NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

RETHINKING DEMOCRACY AND CONTINUING MARGINALIZATION OF WOMENIN LIBERIAN POLITICS BETWEEN 2005-2017

M.A. THESIS

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Nicosia

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Approval

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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.

Donetta M. Kokeh

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Rethinking Democracy and Continuing Marginalization of Women in Liberian politics from between 2005-2017

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Liberia possess a lengthy history of gender prejudice against women, with women held accountable for the support and upkeep of their families while men hold greater power in making decisions. This has impeded women's capacities, education, and accessibility to the economy. Having said that, there was a noticeable increase in the number of women actively participating in the voting process in Liberia during the post-war electoral period. Prior to the elections in 2005, which ushered in a new era for women, women faced a number of challenges, including marginalization. Women were limited to a specific set of duties within the civilization, most notably those in the home. There were institutional impediments that made it challenging for women to get involved in politics, such as discriminatory laws. During the era of Madam Ellen Sirleaf certain mechanisms and initiatives were on rise with the aim of increasing awareness of the potential contributions that women can make to the process of nation-building. Women in leadership positions have advanced much as well, yet there is still a sizable gender imbalance in political posts. Thus, this study investigates women's marginalization in Liberian politics from 2005- 2017 and also discusses how Madam Sirleaf's leadership brought advancement in changing the narratives about the marginalization of women in Liberian society.

Key Words: Liberia, Democracy, Marginalization, Politics, Participation

Öz

2005 – 2017 arası dönemde Liberya siyasetinde Kadınların Devam Eden Marjinalleşmesi ve Demokrasi Üzerine Yeniden Düşünmek

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Liberya, kadınlara karşı uzun bir toplumsal cinsiyet önyargısı geçmişine sahiptir; kadınlar ailelerinin desteğinden ve bakımından sorumlu tutulurken, erkekler karar vermede daha fazla güce sahiptir. Bu, kadınların kapasitelerini, eğitimlerini ve ekonomiye erişilebilirliklerini engellemiştir. Bununla birlikte, savaş sonrası seçim döneminde Liberya'da oy verme sürecine aktif olarak katılan kadınların sayısında gözle görülür bir artış olmuştur. Kadınlar için yeni bir dönemi başlatan 2005 seçimleri öncesinde kadınlar marjinalleşme de dahil olmak üzere bir dizi zorlukla karşılaştı. Kadınlar, uygarlık içinde, özellikle de evdekiler olmak üzere, belirli bir dizi görevle sınırlandırılmıştı. Ayrımcı yasalar gibi kadınların siyasete katılmasını zorlaştıran kurumsal engeller vardı. Madam Ellen Sirleaf döneminde ise kadınların ulus inşası sürecine yapabilecekleri potansiyel katkılar konusunda farkındalığı artırmak amacıyla belirli mekanizmalar ve girişimler yükselişe geçti. Liderlik pozisyonlarındaki kadınlar da çok ilerledi, ancak siyasi mevkilerde hala oldukça büyük bir cinsiyet dengesizliği mevcuttur. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma 2005-2017 yılları arasında Liberya siyasetinde kadınların marjinalleştirilmesini araştırmakta ve Madam Sirleaf'in liderliğinin Liberya toplumunda kadınların marjinalleştirilmesine dair anlatıları değiştirmede nasıl ilerleme sağladığını açmazları ile birlikte ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liberya, Demokrasi, Marjinalleşme, Siyaset, Katılım

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List of Abbreviations

ACFODE: Action for Development

AFELL: Association of Female Lawyer of Liberia

AWLN: African Women Leaders Network

BPFA: Beijing Plan of Action

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CPA: Certified Public Accountant

CPP: Collaborating Political Parties

EWLA: Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association

GGI: Global Gender Index

IDP: Internally Displaced Persons

IYWD: Institute for Young Women's Development

LNAP: Liberia National Action Plan

LTI: Liberia Transition Initiative

LWNPF: Liberia Women National Political Forum

LWI: Liberians Women's Initiative

MGD: Ministry of Women and Gender Development

NEC: National Elections Commission

NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia

RNGS: Research Network on Gender in Society

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

TWP: True Whig Party

ULIMO: The United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNOMIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WHO: World Health Organization

