



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**An Examination of Women Political Leadership in Liberia During Ellen
Johnson Sirleaf's Presidency (2007 to 2017): A Feminist Perspective**

M.A. THESIS

Kimberline A. C. Annan

**Nicosia
December 2021**

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MASTERS THESIS

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M.A. THESIS

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December, 2021**

Approval

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Kimberline A. C. Annan titled **“An Examination of Women Political Leadership in Liberia During Ellen Johnson Sirleaf’s Presidency (2007 to 2019): A Feminist Perspective”** and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

Kimberline A. C. Annan

...../...../2021

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Thanks to almighty God for the wisdom, he bestowed upon me, the strength, peace of mind and good health to finish this research.

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Kimberline A. C. Annan

Abstract

An Examination of Women Political Leadership in Liberia During Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Presidency (2007 to 2017): A Feminist Perspective

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Masters, Department of International Relations

Supervised by Prof. Dr. Nur KÖPRÜLÜ

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Women all over the world for many centuries suffered all forms of discriminations, and Liberia is no exception to this fact. Women were denied certain rights in society, their roles and responsibilities were clearly distinguished from their male counterparts. In Liberia, the society designed a distinct characteristic that ideally defined the roles and responsibilities of both men and women, where women are responsible for family support and maintenance while males are the foreleg, having the greatest authority in decision-making and this made men by nature, natural born leaders. There were many barriers that women needed to have broken through. Too many hindrances that limited the abilities of women, which confined them to just the home and restricted their voices from being heard. Women were also denied the basic rights to education, they could acquire knowledge only if their families saw the need.

This research makes use of the case of Africa's and Liberia's first female democratically elected President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in asking the two basic questions; given the challenges confronting former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership, what were her developmental impacts in Liberia? To what extent did Sirleaf influence changes in the status quo of women's roles and responsibilities in Liberian society? To understand how the women political leadership from a feminist perspective influence change in the lives of Liberian women between 2007 to 2017.

Keywords: Liberia, Political leadership, Feminism, Liberia, Empowerment, Status quo

Öz

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf'in Başkanlığı (2007-2017) Sırasında Liberya'da Kadınların Siyasi Liderliğinin İncelenmesi: Feminist Bir Bakış Açısı

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Danışmanı Prof. Dr. Nur KÖPRÜLÜ

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Dünyanın hemen hemen her yerinde kadınlar, her türlü ayrımcılığa maruz kalmaktadır ve Liberya da bu gerçek karşısında bir istisnası değildir. Kadınlar toplum içerisinde bazı haklardan mahrum bırakılarak, rolleri ve sorumlulukları erkek meslektaşlarından açıkça ayırt edildi. Liberya'da toplum, hem erkeklerin hem de kadınların rollerini ve sorumluluklarını ideal olarak tanımlayan, kadınların aile desteği ve bakımından sorumlu olduğu, erkeklerin ön ayak olduğu, karar vermede en büyük yetkiye sahip olduğu ve bu durum da erkekleri doğuştan lider konumuna getirmiştir. Bu minvalde, kadınların aşması gereken birçok engel ortaya çıkmıştır. Günümüzde kadınların yeteneklerini sınırlayan, onları sadece eve hapseden ve seslerinin duyulmasını engelleyen çok fazla engel bulunmaktadır.

Bu tez çalışması, Afrika kıtasının ve özelde de Liberya'nın demokratik olarak seçilmiş ilk kadın başkanı Ellen Johnson Sirleaf'in Başkanlığında ülkedeki kadın liderliği incelemektedir. Bu amaç ışığında, tez iki temel soruyu sormaktadır; Eski Başkan Ellen Johnson Sirleaf'in liderliğinin karşılaştığı zorluklar düşünüldüğünde, Liberya'nın gelişimindeki etkileri nelerdi? Diğer bir soru ise; Sirleaf, Liberya toplumunda kadınların rolleri ve sorumluluklarını yansıtan sürer durumda değişiklikleri ne ölçüde etkiledi? Bu noktadan hareketle, elinizdeki tez çalışması, 2007-2017 yılları arasında kadın siyasi liderliğinin Liberyalı kadınların yaşamlarında yarattığı değişimi feminist bir bakış açısıyla analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liberya, Siyasi liderlik, Feminizm, Güçlendirme, sürer durum

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List of Abbreviations

GEMAP: Governance and Economics Management Program

LRDC: Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee

PRC: People's Redemption Council

OAU: Organization of African Unity

UN: United Nations

UNFPA: United Nations Populations Fund

BPFA: Beijing Platform for Action

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SADC: Southern African Development Community

DPP: Democratic People's Party

WTO: World Trade Organization

IDA: International Development Association

ACS: American Colonization Society

NPFL: National Patriotic Party of Liberia

INPFL: Independent National Patriotic Party of Liberia

AFL: Armed Forces of Liberia

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

ECOMOG: Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

IGNU: Interim Government of National Unity

ULIMO: United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy

LNTG: Liberia National Transition Government

LAP: Liberia Action Party

GSA: General Service Agency

LUDR: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

RUF: Revolutionary United Front

MODEL: Movement for Democracy in Liberia

UNMIL: United Nations Mission in Liberia

WODAL: Women's Development Association of Liberia

LWI: Liberia Women Initiative

CWA: College of West Africa

NGP: National Growth Plan

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UL: University of Liberia

CEDAW: Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

SGBV: Sexual and Gender Based Violence

SEA: Sexual Exploitation Abuse

PRS: Poverty Reduction Strategy

FGM: Females Genital Mutilation

AfT: Agenda for Transformation

EU: European Union

US: United States

LACC: Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission

CDC: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

IMR: Infant Mortality Rate

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

CDC: Coalition for Democratic Change

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter discusses the background for which this thesis topic was selected. The motivation and consideration for writing this research can be found in this chapter, which is studying political leadership of women in Liberia using the case of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from a feminist perspective.

BACKGROUND

Women in national and international political leadership have been the subject of much study. For decades, there have been discussions about promoting women to positions of political leadership. Governance has been created in male and patriarchal terms and according to a "masculine ethic" since the 1970s, according to Billing and Alvesson (2000). The "masculine ethic" was seen as raising traditional male characteristics to the point that they were required for successful managerial positions (Billing & Alvesson, 2000). This widespread masculinization of leadership is based in cultural institutions and organizations that discourage women from pursuing political roles and result in biased assessments when they do. In other words, both males and females have reinforced gender stereotypes, and political roles have been constructed locally and internationally according to male standards, resulting in challenges and discouragement in seeking leadership positions within the international system. In fact, substantial progress has already been achieved, but despite the major advances made by women in politics, the issue of most women failing to achieve political successes remains in our contemporary world.

The alleged clash between masculine and femininity has resulted in the so-called "glass ceiling," which prevents women from rising through the ranks of the international system's hierarchical structure (Muhr, 2011). In this regard, according to Sara Luise Muhr (2011), one of the most common ways that women have broken through the "glass barrier" is by rejecting their traditionally feminine qualities and embracing the traditionally male ones that are allegedly required for political leadership. Muhr, (2011: 353), for example, claims that a woman in political

leadership strives to be "tough, emotionally in control, calculating, and she is not the soft, kind mother figure who cares for her colleagues in a maternal way." To characterize this new kind of woman, Muhr (2011) utilizes the metaphor of "the cyborg": a person who must lose much of their individuality and strive hard for perfection to surpass their male counterparts. The idea of a female leader as part-human, part-machine exemplifies the perils of women joining traditionally male-dominated fields such as politics. The idea of gender, as well as the linked web of culture, social relationships, organizational structures, and personal identity, need in-depth examination from a few viewpoints. The fluid and sometimes subjective definitions of gender problems make defining the scope of this study's discussion challenging. As a result, the importance of highlighting a unique woman in politics is emphasized in this study.

Considering these theoretical developments, the importance of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership in Liberia's development and on women's political governance is highlighted in this study. Liberia, a small, impoverished West African nation with a population of about 3.4 million people, conducted elections in October 2005, with a presidential runoff in November, marking a significant milestone in the country's 14-year civil war-ending process. Political, economic, infrastructural, humanitarian, and human rights situations deteriorated significantly because of the conflict. Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire were among the countries affected. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, then 67 years old, a Harvard-trained economist and former entrepreneur who had served as Liberia's finance minister and as a United Nations (UN) and World Bank official, won the presidential runoff vote with 59.4 percent of the vote and became Africa's first female president in January 2006. In definitional terms, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf inherited a complete and utter failed state. Liberia's security forces, for example, were fragmented, inefficient, and aggressive by nature. The criminal justice system was non-existent: most courts were closed, and extrajudicial murders by Liberian police were commonplace. The peacekeeping troops of the UN were the only forces that had any real legitimacy and showed any real functioning. Aside from the security forces' shortcomings, the country's circumstances rendered any attempt to establish government authority or identify criminal groups difficult. There was also no electricity, running water, a functional communications infrastructure, or public transportation in the nation. Most of the

land was serviced by seasonal roads, which were inaccessible during the two wet seasons. At the municipal, county, and national levels, government administration was virtually non-existent. There were no written or electronic records of inhabitants, births, deaths, tax compliance, drivers' licenses, government databases, pre-war criminal justice record system, or functional intelligence system. President Sirleaf assumed office on January 16, 2006, with a government dominated by technocrats, professionals, and former opposition or policy advocates. She outlined a comprehensive governance plan in her inaugural speech, and she kicked off her term with several anti-corruption initiatives. Sirleaf emphasized the need of a "new age of democracy" characterized by political inclusiveness and tolerance, nonviolence, and protection as well as promotion of constitutional and civil freedoms and rights. Her government views national reconciliation as a "critical" and "urgent" endeavour. Her administration also pursued a variety of fast impact initiatives intended at demonstrating "immediate and visible success" within the first 150 days of her presidency, in collaboration with donors. Security, Economic Revitalization, Basic Services and Infrastructure, and Good Governance were the four main foundations for her administration. The medium- to long-term development initiatives of her government were characterized by these pillars. The Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee (LRDC) oversaw these pillars. It was made up of four working committees, each of which supported a different pillar. The Sirleaf government negotiated or signed several multi-years natural resource or agricultural concession deals worth billions of dollars in investment and potential exports, indicating that large foreign investors have a high level of confidence in the country's political progress and future stability. The economic agenda of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration focused on creating an investment-friendly environment, exploiting Liberia's rich natural resources, land tenure reform aimed at increasing agricultural production, job creation, particularly for youths, and expanded the economy and social infrastructure rehabilitation, particularly in historically economically marginalized areas. Sirleaf's administration adopted aggressive anti-corruption measures, including forcing all senior officials to disclose their assets and adhere to a national code of conduct. She backed and enforced the Governance and Economic Management Program (GEMAP) that addressed "severe economic and financial management inadequacies" and to seek an "economic and financial management transformation and comprehensive effort to develop

capability. She also called for a restructure of the extremely bloated public service, stressing that civil servant compensation was inadequate and in arrears.

Thus, a meritocratic, performance-based civil service structure was established as a result of her efforts. Additionally, under Foreign Policy, promoted regional integration and security cooperation that was centred on the economic private sector. She was able to maintain excellent bilateral and multilateral relationships on the world stage. Most notably, she declared that "no inch of Liberian land would be utilized to commit violence" against neighbouring nations, which is particularly noteworthy considering Liberia's regional history. Her administration also showed an openness to developing new international relationships. Examples include the United States (US), which has had long-standing ties with Liberia that date back to the founding of the Liberian state by "Americo-Liberians," black freemen and former slaves from the Americas who began settling in Liberia in 1821 and helped to establish the modern Liberian state. Subsequently, diplomatic ties with Cuba, and established bilateral relations with China. As a result of the important role women have played in restoring Liberia's peace and the fact that she is a woman president, she paid tribute to what she described as the extraordinary efforts of women in securing her election and the peace that made it possible even in the face of war-related "inhumanity" and "terror," as well as military conscription, forced labour, and sexual assault. Liberian women were empowered by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in many sectors. As part of her efforts to protect women from rape and all forms of violence, she tightened legislation and law enforcement to better protect them. She also supported the education of children, particularly girls, and implemented initiatives to empower women to play major roles in the country's economic revival. Apart from that, Sirleaf appointed women to lead several important ministries and governmental bodies, including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Women's voices were given importance with females surfacing at every level in leadership.

The enrolment of women and girls in formal and informal educational programs was also given focus. Women became competitors to their male counterparts and a space at the national table was created for them to address issues of concerns to their well-being. To support women empowerment, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration promoted many women's moments and local organizations. The

Liberian society created a place for women outside of the homes wherein they could contribute more to the society and the homes. Most notably, upon assuming office, Sirleaf proclaimed corruption to be the number one public enemy and ordered an audit of the previous transitional administration, as well as the dismissal of all political appointees from the previous transitional government. She also fired the whole Finance Ministry personnel and established a screening process to determine the credentials of new hires and their degree of integrity. Aside from that, she also terminated all current timber concession contracts. Among other things, this action served as a foundation for the removal of a restriction on Liberian wood exports by the UN Security Council in June 2006. Other contracts and concession agreements issued by the transitional administration were subsequently reviewed by the Sirleaf administration. A few audit findings from state agencies were also made public by her administration.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gender disparity and challenges affecting Liberian women in top national leadership positions and the political fabrics of Liberia are the focus of this qualitative paper. Despite the existence of several international regulations, women are still denied the recognition and rights to engage in politics as their male counterparts. Even with the increase in women's political participation in Africa, women still stand in the shadows of men. Women in Liberia and almost every other country in Africa were denied certain basic rights. In Liberia, women were even denied voting rights until the first administration of President William V.S. Tubman. Women were granted enfranchisement in 1946 through a constitutional referendum, allowing them to vote in metropolitan elections and the national elections. Women participation in electoral processes became more noticeable in the post conflict electoral era of Liberia. In the Liberian 2005 Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections, of the forty-four candidates, four women participated; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf represented Unity Party and Margaret Toh Thompson represented Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia as Presidential candidates, while Parleh Dargbeh Harris represented Liberia Destiny Party and Amelia Ward represented Liberty Party as Vice Presidential candidates. In the Senatorial and House of Representative elections, one hundred and six (106) women contested out of seven hundred and fifty-eight (758) candidates (The New Dawn, 2016).

Before the 2005 elections which introduced a new era for women, women suffered issues of discrimination. Social norms confined women to roles particularly in the home. Political and social institutions ignored women's basic rights to education and other social immunities. Women faced many obstacles which robbed them off their abilities to contribute to the community and society as equally as their male counterparts. Women's political participation was however hampered by structural impediments like discriminatory laws. Capacity disparity also created a barrier for women's knowledge of effective leadership.

Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took on an economy that was completely damaged by fourteen (14) years of civil war, between the years of 1989 – 2003. The days when coins were used to buy bread, when electricity and pipe borne water were stable, had all become a mere longing. The days when decent homes, clothes and enough food were now turned into luxury. Infrastructures and public facilities were gone, and on top of these were huge sums of debts. In efforts to see through, how much women can contribute to nation building; this thesis looks at Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's national development while serving as the first female democratically elected President in Africa. Furthermore, women leadership has seen great deals of achievements in terms of development but the disparity between women and men in politics is still very wide. There's a big gap between the two genders yet with all the campaigns and projects to promote women political involvement. Can one say that women have not been able to satisfactorily prove themselves fit for these political positions, or can one say that women leadership have proven to be successful in terms of development despite the challenges and obstacles they are confronted with? These questions when fully answered sets the basis for the study objectives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Liberia is a country with a male dominated history of politics, and Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf served as the first female democratically elected President. This research objective is to critically analyse women in politics in Liberia and the prospects of women while serving in key political offices in Liberia. This study seeks to assess President Sirleaf's administration while serving as President; to look at the educational and empowerment opportunities her administration created for Liberian

women as well as studying possibilities of Liberia getting another female President. Based on the findings this study attempts to provide an understanding of how much women can contribute to issues of social and economic programs in terms of development.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

All through history, it has been asserted that men and women are inherently different. The above concept about differences has frequently been used to justify the assertion that women are inferior to men. Arguments regarding women's inferiority draw our attention to the deeper issues of power that must be confronted when one begins to question the definition of gender. These kinds of arguments have contributed to the level of discriminations women continue to endure, even with all their efforts in political leadership positions to prove that they are equally competent as their male counterparts. The first female democratically elected President in Africa was produced when Liberians saw the need of making a woman president. This wasn't just a pride for the country on the international stage but also a great achievement for Liberian women. The significance of this study is to establish the proof of the prospects women political leadership has and how many developmental contributions women political leadership can yield. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took on an economy in which its entire fabrics were destroyed yet she was able to impact Liberian society in terms of development both infrastructurally and humanly. Infrastructurally, by constructing public buildings and strong institutions and humanly by promoting education. Despite the existing unbalanced gender representation at the top of the political ladder, several women have defied gender stereotypes and risen to positions of power, one of such women is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Not only did she manage to make it at the top of the political ladder, but she also impacted change and contributed to changing the status quo of women's role in Liberian society.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is no exception to the constraints posed to other researchers and therefore, faces some significant constraints. Some of the constraints confronting this research are the limited sources of information and access to other literature that can be a great help to the study. Some of them were available but had internet access

restrictions. Notwithstanding, the objective of the study will be met, and will in no way be undercut.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Given the challenges confronting former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership from a feminist perspective, what were her developmental impacts in Liberia?
- To what extent did Sirleaf's leadership bring changes in the status quo of women's roles and responsibilities in the Liberian society?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis uses the collection of data and other relevant information for the purpose of meeting its objectives, sources used are journals, books, articles, and the internet. While studying and analysing information from the sources indicated above, and to display relevant data, related data will be picked up and gathered from secondary sources for the purpose of obtaining the research findings. Thus, the method used in this study is qualitative. This method was chosen because it is one of the most effective methods used for studying and answering research questions in theoretical works. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic in today's world, it would be difficult for me to engage in field work and conduct interviews, for this purpose secondary data sources were used to obtain the objectives of this study. This method also allowed this research to understand and explain former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership while examining women political leadership in Liberia too.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW: TOWARDS A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

This chapter looks at other portrays a review of related literatures and existing literatures discussions on the topic, in via referring to line with feminist perspective of and the key concepts which is of political leadership.

