gender inequality as a structural issue which must be addressed not only by the women’s movements but also development- and state institutions (Chant & Sweetman 2012: 518). Hence the role of the state and efforts made in including a gender perspective in politics is emphasized in terms of implementing policies which can challenge socially constructed gender roles and relations, thus enhancing gender equality and women’s rights (McIlwaine & Datta 2003: 370).

Although there has been a discursive shift from WID to GAD, the ideas encompassed in the efficiency approach of the 1980s have been prevailing. Since The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in the mid-1990s, the inclusion of a gender perspective in development policies (i.e. gender mainstreaming) has been a major priority for development organizations and governments (Chant & Sweetman 2012: 519). The ICPD, held in Cairo in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing the following year both emphasized the empowerment of women as a goal in itself. However, the instrumental value of women’s empowerment was also identified. The Fourth World Conference on Women framed the subordination of women, not only as a human rights violation but also as an impediment to development. The conference which resulted in a declaration thus states that “Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (Beijing Declaration 1995: 3).

The empowerment of women has also frequently been framed by international financial institutions as a strategic tool to enhance economic development and reduce global poverty, a matter often labeled ‘smart economics’, which is also the term used in this paper (Ibid.). In the Global Monitoring Report from 2007, The World Bank writes, in connection to the Millennium
Development Goal (MDG) 3 (i.e. ‘Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’), that “greater gender equality in access to opportunities, rights, and voice can lead to more efficient economic functioning and better institutions, with dynamic benefits for investment and growth. The business case for investing in MDG3 is strong—it is nothing more than smart economics” (World Bank 2007: 145). In this sense the promotion of gender equality is assumed to enhance broader development goals, it is smart because it is economically beneficial.

The World Health Organization (WHO) argues that “Family planning is key to slowing unsustainable population growth and the resulting negative impacts on the economy, environment, and national and regional development efforts” (WHO 2017). Moreover, women are often targeted in FP programmes as women’s contraceptive use can ultimately control fertility rates, thus slowing down population growth. The linkage between the theory of smart economics and the state’s increased prioritization of FP is therefore based upon the assumption that the state targets women’s SRHR to decrease population growth. Thus FP is seen as a means to reach broader development goals.

4. Hypotheses

As previously outlined, the purpose of this paper is to achieve a broader understanding of the emergence of FP in connection to the strong commitment to the gender-sensitive approach and development agenda set by the state. Thus the paper aims to analyse how the state has argued for the issue. Accordingly, the paper seeks to explore the state’s underlying motives for their increased promotion of FP. Building on the theoretical framework presented above, two hypotheses have been formed which will subsequently guide the rest of the paper. The question which arises is whether the Rwandan state which claims to prioritise women’s interests, such as women’s SRHR, are doing so for the sake of representing women or because it is beneficial for the country’s development in the long run. In this sense, substantive representation of women is defined as something which occurs when state actors claim that FP is important as it enhances women’s SRHR, thus conceiving women’s rights as a goal in itself. Further, smart economics is conceptualized as when the state advocates for FP as a means to reach broader development goals.
goals. In this sense investing in women’s SRHR can lead to “efficient economic functioning and better institutions, with dynamic benefits for investment and growth”, as argued by the World Bank (World Bank 2007: 145). Ergo, the two hypotheses are the following:

**H1. The state’s promotion of FP can be seen as substantive representation of women as women’s SRHR is argued to be a goal in itself**

**H2. The state’s promotion of FP can be seen as smart economics as enhancements of women’s SRHR is argued to be a means to reach broader development goals**

Important to emphasize is that there might be statements in the documents selected for text analysis which might support both hypotheses. In this sense, the paper might find them to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. With that said, the aim of this paper is not to reach a conclusion in which one of the hypothesis is accepted and one is rejected, but rather discuss the emergence of FP in relation to the hypotheses.

**5. Research Design**

The purpose of this paper is to understand how the Rwandan state has argued for the promotion of the issue of FP, by describing the nature of statements made in official documents. Therefore the paper is of **qualitative** and **descriptive** nature as it is an in-depth study which seeks to answer how something is (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 10; 22). The following sections will present the wide range of decisions made in the research process, including case selection, choice of method, a description of how the method is applied and choice of material. Each part will also discuss the strengths and limitations of the methodological choices.

**5.1. Case Selection**

As the paper is interested in doing an in-depth study of specific characteristics of an analysis unit, namely the high political priority of FP in Rwanda, the paper has strategically and purposively selected the case Rwanda. As argued by Meyer, “Case studies are tailor-made for
exploring new processes or behaviors or ones that are little understood” (Meyer 2001: 330). She further argues that research on case studies requires more from the researcher in terms of describing methodological considerations (Ibid.). Thus the paper will attempt to thoroughly describe the considerations taken into account when selecting the Rwandan case.