WIPNET: Women in Peace-building Network

WONGOSOL: Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Liberia was founded on January 7, 1822, as the result of the repatriation of free slaves from America. But before the arrival of the free slaves or the settlers, Liberia was inhibited by people called Blewee and Bodio. These people lived in Liberia before the arrival of the free slaves from America. Liberia was founded by an American Humanitarian organization named the American Colonization Society (ACS). Liberia underwent two periods before the declaration of independence on July 26, 1847. The first period was referred to as the colonial period, which ran from 1822 to 1839. During this period, the three political subdivisions were independent of each other, namely Montserrado, Grand Bassa, and Sinoe counties. After this period, Liberia entered a commonwealth period. This is a period where all political subdivisions came together under one form of government to be led, and this period lasted from 1839 to 1847. After these periods, Liberia declared independence because of the frequent violations of her rights by France and Great Britain and because the country was not recognized by any nation in the world.

In August 2003, the nation's violent and disastrous civil war came to an end. Since then, Liberia has successfully staged three free and fair elections. These elections all went off without a hitch. In this democratic system, everyone who satisfies the prerequisites has the same opportunity to vote and run for office in any of the open positions, regardless of gender, country, or religion. On the other hand, this isn't always the case in reality. The context of women's groups serves as an excellent example of this (WIPNET). It is believed that only males can determine how the government should function; men continue to have an advantage over women in political landscape. In other words, politics is perceived as a man's realm since it involves a struggle for dominance over others, which does not appear natural for women.

This conceptualization of gender inequality in terms of power relations traces back to Niccolo Machiavelli's theories on how the end justifies the means. *Fortuna*, a symbol for the attributes of goodness and knowledge that Machiavelli emphasized in his book The Prince, is no longer significant in the male-dominated view of what

politics should include (Kahn, V. 1986). Another example of this power relation can be tied with Kenneth Waltz's masterpiece, State and War (1995). In this regard, it is imperative to state that the gender in/equality and marginalization of women have begun to be a vital topic under investigation in international relations by the end of the Second World War. The nation of Liberia was used as a case study for this thesis for a variety of reasons within the context of this investigation. First off, unlike other African countries where post-conflict reforms have supported the inclusion of women in these bodies, Liberia's recent history of violence and the significant democratic and political changes that have been taking place there since 2005 have not encouraged the admission of women to the country's legislature. This is because men still predominate in the Liberian legislative organ, i.e., the Parliament. This is especially noteworthy in light of the widespread regional and international recognition Johnson-Sirleaf's work to empower women has received; in 2011, she received numerous awards for her achievements in this field, including the Nobel Peace Prize, the Women of Excellence Award, the African Gender Award, the Millennium Development Goal 3 Award, and the Women of Excellence Award. In terms of gender representation, the Liberian Parliament has 114 women out of a total of 189 members, placing it 114th out of 189 countries (IPU 2012a; IPU 2012b; IPU 2012c; UNMIL 2012, p. 8). In the Liberian Parliament, women make up 11.6 percent of the total number of members. The evidence provided in IPU 2012a, 2012b, and 2012c indicates that in 2005, women made up 14 percent of the total number of MPs in the Liberian Parliament. Every person has the right to participate in the decision-making process of the government of his or her own country, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This unique situation is due to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The attainment of honest and accountable government and administration, as well as for sustained growth in all spheres of society, requires the freedom and autonomy of women in addition to an improvement in women's economic and political status. Whatever the area of life in question, this is true. Power dynamics exist at every level of society, from the most private to the most public, and they prevent women from leading lives that are meaningful and satisfying to them. Women are drastically underrepresented in practically every branch of the government, especially in executive and ministerial positions. They have also made little progress in gaining political influence in legislative bodies, and they haven't even come close to meeting the Economic and