Political Leadership

Much ink has been spilled on the categorizations of leadership and political leadership is one of the many which is the cagiest. The field of political theory as well as political philosophy possess a variety of thinkers and their inputs on this particular topic. Political leadership concept is, therefore, seen as a crucial notion within the establishment and comprehension of diverse political processes as well as outcomes. Consultative, forceful, authoritarian, and enabling are said to be the possible styles of political leadership. In this regard, according to Davide Printe, politics is the art of ruling people, and being a ruler entails a great deal of responsibility. As aforementioned, politics can also be thought of as a branch of philosophy. Socrates and Niccolo Machiavelli are well-known political philosophers who wrote extensively about politics. Politics and moral principles are inextricably linked (Printe, 2018). Both Machiavelli and Socrates contributed to governance principles.

Within this context, Machiavelli develops a theory of leadership that contributes to the establishment of public order and the maintenance of social stability. Additionally, he concluded that people are governed by two motives: love and fear and that a successful ruler employs both (Prince, 2014). In other words, the king can exert power over human individuals by a combination of love and fear. This is almost impossible in the situation of Liberia. In real life, as a leader, it is necessary to work on the fact that the people desires, and ambitions are their motivation to support or not support one's rule.

Much of what has been seen in the leaders of Liberia is self-interest. Machiavelli's ideal of love and fear doesn't necessarily have to work together for a successful rule. According to Martin Luther King Jr., "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend" (Bruyneel, 2014). If most Liberian leaders focus is only on

self-interest and what they can acquire for themselves, love is needed to transform the society and change the status quo. During the rule of Charles Taylor, Liberians lived in fear, but this didn't make his rule successful. This only made him more of a dictator governing the country on his own terms and not seeking the overall good of Liberians. Love and fear cannot work together for the overall good of success. One will overshadow the other, however, the possibility of one overshadowing the other may create the outcome of success or failure. Additionally, these two drives are governed by the intrinsic ambition of everyone.

When it comes to his works, Machiavelli is widely seen as advocating for a rigorous leader who believes that the ends justify the methods. His detractors claim that he is a demon-spawned teacher. He stated that "*the world of politics and governance is a dangerous place to be*". A politician's attitude must be strong, and he or she must be willing to engage in unethical behaviour to survive. To this end, some political leaders of Liberia took such a path, but were confronted with many challenges in building the state-society relations on equity in all respects.

Socrates, in contrast to Machiavelli, advocated for a more flexible approach to leadership and power. He believed that the leader should be as astute and wise as possible and added that "*let someone who wants to move the world first move himself*". Socrates recognized the leader's strong will but did not attempt to train him to be as strict as Machiavelli. Like Machiavelli, he was a critic of democracy. Dictatorship, subjectiveness, brutality, and disorder, on the other hand, he despised. Socrates, on the other hand, holds a different viewpoint from Machiavelli stating that the ruler must be knowledgeable. Furthermore, the representative of power must possess sufficient expertise to govern human beings. The idea of Socrates in the leaders' strong will and knowledge is an important and should be a well noted characteristic of a leader. Liberia's problem with leadership style and governance can be traced to the fact that most leaders were not elected based on their capability but rather on grounds that they led failed revolutions. Failed revolutions because none of what they did to secure power yielded positive results for the betterment of the people, but rather ascended to power and did the same as previous leaders. Perhaps, these so-called leaders failed to provide better leadership and improved the people's lives due to the lack of women's representation. As argued by Edward Azar in his Protracted Social Conflict theory, a lack of women's inclusiveness in political

governance leads to poor governance (Azar, 2018). The rule of Samuel K. Doe can be given as an example, while it is important for a leader to be knowledgeable. Samuel K. Doe was elected president while serving as head of the People's Redemption Council (PRC) in the absence of a constitution due to its suspension. President Doe was illiterate and lacked both formal education and knowledge of political leadership. After a year in office, Doe knew that his leadership was under threat from within the PRC, therefore, became uncomfortable, because of the threats to his dictatorship; in response, he pulled his ethnic group closer to the government, resulting in his leadership being dominated by the Krahn people. With the Krahn people's dominance in President Doe's government, many of his followers viewed this as a monopoly of leadership, like what occurred during Americo-Liberian rule, resulting in dissatisfaction. Doe would've been a better leader only if he had knowledge of political leadership or governance. His lack of knowledge was what destroyed his administration and pushed Liberia into ethnic war.

This confirms one of the defining characteristics of the twentieth century is politics by leadership. To put it another way, the eighteenth century stressed popular sovereignty and direct democracy as significant democratic themes, whereas in the nineteenth century, issues like stratification and dissension were major problems. The twenty-first century has made us more conscious of the role of leadership. People's quest for principles like security and equality has changed politics as we know it. If this newer style of politics were to be defined by its leaders, it would have the following features.

Lester Seligman identified eight (8) features of leadership : (1) the centralization of conflict resolution and initiative away from parliamentary bodies and economic institutions and toward executive leadership; (2) the proliferation of the chief executive's immediate office from its cabinet-restricted status to a collectivity of co-adjutant instrumentalities; (3) the trend toward increased centralization of political parties, with victorious parties serving as instruments for the chief executive; (4) the measured manipulation of biases by political leadership via the massive power potential of information dissemination; (5) the professionalization of politics and civil service; (6) the expansion of bureaucratic system as a generator and methodology of governmental power but also as a fulcrum upon which all participants for authority endeavour to rely; (7) the development in size, frequency,

and impact of interest groups, coupled with a trend toward bureaucratization of their internal structures; (8) the changing role of the public, which finds its most effective voice in a direct and interactive relationship with executives (Seligman, 2013).

With time, there have been changes in political leadership. Each century set a stage for new and better advancement in the approaches of political activities, demanding the involvement of the people making them the major stakeholders to political processes. The involvement of every sector in decision making processes to determine political outcome is one of the approaches to political leadership which makes democracy a significant style of governance. In this regard, the case of Liberia has signed many international instruments, but is yet to uphold the practices of those instruments. The twenty-first century has advanced the awareness of leadership importance. The eight (8) features of leadership identified by Lester Seligman in his 2013 work of political leadership are a perfect understanding of what a more satisfactory perspective of political leadership in the twenty-first should be.

Today, Liberians have become more conscious of the power they possess as citizens to vote in or vote out. The media is still being held under control of the executive due to the authority of silencing the media through closure. This has been a continuous practice by the government in Liberia to close media institutions because of the stance of reporting stories exposing the frauds in the country's governance. For instance, a reporter of Daily Observers Newspaper on October 11, 2019, Abednego Davis reported that the closure of Roots FM on Thursday October 10, 2019, by authorities of the Ministry of Justice was described as unconstitutional by a Supreme Court lawyer (Mamos Media, 2019).

Patriarchal System, Democracy, and Women

In a patriarchal system, men and women values are separated in the society. Traditionalist believes that males are born to dominate the female gender and male hierarchy in the society should continue. Patriarchal system has empowered men and it has however lower the status of women forcing women to follow in the footsteps of men to prove themselves capable of certain positions. Patriarchy subordinates' women to men and gives men the dominance role in society (Trivedi, 2016). The design of democracy and representation excluded women. Historically, in ancient Greece, cradle of the democratic experiment, democracy was rigorously exclusive

the male citizen born of Athenian parents. The revolutions which paved the way for representative democracy were the Glorious Revolution of (1688) in England, the American Revolution (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789). Today, representative democracy is an ideal which includes women (Tremblay, 2007). The value of political equality is important to normative conceptions of democracy, and it claims that women are equal citizens who should share equal decision-making power with males; otherwise, there is a democratic deficiency (Tremblay, 2008). Every democracy needs women's full participation.

Moghadam, a feminist scholar, whose work is focused on women in development, globalization, feminist networks, and female empowerment in the Middle East in her article, *The Gender of Democracy: The Link Between Women's Rights and Democratization in the Middle East*, described women's empowerment and the establishment of gender equality to be crucial in terms of democracy. In this regard, gender equality and women's development are very important aspects of democracy. She further indicated that "*democracy is as much about citizen rights, participation and inclusion as it is about political parties, elections, and checks and balances*" (Moghadam, 2008). Democracy should be more about inclusion and not just about institutions and more rather about different social groups participation in these institutions while women's participation in democracy helps to determine its quality. Women's absence from political life leads to democratization of male dominance, an incomplete and biased form of democracy. Liberia's democratic system is therefore not a good indicator of the percentage of women being successful in elected offices. Very few women have made gains in Liberia's politics and political space. The existing democratic culture in Liberia since the establishment of the country has been a male dominated system (patriarchy). Some women have challenged the system, by working behind the scenes for many years, taking bold steps to engage their male counterparts and stand as candidates in democratic processes, while other women other women have taken the center stage in Liberian body politics, yet women are still massively under-represented in Liberian political sphere (Gray, 2019). Democratic rights were initially enjoyed by property owning white males and was later extended to women and the rest of the population in the United States, and in European country like Britain. Also, women's rights have gone hand in hand with the establishment of democracy, and women have played important role in the transition

from authoritarianism to democracy in other parts of the world (Moghadam, 2008). The involvement of women in democratic processes is fundamental to establishing sturdy communities and a democracy wherein both genders can thrive (Hannah, 2019). Gender inequality comes at an economic cost, hindering productivity and economic growth which globally countries are losing \$160 trillion in wealth due to the differences in lifetime earnings between males and females (Abdi, 2019). Country such as Rwanda is an indication that women involvement in democracy and political processes is crucial for any nation to progress. The increased number of female politicians and lawmakers in Rwanda, has furthered gender equality by increasing investments in land by 18 percentage, which is twice the level observed for men (Abdi, 2019). It is no doubt that patriarchal systems which limits women weakens democracy and development.

In a speech delivered by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary General and executive Director of UN Women, at the democracy and gender equality roundtable on May 4, 2011, at UN headquarters in New York indicated that the year 2011 marked the beginning of the fourth wave of democracy.

“As we have seen from the dramatic events of the ‘Arab spring’, women have been actively involved in the new wave of demands for political freedoms and dignity. In the streets of Tunis and Cairo and more recently in Sanaa, it has been difficult not to notice that women from all walks of life have joined the ranks of protestors in the streets to raise their voices for democracy and citizenship. As a result, we are already beginning to see gains for some women. In April of this year, the political reformers of Tunisia achieved what had been unthinkable only months earlier; a draft electoral law calling for full parity in the political representation of the new Tunisian democracy. The law proposes that in the next parliamentary elections candidate lists will alternate between women's and men's names.

These events remind us of how fundamentally democracy has changed since its inception. Once considered to be the sole domain of landowning male elites, it is now impossible to think of democracy as anything but full and equal political citizenship for all. Of course, this must be driven by leadership and commitment at the highest levels to ensure women's full and equal participation in democratic processes”

(Bachelet, 2011).

Other civil society organizations the peasants, women's movements, environmental networks, and so on may now play an equally significant role in supporting and maintaining democratic reform. Furthermore, state capacity continues to be critical in deciding how far democratic movements may go. The involvement of the state and the activity of civil society organizations are significant elements in understanding the survival of democracy (Huntington, 1991). Liberian democracy needs a more inclusive, representative, and enduring system of government of both genders to flourish.

A Brief Feminist Perspective In IR

Being an important focus in understanding the Sirleaf's administration, it's paramount that this study takes a deft into feminist perspective in International Relations. The term feminism has been ascribed to gender equality. In the late 1980s, the flexibility of theoretical discussions in international relations offered a place for feminist studies in a subject that had previously been mostly biased toward gender issues until then. International relations feminists rely on a rich heritage of feminist thinking that dates to at least the 18th century to further their studies in international relations. There are several strands of feminism, just as there are various strands of other ideologies, and this is mirrored within what may be widely labelled "*feminist International Relations.*" However, given the different strands of feminist theory, these diverse strands of feminist theory in the field of international relations are not surprising. The traditional classification of feminism separates it into Liberal, Marxist, Radical, Critical, and Post-structuralist tendencies (Stearns, & Pettiford et., 2005). Liberal feminist strands are the most appropriate strategy in dealing with or assessing Sirleaf's administration, based on the nature of this research. Sirleaf can be termed as a liberal feminist because of her top priorities during her presidency and based on liberal feminist core themes and their strive for equal treatment of both genders. Although there have been many different debates, critiques, and disagreements over the many aspects of feminism, yet each has made significant contributions to the overall study. Whatever that maybe thought of feminism be it good or terrible, one thing is certain: everything in life has both negative and positive sides to it.

Liberal feminists strive for equal treatment of women and men. Several of liberal feminism's core themes are education, voting rights, sexual harassment, reproductive and abortion rights, as well as affordable health care and childcare. Liberal feminist assertions advocate for women's ability and rights to participate in public life, at the very least through suffrage, examine the institution of marriage and the legal framework governing divorce and property laws, and challenge practices that deny women equal access to the same quality education and professions as men (Ackerly, 2001). Liberal feminists think that when women are educated, the entire society benefits. What distinguishes liberal feminists from revolutionaries is that they do not strive to topple political and social systems; rather, they seek to change them, guaranteeing that women and other oppressed groups achieve on an equal footing with males by providing them with a safe environment to flourish. Liberal feminists are more concerned with ensuring that women break through glass ceilings that have prevented them from attaining jobs formerly reserved for males. From the start, feminist thought has questioned women's near-complete exclusion from traditional international relations theory and practice. This omission is manifested both in women's exclusion from decision-making and in the assumption that the reality of women's daily lives is unaffected or unimportant by international relations. Apart from this, feminist contributions to international relations may be understood via their deconstruction of gender as both socially created identities and a strong organizing logic. These ideas affected the global political process and the consequences for men and women's lives. Feminism established that mainstream IR was indeed gender blind (Smith, 2018). Nonetheless, feminism views both male and female genders equally, posing a challenge to IR's fundamental notions.

African Political Leadership

A more comprehensive, extensive, and insightful examination of African political leadership has become a vital part of political leadership studies. The studies of African political leadership are still in its inception and not many accounts of scholarship have been induced to focus on areas of schools, waves or traditions of the study. Nonetheless, studies of post liberation under African Political Leadership are distinguished in various phrases and schools. The first phase covers the period of Ghana independence in 1958 and the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), when political leaders were referred to as "Heroic Figures" in history; the

second phrase is the period Africa's generation was wiped off by coup d'états orchestrated by military chiefs, leaders of the liberation movement, the wave of democratization which spread throughout the continent distinguishes the third phase; failed, and collapsed states were the emphasis of the fourth phrase focusing on neo-patrimonialism and political corruption; the fifth phrase concentrated on the new generation of African leaders; and the last phrase concentrated on the old generation of African leaders taking a peek at Africa's post-new generation leadership (Van Wyk, & Botha, 2014 3). The phrases clearly account for the different stages of African political leadership.

Given the in abundance of academic work on African political leadership, it is critical that attention be paid to Africa's political processes. When one considers Africa's political leadership, the first thing that springs to mind is the continent's underdevelopment. Given that the West has exported and spread the notion of democracy across the globe, is it possible that the concept of democracy does not apply to African politics? What are the characteristics that are absent in African politics, when much of what has been seen is the recycling of elites throughout the African political spectrum? Or is it a reality that the populace often praises its leaders, elevating their status and making their leaders more powerful? These are pertinent questions that need to be answered. When analysing political leadership in Africa, it is natural to have a feeling of hallucination. African presidents are seen to control failing nations dubbed "kleptocracies," "theocracies," or "stratocracies."

In Africa, perspectives on political leadership range from the "stigmatization" of the state to political leadership as dispensing inheritance, elite recycling, and the consolidation of political and economic dominance via the use of state authority and resources. While African governments maintain exterior sovereignty, internal sovereignty has taken on new significance as political leaders outside the so-called official Westphalia arena (rests on a decentralized nation-state system) strive for power, offer state-like services, and exercise monopoly and control over organized violence. Considering this, several nations that were formerly wholesalers of security have reverted to being only retailers of security, authority, resources, and power.

In Africa, regimes vary from absolute monarchy to traditional government, government of national unity, one- or no-party state, one-party government, and

multi-party democracy. Liberia's politics have evolved from one-party rule to multi-party democracy. The move from one-party rule to multi-party rule offered a place at the national table for everyone to engage in governance. There has always been a schism between the indigenous, those who settled on the region that is now known as Liberia, and the Congos, those who arrived from America and the Caribbeans. These two groups were forced to coexist despite their considerable differences. For many years, the Congos, sometimes known as Americo Liberians, governed the nation via the True Whig Party (Nyanfore, 2020).

This pattern continued until the coup d'état, which installed a local son, Samuel K. Doe, in authority. Doe's government did nothing to alter Liberia's established order of leadership, but instead proceeded on the same path as prior administrations until he was deposed by revolution. Liberia and almost all of Africa, in their search for improved leadership and governance, have progressed beyond just replacing one leader with another and achieving the same outcomes.

African countries' independence and state structures have been largely shaped by coercive techniques and centralized political and economic restrictions, resulting in the emergence of a political culture centred on ethnicity and authoritarian governance patterns (Van Wyk, 2007). The primary objective of most Africa's independence was to retain control of their resources and state, which was the primary focus of their political contestation. Liberia is one such example of a country proclaiming independence to gain control and safeguard its resources and territory from neighbouring nations. As a result, robust institutions were not built to support the economy's growth and development. In Steven Friedman's book *Power in Action: Democracy, Citizenship and Social Justice*, he argued that, if we wish to understand the limits and potential of African democracy, we need to look beyond the 'leadership' argument and look for other realistic reasons why African leaders frequently appear reluctant or incapable to assure greater and deeper democracies (Friedman, 2019).

Evidence suggests that African people respect democratic principles at least as highly as members of extremely old democracies. This book by Friedman also argues that key to understanding the emergency of democracy are the factors that hinders or permits its growth, those who can successfully work with like-minded individuals to

influence decisions. The book employs a well-known difference between negative and positive freedom. Negative liberty is the power to avoid being told what to do; positive liberty is the ability to make your desires a reality. The reason for this, according to Friedman (2019), is that most citizens lack the strength and resources to act in concert to push their claims and guarantee that the government serves them. Citizens can occasionally win negative liberty by banding together, but this isn't always the case; it could become a reality because strong foreign governments or aid donors demand it, or because it benefits elites to surrender it for another reason. However, positive liberty governance helps individuals accomplish what they desire and can only be realized if citizens are organized enough to demand it. When this happens, the government is frequently obliged to listen.