In their book *Att fråga och att svara*, Teorell and Svensson point out four arguments for strategically selecting cases. According to them, it is useful if one desires (1) to be able to generalize the result (2) to choose relevant or significant cases, (3) to choose cases of variation and (4) to complement extensive research (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 152). Due to the fact that this paper will only deal with a single case, the criteria which have first and foremost been taken into account is the importance of selecting a relevant case. The opportunity to generalize the result to a larger population will briefly be touched upon in the conclusion but it is not part of the primary aim of the paper.

Due to the strong commitment to gender equality and development made by the state, Rwanda provides an excellent example for investigating the motives behind the increased political focus on FP in connection to recent theories on women’s substantive representation and the theory of ‘smart economics’. Herewith the paper considers Rwanda as a relevant case. Moreover, unlike other qualitative designs, a case study research is much more viable in terms of using the theoretical framework as guidance in the research process (Meyer 2001: 331). In this sense, the theoretical framework has been central when selecting the case.

By addressing the research question, the paper wants to make a contribution to the broader understanding of this issue. Namely how developing states can motivate their promotion of FP or similar reforms, as they address issues which are widely considered taboo. The chances for generalizing the result in a single case study is somewhat limited as it is not possible to make use of statistical inference (Teorell & Svensson 2007.: 267). The issue has therefore been acknowledged but since generalizing the result is not the main purpose, as it will only briefly be discussed in the conclusion, the paper does not consider this to be a crucial concern. On a more
positive note, the single case study design offers the paper favorable chances to reach good validity, because it has allowed the paper to deep dive into the case of Rwanda and enabled the use of more sources, which have consequently made it possible to achieve a broader and more nuanced picture of the researched issue (Ibid.). Moreover, as argued by Meyer, the strength of a case study design is that “it allows tailoring the design and data collection procedures to the research questions” (Meyer 2001: 329f). This leads the paper into the next and perhaps the most important consideration of the research process, namely the choice of method.

5.2. Choice of Method

In order to investigate how the state has argued for the issue of FP, a method of text analysis will be used. Additionally, the paper will use the more general tools but also take advantage of various elements from argument analysis, in order to design the most fitting method for the chosen research question.

According to Teorell and Svensson, the method of text analysis originates from the hermeneutic school of thought, which is the study of understanding and how to achieve understanding (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 99). In this sense, text analysis should be seen as how we interpret a text for the purpose of understanding it (Ibid.). Text analysis is a method used for reducing the amount of information collected in a study, in order to achieve the scientific criterion of inference (Ibid.: 98). Furthermore, as straightforwardly outlined by Bergström and Boréus in their work Textens mening och makt, in order for texts to have meaning they simply need to be interpreted (Bergström & Boréus 2012: 30). The method of text analysis incorporates several subcategories, including content analysis, discourse analysis, ideological analysis and argument analysis (Ibid.: 24). This paper will borrow elements from the latter one, namely argument analysis. Furthermore, this method is interested in analysing the content in arguments made by actors and as the arguments up for analysis are not necessarily of explicit nature the researcher needs to develop tools in order to identify them (Ibid.). As in this case, the texts which will be analysed are not classical argumentative texts, nonetheless, the method provides the paper with proper tools to analyze how the state has argued for their increased promotion of FP. Moreover,
Bergström and Boréus argue that the argument analysis originates from the school of rhetorics, which is first and foremost about the aspects which makes communication effective and how actors can use texts and language as tools in pursuance of their goals (Ibid.: 91). This serves the purpose of the paper well as it aims to analyze how the state as an actor has motivated FP in different texts. Additionally, the method can fill different purposes depending on the research question. However, the purpose of using this method in this specific case is descriptive, meaning that arguments are often not isolated in the texts but need to be identified and described (Ibid.: 92f). In this sense, the method will be used to analyze how the state has argued for the issue of FP in different texts, as means to achieve their goal. The task of the paper is thus to identify what the state have argued to be the problem, how FP can solve this problem as well as which goal or goals the promotion of FP aims to achieve. The first step in argument analysis is to identify the hypothesis in the text (Ibid.: 95). However, in this case, the paper has already established two hypotheses based on the theoretical framework, thus the aim here is instead to look for statements within the texts which either strengthens or undermines these.