Social Council's goal of having women hold 30 percent of decision-making positions by the year 1995. This is despite most polities having experienced a widespread movement toward democratization (UNO, 1996:109). In the 1990s, only 16 nations met their target of having 30 percent of decision-making positions held by women (Amanor-Wilks, 2002, p. 10). This is true even though the Beijing Platform for Action seeks to accomplish it. Mozambique (25 percent), South Africa (25 percent), and the Seychelles (27 percent) are the top four countries. Although 47 million Nigerians were enrolled as eligible voters for the 1999 elections, 27 million of these individuals—or 57.4 percent of all registered voters—were female. The Seychelles (27 percent) the two African states that were closest to having 30 percent of female decision-makers in 1997 were South Africa (25 percent) and Mozambique (25 percent) according to data given by the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (25 percent) were South Africa and Mozambique. 25 percent of the decision-makers in each of these nations were women (Mawawa,1999, pp. 22-26).

In light of this, this thesis examines the participation of women in the governing bodies of Liberia from 2005 to 2017, and it does so in a manner that is consistent with the ideas presented in inclusion of adults by Robert Dahl (1998). All adult permanent residents, or at the very least the vast majority of them, should have access to the full range of citizenship rights that the first four conditions suggest. Before the turn of the twentieth century, the majority of democratic proponents regarded these criteria as inadmissible (Dahl, 1998, pp: 37–38). The percentage of women holding elected office on the African continent rose to 24 percent by the year 2021 (Bond, 2018). These low numbers have a lot of underlying factors, such as a lack of political will, restrictive voting laws, and deeply ingrained misogyny. Additionally, there are numerous laws, legislation, and rules in Africa that are designed to guarantee that women play an equal and significant role in the political processes of the continent. The fact that women's political struggle is a widespread occurrence shows that there is still more work to be done to promote the cause of women in politics. Women in powerful positions will draw more attention to the need for the adoption of policies that are more cooperative, peaceful, and centered on the well-being of families, women, and children, it is generally agreed by those who support gender equality and feminism. This is made more challenging, though, by the increasing amount of political discourse that claims that politics is a man's world and

that the pursuit of power justifies any and all strategies. Women are discouraged from entering politics as a result of this mindset, which is shared by many people who see politics as a sphere where using any means required to gain power is acceptable. In today's society, these points of view are steadily assuming hegemonic positions, which means they are assuming a more dominant role. As a result, women frequently find themselves in a challenging scenario where they are required to compromise their ideals in order to engage in politics, which is typically the purview of men. To shape or have an impact on political discourse, feminists and female activists must continue working to revive their early understanding of the difficulties that women face. Then and only then will they be able to mold or control it. In Liberia, women have multiple disadvantages compared to men in both their personal and professional life (Emmett, & Alant, 2006). Because Liberia is a patriarchal country with traditional cultural values, women have less access to education, health care, property, prosperity, and justice than men. When it comes to schooling in Liberia, boys are preferred over girls. In most situations, the extended family will pay for boys' schooling but rarely for females. This is an illustration of Amartya Sen's notion of "special opportunity inequality, which proposes that societies should try to provide individuals with an equal opportunity for autonomy or empowerment". In Liberian schools, girls have been given less possibilities for education. This gender disparity between boys and girls is derived from the understanding that the familial bonds and relations will be jeopardized.

Examining the interactions between the native Liberians and the Americo-Liberian elite who dominated the nation from 1979 until that year will help us understand several of these problems. There are difficulties for women in Liberia in many areas of their personal and professional lives. It may be challenging to get beyond these obstacles. Following Liberia's declaration of independence, the True Whig Party (TWP) established customs based on what Americans and non-native Liberians perceived to be the nation's traditions. On the other hand, a large chunk of the crucial roles that women performed in both social and political life were utterly ignored by these constraints. Whatever the reasons, this was the situation. The Rules and Regulations Governing the Hinterland are a set of laws and regulations that the Americo-Liberian True Whig Party (TWP) enacted in the 19th century to exert indirect control over the nation's rural areas (Gerdes, F. 2013). Because of how much

the framework of indirect norms that the British used is evocative of these rules and standards, they are extraordinary. Even though Liberia's most recent president was a woman, there is a serious lack of gender equity in the political structure of the nation. This is true even though Liberia's president at the time was a woman. The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia in 2005 undoubtedly represented a huge advancement for women's rights; yet, the reality for the vast majority of Liberian women is far different from what was anticipated at the time of her triumph. The percentage of women represented in the legislative body should be substantially greater than the 14 percent they discovered in 2008, according to women's rights organizations, who have long maintained this view. In spite of the fact that there were more women running for office in the 2011 elections (105 women out of 925 candidates), the proportion of female candidates who were ultimately victorious decreased from 14 to 11 percent. (Heaner, 2012). In light of this, the researcher came to the conclusion that it would be imperative to look into the causes of women's marginalization in the case of Liberia, which would also speak for the African continent as well.