There are various degrees of negative liberty in Africa, but overall, African citizens are freer than they were three decades ago, at least nominally. Positive liberty, on the other hand, is much harder to come by and when it does, it is limited to a select few primarily professional groups in cities. Citizens seldom, if ever, can employ democratic rights and freedoms to obtain policy changes or guarantee that the government accounts to them, according to Friedman in his book, *Power in Action: Democracy, Citizenship and Social Justice*. This clearly indicates that leadership is a symptom rather than a cause. If leaders are more concerned with themselves than with people they are supposed to serve, it is because the latter do not have the power to assure a different type of leadership. The chances for democracy in Africa are therefore dependent on elements that can expand the ability to act collectively to guarantee that the government listens to citizens, rather than on finding better leaders.

Women Political Empowerment

Global development policy has shifted to emphasize the importance of women's meaningful involvement in national, municipal, and local leadership positions. But many still ask questions like; why does it matter if women become political leaders, legislators, or civil society activists? Why do we need more women in politics? In addition to improving democracy, women's engagement in politics leads in enhanced public response, more collaboration across political institutions, ethnic lines, and a more sustainable future. The involvement of women in politics promotes gender

equality and has a direct impact on the sorts of policy issues examined and the types of solutions suggested. The gender of a lawmaker has a significant influence on their legislative preferences. Also, when more women are elected to government, there is a corresponding increase in policy making that stresses standard of living and reflects the interests of families, females, and ethnic and racial minorities (Pepera, 2018). Why women in politics? Women in politics have an evident beneficial influence. According to the former Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan, "there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women," (Hellstrom, 2017). There is no other strategy that has the same chance of increasing economic output or lowering child and maternal mortality. No other strategy is as certain to increase nutrition and boost health, including HIV/AIDS prevention. No other strategy is as effective in boosting educational opportunities for the future generation" (Nkomo, 2018). Women must be encouraged, enabled, and supported to become effective political and community leaders to fulfill global developmental goals and establish strong, sustainable democracies.

The African continent has historically and culturally assigned distinct characteristics that ideally define the roles and responsibilities of men and women. This tradition corresponds with family expectations that clearly define the responsibilities of women and men in the home, where women are responsible for family support and maintenance while males are the foreleg, having the greatest authority in decision-making and this made men by nature, natural born leaders. For many decades, African societies' traditions were not reasonable to women; rather, women were utilized and maintained as men's personal property. In certain circumstances, individuals feel that it is dishonourable to educate girls and allow them to attend school since they would eventually marry and join another family, providing little service to their family. Women's political representation has shifted in recent decades, with a notable growth in women's political presence in Africa (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019).

Between 2000 and 2018, the percentage of female legislators almost quadrupled, while female participation in cabinet climbed fivefold to 22% between 1980 and 2015. Regrettably, the rise has not resulted in impact (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019). Women have tried to show their competence; however, they are still being held back in some ways. Democracy, the most widely practiced type of government, treats all

people equally regardless of their gender, colour, or religion. There is a widespread adage that, "anything males can accomplish, women can do as well, if not better" (Arvay, 2017). According to this proverb, women do not need evidence or proof that they can become good leaders and politicians. The years have produced several outstanding female leaders and politicians, some of whom history has documented and others who have been erased; yet these women have had a significant impact on their nations' development. Women confront several obstacles, ranging from unfair treatment to abuse and violence directed at them.

Konte and Kwadwo (2019) asserted that women's political engagement is more descriptive than substantive and this is an agreeable fact. Women in Africa are on the verge of breaking through the barriers that have been erected to prevent their participation in politics and access to political positions, but they lack the influence or control necessary to influence critical government decisions regarding budgets, policies issues, and legislation. For Powley (2006: 2), "Women's ability to make an impact in male dominated institutions will be limited until they are represented in numbers large enough to have a collective voice, until they reach a critical mass". This is a factual remark which indicates while women have been given the chance to participate in senior government posts, they have had little effect on policy choices due to the political landscape being dominated by males. The only way for women to have a greater effect and influence on major choices is for their numbers to increase beyond what they are currently.

The social perspective of African political systems has had a range of consequences on African women in positions of political leadership. They have been fundamentally disenfranchised in many situations, not just because of a prejudiced political system, but also as a result of gender bias in a primarily male-controlled culture. Since the Second World War, there have been several demands for gender-sensitive legislation, budgets, and women's empowerment via education, economic empowerment, political governance, and affirmative action across the world. At the 1995 World Conference on Women, one of these demands was made (Beijing Conference) (UNFPA, 1995). The Beijing Platform of Action outlined several key issues of concern that the conference identified as major roadblocks to women's development (BPFA). It was a bold proclamation of women's uneven position across the globe, offering not only recommendations for government, NGOs, and civil

society members, but also a powerful declaration of women's unequal status around the world.

To ensure women's full and effective participation in political systems and decision-making, states must invest in development, education, and training to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership, as well as aiming for gender balance in government bodies and the composition of United Nations (UN) delegations. As a result, women's involvement in politics internationally has increased significantly. On the other hand, gender stereotypes, among other things, have inhibited women's advancement in Africa's leadership ranks. Women's groups, or women within political parties, have been instrumental in advocating for women's political representation in Africa while steps have been taken to increase women's participation not only in politics but also in other African acclaimed institutions, but progress has been steadily slow and, in some countries, elusive. It is because many African cultures think that males are better leaders than women, and that this unwittingly coerces women to imitate masculine traits to fit into male-dominated hierarchical structures and systems.

Many studies, however, reveal that there are no differences in genuine leadership characteristics between men and women. Research done by Lockwood (2004) entitled "The glass ceiling: domestic and international perspectives," which discusses the rising leadership responsibilities and competency of women in leadership, is an excellent example. Lockwood points out that in recent years, progress has been achieved in tackling the problem of women's progression in the office and in the corporate environment.

Contrary to African belief that men are better leaders than women, many academics have stated also that one of the key impediments to women running for office or being elected to political positions in Africa is culture, which shapes social notions about gender roles (Yoon, 2011). Women are perceived as belonging in the house as spouses and caretakers, or in roles that appeal to women's nurture instincts, and are expected to be subservient rather than vocal, they suggest. One of the key reasons why women do not run for public office, according to scholars, is structural or situational constraints. Law and tradition have often legitimized male domination in politics, and public life has been assumed to be the natural domain or territory of

males, with women mainly considered as creatures of the private sphere (Genovese, 2013). Women are often considered as belonging to the private sphere, and they are typically so preoccupied with raising kids and other domestic responsibilities that they do not contemplate a career in politics.

Women's participation in politics continues to be hampered by these attitudes, as well as gendered economic and family injustice. Even though women account for half of Africa's population (World Index, 2021), they continue to be excluded from formal policy-making circles, and hurdles to female political leadership in governments and communities continue to exist. Considering the above, particularly from a post-structural feminist perspective, it is critical to underline that all reality is socially produced, according to social theory. This implies that traditional and societal notions about what women are capable of are unfounded. As a result, it is a constructed or made-up vision of women by society, rather than a set and unshakeable fact. Furthermore, from the perspective of leadership theory, one must consider that current management and leadership culture no longer promotes the traditional male-controlled paradigm of leadership (Turock, 2001).

Many studies on female leadership traits agree that flexible leadership styles foster elements like individuality and an introspective leadership model. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) established a more comprehensive goal of 50% female participation in political decision-making at all levels in 2015, based on the assertion that women's role in leadership will have a positive impact on the effective running of businesses and organizational structures, as well as the fair and optimal distribution of human resources (SADC, 2012). Share systems have been used to guarantee that women are represented in government institutions in a few African nations, including Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, and South Africa (Burnett, 2008). Women continue to aspire to leadership roles in all domains of administration, both public and private, despite African orthodox gendered conceptions of women in political leadership in most African nations. Women's engagement in both the independence battles and the democratic processes of many African nations has achieved significant progress in the political domain. In Rwanda, for example, women in government worked along with civil society to create an Inheritance Law that permitted women to inherit family property (Burnett, 2008).

The ability to influence policy is an important indicator of a woman's political leadership development since it shows that her participation helps the people she serves. Similarly, female MPs in South Africa were instrumental in the passage of a 1998 Domestic Violence Bill, and female MPs in Namibia were instrumental in the repeal of apartheid-era legislation that discriminated against women, as well as the creation of policies that aided women and girls' economic development (Coffe, 2013). In Uganda, Action for Development (ACFODE), a women's organization, successfully partnered with other women's organizations to demand the creation of a Women's Ministry and ensure women's representation in local government at all levels, where statistics show that women perform better than men in those positions. (Goetz et al., 2010).

Women activists in Niger lobbied for legislation that would enable political parties to support female candidates (Kang, 2013). By permitting women to assume positions of leadership, this legislation has benefited national progress. Even though women are acquiring abilities in articulating policy and affecting the destiny of women in their communities, and despite exceptional successes by women in several African nations, equal representation of women in political leadership roles has yet to be achieved. According to Drude Dahlerup's critical mass theory, women's numbers must increase if they are to have a greater impact on national and international political leadership. He thinks that because of the rising numbers, laws and policies will be passed to benefit or empower more women to participate in the nation's future. Activists for female representation and succeeding female political leadership have successfully communicated the idea that politics isn't only a man's game (Coffe, 2013). The significant number of registered female voters who participated in the election, for example, contributed to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's political win. Several African nations, on the other hand, are attempting to enhance the political and social climate for women, who already occupy substantial roles in government (Bauer and Barnett, 2013).

Despite attempts to guarantee that women are represented at all levels of government in Africa, women continue to be underrepresented in many governments and non-government organizations, especially in positions of power and leadership in Africa. While women make up half of Africa's population, UN Women 2021 data shows that they are badly underrepresented, to the point that, while gender equality is codified in

party constitutions and manifestos, it is not integrated into party structures. While the prevailing climate in Africa continues to exclude women from political leadership, this study identifies and explores several women in positions of power who have played or are playing key roles in improving women's political engagement. Considering the importance of this study, it is critical that it shine light on women who have held positions of leadership and the influence they have had.

Joyce Banda

Malawi's President Bingu wa Mutharika died of a heart attack while in office in April 2012, and Joyce Banda was installed as the country's new leader by default (Singini, 2013). The ruling Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP) and its cadres, who controlled parliament and were unwilling to hand over the presidency to someone they had previously expelled from the party, decided to have Mutharika's brother installed as president, despite the fact that this would have violated the constitution, which stated that the vice president should assume presidential office in the event of the sitting president's demise (Singini, 2013: 85–86). Banda became president because of a convergence of forces, including military, civil society, judicial, and media support for the constitutional provision (Yi Dionne and Dulani, 2012). The constitution was upheld, and Banda was inaugurated as president. Considering gender prejudice and stereotyping against women in Malawi's political leadership, Banda was installed as president.

As a woman, many locals applauded her ascension to power, but they had lower expectations of her ability to turn around the economy. With so much negative and unpopular support among national political actors in Malawi, Banda's ascension to the Presidency was interpreted by the Western political establishment as representing an optimistic new turn in Malawian politics and the region more broadly, following Mutharika's steady descent into authoritarianism during his tenure as President of the Republic. Because politics is a male-dominated field, President Banda found herself in an unexpected or maybe expected circumstance when she was taking office. Her presidency was viewed as an 'accidental', and abomination would follow her throughout her reign.

The governing party reacted angrily to her presence and actions. Even though previous male presidents had been awkward, poor, and had made flagrant blunders,

the yardstick measuring her reign was different throughout. She was reviled, insulted, and criticized on a level she had never experienced before in her life. Despite this, Banda reacted to criticism by enacting a series of dramatic changes that had a huge influence on the everyday lives of ordinary people. It was her desire to develop simultaneous methods that gave people optimism and raised donor expectations, as well as her own country. She worked fast to restore donor trust, devalued the local currency and alleviated import bottlenecks, and repaired ties with the country's neighbouring nations. She went on to overturn a few her predecessors' unpopular policies, and she made significant improvements to the human rights situation and the rule of law throughout her time in office. Even though she is a woman, she demonstrated that she had both the ability and the desire to govern the country. In acknowledgment of what was seen to be a democratic administration and adherence to western principles, major states that had previously withheld funding from the country in protest at Mutharika's actions have publicly endorsed Banda as a leader deserving of world respect. Banda was commended in the UK parliament by Prime Minister David Cameron, whose country's ambassador had been expelled by Mutharika in April 2011 (Hansard, 2013), and Presidents Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton complimented Banda for "for changing the lives of the people of Malawi" (Clinton, 2012).

Additionally, key think tanks and policy centres queued up to commend Banda's leadership and vision. A speech by Malawian President Dr. Joyce Banda was the first time Chatham House has issued an invitation to a Malawian leader. The director of Chatham House's Africa Program, Alex Vines, spoke at a following event in March 2013, when he discussed Malawi's strategic position in a region that is becoming more significant as a potential supplier of oil, gas, and other natural resources (Chatham House, 2013). Meanwhile, Freedom House classified Malawi's administration as being on an "upward trend during Banda's administration" (Freedom House, 2013). However, while corruption behaviours were like those of previous presidents in terms of survival tactics and amassing wealth for political survival and, which could well be considered "normal" and patterns of life, Joyce Banda criticized the former president for his wastefulness, his sporadic and erratic initiatives of allocating funds and building houses for selected people, as well as her insatiable appetite for traveling. In her role as an outspoken opponent of corruption

and waste, she dissolved her cabinet and fired her ministers of justice and finance, and she set up an investigating panel to investigate corruption claims (Harrison, 2002: 81).

Banda expressed her concern that, "when the country is going through a period such as this, when the majority of Malawians have to do without and make sacrifices, and they are doing so happily, not because it's ok, but because they believe it is necessary for us as a nation to do so, "I must be the first person to set an example," the President said in a statement on the fight against corruption. At the same time, during Banda unexpectedly presidency, the country was dealing with high maternal mortality, high total fertility rates, and high HIV prevalence among women and girls, all of which were compounded by low levels of women's economic empowerment and widespread violence against women. To ensure women's participation in political leadership, President Banda has been extremely passionate about economic empowerment of women, and she has argued that "it is only when a woman is economically empowered that she can negotiate at household level with her husband about the number of children that body of hers can have," (Dahlerup & Leyenaar, 2013). President Banda has instituted several policies to improve family planning, reduce maternal mortality, and combat malnutrition in the country.

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Women in political leadership are prevalent throughout all spheres of leadership, making it necessary to draw emphasis on the positive contributions that women continue to make despite the little space that is provided for them to serve. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the current Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the first African to hold such a high-profile post, is one of these remarkable women. Previously, she served as the World Bank's Managing Director, where she was responsible for overseeing the organization's operations in Africa, South Asia, Europe, and Central Asia. Aside from that, she was the driving force behind a few World Bank efforts to aid low-income nations through the food and subsequent financial crises. Moreover, she presided over the replenishment of more than \$40 billion for the International Development Association (IDA), the grant and soft credit arm of the United Nations, in particular garnering over \$50 billion for a fund to assist the world's poorest nations in their development (Salmon, 2005).

As Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, she oversaw the country's external relations. She also served as Minister of Finance for the Federal Republic of Nigeria twice, under Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, which this section tries to emphasize because of the significant reforms that were instituted under her leadership. Before taking on the role of finance minister, she highlighted two major issues that were afflicting the West African country at the time. As a starting point, she noted that Nigeria had weak institutions, notably inadequate financial systems, and procedures, such as Nigeria's "cash-based economy," which has resulted in the phenomena of ghost labour and fuelled widespread corruption. As a finance minister, she was responsible for strengthening and constructing, with international assistance, a government-integrated financial management system to address the situation in question.

The second point to mention is Nigeria's expensive presidential system and the influence it has on elections. It was her contention that "a portion of the funds intended for the Treasury is diverted to pay political campaigns." She believes that, given Nigeria's permissive campaign finance laws, a bloated budget presents a chance for politicians to utilize public funds to support their election campaigns. She proposed two ideas for how Nigeria may grow more quickly than other countries; first, there should be cohesiveness, a social contract, and a shared vision for Nigeria; there should be a common vision for Nigeria. Second, there should be consistency in policy, since this will result in higher performance than policies that are inconsistent. She argued that Nigeria failed these requirements because it lacked cohesiveness and shared purpose, as well as consistency in policy implementation.

In recognition of her accomplishments as Nigeria's Minister of Finance, she was acclaimed for enhancing the country's financial stability and promoting more fiscal openness to fight corruption in Nigeria. In October 2005, she was the leader of the Nigerian delegation that negotiated with the Paris Club the cancellation of 60 % of Nigeria's foreign debt, totalling \$18 billion. The debt agreement also contained an innovative buy-back mechanism, which eliminated Nigeria's Paris Club debt and decreased the country's foreign debts from \$35 billion to \$5 billion during the agreement. She oversaw the awarding of Nigeria's first sovereign credit rating of BB

by Fitch and Standard and Poor's, a rating that placed the country in the same category as other emerging market countries such as Vietnam, Venezuela, and the Philippines, and contributed to the country's attainment of its first ever sovereign credit rating, Center for Global Development (2006).

The country's debts had been accruing since the early 1980s and had swelled to more than \$35 billion by the 1990s because of interest and penalties levied on late payments (Salmon, 2005). In addition, her economic reforms had a far-reaching influence and helped to preserve Nigeria at an extremely difficult time, according to noted Nigerian economist Bismarck Rewane. This included detaching the budget from the price of oil, as well as her crackdown on corruption in the fuel sector, where some powerful importers –known as marketers– claimed huge sums of money in subsidies from the government for fuel they had not sold, allowing the country to save money in a special account when oil prices were high, and also allowing the country to save money in a special account when oil prices were low. Because of these measures, Nigeria's economy was able to withstand the global financial crisis that hit the country in 2008 (BBC News, 2014). Her rapid development policies and anti-corruption stance earned her the position of head of Nigeria's much acclaimed Presidential Economic team, which was tasked with overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive home-grown economic reform program that stabilized the macro-economy and tripled the growth rate to an average of 6% per annum over three years.

Leymah Gbowee

Since the end of the Cold War, several paradigm shifts have occurred in the international system. One of these shifts has been the significant role played by women in the process of peacebuilding. According to former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Gali's 1992 report "An Agenda for Peace," women play an important role in peacebuilding and are essential to the advancement of international peace and security (Boutros, 1992). Considering this, it is critical that this study also draws attention to the many responsibilities that women continue to perform across the African continent. Leymah Gbowee is one of the women that have played a leading role in peace initiatives across especially in Liberia. She is a

Liberian peace activist who was instrumental in bringing Liberia's 14-year civil war to an end by organizing a women's peace movement.