The main limitation of this study is the tendency of text analysis to fall short in terms of reliability. The aspect of interpretation, central to the method of text analysis, is naturally an issue of reliability. As Bergström and Boréus argue, we can never completely detach ourselves from the research process, thus our previous knowledge, values, experiences and social background will influence the way we interpret the text (Ibid.: 31). Therefore a text will inevitably always be interpreted slightly differently by different researchers. This concern was acknowledged early on and by attempting to meticulously outline the research process in the section below, the paper aims to reduce the risk of not attaining the criteria of good reliability.

5.2.1. Application of Method

The study of hermeneutics is according to Føllesdal et. al, merely about applying relevant material to the hypothetico-deductive model (Føllesdal et. al 1993: 135). Moreover, Teorell and Svensson divide the hypothetico-deductive model used for text analysis into four steps. (1) Presentation of hypothesis (i.e. a preliminary interpretation of what the text means), (2)
derivation of a number of text implications which should follow if the hypothesis is accurate, (3) testing the hypothesis on the material and (4) a conclusion on whether to reject or accept the hypothesis (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 99). The following sections will present the first two steps in order to further describe what will be done and how it will be done.

As previously outlined the paper will test two hypotheses based on the theoretical arguments: (1) Family planning as substantive representation of women, in which women’s SRHR is seen as a goal in itself, and (2) Family planning as smart economics, in which women’s SRHR is seen as means to achieve broader development goals. As the second step of the hypothetico-deductive model implies, in order to identify statements in the texts as either supporting or rejecting the hypotheses, there needs to be further clarification of what expressions of substantive representation of women and smart economics look like. That is, the theoretical arguments forming the hypotheses ought to be operationalized. FP as substantive representation of women is thus operationalized as: statements which indicate that the state considers the enhancement of women's SRHR as an intrinsic goal. In this sense, statements in the texts that are seen as indicators of substantive representation of women are those which explicitly or implicitly highlights the enhancement of women’s SRHR as a goal in itself. Furthermore, the paper will operationalize FP as smart economics the following: statements which indicate that the state views women’s SRHR as a means to reach broader development goals. Here, statements backing up the hypothesis will be those indicating that the enhancement of women’s SRHR is rather a strategic tool to achieve broader development targets.

The paper wants to further emphasize what was already mentioned in the part presenting the hypotheses, ergo that the hypotheses are not assumed to be mutually exclusive. In order to more concretely test these hypotheses on the material and to answer the main research question, the paper has established a pair of sub-questions which will assist the paper in operationalizing the content in the texts. These are the following:
(1) What is considered to be the main problem which FP is supposed to solve?

(2) What is seen as the main goal of FP?

The analysis has consisted of several parts. Firstly, all the material have been thoroughly read in order to get a broad understanding of the context, secondly, the sections focusing on FP have been highlighted and then the data has been systematically analyzed through the sub-questions presented above. Lastly, the findings are discussed in relation to the hypotheses.

5.3. Material

This paper seeks to get a deeper understanding of the Rwandan state’s main motives behind their increased promotion of FP, especially targeting women’s SRHR. This is why the key empirical data selected for analysis are naturally official documents from government agencies concentrating on development, gender equality and FP. Although the documents are written and published by different government agencies, the paper sees them as representing the executive branch, which the paper considers to be the state’s most central actor. This assumption is made due to the autocratic governance in which deviating opinions are not tolerated. Thus, the paper assumes that different government agencies share a collective set of opinions. In this sense, opinions and ideas from different state actors are considered to be rather homogeneous, thus representing the overall position of the state. Subsequently, five texts have been selected, dating from the year 2000, when Paul Kagame officially became president and Rwanda's long-term development strategies were first formulated, to 2007, the year in which the FP was declared a national priority (Solo 2008: 11). The paper considers this time period as crucial for the emergence of the FP programme. The first text, Rwanda Vision 2020 (2000), has been chosen as it is considered the first document which clearly outlines the state’s long-term development vision for Rwanda. The second document is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002), which corresponds with the ideas presented in Vision 2020 but which is published two years later, hence it is selected to see if the state has made any changes in their arguments concerning FP. The third document is the National Reproductive Health Policy (2003) which has been chosen in order to further explore the state’s perspective on reproductive health. Three years later the
National Family Planning Policy and its Five-Year Strategies (2006) was published. The following year the state declared FP a national priority which is outlined in the document Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy (2007), which is also the last text.