Statement of the Problem

The gender gap and the challenges experienced by Liberian women who hold top national leadership positions and are active participants in the country's political institutions are one of the main concerns of this study. Despite numerous international laws outlawing such discrimination, women still do not enjoy the same respect or political participation privileges as men. Despite the fact that more and more African women are participating in politics, prejudice still exists in many African nations. In Liberia, as well as nearly every other nation on the African continent, women were denied a number of basic rights. Women in Liberia did not even have the right to vote in national elections prior to President William V. S. Tubman's first term in office. In the end, women in the United States were granted the right to enfranchisement in 1946 when a constitutional referendum granted them the ability to vote in both local and presidential elections. There was a noticeable increase in the number of women actively participating in the voting process in Liberia during the post-war electoral period. Out of a total of forty-four candidates, four women ran for office in Liberia's 2005 presidential and vice-presidential

elections respectively. For the Liberian Unity Party and Freedom Alliance Party, respectively, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Margaret Toh Thompson stood for president; for the Liberia Destiny Party and the Liberty Party, Parleh Dargbeh Harris and Amelia Ward campaigned for vice president. Seven hundred and fifty-eight (758) candidates in all ran for seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate (The New Dawn, 2016). There were 106 female candidates out of those totals.

Prior to the elections in 2005, which ushered in a new era for women, women faced a number of challenges, including marginalization. Women were limited to a specific set of duties within the civilization, most notably those in the home. Political and social institutions habitually ignored women's fundamental rights to education and a range of other social benefits. Numerous obstacles that women had to overcome made it difficult for them to contribute to society and the community on a par with their male counterparts. However, there were institutional impediments that made it challenging for women to get involved in politics, such as discriminatory laws. Another barrier to women's access to knowledge on effective leadership was the gender difference in capacity. An economy that had been completely destroyed by the nation's fourteen (14) year civil war, which ran from 1989 through 2003, was what former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf inherited. The desire for earlier days, when bread could be bought with pennies and when power and water were reliably supplied through pipes, was merely a yearning. The era before what are now luxuries like decent houses, clothes, and enough food were not. Along with the destruction of public services and infrastructure, the nation was also burdened with a mountain of debt. These initiatives aim to raise awareness of the potential contributions that women can make to the process of nation-building. Women in leadership positions have advanced much as well, yet there is still a sizable gender imbalance in political posts. There is still a sizable gender gap presents despite the numerous initiatives and programs that have been established to improve the political participation of women.

Research Question

The research questions of this thesis are based on the scope of; the purpose research. Thus, this thesis will solicit answer to these critical questions below:

- Did Ellen Sirleaf's leadership bring about any advancement in changing the narratives about the marginalization of women in Liberian society, or did it keep things the same?

- How much has the establishment of women's organizations contributed to bridging the gender gap among marginalized women?

Significance of the study

On numerous occasions throughout history, the notion that men and women are fundamentally distinct has been disseminated. The argument that women are intrinsically inferior to men has frequently been supported by the belief that men and women are fundamentally different. Arguments that assert women are less capable than males draw our attention to the necessity to confront underlying power dynamics when one starts to investigate what it means to be a particular gender. Despite the efforts that women in political leadership positions have made to demonstrate that they are equally capable as their male counterparts.