Gbowee is the founder and president of the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa, which has its headquarters in Liberia. Girls, women, and young people in West Africa are given educational and leadership opportunities via her organization, which encourages women's participation as leaders and change agents on the continent (Gbowee foundation, 2014). In 2011, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Gbowee, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Tawakkul Karman for their nonviolent campaign to ensure women's safety and full participation in peace-building initiatives across the world (Nobel Peace Prize, 2011). Following Kenya's late Wangari Maathai, Gbowee and Sirleaf are the second and third African women to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, respectively. Gbowee was a founder member of the Women in Peacebuilding Program/West African Network for Peacebuilding (WIPNET/WANEP) as well as its past coordinator. She has also served on the board of directors of the organization. During her tenure in Liberia, she led collaborative peace-building initiatives with women peace builders from nine of the country's fifteen counties. Following the war, Gbowee's women movement played a critical role in demilitarization efforts. It also provided essential support to Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during her successful campaign to become Liberia's president and Africa's first elected female head of state. Over the course of Liberia's 14-year terrible civil war, thousands of lives were lost, and millions of houses were destroyed. Liberia's low levels of human security were mostly due to the war. The country, which had been engulfed in a horrific conflict, was marked by abject poverty, inadequate service provision, political instability, sluggish economic growth, and several types of abuse against women.

After seeing the devastating effects of war on Liberians, especially on women who have been victimized by institutionalized rape and violence, Leymah formed an interfaith coalition of Christian and Muslim women and launched the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement. Under Leymah's guidance, thousands of women participated in prayer vigils and peaceful rallies, calling for reconciliation and the reopening of high-level peace talks (UN women, 2016). The pressure led President Charles Taylor into exile, clearing the door for the election of Africa's first

female leader, who became the country's first female leader in the process. It is this endeavour by Gbowee that corroborates Laura Shepherd's (2016) claim that women are actual change agents. It is true that the Liberian conflict did not seem to have a religious undertone on the surface, but it did have a religious undertone, much as Gbowee describes the tension that existed when Christian and Muslim women came together. Gbowee stated that she knew that nothing could be “accomplished until that barrier was bridged, and the way she went about doing so was by concentrating on the one thing that all of the women in her group had in common: their gender as a starting point” (Gbowee, 2011). “Once they felt comfortable enough to do so, the females went to the Koran and the Bible to learn about male aggressiveness from the perspectives of their respective faiths. This led them to realize that they couldn't continue to be bystanders while men fought to bring about peace, and that by being split, they couldn't possibly do anything. Gbowee also added that;

“Our experiences as a community and as mothers are the same during war, regardless of whoever you pray to. Our experiences as a community and as mothers are the same throughout conflict,” Gbowee says (Gbowee, 2011).

It is impossible for a bullet to distinguish between a Muslim and a Christian (Reticker, 2008). As a result of the conclusion of the violent conflict, President Sirleaf elevated Gbowee to the position of peace ambassador. As a result of her efforts, she was able to bring cohesion among the nation and promote peace among warring groups. The above-mentioned women were able to make an impact in their countries from the positions they found themselves in.

Women Political Participation in Africa: Influence or Number?

Women's political representation in Africa has grown substantially in recent decades. Between 2000 and 2018, the share of female legislators nearly quadrupled, while female cabinet representation grew fivefold to 22 percent between 1980 and 2015. In fact, numbers do not always reflect influence. In Africa, women's political representation is more descriptive than substantive (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019). When it comes to key posts like finance minister or prime minister, women ministers in Africa have less than half the chance of their male counterparts. Fifty percent of women in the cabinet have responsibilities in areas like health care, but only thirty

percent have leadership roles in areas such as treasury, infrastructure, military, international affairs that are believed to have more political power. It is also true that women's engagement in African politics is mostly restricted to tokenistic and ineffectual positions on the women's wings of political parties; males continue to dominate at the highest levels. Only 10 of the 54 nations in Africa have had a female president or prime minister in the previous 50 years, Burundi, Liberia; Madagascar; Mali; Mozambique; Malawi; Namibia; Rwanda, Senegal; South Africa (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019). In Africa, there is still a systemic gender prejudice against female leadership, rooted in socio-cultural and religious beliefs. For example, Rwanda has the largest proportion of women in its parliament (61.3 percent) and that South Africa has the highest ratio of female ministers (44.7 percent) (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019). How can we argue that these figures have any real impact?

Despite all attempts to increase political participation at the highest levels of government, little progress has been made in terms of their effect on decision-making processes. Kwadwo and Kante performed an outstanding job of elucidating a critical feature of women in high leadership. It is not about the quantity, but rather the influence gained while serving. The increased need for women in political leadership was driven by women's demonstrated capacity to constructively contribute to policy problems and other development concerns. If women continue to be side-lined in political processes, restricting their impact, then much work remains to be done. Society is very hostile to female leadership, with females being seen as inferior to their male counterparts. It is a well-known fact that females can influence and accelerate growth when provided the space and resources necessary to do so. In Liberia, for example, the Vice President is a woman. She has complained about her budget being insufficient to sustain her programs and activities since they entered office in 2018. Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor expressed concern about not receiving an official armored vehicle for a year, default or non-payment on leased property, delays in processing checks and non-remittance of budgetary appropriations, and not being consulted on critical decisions, which she characterized as a lack of respect and courtesy toward her office. For three weeks, she abstained from office and significant government activities (Kollie, 2020). This is just an example of the things women have to endure while serving in top governmental positions. Vice President Taylor is a single woman, and it is because she took action

that everyone came to grasp what the true nature of the problem was. There are many women in government posts just for ceremonial purposes, which is not the goal of the women's political participation movement. It has been proven that women have more to give and can contribute equally to their nation's growth, if not better, in policy areas relating to women, family, and children.

Gender Differences

According to Merchant, (2012), whether gender disparities exist in how men and women interact, influence, or lead, men and women have always been regarded as distinct and distinct groups of individuals they will always be. Vanderbroeck concluded, that women working their way up the corporate ladder falls into two traps, the premise that men and women have equal leadership abilities, and the believe that to thrive, women must emulate male leadership characteristics (Vanderbroeck,2010). These traps do not work however, they only prevent women from achieving their entire potential, and prevents companies from realizing their full potential and from also making the most of available talent. Schein (1973) developed a list of 92 traits that individuals often exhibit, thinking there is a distinction between males and females.

There should be no argument about whether men and women have distinct leadership styles. The most critical aspect of everything that is required of a leader is their ability to achieve outcomes while serving in any capacity. Effective leaders are results oriented. Society has made every effort to demonstrate that women are less competent than males in politics. The only discernible difference between the sexes is physical strength (Cloud, 2016). Men may possess more physical strength than women. Men and women are essentially the same in terms of personality, cognitive capacity, and leadership, according to a 2005 examination of 46 meta-analyses undertaken over the latter two decades of the twentieth century. Janet Shibley Hyde, PhD, of the University of Wisconsin in Madison observed that men and females are more alike than dissimilar on most psychological factors from infancy through maturity, culminating in what she terms the gender similarities hypothesis (Hyde, 2005).

A similar pattern of findings may be seen in nations with very diverse national cultures, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, China, Turkey, and Sweden.

Both men and women were present in such situations. According to PEW Research, 2015, roughly four-in-ten Americans believe that women who aspire to the top echelons of politics or business face a double standard, in which they must demonstrate more accomplishments than their male colleagues. All of these concerns are raised in order to diminish women's political capabilities. African states are just not prepared to expand the proportion of women in prominent political posts. There are just too many concerns about female leadership. When gender norms do not meet public expectations for leadership choices, an environment of adverse impressions of women in political leadership positions will exist.

Women have encountered an increasing number of difficulties throughout history than males; nevertheless, those women who have been successful in filling positions in successive leadership roles provide an intriguing window into the personality of a successful female leader. Women in leadership positions are at risk of being stereotyped. They attempt to emulate male characteristics just to attain success in leadership roles. It is individuals who strongly identify with a specific group for whom there is negative stereotype danger, who are most at risk of being affected (Steele, 1997; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). When female executives change their ways, subordinates perceive them to be aggressive and domineering, masculine characteristics become less popular and harsh. According to research, the existence of this danger may cause one to make unintentional decisions to underperform and adhere to the very stereotyped habits that they were attempting to do away with. These gender differences are often used to underate and discredit women leaders. There is insufficient data to determine whether these disparities are attributable to nature or nurture in both biological causes and the socialization process that assigns responsibilities to individuals may be the culprits.

The numerous attributes associated with masculine or feminine personalities and ascribed to leadership personalities are used to disparage women's distinct leadership skills. Women's political participation benefits democratic government, despite the many obstacles to female leadership posed by society and cultural conventions. The African continent has historically and culturally given unique features that serve as ideal descriptors of men's and women's roles and obligations. This tradition is congruent with family expectations, which clearly define the roles of women and men in the home, with women responsible for family care and maintenance and

males serving as the foreleg, with the greatest decision-making authority, naturally making men leaders. The years have produced a number of remarkable female leaders and politicians, some of whom have been chronicled in history and others who have been forgotten; yet these women have had a substantial effect on their countries' progress.

Leadership Styles: A Feminist View

According to Cleas (1999), new feminine values such as consensual relationships, inspirational communication, negotiating, control, and organization are valued for leadership in opposition to conventional male principles. Many sources of research have been compiled to demonstrate the distinction between males and females' leadership style. They are intended for male structures that are transactional, autocratic, instructive, business-oriented with a female perspective, transformative, participatory, sociable, outspoken, people-oriented, excellent listener and empathizer, and additionally well-developed intermediate abilities such as negotiation, dispute resolution, interpersonal abilities focus of the feminine element. Numerous studies have proven that feminine leadership qualities are transformational while masculine leadership qualities are transactional (Hare et al., 1997).

Individuals' personalities and experiences often influence their leadership style. While it is true that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership, leadership styles have no resemblance to gender. Leadership is most certainly not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Each leader has their own personality, which shapes their own leadership style, and may vary through time. As a result, a leader's leadership style is prone to change based on the leader's circumstances and decisions. Each leadership style has unique characteristics that may be either beneficial or have bad consequences.

Women are empathic; they care for those in need, more concerned about building strong supporting relationships, effective communication, and a statement of clear expectations of people, clearly conveying thoughts and ideas, and facilitating conversation flow. In addition, women excel in interpersonal skills, sensitivity to others, likability, and the capacity to listen (Kabacoff, 1998). Rosner asserts that women follow a different route to successful relationships than males do (Rosner, 1990). According to leadership categorization theory, individuals have mental

models, or prototypes, of how leaders should behave (Lord & Maher, 1993). Prototypes influence an individual's attention, encoding, and retrieval of schema consistent information (Phillips & Lord, 1982).

Even physical characteristics connected with race, sex or ethnic origin may elicit prototypes that influence perceivers' expectations for males, as well as female leaders (Lord & Emrich, 2001). Offer Mann et al., (1994) discovered eight widely held beliefs or dimensions of the leader prototype; sensitivity, devotion, dictatorship, charisma, and attractiveness, intelligence, masculinity, and strength (for male, female, and transgender). These eight aspects are the most exhaustive analysis of leadership prototype and have received widespread support from later investigations (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Gender variations in communication styles and persuasion techniques demonstrates that men and women communicate differently (Merchant, 2012). Women are rarely unique leaders while men's leadership styles have evolved throughout time. Women have been classified according to a variety of criteria: communal vs. agentic leadership, task-oriented leadership vs. interpersonal leadership, participatory/democratic vs. authoritarian leadership, transactional leadership vs. transformational leadership, etc. There have been few studies which have discovered gender differences in styles of leadership (Helgesen 1990; Hennig and Jardin 1997; Rosner 1990).

Women were shown to be more participatory/democratic leaders than males, who were more likely to be autocratic (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Eagly & Carli in their 2007 work defined women as communal in nature because they place a premium on social dynamics and decision-making processes, while males are agentic in nature because they place a premium on result and are task oriented (Madden, 2011). Men see leadership as leading by example, as indicated by (Grove & Montgomery, 2000), exercising control over others' performance of tasks and hoarding all whereas women see leadership as a role that enables completion of duties.

Bass (1985), Low Kroeck, and Sivasubramania (1996), Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999) and Rowald & Rohmann (2009) similarly defined transactional leadership as the process through which a leader and a follower trade intangible like as economic, personal, political, psychological, or emotional in nature. Bas (1997) and Howell & Avolio, (1993) asserted that transformative leaders collaborate with followers to

accomplish a shared objective. They will elevate followers by placing them in the spotlight and will motivate them to attain better achievements and will consider their unique circumstances.

Recognizing that successful leaders have both transformational and transactional characteristics, these have been linked with a more favourable view toward the abilities that women bring to leadership with solutions that assert that a woman's leadership style is transformative. While women's style is more interpersonal, men's style is more of command and control. Women foster good relationships with employees; they stimulate involvement and share more power and knowledge than men do. Whenever leaders use collaborative techniques, it allows and empowers people via its open and participatory communication. Men in their leadership, they use unilateral directive communication. If all of these characteristics are taken into account, there should be no need to compare women's leadership abilities to that of males. All of the leadership styles defined as female prototypes show strong leadership skills. Women get superior outcomes when it comes to how they approach handling difficulties. All that society has accomplished through time is to restrict women's potential to lead. The prototype identified is almost unmatched in terms of identifying and recognizing leadership characteristics.

An increasing awareness of the importance of women's participation in political leadership has emerged during the last several years. Overall performance of a nation seems to increase when women are included in decision-making processes. Several studies, such as the Global Gender Index (GGI) reports (2015) have demonstrated that increased participation of women in political leadership and development of societies in the areas of health education, family care, social welfare, and the environment are associated with greater participation of women overall. Those nations with a low or non-participation of women, on the other hand, have experienced a decline in the quality of services provided by the government. Women's participation and voting rights were granted first in New Zealand, which was the world's first democratic state to do so. Female political leadership, on the other hand, remained underrepresented until electoral reform was implemented in the 1990s, which resulted in a continuous increase in the number of women in political leadership and, as a result, the country's growth accelerated significantly Global Gender Index (2015).

Females, according to Cynthia Hook (2012), are more adaptive to change than men, and their attitudes to change differ from those of their male counterparts. Their negotiating technique is all-inclusive, embracing all concerns that impact men, women, girls, and boys alike. While she defines women's political leadership as having an immeasurable impact on the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of their country or organizations in a significant way that inspires humanity. However, on the other side, according to Peggy Antrobus, because of the enormous difficulty that women face in obtaining leadership positions in governments and bureaucracies through the traditional channels, many women activists choose to advance their causes by lobbying and campaigning outside of traditional government and bureaucratic structures. Specifically, she points out two reasons why "the worldwide women's movement has achieved such remarkable progress over the last two and a half decades." (Antrobus, 1995) In the first place, the purposes and agendas of women's groups vary enormously. 'Because of the variations amongst women by class, ethnicity, colour, religion, and so on,' she says, there is no unified set of 'women's interests (Goetz 1998:243). When working together to achieve a shared objective, it is necessary to accept that we will disagree on certain matters.

Secondly, this collaborative activity has been performed in response to conservative forces, especially right-wing women's groups, who have attempted to disrupt the process by attacking the notion of gender equality. The distinction between women's action and feminist action (defined as action that seeks to transform unequal gender power relations) should be stressed because it is often overlooked in discussions and documents. Not all women are feminists, and not all feminists are female, as should be made clear in discussions and documents. As a result of these findings, she hypothesized that, although women do not assert more energy than their male counterparts, they do perform much more than their male counterparts. She contends that without increasing female involvement in political leadership, a social issue that has existed for decades, if not centuries, would not be rectified.

Another empirical characterization of women in political leadership was advanced by the Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development. They feel that women's contributions to democracy and post-war reconstruction, particularly in Africa, are critical. It contends that women political leadership is the

foundation for post-conflict change and development, using the enormous role of women in post-ethnic war transformation in Rwanda, a nation with the largest number of women in parliament, as a barometer. Much of this scenario is also in the case of Liberia where for many years, in the country's history women were invisible until after the elections of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during the country's post war period.

CHAPTER III

LIBERIA IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter examines the formation of the contemporary nation-state and political landscape of Liberia in a historical perspective referring to the foundation of the republic, as well as the different years of transition that occurred during the country's civil war. This chapter will basically provide an in-depth look into Liberia's history, shedding light on the country's important events until present.

Liberia Before 1822

The country known as Liberia today before 1822 is thought to have had sixteen 16 tribes residing in what was referred to as the Pepper Coast, Malaguetta Coast or Grain Coast. These names were given because of commerce that carried in the area and one of the main products was Malaguetta pepper. The English and Dutch chose the moniker Grains of Paradise for the same product. They later renamed it the Grain Coast. The coastal areas east of Cape Palmas were also given names based on their primary commercial goods, including Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and subsequently Slave Coast. The tribes that were thought to have been occupants of the region in recent days may also be found in surrounding nations such as Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone as well as other countries in West Africa. Liberia is a country in sub-Saharan West Africa bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.

It is well-known in all of Africa's legends that their forefathers were Pygmies or people of diminutive stature. Their legacies continue to live on via myths and legends. Though no evidence of their existence has ever been unearthed in West Africa, they are well-known as inhabitants of the pepper coast subregion. According to Abayomi Karnga, a Liberian historian, the land known as Liberia original occupants lacks written evidence proving their presence, but they do have significant records in the oral history and religious life of Liberia's tribes who resided on the territory throughout their existence. The Golas, thought to be the first tribe, encountered these small-sized people who were mostly bushmen and lived in caves and hollows of huge trees, subsisting on the fruits and roots of wild plants.

The Return of Free Slaves

In 1816, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was created with the mission of transferring freed slaves to Africa. While some supporters of the organization felt it was a charitable endeavour, others who advocated for the return of freed slaves to Africa did so for racial reasons. The whole concept of repatriating Blacks to Africa began in the late 1700s with Paul Cuffee, a Native American and African descendent from New England. While sailing from Philadelphia in 1811, he investigated the feasibility of transferring Blacks from America to the African coast. By 1815, he had seceded from America, transporting around 38 colonists to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is a West African British colony. On the 21st of December 1816, upon Cuffee's return, the American Colonization Society was formally inaugurated at the Davis Hotel in Washington, D.C. Among those in attendance were notable persons from the United States, including John Randolph, a Virginia Senator, Henry Clay, a well-known political figure, Robert Finley and Daniel Webster. Bushrod Washington was the ACS's first president. He was a Supreme Court judge, a slave owner, and inherited from his uncle George Washington's Mount Vernon estate in Virginia. The ACS's stated objectives were as follows: abolition of slavery, repatriation of free slaves to Africa, establishment of a territory for free slaves to inhabit, and last, the preservation of Christianity.