An aspect of the selection of material which has been acknowledged by the author as a potential limitation is that of selection bias. “Due to time constraints, it is seldom possible to collect and analyze all these documents, and thus the researcher has to make a selection.” (Meyer 2001: 339). As Meyer suggests, it is often impossible to analyze the total amount of data available. Due to the time limit and the scope of the paper, this has naturally been the case here. As such, the result of the paper may be considered to be biased. However, the author has made efforts to avoid this. Firstly, the selection of material has been guided by previous research, in which the selected documents and the time period in which they were published were highlighted as crucial for the emergence of the FP programme. Secondly, other state documents from this time period have been read in order to not miss important aspects, however, the issue of interest has not been as central in these texts. The texts which have been selected have been so because they are considered as central in describing the issue of interest, namely the state’s motivation for FP. Moreover, all texts are public documents accessible on the internet. Further, the quality and credibility of the texts have been taken into account. The paper has borrowed three criteria for evaluating information sources as outlined by Teorell and Svensson. Namely authenticity, tendency and centrality (Teorell & Svensson 2007: 104 ff). The author has recognized the issues of authenticity and tendency which comes with using sources from an authoritarian state with rather a limited freedom of the press and with a potential interest to depict an issue in a certain way (Ibid.). However since the purpose of this paper is to analyse the arguments made by the state, the paper is more interested in correctly citing these texts rather than establishing their credibility. In this sense, the criterion of centrality has been of higher priority.

6. Results and Analysis
In the following sections, the findings of the paper will be presented and analyzed. The first section will be rather descriptive as it will briefly outline the content of each text, specifically
focusing on sections discussing development, gender equality and FP. This section will also discuss each text in connection to the two sub-questions, ergo (1) What is considered to be the main problem which FP is supposed to solve? And (2) What is seen as the main goal of FP? This is done in order to provide a broad understanding of what the paper has found to be the overarching themes in the texts and thereby present what the paper has identified the state’s main motives for their increased promotion of FP to be. Lastly, the paper will analyze the findings in connection to the theoretical framework. By outlining the findings in relation to the two hypotheses, this section will discuss whether the state sees women’s SRHR as a goal in itself or as means to achieve their development goals.

6.1. Results

Rwanda Vision 2020

“How do Rwandan envisage their future? What kind of society do they want to become? How can they construct a united and inclusive Rwandan identity? What are the transformations needed to emerge from a deeply unsatisfactory social and economic situation?” (Government of Rwanda 2000: 6). Those are the opening words of the introduction to Rwanda Vision 2020 (hereinafter only referred to as Vision 2020), a document put forward by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The document serves as a framework for Rwanda's long-term development in which key priorities are highlighted. Furthermore, the document outlines the country’s rather ambitious development goal, namely to establish itself as a middle-income country by the year 2020 (Ibid.: 2) To reach this goal Rwanda has to have an annual growth of 7% and in order to achieve this the document outlines the need to transform the economy from depending on agricultural production to become a knowledge-based society, thus being less dependent on foreign aid (Ibid.: 11f). Vision 2020 aspires for Rwanda to become a “modern, strong and united nation, proud of its fundamental values, politically stable and without discrimination amongst its citizens” (Ibid.: 6). Therefore as the document outlines, economic growth is not the only way to reach this vision, it is argued that in order to eradicate poverty and achieve the long-term development goals, development must be pro-poor, allowing all citizens to benefit from the country’s growth (Ibid.: 6).
The document outlines that Rwanda is densely populated and due to continued high birth rates, land scarcity is exacerbating, subsequently leading to increased poverty and hunger (Ibid.: 15). Since Rwanda is an agricultural economy, this is a big impediment for their development goals (Ibid.: 9). It is further stated that due to the prevalence of major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the productivity of the population is insufficient (Ibid.: 10). Furthermore, the document clearly highlights the relationship between health and population trends and development as one of the 6 pillars which must be targeted in order to achieve this vision, namely the second one which focuses on human resources development (Ibid.: 15f). In that section, it is argued that “Family planning is crucial for reducing both birth rates and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Envisaged and current population policies should go hand in hand with strategies to overcome problems in the health sector. Indeed, poverty remains a major cause of poor health and vice versa.” (Ibid.: 16).

The main problem identified here is the population growth and poor health which subsequently leads to decreased productivity. FP is thus seen as the main solution as it can help reduce birth rates and improve reproductive health. Although the document does not explicitly discuss FP in relation to gender equality or women’s SRHR it clearly argues that “Gender will be integrated as a cross-cutting issue in all development policies and strategies” (Ibid.: 21).