These women want to demonstrate that they can perform tasks just as well as their male coworkers. This is true even though discrimination against women still exists. Liberians understood how crucial it was to elect a female president, which resulted in the first democratically elected female head of state on the continent. This was a major victory for Liberian women as well as a source of pride for the country of Liberia on the international scene. This study's value rests in its ability to demonstrate the prospects for women in political leadership as well as the variety of developmental outcomes that these people are capable of. It will also show the range of developmental outcomes that these people are capable of producing. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was able to influence the development of Liberian society in terms of both its infrastructure and its people despite inheriting an economy whose very foundation had been destroyed. Construction of public buildings and the establishment of reliable institutions will improve the infrastructure; population education opportunities will improve the human condition. One of the many women who have defied gender stereotypes in order to develop their careers and hold powerful positions is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is one of many, despite the fact that there is a disparity between the representation of men and

women at the highest levels of the governmental structure. She not only overcame her fears of marginalization and rose to the top of the political food chain, but Madam Sirleaf also led the critical transformation and thus provided the women the necessary means such as by rising to the top of the political food chain, in Liberian society. However, due to its relevance, this research will also contribute to future research initiatives.

Feminist Theory

This theory was first advanced by Wilhelmina Drucker in 1901. It looked at how men and women play different roles in terms of power. Feminism aims to remove all psychological, social, and legal constraints that restrict women from taking independent action. Women must have equal access to competitive economic possibilities if our society is to even approach fulfilling its potential (Evans, 1995). Women are seen as passive change agents in this movement, which calls into question and alters ingrained preconceptions about how women are perceived in psychological and historical contexts. The idea also recognizes avenues, such as organizations, that enable women to actively participate in the process of social transformation in society. A political and social movement known as feminism advocates for women to have equal rights and opportunities in both the political and economic spheres. In order to guarantee that women are given the same chances and benefits as those enjoyed by men, it examines fundamental political connections that have an impact on gender and power relations (Benhabib, 1987). The first wave of feminism and feminist movements emerged from social movements that started in the 19th century with the goal of ensuring that women were treated equally to men in all parts of life. The movement pushed for significant advancements to women's civic rights, including the right to vote (Seth, 2011). The feminist movement pushed for equal representation of men and women in society and politics (Cott, 1987). The movement's roots may be found in New York, and it led to the coming together of hundreds of people to advance women's civil rights and economic equality (Evans, 1995). Three main waves can be identified in the evolution of feminism. The first wave's origins can be found in nineteenth-century Europe and North America. This movement's main goal was to fight for men's and women's rights to be treated equally. In addition to equal political opportunities, they also included the right to vote, the right to work, the right to own property, the right to inherit property, and the

right to own a gun (Brookes, 2008). The first wave of the assault was successful. Women gained the right to vote as part of a greater push for gender equality in several European nations. China, Japan, and a few more countries quickly followed suit (Yuan, 2005). On the other side, the feminist movement encountered fierce hostility in some parts of the world. For instance, the question of male dominance was presented as having religious significance in India. A subsequent wave of feminism emerged as a result of this. The primary focus of this was on evolving social and political behavior patterns that hindered the liberation of women (Tong, 1989). Within this context, Simone de Beauvoir examined the ways in which women's social construction as the "other" led to their disempowerment. In the second wave of research, researchers looked at social perceptions of sexual discrimination, unequal employment possibilities for women, and discriminatory pay for women (Seth, 2011). There are still many nations in the world where it might be argued that this wave is still in existence. Women's inability to access equal job prospects, as well as their lower pay relative to men, are all issues that feminists continue to fight against. For instance, black women in the US have continued their dogged fight for equal representation in governmental positions. As a result, there are now more women in positions of political leadership across all of Europe, including some who are heading states and governments (Brookes, 2008). This rise in the proportion of women in leadership roles in Europe has sparked similar changes elsewhere in the world. Women are increasingly taking positions of political leadership in nations like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Thornham (2006) argues that it is plausible to conclude that women may achieve equal political and economic rights anywhere in the globe provided they are willing to advocate for those rights. It is obvious that gaining equal rights for women around the world is doable in light of the fact that a black man was elected president of the United States of America in 2008 as a direct result of the equal rights movement that led to enhanced rights for black people in the United States (US) (Seth, 2011). The third wave of feminism, which is still running strong now, began in the 1980s. This wave had a close connection to politics. This resulted directly from criticism of the second wave, which claimed that while it advocated for some rights, such as the sexual rights of women, it was less concerned with other rights that had an impact on women's sexuality, such as the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and

transgender people. Also, it was believed that neither the poverty of white women nor that of black women was of great concern to the organization (Tong, 2013). As a result, this third wave started looking into more fundamental issues including racism, homophobia, and European behaviors (Mackinnon, 1982). This leads one to the conclusion that the feminism theoretical framework emphasizes the equality of women through responsible decision-making and deeds (Brookes, 2008).