The majority of the Society's members were not slave owners, and the Society received little support from the lower South, which consisted mostly of cotton-growing regions where slavery was critical to their economies. The American Colonization Society had to push for financing in order to buy slaves' freedom for their return to Africa, and significant accomplishments were accomplished as a result of this well-intentioned endeavour to eliminate slavery. Despite this, some followers continued to feel that Blacks were inferior to Whites and that cohabitation was impossible. They were more concerned with free Blacks coexisting with Whites than with the central problem of slavery. Some supporters viewed the return of free slaves as a means of defending their practice of enslavement; they feared that free Blacks living in America would inspire enslaved labourers to rebel, a fear that became widespread when freeman Frederick Douglass became an eloquent spokesperson for the growing abolitionist movement (McNamara, 2018). Although the ACS's work was not widely accepted, the notion of colonization as a means of eradicating slavery

survived. While serving as president, Abraham Lincoln promoted the notion of establishing a colony for previously enslaved people in Central America. Lincoln's colonization plan was thwarted by the civil war, but before to his murder, he established the Freeman's Bureau to assist freed slaves in assimilating into American culture.

The Colony 1820-1846

The ACS deployed a representative, Dr. Eli Ayres, to purchase land further north up that coast from Sierra Leone, and with the assistance of US naval officer Lieutenant Robert F. Stockton, Ayres travelled to the coastal waters west of Grand Bassa in search of suitable land for the colony. Stockton handled discussions with representatives of the Bassa and Dey peoples who live in the Cape Mesurado region. The indigenous people did not want to sell their land to foreigners but were convinced to do so.

The first batch of immigrants sailed from New York port in 1820, sponsored by the ACS, to Sherbro Island in Sierra Leone, carrying eighty-six (86) people. The second group travelled in 1821. The island's poor state causes disease in many inhabitants and some ACS members, leading in a high fatality rate. In 1822, a place was discovered for the settlement of the immigrants, and that territory eventually became the African country known as Liberia, which today is home to roughly 12,000 Black people (McNamara, 2018). Survivors of Sherbro Island came to Cape Mesurado and began establishing their community. These free African Americans married inside the colony and had Americo-Liberians offspring. They were mostly of mixed race and schooled in American culture; they refused to connect with the indigenous peoples with whom they came into contact. Within the colony, intermarriage resulted in the formation of an ethnic group with a cultural legacy saturated with the American concept of political republicanism and Protestant Christianity.

With the hesitant acceptance of the newly arrived immigrants, the colony was managed by an ACS delegate. With time, Jehudi Ashmun, a Methodist missionary, established dictatorial methods, despite fierce opposition from some colonists. Jehudi Ashmun succeeded Ayres as the ACS's governing representative, causing conflict, and escalating tensions in the beleaguered colony. Due to the colonial agent's alleged unequal distribution of town-rationed supplies, several settlers took up guns and

attacked the society's representative, forcing him to abandon the colony. Ashmun was convinced to return to the colony when the ACS sent a delegate to examine and temporarily resolve the colony's concerns. Efforts were then undertaken to codify laws and to establish a system of local government. This first move toward resolving the colony's difficulties led to the constitution's drafting a year later. The colony was permitted to function by common law in this agreement, although sovereign authority was retained by the ACS agent. Slavery and participation in the slave trade were illegal under the law. Now, the community once known as Christopolis has been renamed Monrovia in honour of America's president, James Monroe, as has the colony's whole name, Liberia (the free land).

The desire of slave governments in North America to return free slaves to Africa resulted in the development of colonization organizations. Apart from the ACS, these groups created their own colonies in Liberia, repatriating free slaves. Some slaves were freed depending on their desire to emigrate. The Maryland State Colonization Society founded a colony in Liberia called Cape Palmas; additional colonies established for former slaves and free blacks included Virginia and Mississippi (Liebenow, 17; Nelson, 15, 1999). The American Colonization Society, the Quaker Young Men's Colonization Society and the colonies that were established by the Virginia Colonization Society of Pennsylvania merged as the Commonwealth of Liberia taking control of the settlements between Cestos River and Cape Mount. As the Commonwealth they adopted a new constitution along with a newly appointed governor in 1839. Joseph Jenkins Robert, a freeborn African American from the US state of Virginia, was a trader and successful military commander who was named as first lieutenant and also became the first African American to govern the colony by his appointment in 1841 after the death of governor (Nelson, 16; Boley, 20, 1999).

The commonwealth exercised complete authority over the area and received the majority of customs taxes and income generated. This infuriated both the British merchants on whom they charged and the indigenous traders, prompting the British government to declare that the commonwealth lacked the authority to collect such taxes. The British unwillingness to acknowledge the commonwealth's sovereignty persuaded many colonists that independence would provide them complete taxation power, which was critical for the colony's and population's survival. The Society

officially surrendered all control of the colony in January 1846, encouraging the declaration of independence.

The Republic

On July 26, 1847, the Commonwealth of Liberia proclaimed independence from the ACS, stating that the Commonwealth of Liberia, a colony formed by a private organization known as the ACS, had become an independent state known as The Republic of Liberia. Hilary Teague penned the Liberian Declaration of Independence, which was approved concurrently with Liberia's constitution. Eleven delegates with one secretary signed the proclamation and constitution on behalf of Liberia's three counties, namely Montserrado, Grand Bassa, and Sinoe. The declaration outlines Liberia's motivation for being accepted as a free and independent nation in the collegiality that characterizes the friendly interplay of independent communities, highlighting the injustices perpetrated against African Americans as a direct consequence of the slave trade in the US and the Caribbeans, acknowledging the colony's formation by the Society as well as their withdrawal from ACS control to achieve self-governance.

Liberia's Declaration of Independence was drafted in a similar fashion to the Declaration of Independence of the US. Liberia's constitution and flag are fashioned after those of the US, since practically all of the country's founders were either free people of colour or free slaves who moved to the colony from the US. The Liberian flag, known as the "LONESTAR," has eleven (11) horizontal stripes, which represent the eleven signers of Liberia's declaration of independence and constitution; of the eleven stripes, five white colours represent purity, six red colours represent fighting spirit, and the blue field represents the dark African continent; the white five-pointed star depicts Liberia as the first independent republic. The Liberian Seal or the Coat of Arms is also a historical national emblem. It features a palm tree, which signifies Liberia's natural riches, as well as the Liberian coat of arms represented by a plow and shade, which represents the means of developing natural resources, a dove with a scroll, which represents communication and living peacefully in coexistence with other nations, the rising sun, which represents the birth of Liberia, a sailing ship, which represents settlers' arrival, and the motto "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here," which represents the dreams, wishes, and hopes

of the settlers who arrived on the soil known as Liberia. The Liberian Legislature was also modelled after the United States of American Legislature, which makes it bicameral with a Senate and House of Representatives. The Republic of Liberia has fifteen (15) counties and based on the population each county has two Senators in the upper house making them thirty (30) and the lower house, which is the house of Representative, each county electoral districts have a representative giving the total seats of seventy-three (73) in the lower house (Legislature-eliberia).

Elected Presidents of Liberia

- ✓ Joseph Jenkins Roberts 1848-1856 (elected six times)
- ✓ Stephen Allen Benson 1856-1864 (elected four times)
- ✓ Daniel Bashiel Warner 1864-1868 (elected two times)
- ✓ James Spriggs Payne 1868-1870 & 1876-1878 (elected two times)
- ✓ Edward James Roye 1870-1871
- ✓ James S. Smith 1871-1872 (Vice President completing term)
- ✓ Anthony William Gardiner 1878-1883
- ✓ Alfred Francis Russell 1883-1884 (Vice President completing term)
- ✓ Hilary Richard Wright Johnson 1884-1892
- ✓ Joseph James Cheeseman 1892-1896
- ✓ William David Coleman 1896-1900 (Vice President completing term and elected two times)
- ✓ Garretson Wilmot Gibson 1900-1904 (Vice President completing a term and elected once)
- ✓ Arthur Barclay 1904-1912
- ✓ Daniel Edward Howard 1912-1920 (elected two times)
- ✓ Charles Dunbar Burgess King 1920-1930
- ✓ Edwin Barclay 1930-1944 (elected two times)
- ✓ William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman 1944-1971 (elected six times)
- ✓ William Richard Tolbert, Jr. 1971-1990
- ✓ Samuel Kanyan Doe 1980-1990
- ✓ Charles Ghankay Taylor 1997-2003
- ✓ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf 2006-2018 (elected two times)
- ✓ George M Weah 2018-Present

Joseph J. Roberts became the first President of Liberia from 1848 and the seventh president to 1876. He was born into a mixed-race household in Norfolk, Virginia, USA around 1809. J.J. Roberts attempted to win recognition for Liberia from European nations and the United States during his first year in office. He flew to Europe to visit Queen Victoria, and the United Kingdom was the first nation to recognize Liberia's independence in 1848, followed by France, Portugal, Norway, the Austrian Empire, Haiti, Sweden, and Denmark in 1849. Nonetheless, the United States of America did not acknowledge Liberia's independence until 15 years later, on February 5, 1862. President Roberts attempted to incorporate indigenous people residing in Monrovia by expanding Liberia's boundaries along the coast (Momodu, 2016). Maryland colony claimed independence from the Maryland State Colonization Society in 1854 but did not join the Liberian Republic.

In 1856, Maryland (Africa), an independent state, requested military aid from Liberia in a conflict with the Grebo and Kru tribes. Maryland attempted to seize control of the Grebo and Kru people's commerce. Roberts agreed to support the Marylanders in their attempt to acquire control of the trade; via a united military operation, they achieved success, and in 1857, the sovereign state of Maryland merged with Liberia to become Maryland County. After losing the presidency to vice President Stephen Benson in 1855, Roberts served the nation for fifteen years as a major general of the Liberian Army and as Liberia's envoy to France and Great Britain. He assisted in the establishment of the Liberian College of Monrovia in 1862, which was eventually renamed the University of Liberia, where he also served as the institution's first President. Joseph Jenkins Roberts was re-elected President in 1871 and remained until he was disabled by bad health in the early part of 1875, forcing Vice President Anthony Gardiner to serve as acting president. Roberts died at the age of 67 in Monrovia on February 24, 1876 (Momodu, 2016).

The True Whig Party was officially formed in the late nineteenth century and remained the dominant political party in Liberia until the coup. Joseph J. Roberts was followed by other descendants of freed slaves known as Americo-Liberians which were all men. This group of Liberians maintained political power in the nation until 1980. According to Abayomi Karnga, a scholarly writer in 1923, Liberians were classified into four hierarchical classes. The first were the Americo-Liberians, who were light-skinned and had both black and white ancestors and were commonly

referred to as Mulattos; the second were mostly laborers and farmers but also Americo-Liberians; the third were those commonly referred to as Congos who were brought back on slave ships; and the fourth, and final, were the indigenous African Liberians who met on the soil. With time, the Mulattos and the Free Slaves lost their distinction, and both were known as Congos or Americo-Liberians. This group comprised fewer than 3% of the country's population, yet they maintained social, economic, and political power of Liberia until the 1980 coup d'état (Dennis, 2006).

Women who played significant roles in Liberia's history during this period are not well documented in the country's history. The name Suah Koko is one that is widely known in Liberian history because of her leadership potential as well as her influence as a fierce fighter. Suah Koko is one of the few women in Liberian history who has been recognized. Suah Koko was the first female Paramount Chief in Bong County, and she lived her life above and beyond the traditional conventions of the country at the time (Taylor, 2020). During this time, women were primarily considered to be mothers, responsible for the care of their children and the household and were not authorized to take specific roles in their communities or in society. Suah Koko was one of the few women in Liberia who prevailed to live her life outside of the expectations that Liberian society placed on women. Known for her roles as politician, diplomat, and healer, Suah Koko had sway over a broad region. While she was in power, the Americo-Liberian government was able to gain access to her territory, which served as a strategic gateway to the interiors of the country, and eventually resulted in the annexation of the northwest region such as Bong, Lofa, and Nimba counties during diplomatic negotiations. She waged several fights against the Liberian Frontier Force before allowing the government access to her region. Education possibilities was enhanced because of the Liberian government's efforts and the efforts of religious missions. Cuttington University was handed more than one hundred acres of land by the ancestors of Suah Koko, who lived in the area. Her name is also given to a town and a chiefdom in Bong County ([liberian history.org](http://liberianhistory.org)).

Women's Right to Vote 1951

Earlier to 1951, Liberia had elections in May and votes were not tallied until the Legislative gathering in November or December, with the election victors taking oaths the following January. Liberia's first elections under universal suffrage

occurred on May 1, 1951, when women gained the right to vote. In Liberian history, women were granted enfranchisement in May 1946 which was President William V.S. Tubman's first administration. To grant women suffrage, a constitutional referendum was held allowing women to participate not only in metropolitan elections, but also at the national level. However, women participation in public elections was not as apparent as it became in Liberia's post conflict electoral era (The New Dawn, 2016). Previously, voting rights were restricted to male descendants of Americo-Liberians. Not only did the Constitutional Referendum provide women the right to vote, but it also granted native Liberians who owned property the same privilege.

While Liberian women were subjected to a slew of challenges, Angie Brooks Randolph, like Suah Koko, was another Liberian lady who broke down the barriers that society had set in the way of women. Besides serving the Liberian government as Counsellor-at-Law of the Supreme Court, Assistant Secretary of State of Liberia, Supreme Court Justice, and Liberia's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), she also achieved the distinction of becoming the first African Black Female President of the UN General Assembly. In this time of Liberia's history, many Liberian women did not tell their stories in the way that have been described for Angie Brooks Randolph. Liberian women such as Angie Brooks Randolph are among the minority group of courageous women who have stood up to the system and persevered to realize their ambitions. Prior to the 1950s Liberia lacked a diplomatic corps. Liberia entered a training agreement with the United States Foreign Service Institute. The first group of trainees sent abroad for training in diplomacy included George A. Padmore, S. Edward Peal, J. Dudley Lawrence, Christie Doe, and David Thomas, and they were appointed to serve as Ambassadors after the first training. Following the training, not a single woman was appointed to serve as Ambassador, a culture of Liberia at the time which put restrictions on women leadership capacity (Dunn, 2007). Angie Brooks Randolph's ascension through the ranks of the UN was entirely due to her dedication and willingness to serve. Her situation was not different from that of other Liberian women who were coerced into early marriage, assumed domestic obligations, and raised children. She went above and beyond the conventions in order to establish the image and legacy she desired for herself.

The Liberian Coup of 1980

The coup of 1980 was a historic event, the first of its nature since the country's inception. The coup was motivated by a variety of factors, including a power differential between the Americo Liberians, the ruling elite, and the indigenous Liberians, the land's original occupants. For many years, the Americo Liberians elite-maintained control and did not get along with the indigenous, relegating this segment of Liberians to poverty and rural villages. For many years, the two communities clashed and intermixed, but in the decades preceding the coup, Americo Liberians retained control over political institutions despite their smaller percentage of the total country's population, and thus avoided giving power to the indigenous people, who constituted most of the country's population. The nation was dominated by a single political party, the True Whig Party (TWP), which produced the majority of the country's presidents, all of whom were of Americo Liberian ancestry. The country was ruled by a single political party, the True Whig Party (TWP), which produced the bulk of the country's presidents, who were all Americo Liberian heritage. Throughout the 1960s of Liberia's history, the nation witnessed economic success and quick progress; nonetheless, regardless of how well the economy performed, the inequality between locals and Americo Liberians was enormous. William R. Tolbert attempted to redress the inequalities upon becoming president in 1971 by instituting liberal reforms and recognizing opposition parties. As with other Americo Liberians, Tolbert was accused of nepotism and corruption to preserve power; these allegations, together with the adoption of unpopular agricultural reforms that were rejected by a large segment of Liberian society, ended in the 1979 riot.

On April 12, 1980, in the early morning hours, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and soldiers of the AFL, commanded by Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, staged a violent coup d'état, infiltrating the Executive Mansion presidential residence and assassinating Tolbert. President Tolbert's corpse was placed in a mass grave with the bodies of twenty-seven (27) other victims. There have been several reports of Tolbert's death. In his book *Mask of Anarchy*, Steven Ellis said that "President Tolbert was discovered asleep in his office and was murdered by Doe's men." *This Child Will Be Great*, a book written by Madam Ellen Johnson, "alleged that President Tolbert was apprehended and murdered in his bed." The 1980 coup brought an end to Americo Liberians' lengthy reign of supremacy, with Doe

ascending to the presidency as the first local son to run the country. By the end of April 1981, most of Tolbert's government cabinet members had been tried and condemned to death in a kangaroo court. Thirteen (13) of the prisoners were publicly murdered by firing squad on April 22 on the seashore outside Monrovia's Barclay Training Center. According to journalist Larry C. Price, the execution was a "nightmarish spectacle" in which those individuals were killed in front of a cheering mob of indigenous Liberians. Former President Charles Taylor testified for the first time on how former President William R. Tolbert was assassinated. He testified that on April 12, 1980, the day of the deadly coup, the first gunshot was fired by coup plotter Nelson B. Toe and the second round was fired from the pistol of Harrison Pennue. He also described Thomas Quiwonkpa, another coup plotter, as stating that Toe and Pennue shot Tolbert before the rest of them arrived at the location where the former Liberian president was shot to the face (The Analyst, 2009).

Samuel Kanyan Doe

Former President Doe was a native son, born into a Krahn ethnic family in Tuzon Grand Gedeh County. Doe had not completed elementary school when he joined the army and, prior to becoming Liberia's president, was just in the fourth grade when he and his group of soldiers seized power. He enlisted in the Liberian army at the age of eighteen (18) and graduated from the Tubman Military Academy in 1970. A year later, he got a certificate from the Ministry of Defence's radio and communication school (Africa Now, 1985). In 1979, he was promoted to the military rank of master sergeant. He also got instruction from US Special Forces in Liberia because of his military ambition (Perkins, 2006). Doe, like other indigenous Liberians, despised the Americo Liberians' supremacy over the country from the early 1800s. At the conclusion of the coup that brought an end to Tolbert's government, Samuel K. Doe assumed power as chairman of the People's Redemption Council's (PRC) governing body, becoming President of Liberia. President Doe was uneducated and lacked both political leadership and governance expertise. A twenty-eight (28)-year-old unknown young man and his comrades altered the course of Liberia's history.