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper**

The ideas and actions presented in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP), drafted in 2002 by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, corresponds well with those presented in Vision 2020, as it is also a strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction (Government of Rwanda 2002: 6). As in Vision 2020, it outlines 6 priority areas, in which human development is one (Ibid.). Poor health is argued to be a major issue here and one that contributes to poverty and slows down production (Ibid.: 22). Reproductive health is highlighted as an important adult health issue, especially for women as the maternal mortality rates have risen (Ibid.). The increase in fertility rates, which is considered to be a result of women’s limited access to FP services, is also argued to be an issue for women as it “worsen reproductive health and increase [sic] the
incidence of complications during pregnancy” (Ibid.). Furthermore, this document also makes a connection between economic development and poverty reduction (Ibid.: 29), however it is argued that poverty is not merely about low incomes but also involves other aspects, hence it is argued that all citizens should also have access to health services, housing and education (Ibid.: 31).

The main problem identified in this document is the high population growth rate, which is considered to be a microeconomic structural problem, hindering the country's economic development (Ibid.: 6f). It is suggested that FP is the main solution to the high population growth rate as evidence has shown “that this rate could be substantially reduced if women had access to family planning services” (Ibid.: 31). The section in the document which is solely about FP, addresses the issue of women’s limited access to FP which subsequently has led to a decrease in contraceptive use (Ibid.: 45), however, it does not discuss men’s participation. Similarly to Vision 2020, the document outlines gender as a cross-cutting issue which should be mainstreamed into all strategies and policies (Ibid.: 69). Other aspects which ought to have a gender perspective are those of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, hence the documents outlines that the state should “prioritise the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality; make health services gender-sensitive; increase resources for women’s health; promote multi-sectoral approach to fight HIV/AIDS” (Ibid.: 70).

National Reproductive Health Policy
The NRHP was published for the purpose of serving as a guide for all reproductive health services (Government of Rwanda 2003: 1). In the introduction, the recommendations made by the ICDP and the International Conference on Women of Beijing concerning reproductive health and sexual rights are highlighted (Ibid.). The NRHP also states that these issues ought to be treated as fundamental elements of human rights by the Rwandan government (Ibid.). The document outlines that “the right to adequate behavior in terms of sexuality and reproduction (including family planning)” are unanimous with the principles of human rights (Ibid.).
The NRHP is made up of several components, these are: “safe motherhood/child health (SM/CH), family planning (FP), prevention and treatment of genital infections (STIs/HIV/AIDS), adolescent reproductive health (ARH), prevention and management of sexual violence, and social change to increase women’s decision-making power” (Ibid.: 2). Moreover, a gender approach should always be present (Ibid.). The purpose of this policy is to combat issues relating to poor reproductive health, however, it is also stated that the work carried out in this area should build on the country’s endeavour towards greater overall development (Ibid.: 2). This is further highlighted in the sentence which states that “the population’s health status is a key factor of a country’s development” (Ibid.: 4). It is argued that the ultimate purpose of the NRHP is to decrease the high rates of maternal mortality, population growth and HIV/AIDS as these issues are costly for the economy (Ibid.: 3ff). Likewise, FP is seen as an important factor in improving the health of the population. FP is here defined as birth planning, which further is argued to “contribute to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and unwanted pregnancies that can result in induced abortions or the neglect of unwanted children” (Ibid.: 9). In this sense, the emphasis here is on women’s reproductive rights. Further, it is argued that “birth planning is a fundamental human right” (Ibid.), which needs to be further promoted by opinion leaders and decision makers as FP is not sufficiently integrated into reproductive health services as it is (Ibid.: 10). Furthermore, an enhancement of women’s decision making power is fundamental for improving women’s reproductive health (Ibid.: 21). The document concludes that “the goal of the RH policy is to contribute to improved reproductive health, in order to enable efficient participation from all groups of the population in the social and economic development of their country” (Ibid.: 15). This clearly underlines the state’s motivation for increased promotion of reproductive health, in which FP is an important cornerstone.

The main issue identified here is thus the poor reproductive health among the population because this is an issue which subsequently hinders the development of the country. FP is seen as one of the main means to tackle this issue by improving maternal health, decrease the rate of HIV/AIDS and slow down the population growth.
National FP policy and its five-year strategies

This document, published by the Ministry of Health in 2006 outlines Rwanda's FP strategies between the years 2006-2010 and aims to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs (Government of Rwanda 2006: 6). The policy is largely based on Vision 2020 and the main objective of the policy is to “ensure for Rwanda healthy citizens that are able of working both for themselves and for their nation for its development” (Government of Rwanda 2006: 6). In this sense, the purpose of the policy is to enhance the health of the population and maximize the capacity of each household to make sure that productivity is as sufficient as can be, thus promoting the development of the country (Ibid.).