It is clear that these rights still have a long way to go before they are fully realized. The sad reality is that men still have a disproportionately male perspective on women, and this bias persists today. Despite being the more skilled and politically seasoned candidate, democratic contender Hillary Clinton lost the most recent election in the United States to a guy with a history of misogyny (Scaramucci, 2017). According to theory, the fourth wave of feminism is currently developing. This is a fight for the rights of women in terms of their occupations, education, enterprises, and political involvement (Rampton, 2015). The rights to abortion and contraception, as well as the rights to accept female sexuality and general women's rights, are all listed on the expanded lists of rights that are a part of this wave (Rampton, 2015). By creating a supportive infrastructure for organizations that provide women refuge from oppression, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of measures made to protect women from gender-based violence. Women's issues, which had been ignored in previous waves, are now receiving attention in this fourth wave. A variety of subjects have received a lot of media coverage in recent years, including but not limited to sexual assault, rape, gender-based violence, transgender individuals, lesbians, and others. As all the previous waves before it, the fourth wave of feminism is pushing for total gender equality (Rampton, 2015). This idea can be used to shed light on this study since it helps to explain why women participate in politics at a lower rate than men. As a result of contextualizing the creation and operation of women's organizations in the public realm in relation to certain psycho-sociological events, it also suggests remedial measures. This is achieved by placing the actions of women's organizations within the context of specific psycho-sociological events. The study looks at women's organizations as a way to make amends for past injustices that have led to women's marginalization.

In light of these discussions, the purpose of the research is to better understand how psycho-sociological marginalization is being addressed, so this is

done. The feminist movement is beneficial because it focuses on the rights of women. Knowledge of feminism may be of great use in many situations. The core tenet of feminism is the idea that women have a right to equality in all spheres of society, including politics, economics, and society at large. This opinion is shared by feminists. The main goal of feminism is to achieve gender equality in all spheres of society, including the right to equal protection under the law and civil rights.

Private versus Public life of women

To understand the concept of women's marginalization, one must be aware of the duality between the public and private realms. Men are connected with the public world, whereas women are associated with the home (private) sphere, according to this dualism. This dualistic viewpoint holds that men are better equipped to live in the public world and that women belong in the private sector of the home. Men are openly identified with the world of structure, culture, and public life, whereas women are explicitly linked to the world of nature, emotion, and desires. Men are also specifically linked to the realm of logic and public life. The idea that men and women are essentially different has led to this dichotomy. Individual and cultural worldviews are influenced by this dualism and essentialist conceptions of gender, which also hinder women from entering politics because of how clearly defined and consistently reinforced their gender roles are. Throughout history, fathers and husbands have been the ones to publicly defend their wives and daughters, frequently silencing them in the process and claiming control of their agency (Arneil 1999:7-8). Due to efforts for women's suffrage, equal pay for equal work, support for reproductive rights, and third-wave feminist critiques of essentialist ideas of femininity, this duality has become more convoluted in a number of nations. Despite this, there is still a significant negative impact on the participation of women in political processes due to the disparity between the public and private sectors. This is particularly true in places like Liberia, one of the only countries where women's emancipation has made very little progress and where the situation is exceedingly terrible.