The People's Redemption Council (PRC) administration was a collaborative government made up of civilians, representatives of various political parties, and a few people from Tolbert's administration, with the military overseeing the key

financial institutions. The constitution was put on hold until 1984, when a new constitution was ratified that represented the whole country. The PRC administration intended on restoring law and order, which included restraining military personnel who were harassing residents and businesses. Government and commercial activities resumed shortly after the coup; but, because of the PRC's persistent worry of security, an 11pm to 6am curfew was established, which lasted for more than two years (Britannica, 2012). The PRC claimed to restore civil rule to the country but did not hold elections until 1985, when the prohibition on political parties was removed in response to rising pressure from international organizations and funders. Doe, on the other hand, contested and won the election, therefore retaining power. He formally assumed the presidency of Liberia on January 6, 1986, despite widespread claims that the election was marked by irregularities (Powers, 1985). Although the elections were contentious, the US recognized the results (though the current U.S. States Department maintains that the elections were permeated by fraud). Samuel K. Doe was declared the winner.

Shortly after the elections, given the Krahn people's dominance in President Doe's government, many of his followers perceived this as a monopoly of leadership, like what existed during Americo-Liberian rule. As a result of these disenchantments, Thomas Quiwonkpa plotted a coup to depose Doe. Quiwonkpa entered the nation from Sierra Leone, seeking to depose Doe through a coup. However, the coup attempt failed, and he was assassinated, and his corpse was paraded through the streets of Monrovia. Jackson F. Doe and Thomas Quiwonkpa were both sons of Nimba county, and as a result, there was widespread rumour following these incidents that Krahn forces were killing Nimba's Gio and Mano tribes. Later in Doe's presidency, he emphasized agricultural promotion by urging residents to cultivate their own food through his "Go back to the soil" initiative (LiberiaInfo, 2012). Officials and ministers were encouraged to establish farms in their hometowns. This initiative aimed to reduce Liberia's dependency on imported food, most notably rice. Along with other developmental projects, initiatives such as family planning/population growth and a clean environment were introduced. Among these development initiatives were the building of the Samuel Kanyan Doe stadium and the enlargement of the Fendall University of Liberia's campus. When the first

conflict broke out, the Defence and Health Ministries' infrastructures were still under development.

Liberia's First Civil War (1989-1996)

Charles Taylor (Head of the General Service Agency), Thomas Quiwonkpa (Commanding General of the Armed Forces of Liberia) and Prince Y. Johnson (Assistant to Quiwonkpa), all of which were confidants of Doe and members of the PRC in November 1983 left the country. Liberia's First Civil War is regarded as one of the deadliest civil wars in post-independence Africa. The assassination of Gio and Mano people by Doe's Krahn soldiers precipitated confrontation between Doe's ethnic group, the Krahn, and Quiwonkpa's ethnic groups, the Gio and Mano, resulting in violence between these Liberian ethnic groups, and many lives were lost as a result. As a result of the Quiwonkpa failed coup attempt, Charles Taylor was presented with an opportunity. On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor entered Liberia via neighbouring Ivory Coast, accompanied with a small squad of Libyan-trained rebels. The conflict claimed the lives of 2.1 million individuals and displaced another million inhabitants in neighbouring nations' refugee camps (Momodu, 2016). Charles Taylor group which was known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), thereby gaining a great deal of support within Nimba county. This was because of Prince Johnson's plan to overthrow Doe as well as Doe's consistent attacks as a direct consequence of Quiwonkpa's 1985 coup attempt. This being the case, the NPFL came in defence of the people of Nimba county causing the Armed Forces of Liberia to initiate and thereon launched counterattacks.

Former Liberian military personnel and citizens were incorporated in Charles Taylor's NPFL. The NPFL was among the first organizations to recruit young soldiers. Between December 1989 until mid-1993, the NPFL and government forces clashed with various ethnic militias backing President Doe. Throughout this period, both parties to the conflict caused civilian casualties, nevertheless Taylor was responsible for the massacre of thousands of Liberians, both civilians and soldiers who resisted him. They targeted primarily the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic communities that were loyal to Doe's regime in their efforts to advance into Monrovia, Liberia's capital city by 1990 (Momodu, 2016). July 1990 brought a cleave between Taylor and Prince Johnson leading to the formation of the

Independent National Patriotic Front (INPFL). Both the NPFL and INPFL continued in their siege on Monrovia while the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) continued in its endeavour of defending the Liberian capital. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened in the war through its peacekeeping force ECOMOG, citing the necessity for a cease-fire and the high number of civilian fatalities, as well as the importance of a peace accord. ECOWAS soldiers from Nigeria and Ghana reached Monrovia reportedly for peacekeeping purposes. The NPFL seemed much more interested in taking control of the capital Monrovia, therefore they continued to make efforts in reaching Monrovia and carry on with the act of brutality against the Krahn people, with some reports of the Mandingos being victims also of these atrocities.

A visit to the headquarters of ECOMOG in Monrovia was made by President Doe in September 1990. During his visit, he was advised to flee the country into exile. Hereinafter, Doe also visited the Freeport of Monrovia at a time wherein ECOMOG had not yet fully established in the Freeport of Monrovia. Under these circumstances, Doe was subjugated and thereafter taken to the INPFL base in Caldwell, where he was tortured and killed. Accounts for the reason for President Doe's visit to the Freeport of Monrovia are still unclear, something that led to his capture and death.

The months following the death of Doe continued with struggle for control of Monrovia between Charles Taylor's NPFL and Prince Y. Johnson's INPFL. In the same year 1990, by November, a settlement negotiation and establishment of Interim Government was reached. The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was headed by the former dean of political science at the University of Liberia, Dr. Amos Sawyer. Charles Taylor did not recognize the IGNU, and as a direct consequence the fighting continued. The most targeted groups of NPFL and INPFL, the Krahn and Mandingo in 1991 with the help of exiled Krahn, organized the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). By 1994, ULMO had a split of two factions, and they were ULIMO-J consisting mostly of the Krahn people, with Roosevelt Johnson as the leader and ULIMO-K consisting mostly of the Mandingo people, with Alhaji Kromah. The Liberian civil war had grown by 1995 with the following seven factions as major forces of the conflict were: NPFL, NPFL Central Revolutionary Council (NPFL-CRC), Lofa Defence Force (LDF), ULIMO-J, ULIMO-K, Liberian Peace Council (LPC), and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

The fighting between these factions persisted, resulting in further civilian casualties. Taylor and his NPFL launched a massive offensive on Monrovia in 1992, dubbed Octopus. The siege of the capital lasted two months, trapping ECOWAS soldiers who were unable to ensuant control of the continuing civil conflict.

By September 1995, a peace accords were initiated to bring an end to the fighting and this accord was known as the Abuja Peace Accords. In accordance with the Abuja Peace Accords, the seven major factions of the war joined to form the Liberian Council of State. With an automatic consideration of the accords, fighting was supposed to stop, however, it continued and the year 1996 saw the deadliest phase of the Liberian civil war. Nigerian government coerced the warring groups into signing the Abuja Accord in August 1996, mandating them to disarm and demobilize by 1997 (Momodu, 2016). In the accords, a timetable was spelled out in a supplement for elections to be conducted July 1997 and Charles Taylor emerged as the victor of the election as leader of the National Patriotic Party with almost 75 percent of the vote. There was widespread speculation that his victory was based on fear. Many citizens believed that once Taylor was not elected as president, the war would not have come to an end (Peter, 2006).

Interim Presidents

Due to the civil war in Liberia, between the periods of 1989 December to 2003 August, a temporary government structure was established for the need of order and security mainly within the Monrovia Capital. Interim leaders of Liberia were often neutral parties without any affiliation with the warring faction; these governments were born out of numerous peace accords. Liberia had six (6), only one female was given the opportunity to serve Liberia as an Interim President.

- I. Amos Claudius Sawyer, served from November 1990 until May 1994, he was President of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) (Encyclopedia.com).
- II. David Kpomakpor, served from May 1994 until September 28, 1995, he was the Chairman of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government I (LNTG I) in Klay Township, Bomi County (Front Page Africa, 2017).

- III. Wilton Sankawulo served from September 1995 until September 1996, he was Chairman of the Liberian National Transitional Government II (LNTG II) Council of State (LiberiaInfo, 2012).
- IV. Ruth Sando Fahnbulleh Perry, she served from September 1996 until August 1997, she served as Chairman of the Council of State of the National Transitional Government III (LNTG III), (Ruth S. Perry-HPSOL).
- V. Moses Blah, he served as Liberia's Acting President from August to October 2003. (The Liberian Echo, 2015).
- VI. Gyude Bryant, he was the Chairman of Liberia's National Transitional Government (NTGL) from August 2003 until January 2006, when Charles Taylor fled Liberia for Nigeria in 2003, (LiberiaInfo, 2012).

Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor was born in 1948 in Arthington. He was first educated at home and began attending school in Arthington at the age of seven (7). He was awarded a scholarship by a businessman, which enabled him to attend Ricks Institute. He completed his studies in a teaching program and following graduation, began teaching in Bomi Hills. He then taught in Arthington before relocating to Monrovia in the early 1970s, when he had the opportunity to work at the Ministry of Finance. He was subsequently able to travel to the United States to continue his studies at Bentley College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics in 1977. During Doe's administration in Liberia, he worked for the General Service Agency (GSA) and was discharged in May 1983 for misappropriating \$900,000 from the Liberian government. He returned to the United States in October 1983 and was apprehended in May 1984. In September 1985, while his deportation to Liberia was being processed, he allegedly escaped from the Plymouth House of Corrections in Boston, Massachusetts. According to some sources, he escaped from prison, while others allege, he was aided by those who desired his overthrow of Doe's administration (BBC, 2012). Taylor travelled to Libya and received Guerilla Warfare instruction from Moammar Qaddafi, and he is thought to have spent time in Burkina Faso. Taylor entered Liberia on the eve of Christmas 1989, portraying himself and his rebels as "Freedom Fighters," and they were warmly welcomed by many Liberians seeking to oust President Doe. After years of conflict and an interim administration,

Liberia conducted elections on July 19, 1997, with Taylor winning with 75% of the vote. Liberians chanted, "*You kill my ma, you kill my pa, I will vote*". On August 2nd, 1997, Taylor was sworn in as Liberia's 22nd president, succeeding temporary leader Ruth Perry. Liberia went back to war two years into Taylor's government. From Guinea, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) launched an attack on the country. Despite the consideration of allowing Taylor to become the President to avoid the fighting, Liberia still did not experience long lasting peace (Britannica, 2016).

The Second Civil War (1999-2003)

The late 1990s it was reported that Taylor was clearly a supporter of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a fighting force in the bordering Sierra Leone civil war, given that a sanction was placed on Liberia by the United Nations. To Taylor's government was a growing movement of opposition based in Lofa county within Liberia. This group was headed by Sekou Conneh and called Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). In 1999, LURD engaged in spasmodic fighting with AFL and by 2000 many believed that LURD was in control of almost 80 percent of the provinces. The fighting continued up until 2002 and Taylor sustained control of the capital Monrovia.

The year 2003 brought another party to the war, Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) which was formed in Ivory Coast and was supported by south-eastern counties, escalating the fighting. A peace summit was supported by ECOWAS in Ghana and Taylor consented to participate in the summit. While in Ghana, the Office of the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone unclashed an indictment against Taylor, Ghana however, refused to detain him and hours later Taylor arrived Monrovia in the event, with the months following fighting in Monrovia escalated. While peace discussions were taking place in Accra, Ghana, LURD soldiers arrived in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, and laid siege to the city. More than a thousand (1000) Liberians were murdered and many more were displaced because of the bombardment of the city. LURD proclaimed a truce, allowing ECOWAS to send battalions, primarily made up of Nigerian troops, to help maintain calm in the city. In August of 2003, Taylor finally consented to the brokered peace deal offered by ECOWAS to grant him asylum in Nigeria. The term was completed by Vice

President Moses Blah following an interim government headed by Gyude Bryant (Momodu, 2017).

In October 2003, United Nations took over the peacekeeping operations and UN Mission in Liberia was established (UNMIL), and in the years after disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and rebuilding endeavours was initiated. With these efforts came the 2005 elections, which produced the first female democratically elected African President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and set forth on a challenging reconstruction agenda.

Although there are few reports of Liberian women dating back to the country's founding, women have played key roles in the country's history, despite being the most vulnerable and heavily impacted demographic, comparable to children, throughout the country's dark days. Women in Liberia were not only forced to flee gunshots during the country's turmoil, but they were also sexually molested and used by the rebels. Mothers had to see their daughters being raped and mercilessly treated. Women also had to witness their sons being forcefully adopted to join fighting forces or the army. The misery spurred Liberian women to make history by remaining firm in their beliefs that the conflict would end. "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," a documentary, tells the story of what Liberian women had to go through in their search for peace (Pray the Devil Back to Hell, 2008). It is an uplifting narrative about a group of Liberian women who came from all walks of life, including Christians, Muslims, urban, rural, affluent, and impoverished women, to bring peace to their war-torn country. This is a narrative that is horrifying, suspenseful, compelling, unexpectedly emotional, and finally very fulfilling. The ladies assembled at a crucial spot known as "Fish Market," where the President's convoy passed day after day, determined to achieve their goal of establishing peace, they prayed and sang for days without fear of being slain (Pray the Devil Back to Hell, 2008). In the documentary, Leymah Gbowee expressed her mother's fear of losing her, and all she said to her was, "If I die, just know I was fighting for peace." According to Gbowee, it was at this point that the phrase "We Want Peace, No More War" was birth. When they learned that a peace conference would be held in Ghana, their spirits were raised, and a contingent was dispatched to the country to continue their pursuit for peace and to exert more pressure on the warring sides during the peace negotiations. Liberian women's participation had a massive impact in ensuring that peace discussions

finally resulted in a peace deal ending the conflict, and they even assisted in the disarmament process. The end of Liberia's second civil war marking fourteen (14) years of conflict, brought a new era which opened opportunities for women's voices to be heard, giving them the occasion of limitless possibilities to serve in any position once they have obtained the necessary qualifications. This was the era of endless possibilities for Liberian women issues to be addressed. This era saw a paradigm shift of political leadership in Liberia.

CHAPTER IV

A Spotlight on the Sirleaf Administration

This is the bedrock for this thesis, it discusses Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership looking at her gains in terms of women empowerment and how she brought a new era for a Liberian woman. It focuses on three cardinal aspects which are economic and production resources, human capital development, and protection before the law. These three cardinal areas establish the objectives of this thesis on how the status quo of women was changed under the Sirleaf led administration.

Status Quo of Liberian Women Before Sirleaf and Women-led associations in Liberia

For many decades, women in Liberia were subjected to a wide range of types of violence. They were considered inferior to males and were thus denied some fundamental rights like education, freedom of expression, and so on. Their responsibilities were limited to domestic work, but their male colleagues were given the opportunity to complete proper schooling. If a girl was required to attend school, she did so at the Sande Society, which was a traditional institution. It was used to prepare females for adulthood, including teaching them how to care for their spouses and children, as well as sexual concerns, farming, singing, dance, creating traditional items, medicine, and other related topics such as these. A procedure known as female circumcision was also performed as part of the ceremony, as well. Some girls' parents voluntarily brought their daughters into the Sande bush, while others were coerced into going into the Sande brush. They were accepted into the Sande society at a set period of the year, where they would remain for several months until graduating from the program. This tradition was practiced by all tribes in Liberia. A girl's graduation for the Sande Society was like a pride for their families. Sometimes men ask for the girl's hand in marriage even before they leave the Sande Brush (Massaquoi, 2014). Because of this, girls were given out in marriages at a very early age, before they even reached the age of eighteen (18). This traditional practice has existed for many years in Liberia, and this was profitable for the female specialist, Zoes, those who trained the girls because parents paid money and provided items that were needed for their daughters to be taken in. This tradition demonstrates unequivocally that females' roles and responsibilities were solely tied to the home, subjecting them to the males. All that was required of a female to be recognized and held in high esteem was to get married and at an early age, nothing offered so much pride to a family more than this. Many women in Liberia did not acquire formal education because of this tradition and it resulted in a high rate of illiterate women in Liberia. The ratio of literate

women was like one out of three women, Visionary Young Women in Leadership Report (2018).

Prior to Madam Sirleaf's administration, there was little interest in Liberia for women's empowerment according to UN Women (2005). In many segments of Liberian society, there hasn't been much recognition of the importance of women's emancipation. The market was the only place where women had a greater presence. Almost all areas of Liberian society were dominated by men, especially those requiring professional education or training. Males outnumbered females in the number of students enrolled in schools (MOE, 2005). Female students, even those who mustered the bravery to persuade schooling, were hesitant to pursue careers in particular fields, such as the sciences. The sciences were thought to be a male-dominated field of study, and it was assumed that women would be unable to achieve high academic standards or match the expectations of a scientific student. Women in general did not have the opportunity to attend school, either because their parents did not see the need, or because they were unable to meet the expectations placed on them, or because they were married young and had to take on the responsibilities of a wife in the home, leaving them with little time to think about school, or worse, because they lacked the confidence to persuade education not recognizing its importance.

Leadership roles were traditionally reserved for men. Women were not even trusted to get active at the local level, let alone in politics at the national level. If they summoned the fortitude to do so, they would have been reminded of their proper role, which is in the kitchen, preparing food or caring for children (UN Women, 2005). Not to mention employment at the highest levels of government. Women's abilities were limited to the point that tradition even dictates that a lady should remain silent when a male is speaking.

Some families recognized the need of educating their daughters but were unable to do so due to financial constraints. As a result of the war, some women became single parents, responsible for many children; in other cases, even if both parents are still living, they may not be able to provide for all of their children's requirements. Because of the lack of knowledge of family planning, women frequently had several children as it was all they had to do; give birth to children and take care of them. They were not taught about family planning, and consequently, of being married at a very young age. Because women were solely expected to bear children, care for their homes, and care for their husbands, males were the only ones who were burdened with the task of providing for their families. Many families were forced to pick which children to educate since their financial resources were severely constrained because of this. In such cases, families will always consider the necessity to educate the males, it is common for the girls to become the victims in this

situation. The un-empowerment of women was because of lack of education, lack of support from family, as well as lack of support resources (UNDP, 2007). These and other similar factors created a status quo for Liberian women, that is, they were tied to making babies, and the kitchen.