The main problem identified in this text, is again Rwanda’s rapid population growth which FP is seen as the main solution to. It states that “unplanned fertility fuels a rate of population growth that is outpacing the economic production, constituting a real hindrance to the achievement of the Vision 2020 to reduce poverty where we hope that all Rwandans will have equal opportunities in a sustainable development” (Ibid.). Therefore, the policy targets issues which are all related to population growth, these include “decreasing women’s fertility rate, infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, and population growth rate” (Ibid.: 8). The policy argues for an increased prioritization of FP as the demand surpasses the unmet need (Ibid.: 7). The policy also highlights the reality of many girls and women who are forced into unsafe abortions due to the lack of FP services providing preventative means, such as contraceptives and counseling (Ibid.). It is also argued that Rwandan leaders have a responsibility to promote FP, challenging cultural and religious barriers in order to achieve a healthier population and a more prosperous development (Ibid.: 14ff).


The last document included in the analysis is the Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2012) (EDPRS) outlined in 2007 by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The document serves as a roadmap for the Rwandan government, its people and development partners by outlining the country’s development targets as well as strategies on how
to get there (Government of Rwanda 2007: 1). One of the major objectives of the document is the issue of population growth and how it hinders the development of the nation. Thus the document outlines that “High population growth is a major challenge facing Rwanda. Slowing down population growth requires innovative measures, including the strengthening of reproductive health services and family planning and ensuring free access to information, education and contraceptive services” (Ibid.: ii). FP is outlined as one of the four main priorities in need of targeting in order to enhance overall development (Ibid.: 28). The main goal of FP is to increase the modern contraceptive use among women in the age group 15-49 (Ibid.: 40). Moreover, FP is meant to improve reproductive health by reducing maternal mortality and lower fertility rates, in order to subsequently decrease population growth (Ibid.: 95). Additionally, the document also points to the importance of gender empowerment as a means to decrease fertility rates (Ibid.: 93). The document further makes a clear connection between the country’s development and the health of the population, arguing that productive activities will be hindered by “the absence of a healthy and educated population that involve women and youth, and support for the most vulnerable” (Ibid.: 46). It is also argued that improving the health of the population is an important goal in itself as it is a “component of human capital accumulation” (Ibid.: 93). Thus the main issue identified in this text corresponds well with the ideas presented in previous texts as it is the issue of population growth. Again FP is argued to be the main solution as FP services provide the population with means to reduce their fertility rates and therefore it also contributes to slowing down the country’s population growth.

6.2. Analysis
In the previous sections, the paper outlined the main findings of the text analysis, namely how the state has formulated its main motivations for the increased prioritization for FP in different documents during the time period 2000 to 2007. In the following section, the paper will analyze the findings in connection to the research question and the hypotheses based on the theoretical framework.

For the purpose of inference, the paper returns to the overarching research question which the paper now aims to answer, namely: What has been the state’s main motive for the increased
prioritization of family planning? Although the texts included in this paper were published in different years and by different ministries, filling different purposes, the paper has identified a recurring issue in all of the texts which in turn uncovers the state’s main motive for the increased prioritization of FP. The issue which permeates all of the texts, is the issue of Rwanda’s rapid population growth which subsequently hinders the country’s development. In the first text, Vision 2020, it is argued that as the population increases in Rwanda, an already densely populated country, the issue of land scarcity is crucial. The population growth is argued to contribute to a cycle of poverty and hunger, which in turn hinders the country from developing. It is also argued here that high poverty among the population correlates with poor health which subsequently causes a decrease in productivity. It follows that it is also an impediment for the country to reach their envisioned development goals, as low productivity hinders economic growth. This line of thought is further emphasized in the second text, namely the PRSP which states that the high population growth rate is a microeconomic structural problem which is a major obstacle for development. Likewise, poor health is also brought up in this document as an aspect which slows down productivity, hindering the country's economic growth. The third document which is the NRHP also states that the health of the population is a key issue for the country’s development. As such, it is argued that fertility rates and HIV/AIDS rates must be lowered as these high rates are financial burdens for the country. In the fourth text, ergo the FP policy, it is argued that the purpose of FP is to make sure that Rwandan citizens are healthy for themselves but also in order to contribute to the development of the country. In this sense, it is argued that population growth must decrease as it hinders the country from reaching its goals by 2020. The final document which was analyzed in this paper, the EDPRS, also outlines population growth as a major challenge for the development of Rwanda.