Other women attempted to break down these boundaries even before Madam Sirleaf's government took over the reins. Even though certain accomplished women were able to have their names recorded in history as a result of their accomplishments, they did not have a significant influence on the status quo of Liberian women. In the previous chapter of this thesis, it was discussed how women such as Suah Koko and Angie Brooks Randolph battled their way through the system even though they were victims of the circumstances. Despite this, they managed to make their way up the ladder and gain recognition for their courage, confidence, and accomplishments. It is even possible to assert that there were many other women who also succeeded in breaking down barriers, but because society was uninterested in women's capabilities, aside from the fact that women's roles were clearly destined for childbearing and the home, such women have not been recorded in history until recently.

To this degree, much work cannot be found on Liberian women before madam Sirleaf's ascendancy to the presidency. As far back as the 1920s, women attempted to get their voices heard and to have their issues addressed. The National Liberian Women Social and Political Movement, which was started in 1920, is credited as being the country's first documented women's movement. Next up was the Women's Development Association of Liberia (WODAL), which was established in 1988 and coming into being soon before the commencement of the country's first war. To improve the economic, social, and legal position of Liberian women, as well as to increase the participation of women in community development and decision-making processes, WODAL was organized. During the period of the war, the Liberia Women Initiative (LWI) was established in 1994 to help women in the country. The LWI was created to aid in the efforts to achieve peace (www.liberia-unog.org). In terms of women's empowerment and political engagement, the formation of these groups did achieve many positive results.

In this regard, this thesis examines women in political leadership in Liberia under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration, so it is necessary to provide background on the Taylor administration and draw an analysis that shifts towards the emergence of Sirleaf's government, since Sirleaf was the successor of Taylor. The quality of political leadership at various levels of governance processes, particularly that of those who lead the developmental drives that determines the success or failure of any post-war democratic system in terms of political development, democratic growth, and governance capabilities. In the post-war

rehabilitation phase, the individual gains increasing relevance and assumes a more expansive leadership role. Furthermore, the charismatic quality of the person in charge of a country's complex multi-dimensional socio-political and economic development will serve as a catalyst for growth, adding to the country's complex multi-dimensional socio-political and economic development. As previously stated, the Liberia war was characterized by harsh war and the disintegration of the Liberian state. Liberia's route from anarchy to elections seemed to be set in motion in 1997, when the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) started a peace deal that was signed by the various warring groups in the country. Elections were held in July 1997 because of this decision. Several Liberians expressed concern that Taylor would fight if not elected; however, Liberians made a calculated choice they believed would more likely promote peace and stability; as a result, Taylor was soundly elected in the election which defeated Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and receiving more than 75 percent of the vote (Akwei, 2017). Taylor served as the country's first president following the end of the conflict. Sirleaf expressed her displeasure, claiming that the elections commission and ECOMOG had participated in extensive fraud and that the results were thus not trustworthy (Lyons, 1989) Sirleaf, on the other hand, tempered her remarks and started to play a significant and constructive role in the opposition. Taylor's administration, on the other hand, was confronted with a slew of challenges, including the reconstruction of the state's basic infrastructure, the repatriation of hundreds of refugees and internally displaced people, the implementation of security reform, the institutionalization of the rule of law and democratic governance, and the reconciliation of the country's divided people. Furthermore, the war left a legacy of terror and mistrust, as well as a shattered image of the Liberia abroad. As a result of these difficulties, Taylor promised to govern on behalf of all Liberians, nominated a few opponents to small cabinet posts, and formed a human rights commission and a mediation commission, neither of which were able to operate well.

Taylor failed to implement any reforms, despite his pledges. His rule was repressive in nature. The government's harassed media resisted accountability and criticism. Taylor recruited incompetent friends into the administration, looted the public coffers, and built his own military, completely disregarding the national army (Lyons, 1998). His administration was harsh to women, and no women were chosen to any significant cabinet positions during his tenure. Taylor pursued political opponents who had opposing viewpoints to his leadership positions. Taylor also contributed to the deterioration of Liberia's international reputation by backing rebellions in neighbouring nations, particularly in the Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. As a result of Taylor's poor leadership and inability to rule beyond his warlike tendencies, Liberia descended into another conflict just a few months after he became the president. While the Taylor government failed to break away from the past and

rule the nation without regard to political parties, the Sirleaf administration was a complete departure from the previous administration. She inherited issues comparable to those faced by the Taylor administration, but she was farsighted in her approach, presumably learning from the mistakes of her predecessor's government. First and foremost, she brought the most senior members of the opposition into government and elevated them to positions of high leadership. In addition, she selected women to senior government positions, including those in the ministries of finance and international affairs.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Early Life

Born in Monrovia, Liberia, on October 29th, 1938. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's father was a Gola Chief's son who was fostered by the McGrity family and given the name Cerney Johnson. Martha was the daughter of a Sinoe county lady, and her father was a German trader. Sirleaf's parents were married and worked hard to provide a better life for their children. Her father had a decent basic education. He began his career as a lawyer and afterwards pursued a political career. As his political career progressed, he was elected to the House of Representatives. Her father was a close friend of Present Tubman, who paid many visits to their home and assigned him to numerous overseas trips. Her mother was a devout Christian who dedicated her time to education and founded a school that was attended by several children, including Sirleaf and her siblings. Her father, even though they resided in Monrovia, made certain that they remained linked to their indigenous roots by allowing them to visit their village during school holidays, as she explains in her biography "*This Child Will Be Great*." Sirleaf received her education at the College of West Africa (CWA), which was one of the greatest schools in Liberia at the time. The young woman who would become President of Liberia, Sirleaf, married at an early age, and her marriage was blessed with four children. With a strong desire to further her studies, she filed for a government scholarship to study in the United States, which she received together with her husband. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting from Madison Business College in Madison, Wisconsin, USA in 1964; with a Diploma in Economics from the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, USA in 1970; and with a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in Boston, Massachusetts, USA in 1971, Ellen Memoir: *This Child Will Be Great* (2008).

Sirleaf's professional career began with Liberia's Treasury Department in 1965, even before she had her master's degree in public administration. Taking advantage of this position, along with her strong independence and intelligence, she was given the opportunity to serve as Minister of Finance from 1979 until the 1980 military takeover. Later that year, she was appointed President of the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI), but she

was forced to flee the nation due to the military government's oppressive regime. She was well-known for her own financial honesty, and she was always vocal in her opposition to the squandering of funds by the administration. Under Doe's reign, she was captured twice and imprisoned, barely avoiding death on both occasions (theafricanhistory.com). She ran for a position in the Senate for Montserrado County in the 1985 elections and openly criticized Doe, which resulted in her detention and subsequent imprisonment to ten (10). She was later released and given permission to leave the country. As Vice President of the CITICORP Africa Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya, she has had positions at the World Bank and Equator Bank, where she worked as a Senior Loan Officer and as a Vice President. Sirleaf previously served as Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and as Director of the Regional Bureau of Africa in the position of Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, but she resigned from this position in order to run for President of the Republic of Liberia in the 1997 Presidential Elections, she finished second to Charles Taylor (Akwei, 2017). Former president Sirleaf along with Gbowee won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 and further won other prestigious awards.

She didn't have it easy for most of her adult life. In the hands of her husband, Sirleaf endured physical and verbal abuse because he was terrified of her potential. Despite her successful political career, as a female in a patriarchal system, a system in which men have primary power and a dominant role in political leadership, moral authority, social dominance, and control of property, Sirleaf was forced to keep looking over her shoulders, fleeing home and leaving her children in the care of family members. She was dubbed the "Iron Lady"; because of her courage in confronting and standing up to a patriarchal political system. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia in 2005 as the standard-bearer of the Unity Party, and she officially took office on the 16th of January 2006, making her the first democratically elected president in the country's history and the continent of Africa. In her inauguration address, she emphasized the need of ensuring that women in Liberia are empowered in all sectors of the country's life and government. Following her inauguration, she set out on the route to fulfilling her pledge of empowering Liberian women, who had lagged well behind their male counterparts in all aspects of the country for many decades, dating back to the country's founding. Besides inheriting a patriarchal culture, she also inherited an economic system whose structural fabric had been harmed by the fourteen (14) years of civil war, which was compounded by the presence of traumatized individuals, whether they were former soldiers or victims of the conflict. According to Madam Sirleaf, in her inauguration speech in 2006, she stated that; "My Administration shall thus endeavour to give Liberian women prominence in all affairs of our country. My Administration shall empower Liberian women in all areas of our national life. We will support and increase the

writ of laws that restore their dignities and deal drastically with crimes that dehumanize them. We will enforce without fear or favour the law against rape recently passed by the National Transitional Legislature. We shall encourage families to educate all children, particularly the girl child. We shall also try to provide economic programs that enable Liberian women to assume their proper place in our economic revitalization process". These words were hope to the women of Liberia, many of whom were glued to their radios with overwhelming hope that the time for women emancipation had finally come, that women can finally be at the height of men in the country's political leadership structure.

In reflection of this thesis significance, three focus areas are the advancement of access to economic and production resources for women; advancement of access to human capital development opportunities for women; advancement of women access to protection under the rule of law.

Economic and Production Resources

This research, conducted under the previous president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, discusses economic and production resource access via the lens of involvement in the workforce of the public sector. As was the case throughout, this research attempted to capture the current position of women in Liberia. While in power, Sirleaf made it possible for women to continue working, particularly in the public sector, by creating opportunities for them. To incorporate women in the restoration of Liberia, the Liberian President appointed women to high-level government positions, including heads of ministries such as the Ministries of Justice, Finance, Youth and Sports and the Ministries of Commerce and Women and Development. She has also appointed women to serve as superintendents of counties and as mayors of cities, in keeping with her commitment to empowering Liberian women in her first term. Gender inclusion in Liberia's governance system to provide women the opportunity to contribute their own quota to development was a priority, with a particular emphasis on legal and legislative measures. The National Gender Policy, which was implemented during Madam Sirleaf's leadership and is worth highlighting, is one major policy in the area of women empowerment, particularly in terms of involvement in the workforce. NGP, was important in that it provided opportunities for a participatory process that included youth and community-based organizations, civil society organizations, government ministries and agencies, women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cultural leaders, national legislators, public and private institutions, journalists and religious leaders, the National Growth Plan (NGP) was adopted in 2009. This policy was a remarkable tool, given the importance of gender integration and national development in ensuring girls and women are empowered for equitable and sustainable development; strengthening

mechanisms through which both men and women can participate in and benefit from developmental projects; and ensuring girls and women are empowered for equitable and sustainable development. It was obvious from this National Growth Plan that Sirleaf's objective was to boost women's development, remove gender segregation in the workplace, and enhance economic empowerment. Historically, women have played important roles in the agricultural sector, since they are the most prevalent gender in the markets, offering trade and market services, as well as traveling between rural and urban locations through their personal networks. Even though women are the most dominant gender in the agriculture sector, accounting for 80 percent of the workforce, and despite their numerous contributions to the sector, including owning 76 percent of cash crops and 93 percent of food products, they are disproportionately underrepresented as landowners and lack secure tenure to the land on which they grow their crops. This is common in Liberia since it is assumed that women would marry and take on another family's name; hence, the girls are typically deprived of inheritance. Male offspring are the only ones eligible to inherit from their father's family (National Gender Policy, 2009). To promote women empowerment, an act to encourage women political participation which states that;

There shall be no less than 30% and no more than 70% representation of each gender in national elected officers and heads of principal and subsidiary organs and structure of each political party in Liberia, was in process in 2011 for approval and ratification in the Liberian senate (DiMarco, 2012).

Table 1. Public Service Representation of Women and Men at Higher Level

Locations	Total	Males	Females	Female
Cabinet	21	15	6	28.5%
Legislature	94	81	13	13.8%
Supreme Court	5	3	2	40%
Civil Service Directors	318	266	52	16%
CSA Directors and Above	16	15	1	6%
LIPA Directors and Above	8	7	1	12%

Source: Civil Service Reform Strategy, 2008

Table 2. Number of Women Appointed to Position of Trust by the President

Appointed/No minated Positions	# Of Positions	# Of Males	# Of Females	Percentage Female
Minister	23	17	6	28.5%

County Superintendent	15	10	5	40%
Development Superintendent	15	12	3	20%
Chief Justice	1	1	0	0%
Associate Justice	4	2	2	50%
Ambassadors	22	16	6	28.5%

Source: National Gender Policy Document, 2009

As seen in the tables, during Madam Sirleaf's administration such efforts made to ensure that women were represented in every aspect of national administration. She worked hard to ensure that women were represented in top and junior ministerial roles, as well as in other critical decision-making positions in the government. The act to ensure that no gender has more than 70% representation in political participation or less than 30% representation in political participation was not implemented, despite efforts to have it implemented. This was not only within the government's power to secure, but also within the capacity of political parties. Additionally, in 2009, the World Bank ran the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Females and Young Women (EPAG) project as a pilot effort for adolescent girls. EPAG was an effort that provided training in areas such as business skills, work skills, and life skills to around 2,500 young women between the ages of 16 and 27, resulting in a significant increase in employment and a reduction in the high incidence of unemployment among women and girls. This chance was mostly for females who were less affluent and vulnerable.

Human Capital Development

In this thesis, human capital development places emphasis on education and medical services. This was a critical issue that needed redress. Many girls were denied access to basic education which was the cause of the high rate of illiteracy among women and girls. According to the National Gender Policy, the literacy rate for women in rural Liberia was 26%, 61% for women in urban Liberia and for men the literacy rate was 60% and 86% in rural and urban areas. Secondary school attendance ratio in rural areas was 6% for females and 13% for males and the urban attendance ratio was 29% for females and 32% for males. The literacy rate among adult men and women is far lower than that of the children and youth, adult women literacy rate was at 41% while men was 70%.

Furthermore, the gender gap literacy ratio among the youth had a shift under Sirleaf's administration as compared to the adults, however, an adult literacy program was designed

by the Ministries of Education and Gender and Development particularly for women (National Gender Policy, 2009). To refine the delivery service in the education sector, a national survey was conducted on school enrolment. Training needs assessment to identify available teaching personnel was conducted, this was essential in identifying qualified and unqualified teachers. In this light, underqualified and unqualified teachers were trained through relevant programs to fill in the gap that existed in the system. Additionally, the teachers training centres were rehabilitated and treated as a matter of urgency, similarly strengthening the teacher's college at the University of Liberia. Sirleaf, rehabilitated the entire educational sector infrastructure by constructing concrete buildings in towns and villages which never had schools. These were collaborative initiatives by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and other partners to build additional classrooms, train teachers, modify curriculum, and strengthen educational policy plans. According to a study by UNICEF on basic education in Liberia, around 1.4 million students were enrolled in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools in 2015. UNICEF and other partners advocated for increased access to free early childhood development (ECD) programs in schools and communities, with the goal of advancing children's early learning and preparing them for formal schooling. This included the development of ECD policies, standards, and curriculum, as well as the training of facilitators and caregivers (UNICEF, 2015). President Sirleaf signed the new Education Reform Legislation of 2011 into law on August 8, 2011. The reform act was one of the steps put in place by the government to ensure decentralized education. (The Executive Mansion, 2011).

As a direct result of the fighting, access to quality healthcare in Liberia was extremely limited. The healthcare delivery system was in a state of emergency, in need of both professional physicians and nurses, as well as other hospital equipment. NGOs and organizations oversaw executing more than 90 percent of health care service delivery, which was a significant amount of work. Approximately two-thirds of the country's population lacked access to basic secondary healthcare services; the situation was particularly dire in the country's rural areas. This resulted in a high risk of baby maternal mortality. The infant death rate is around 157 per 1,000 live births, while the maternal mortality rate is 760 per 100,000 live births, resulting in the highest mortality rate in the world (National Gender Policy, 2009).

Table 3. Infant Mortality Rate in Liberia from 2008 to 2017

Years	Value	Change
2008	77.4	_____
2009	74.7	-3.49%

2010	72.5	-2.95%
2011	70.7	-2.48%
2012	69.2	-2.12%
2013	68.0	-1.73%
2014	67.4	-0.88%
2015	66.1	-1.93%
2016	65.2	-1.36%
2017	64.3	-1.38%

Source: <https://knoema.com/atlas/Liberia/Infant-mortality>

This table shows that progress was made with regards to the reduction in the percentage of IMR during madam Sirleaf's administration.

The National Health and Social Welfare Decentralization Policy and Strategy, which was implemented under Sirleaf's government, is yet another major policy. It was part of her administration's aim to decentralize the public health sector in Liberia, which included this strategy. It was developed in acknowledgment of the importance of health and social protection as factors of human development and as a component of success for a country like Liberia, and it was designed to address these concerns. To support the government's efforts to expand the network of healthcare facilities, qualified health staff, as well as a massive process of rebuilding clinical, managerial, and administrative capacities, were being developed to develop a workforce with the relevant skills and professional knowledge in the health sector. According to the National Capacity Development Strategy of 2011, the civil service lacked enough employees with the necessary skills, competences, and work culture to provide the public with responsive, effective, and efficient health services. Even those who have the necessary competences and abilities lacked the passion to serve the public. The policy foundation in Liberia was based on the establishment of goals, objectives, a vision, and a mission to enhance the healthcare delivery system (MOH, 2011) in the country. During celebration marking the 40th anniversary of the A. M. Dogliotti College of Medicine of the University of Liberia (UL), Liberian President Ellen Sirleaf reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the full restoration of the institution by providing the necessary support. She commended the help offered to the institution by friendly nations and other foreign partners, but she also stressed the importance of finding a long-term solution to the country's healthcare delivery system. More Liberian physicians, she believes, should be trained to carry out their national responsibilities properly and efficiently, which will be a significant step forward. To encourage more students to pursue careers in medicine and to increase the number of Liberian doctors, Madam Sirleaf made the A.M. Dogliotti Medical

School free for medical students, and she also provided them a monthly stipend for the course of their studies.

Protection Before the Law

Protection before the law will focus on individual and personal rights as well as security taking into consideration violence against women and sexual molestation. This was one of madam Sirleaf's major focus as a victim of abuse after being raped suffering in the hands of her husbands from his violent acts towards her. According to a UN Report, Liberia established a task force to implement recommendations in the 2009 report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Since the outbreak of the Liberian conflict, Sexual and Gender Base Violence (SGBV) continues to be an emergency issue in Liberia. Rape has been and continue to be the highest reported crime in Liberia. In 2007, 46% of reported cases to Liberia National Police are rape cases of children under the age of 18. Sirleaf's administration took huge steps to tackle the issue of SGBV. Measures taken by the Sirleaf led government to prevent and respond to gender-based violence was built around multi-sectoral, and multi-agency framework categorizing GBV interventions into five (5) thematic areas namely, psychosocial, and economic empowerment for women and girls, medical, legal, security and protection, and coordination.

Other related issues like monitoring and evolution as well as advocacy were also captured. The aim of the National Gender-Based violence Plan of Action was to reduce GBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by 2011. As a multi-sectoral framework, it was designed by all actors involved in GBV prevention and responses in the fifteen (15) counties. Those actors are UN Systems, Government Ministries, International and national NGOs, and Community Based Organizations. An allocated budget of fifteen million, two hundred, twenty-five thousand United States dollars (\$ 15,225,000.00) was to be used for the period of five years. Strategies was designed in order to achieve the goals of this framework, the key strategies were, research, advocacy and communication, sensitization and awareness creation, education and capacity enhancement, gender, women, family, and girls empowerment strategies, collaborative management and coordination, resource mobilization, psychosocial counselling and support, youth and male involvement, socio-cultural integration and elimination of native traditional cultural practices the influence GBV in Liberia, integration of GBV school curriculum basic secondary and tertiary levels monitoring and evaluation, collaboration and partnerships.

Table 4. Budget Summary (in US Dollars)

Thematic Areas	Amount spent
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Psycho-social & Economic empowerment	3,000,000.00
Health	6,000,000.00
Protection and Security	2,000,000.00
Legal	3,000,000.00
Coordination	1,225,000.00
Total	15,225,000.00

Gender Based Violence National Plan of Action, 2006

A collaborative agreement was signed by the Liberian government and the United Nations to address issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through the deployment of preventative and response procedures. Additionally, the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy included a component on security and protection, which was implemented in conjunction with this joint effort (PRS). Following the declaration of war by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf against all forms of violence, the Ministry of Justice established an SGBV Crimes Unit, which officially began operations on February 27, 2009. The Domestic Violence Act of 2014, to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against both women and men, was eventually ratified by the legislature in 2019. For the last four years, this Act has been circling the National Legislature's corridors, aiming to enhance the domestic violence regulations included in Chapter 16 of the Penal Code. Female's genital mutilation (FGM) and other traditional practices were the subject of heated debate among legislators over a few elements in the draft act that placed a focus on them. It is considered that these were the difficulties that contributed to the delay in the passage of the domestic violence legislation; nonetheless, the act was ultimately enacted in 2019 and was referred to as the "Domestic Violence Act of 2019" rather than the Domestic Violence Act of 2014, as advocated by Cllr. Kofa (Gboerreh-Boe & Wesseh, 2019).

In light of these steps, it is apparent that Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made significant strides forward in the areas of sustainable growth and development, particularly in the building of ties with other countries throughout the world. It was during her administration that exceptional gains were made in the advancement of good foreign policy and international relations efforts that were beneficial to the country, in relieving the country of enormous debts and benefiting from development projects, international goodwill, construction of public facilities in the country, and the presence of a diplomatic mission, all of which were exceptional gains. She managed to free Liberia of her national debt which stood at \$4.9 billion US dollars. In the interests of the country, her government's foreign policy prioritized the preservation of security while also upholding the country's sovereignty in the pursuit of peace and harmony in accordance with international humanitarian law and

the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Rather her government focused on cooperation with other nations in the international community.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's government was concentrated on the pursuit of one's own interests through developmental diplomacy, which is allowed in the field of international relations since it allows nations to advance their own national interests. Her leadership worked to advance local and international policies on human rights and the rule of law, as well as the development of active economic diplomacy as a critical instrument for the advancement of the country. Sirleaf's foreign policy was based on the political ideologies of liberalism and democracy, which she espoused.

Among the reform and development initiatives undertaken by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which intended to lead the country to a speedy and sustainable development across the country's boundaries. As of 2011, the strategy's development plans, regulations, and other foundational elements have been completed, with the most significant outcome being "Macroeconomic stability with low inflation, virtually balanced budgets, and a significant reduction in foreign debt" (IMF, 2012). The PRS laid the groundwork for the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), a five-year development plan that would lay the groundwork for Liberia's socio-economic development and its long-term goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2030. The Agenda for Transformation (AfT) was a key component of the PRS. The AfT marked the beginning of Liberia's Vision 2030 (Liberia Rising 2030), which was an eighteen (18)-year plan to achieve the goal of becoming a middle-income country by the year 2030, in which Liberians will enjoy a thriving economy, an accountable government, and a stable nation with growth opportunities for the youth. Initiated by Sirleaf's government, this policy strategy resulted in economic development between 2006 and 2014, increasing the country's national budget from 80 million US dollars in 2006 to 572 million US dollars in 2012, resulting in an increase in the country's national income. Additionally, real GDP increased by 9 percent between 2011 and 2012, and then increased by an additional 8 percent between 2013 and 2014. Small-scale development initiatives were also carried out in several counties with the assistance of foreign partners such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the United States, and the counties' operational administrative centres. Markets, bridges, chief compounds, and community colleges were built throughout the counties, as well as other infrastructures. Under Sirleaf's leadership, large-scale developments like the new Roberts International Airport terminal and the Ministerial Complex were completed. Despite the fact that these two big projects were not finished under her administration, all of the processes for their accomplishment were put in place before the end of her tenure. During her tenure, she renovated the Hydroelectric Plant, which

now provides steady energy to most of the population in and around Monrovia. She also performed a significant amount of road work. Grand Bassa, Buchanan Road, Caldwell to Fendell Road, Gbarnga, and Ganta Roads, among other routes, were essential for efficient transit.

One of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's most difficult challenges was the issue of corruption in Liberian society. Corruption has been one of the most serious issues that previous governments have had to deal with prior to Sirleaf taking over as president. Because of this, it is apparent that she took over a country with a national character marked by dishonesty, mismanagement, and a corrupt public system. During her tenure as president, she devised tactics to combat corruption, including the establishment of agencies responsible for auditing and investigating allegations of wrongdoing. One of these institutions is the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), which was established in 2008. She even went so far as to declare corruption to be a public enemy, although the issue of corruption continued to be a problem during Sirleaf's administration.

Her government was challenged with the devastating Ebola Virus Disease outbreak, which was in addition to the war-related issues she faced. This was a serious public health crisis in a country that is still trying to establish a functioning health system. The Ebola outbreak in Liberia began in 2014, posing a serious threat to the country's health-care system and threatening to destabilize the country's already frail economy. Liberia was one of the countries that was most severely afflicted by the Ebola virus. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Liberia was officially certified Ebola-free on June 1, 2016, according to their report on the Ebola Virus Disease, 2014-2016 epidemic in West Africa. Ellen, on the other hand, was able to depict a positive image of herself and Liberia on the world stage. Many international accolades have been bestowed upon her, and she has held positions of influence in the international arena. President Sirleaf was appointed co-chair of the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in May 2012; in June 2016, she became the first female to be elected Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for a term of twelve (12) months.

CHAPTER V

Key Findings

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership was confronted with an excessive number of hurdles and barriers; yet being a woman in charge of a shattered economy with unemployment at 80% (Shulman, 2018), was a highly bold undertaking for which she deserves to be awarded a five-star rating. It takes courage to speak out against a patriarchal system that has been in place for many, many decades, even though she was a victim of the horrible system. She fulfilled her twelve (12)-year term, ushering in the first peaceful and democratic transition in the country's history in seventy (70) years, which culminated in the election of former football star George M. Weah as president. The findings of this study include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Despite significant progress in alleviating poverty, inequality, and unequal representation of women, these concerns to endure in Liberian society. Women continue to be disproportionately represented in Liberia's political realm. Her government fell short of the 30/70 split between men and women in positions of political leadership. Sirleaf's ascension to the presidency spurred a younger generation of women to feel that women can succeed in politics, but she did not completely transform the political structure to ensure equal participation. When she was elected president in 2005, there were only thirteen (13) women elected to the national assembly; by 2011, when she was re-elected, the number had plummeted to eight (8). (Msafropoltan, 2017). This was not entirely her fault because, it was a share responsibility for citizens and political parties.
2. Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were domesticated, it was necessary to identify more realistic efforts to be made in order to maintain tremendous assistance and reconstruct the plans in order to promote development rather than relying solely on the AfT.
3. The education of women and girls was one of Sirleaf's most significant accomplishments. Under her leadership, the number of girls enrolled in schools ranging from pre-primary to university level in Liberia climbed dramatically. The literacy rate among women and girls in Liberia is quite high now.

4. Because the literacy rate of women increased, many families are doing very well. The men are no longer the breadwinners in the homes, but rather it's a shared responsibility of both the man and the woman. Because women are also contributors in the home, they can now have a say in decision making when it comes to the family as opposed to previous generations when women were not permitted to speak.
5. Under Sirleaf's leadership, the quality of health-care services for mothers and new-born improved significantly. The infant mortality rate (IMR) and the number of deaths among women during childbirth have both decreased as a result of improvements in health-care services, such as the availability of competent and skilled health professionals and high-quality medical facilities.
6. The connection of roads connecting rural and urban regions made it easier for market women to go to and from marketplaces, allowing them to sell their agricultural products.
7. In order to stop abuses and sexual violence against women and girls, robust rape laws were enacted, although the requirements for enactment of these laws were not reached. In Liberia, rape and sexual abuse continue to be a nightmare for women and young girls.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Women's political leadership, according to Sara Luise Muhr (2011), may be seen as a gradual breaking through of the "glass barrier" and rejection of the conventional thinking that politics is a field for men. Her activities to improve conventional thinking via persuasion are highlighted by women across the world, as she describes in her book. Women leaders, for example, would want to be "tough, emotionally in control, calculating," rather than the "soft, gentle mother type who cares for her children in a maternal manner," according to the author (2011: 353). Muhr (2011: 341) uses the metaphor of "the cyborg" to describe this new kind of woman: "a person who must give up much of their uniqueness and work tirelessly for perfection to surpass their male counterparts on all levels". The idea of a female leader as part-human, part-machine is a disturbing representation of the ramifications of women taking traditionally male-dominated positions in society.

Madam Sirleaf has done an outstanding job in Liberia in terms of altering the status quo for women. Taking them from the back of the line to the front of the line, providing them with the chance to be granted a seat at the table to participate in critical decision-making processes, and allowing them to have their opinions heard Sirleaf's election came two years after the country's horrific civil war ended, establishing history not only in Liberia, but also on the African continent as the country's first female democratically elected President, and the first female president in the country's history. It was then that she embarked on a very tough journey to reconstruct a country that had recently come to an end after fourteen (14) years of civil war between 1989 and 2003. She had to repair a country whose entire infrastructure was damaged, poor roads network, illiterate population, lack of electricity, poor security and justice system, lack of public service buildings, lack of equip hospitals, among other things.

The significance of this study was to look at the contributions women bring to political leadership in terms of development, using these two questions as the backdrop for this study; given the challenges confronting former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership from a feminist perspective, what was her developmental impact in Liberia; and to what extent did she influence changes in the

status quo of women roles and responsibilities in Liberian society? Keeping these questions in mind, the goal of this study was to evaluate President Sirleaf's administration while she was in office; to examine the educational and empowerment opportunities her administration created for Liberian women; and to investigate the possibility of Liberia electing another female president. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was raised in a distinguished household and was introduced to politics as a result of her father's role in the Liberian government during Tubman administration.

In society, men have often led in political positions as compared to women, and in Africa, men have always controlled the financial, social, and political spheres of the continent. Liberia, which is no different from other African countries since its foundation, has been known to be a patriarchal society. The system created an image which printed men as the strongest and smartest gender, leading to their dominance in society, while on the other hand, the female gender has been given the image of being weak and less smart. This image of women established a glass ceiling which women have taken decades to break through, transferring it to the political space. Women in Liberia for many decades suffered all forms of discriminations, they were denied certain rights in society, their roles and responsibilities were clearly distinguished from their male counterparts. The African continent historically, religiously, and culturally assigned distinct characteristics that ideally define the roles and responsibilities of men and women. This tradition corresponds with family expectations that clearly define the responsibilities of women and men in the home, where women are responsible for family support and maintenance exercising less power, while men are charged with the responsibility of leading and exercising more power. These attributes being designed for each gender created gender quotas in the Liberia political sphere which suppressed women from meeting their potential in Liberian society, to a greater extent marginalizing women who thrive to attain some accomplishments in the Liberian political system. Before Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's presidency, there were women in Liberia who managed to break through the glass ceilings placed on them and successfully achieve living beyond what the society expected of them. Today, going back in Liberia's history, it is sad to know that only the shadows of women can be found with just few women being recognized. It can even be argued that if Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had not gone through the thick and thin, the hard and the tough roads, making it to the presidency, women like Suahkoko, and

Angie Brooks Randolph, names would not have been mentioned in the history of Liberia. Liberian women were unknown in the country's history until Sirleaf's era. It is even sadder to know that Liberia only has a rich history of conflict, and all through the period of the country's crisis, women again were highly victimized.

President Sirleaf's administration was a task with too many challenges and responsibilities. Truth be told, twelve (12) years is not enough for an entirely damaged economy to be fixed. In Liberia, women are increasingly holding positions of power and leadership. With a female President, female lawmakers, and female ministers, women are gradually playing prominent roles in Liberian society. Just a half-century ago, it was nearly impossible for women to fill these roles. Although the number of women in these top governmental positions is not high, yet these gains came on the back of Sirleaf's sacrifices, fighting to stand up in a male dominated politics. The efforts to have an increased number of female political involvement was not entirely for Sirleaf to carry, political parties, women support movements are all forces needed in ensuring that the number of women in the legislature and cabinet be increased. The debate for women contesting in elections is no longer about competence about financial resources and support. Today Liberia is still upholding the commitment to women empowerment because of Sirleaf's ability to shape the culture by providing accessible educational opportunities wherein the women of Liberia have benefited massively. Girls in schools are standing up to contest for positions which were only known to be for boys. Women even at the local government levels are taking seats which were designated for and owning properties. Under her administration, she was concerned about promoting policy agendas, Sirleaf was interested in the promotion of family issues considerably because every society begins with the family. Under her leadership, the number of women grassroots movements increased in the country receiving support from international partners to promote women and girls empowerment. Former president Sirleaf's leadership was a hope for Liberia, picking up the country from where she found it, she was about to generate domestic and foreign resources in her agenda for development by directly improving the transportation, energy, and health sectors of Liberia. Relieving the country of its national debts and increasing the GDP. Finally, she was able to maintain peace in Liberia until she transitioned the country into its first democratic transition after so many years.

Is it possible to argue that Liberia is any closer to having another female president considering these circumstances? This is an issue that many Liberians find themselves pondering on a regular basis. When this subject is addressed in an open dialogue, the males will occasionally react with a "No," while the women, who are filled with hope and passion, will frequently respond with an enthusiastic "Yes." Looking at the country politics, many women are interested in finding themselves in the political space. They are leading transformational and developmental initiatives. Right after Sirleaf's administration, Liberia made history by producing its First Female Vice President in the 2017 elections, making former Senator Jewel Howard Taylor vice president on the ticket of Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) with President George M. Weah. This is also a massive gain for women political leadership in Liberia, which could lead to the election of another female president in a not too long-distance future.

Finally, given Sirleaf's outstanding achievements in Liberia's geopolitics, which significantly improved the people's social and economic well-being as well as the country's political stability, it was critical to analyse the Sirleaf era from a feminist viewpoint. Women are still oppressed over the globe by dominating cultures and religious extremist groups, (The Global Institute for Women's Leadership 2018). Yet, women have risen to political prominence and stepped in to give vital improved leadership, especially when dealing with challenges like as post-war recovery, poverty, and inequality, as proven by Sirleaf's government. Women's distinct leadership characteristics not only back up the 1995 Beijing conference for women, which states that as women rose through the ranks of political leadership, they developed a range of tactics for adapting to and coping with the realities of political life. Close-knit communities and networks that provided direction and emotional support, as well as strong teams with a variety of abilities to overcome hurdles, were often noted. These networks also enabled women to maintain their motivation and set boundaries in accordance with their overall leadership vision. It asserts that women confront a more complicated labyrinth of issues than men do throughout their leadership careers. Women's leadership influences others to attain shared objectives, according to Meng Li (2020). Women leaders, she claims, utilize more transformational leadership (inspiring, loving, and encouraging) and participate in more of the continent's reward behaviours. These arguments support how Sirleaf's

government changed the status quo and displayed better leadership in a post-conflict nation than males' leadership especially her predecessor Charles Taylor.

Feminist perspectives on political leadership assist women in mustering the courage to engage in political activity. Despite the numerous supportive and critical arguments advanced by feminists, women continue to struggle in politics, facing numerous difficult obstacles. However, when given the opportunity to serve in political leadership positions, they have been able to shape policies in a positive direction that addresses women's issues. Women's groups and organizations frequently promote and support women's political agendas through training and resources, to assure their success in political processes. Sirleaf's leadership demonstrates that feminist preconceptions about women political leaders are accurate in terms of their priorities being policy concerns impacting women and a better responsiveness in resolving these issues, also, the improvement of democracy. Sirleaf's leadership birth the first peaceful democratic transition in Liberia after many years. The elections of 2017 which led to the presidency of Goerge Weah was the first democratic exchange of power in seventy (70) years of the country's history (Roby, 2017). Feminist perspective makes it easy when analysing and understanding Sirleaf's leadership and also while she made gains in areas of education, healthcare delivery, foreign policies, human capital development, security by providing women protection under the law, promoting gender equality and equity as well a diminishing discrimination against women and girls.

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Appendix A

Turnitin Similarity Report

An Examination of Women Political Leadership in Liberia During Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Presidency (2007 to 2017): A Feminist Perspective

ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

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Appendix B

Ethics Committee Approval

12.01.2022

Dear Kimberline Annan

Your project "An Examination of Women Political Leadership in Liberia during Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Presidency (2007 to 2017): A Feminist Perspective" has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project it does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Direnç Kanol

Rapporteur of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee



Note: If you need to provide an official letter to an institution with the signature of the Head of NEU Scientific Research Ethics Committee, please apply to the secretariat of the ethics committee by showing this document.