Based on the content of these texts, the main issues which FP is seen as a solution to is that of high population growth and the subsequent deterioration of the health of the population. These are issues which hinder Rwanda to reach its ambitious development goals by 2020. Therefore the paper finds the state’s main motive to be development oriented and FP is seen as a means to reach broader development goals. Moreover, the texts all argue for the importance of targeting
and enhancing women’s reproductive health as the primary means to decrease fertility rates and slow down population growth. As such, the paper makes a connection between the state’s increased prioritization of FP and hypothesis (2), which predicts that FP, targeting women’s SRHR, is a means to reach broader development goals. Hence the findings of this paper can also be linked to the theory of smart economics, as hypothesis (2) builds on the idea that targeting women is smart because it benefits the economic development of the country. As previously outlined smart economics originates from the idea which argues that targeting women and enhancing women’s decision making power in all levels of society can be beneficial for the development and economic growth of a country. It is argued in the texts, that the aim of the FP programme is to accommodate women with more alternatives and opportunities by providing them with access to modern contraceptives and increased knowledge about their rights. Subsequently, FP can lead to an increase in women’s well-being but also, which is the most emphasized aspect in the texts, a greater and more prosperous well-being for Rwanda.

So, does this mean that the paper must completely reject the ideas incorporated in hypothesis (1)? As previously outlined, this hypothesis builds on the idea that the state’s promotion of FP can be seen as substantive representation of women as women’s SRHR is argued to be a goal in itself. As mentioned, the dominating motive identified in the text is found to be state’s strong commitment to development. FP is thus considered to be a means, used to achieve broader development goals. Although the texts greatly emphasizes the importance of targeting women’s reproductive health as a strategic means, much less attention is paid to women’s sexual and reproductive rights, however this aspect is not completely ignored as there are statements identified in the texts which can be seen as indicators for substantive representation of women, thus supporting hypothesis (1). The paper will therefore move on to discuss the findings in relation to hypothesis (1).

The strictly development oriented documents (i.e. Vision 2020, PRSP and EDPRS), are naturally more interested in long-term goals, hence FP is mostly seen as a means to achieve broader goals here. They do however address the importance of promoting a pro-poor development in which
the Rwandan people, and especially its most vulnerable citizens, are at the centre. Since women are the main target group of the programme, FP is here framed as a women’s issue and as such, the state can be seen as claiming to represent women. These aspects of the texts can thus be seen as supporting hypothesis (1), as substantive representation of women is seen as a process of claiming to represent women. Furthermore, they all include gender as a cross-cutting issue which is supposed to permeate all levels of politics. However these three documents do not explicitly address the enhancement of women’s SRHR as being a goal in itself, but rather as a means, therefore these documents are ultimately seen as rejecting hypothesis (1). The NRHP on the other hand, put greater emphasis on how women’s limited decision making power results in poor reproductive health. Moreover, this document more explicitly refers to women’s SRHR as a goal in itself as the rights aspect is further highlighted. Here, targeting women’s reproductive health is seen as important in itself since the document clearly argues that the state considers reproductive rights to be a human right. The paper thus considers this to be an indicator for the state’s substantive representation of women as the text claims that the promotion of FP is intrinsically important for women’s rights. Thus the paper considers this text as arguing that FP targets women’s SRHR as it is seen as a goal in itself rather than only as means for the development agenda. In this sense, this section of the NRHP highlights women’s rights and needs rather than the needs of the nation. However, as previously mentioned, it also argued that improvements in the health of the population are important aspects in order to achieve greater development. But then again the motivation for promoting FP is rather ambiguous in this document. On the one hand, it has a greater focus on women’s rights than the development oriented documents but the underlying motivation is still the desire for enhanced development. The FP policy addresses the substantial consequences for women who are deprived of proper FP services. In addressing the lived realities of women, the texts can be seen as identifying the lack of FP services as a crucial issue for women’s SRHR and not only as an issue for the development of Rwanda. In this sense, it can be argued that the state does consider women’s SRHR as an issue in itself. Nevertheless, analogous to the other texts, the main motive here aligns with the state’s development agenda, thus being the need to decrease population growth. Nevertheless, the paper wishes to highlight that the issue of FP is more complex than it first appears. The paper has found that the state’s
main motivation for FP is at all times underpinned by broader development incentives, thus hypothesis (2) finds strong support in the texts. However, there are statements in the texts which also supports hypothesis (1). Ergo, that women’s SRHR are important goals in themselves, even if these are not as common nor as strong. This indicates that the hypotheses are not completely mutually exclusive but rather concurrent, even if hypothesis (2) finds stronger support.

Moreover, the paper made the assumption that the ideas and arguments made in the different texts would be rather homogenous since they are published by ministries operating within an autocratic state. However, the paper has found that the different documents have slightly different approaches to the issue of FP depending on the publisher. Though the pervading argument for FP in all of the texts is based on the need for decreased population growth which is underpinned by the development agenda, the documents published by the Ministry of health are more human development oriented, as they put greater emphasis on the well-being of the Rwandan people rather than only focusing on the well-being of the economy. In contrast, the documents published by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning take a more economic oriented approach to development, in which economic growth and productivity are the focus. In this regard, the findings demonstrate that different state agencies can have slightly different approaches to the same issue, even though they are operating within an autocratic state. This reasoning is not unique to this paper but has been covered before in previous research on gender and politics (see Randall & Waylen 2012).

7. Conclusion
What has been the state’s main motive for the increased prioritization of family planning? The main purpose of this paper was to answer this question by analyzing different government documents published during the emergence of the FP programme in Rwanda (i.e. between 2000 and 2007). By answering the overall research question the paper has also aimed to connect the findings to theories of substantive representation of women and smart economics. Moreover, the theoretical framework has formed two hypotheses aimed to explore if the state considered the enhancement of women’s SRHR as a goal in itself or as a means to achieve broader development
goals. These were the following, (1) The state’s promotion of FP can be seen as substantive representation of women as women’s SRHR is argued to be a goal in itself and (2) The state’s promotion of FP can be seen as smart economics as enhancements of women’s SRHR is argued to be a means to reach broader development goals.

Above all, the paper has found the state’s main motive to be driven by the development agenda rather than the gender-sensitive approach. In this sense, the findings of the text analysis have suggested that the state’s increased prioritization of FP is a means to achieve broader development goals. Further, the documents analyzed here have argued that targeting women’s SRHR is of utmost importance in order for the FP programme to be successful. Therefore the paper has concluded that hypothesis (2) finds the strongest support in the text analysis. Nevertheless the paper has also drawn connections between the findings and hypothesis (1), as enhancements of women’s SRHR were highlighted as important in itself in some sections of the texts, however, this line of thought was not as recurrent as the development rationale. On these grounds, the paper has argued that the hypotheses are not mutually exclusive but rather coexisting, even if hypothesis (2) gained stronger support. Another key finding of the paper is that although the texts were published by different ministries operating within an autocratic state with restricted freedom of opinion, the arguments identified in the texts were more nuanced than expected.

So what are the implications of the findings and how does the paper contribute to the field of research? This paper distinguishes itself from previous research in various ways. Firstly, previous research on this issue has concluded that the state’s strong commitment has played a crucial role in the successful implementation of FP in Rwanda. However, this paper has further explored how the state has motivated it’s increased promotion of FP, an aspect which has, to the best of my knowledge, been left out in previous research. Secondly, the paper has aimed to widen the understanding of substantive representation of women and smart economics by applying these theories on a new case. The primary aim of the paper was to explore the specific case of FP in Rwanda, but in doing so it has also aspired to make a contribution to a more general
understanding of how countries can successfully promote policies which deal with similar issues. Therefore, the paper’s third contribution to research is how the findings can help us understand the issue explored here in different contexts. In this sense, the state’s promotion of the FP programme in Rwanda can be seen as a case study from a larger population consisting of policies which address taboo issues or issues with low political priority. The particular case of Rwanda is context specific but a theoretical generalization can provide the findings presented here with broader meaning. The main finding of this paper suggested that the Rwandan state has promoted the FP programme by primarily framing it as an issue of national development rather than merely a women’s issue or a private family matter. The paper concludes that the state’s way of motivating the issue is strategic as it can help gain further support for an issue which otherwise is difficult to address due to cultural or political barriers. The findings of this paper then show that policies addressing similar issues can gain wider support if they are argued to be beneficial for broader and more widely accepted goals, such as development or economic growth. That states can adopt women’s issues and shape them to fit the state’s political agenda has previously been explored by scholars of feminist political theory (see for example Höjer & Åse 1996).

As single case studies are rather limited when it comes to generalizing the results to a larger population, this has not been a main aim of the paper. However, the findings of this paper hopefully open up for further research which subsequently can provide greater chances for generalizing the findings which have been presented here. Therefore, moving forward from this study, it is necessary to conduct a quantitative study which can further strengthen the criteria for generalizability and also more properly deal with the issue of reliability. A quantitative study on this issue could for instance include more states in which FP has also been mainstreamed into the political agenda. By looking at more cases, this type of study could identify more independent variables than only the commitment of the state, which might further explain why and how some countries have been able to successfully establish the issue of FP on the political agenda.
8. References

Literature


Franceschet, S., (2011): “Gendered institutions and women’s substantive representation: Female legislators in Argentina and Chile”, in *Gender, Politics and Institutions* (pp. 58-78). Palgrave Macmillan UK.


**Web Sources**


**Material**