As recorded by the 2011 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Liberia was placed 139th out of 146 countries with a Gender Inequality Index (GII) score of 0.671 (UNDP, 2011, p. 4). Prejudice based on gender is instilled in children at an early age, says Longwe,

when "boys are socialized to believe that girls may legitimately be excluded, and girls are socialized to believe that public decision-making positions should properly be occupied by men" (2000, p. 26). According to Longwe, this socialization takes place when "girls are socialized to believe that public decision-making positions should properly be occupied by men." (Longwe, 2000 pp. 24-30.) Discrimination that is ingrained in girls from an early age may impede the growth of their knowledge and abilities in the public sphere. Practically everywhere on the planet, women have much lower literacy rates than men. Even in Liberia, where men had literacy rates of 70% compared to women's rates of 41%, this is true (GoL 2008:47). In certain cases, the growing involvement of women in public life has resulted in a more equitable division of labor between the sexes, with males taking on duties related to the private sphere. Sweden is one of these countries, according to Wangnerud, who was reported by Ballington and Karam (2005, p. 36), where the government provides incentives to parents who split their maternity and paternity periods. The women participation in public life has not resulted in a more equitable distribution of power in other situations. Women are required to balance two sets of responsibilities in many regions of the world, especially in Africa, as a direct result of their involvement in public life. When women are fully responsible for both their work obligations and their family responsibilities, it creates a double weight for them (Gouws 2008, p. 546). One of these areas is Africa.

Methodology

The research accumulates data and other pertinent information in order to achieve its objectives. Journals, books, articles, and the internet serve as information sources. For the purpose of evaluating the findings of this thesis's research, secondary sources are mined for pertinent data while information from the aforementioned sources is analyzed. As a consequence, this study employs a predominantly qualitative methodology. This method was selected because it is one of the most effective methods used in theoretical works for conducting research and addressing research concerns. This work relies heavily on data from Freedom House, the Gender Equality Index, and the Democracy Index. These sources were indispensable to the completion of the research titled "Rethinking Democracy and the Marginalization of Women in Liberian Politics."

Limitations

Due to the nature of this study, secondary data will be utilized. These secondary data will be acquired from a wide number of organizations that have connections to the subject matter. Inadequate funding, a paucity of labor (research assistant), and a lack of time, among other things, were some of the key challenges that needed to be conquered. Other challenges included: This inquiry has a number of challenges, one of which is a lack of access to more relevant literature and information sources, both of which have the potential to be of great assistance to the investigation.

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Framework: Conceptualization of Democracy and Democratization

This chapter addresses and examines the existing and growing literature on the topic of democracy and the marginalization of women in Liberian politics. The chapter will also focus on the theoretical framework and tools that support the research topic and provides a better understanding with respect to women's political participation.

This thesis there illustrates that the increase in the number of women in the legislature often results in a greater focus on women's issues. Thus, gender inequality can be overcome. In parallel to this augment, democracy is primarily dependent on women's participation in political landscape. It makes it easier for women to engage directly in public decision-making and ensures stronger accountability to women.

Democracy as argue by Robert Dahl (1998), is a system that is completely responsive to all its citizens. (Freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and speech, voting rights, political pluralism, freedom to education, and freedom of press) Additionally, he said that none of the five principles he advocated for effective participation, equal voting rights, enlightened understanding, agenda control, and inclusiveness have ever been successfully implemented in any country. USAID is dedicated to assisting Liberia in building on its democratic achievements over the past decade. In this context, USAID continues to increase the National Elections Commission's (NEC) ability to prepare for and carry out credible elections. Furthermore, USAID assists civil society groups in amplifying the NEC's civic and voter education initiatives and providing monitoring of election processes, procedures, and events. Women's political engagement in the historic 2017 presidential elections is encouraged via USAID initiatives, which also facilitate foreign election monitoring. As the 2020 Senate elections approach, USAID will also engage with political parties to establish member-oriented and issue-based groups that can comply with NEC standards.

A democratic wave, according to Huntington is, "a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that happen within a certain amount of time and are much more common than transitions in the opposite direction during that time" (1991, p. 15). In Huntington's book, you can find this definition. The conceptual foundations of the political ideology known as democracy are the ideas of

equality and liberty. Democracy generally supports policies and concepts like gender equality, free markets, democratic societies, international cooperation, freedom of speech, press, religion, civil rights, and secular governments. Democracy may hold a wide range of opinions based on how they understand these principles in general, but they are typically in favor of these policies and ideals. (Crenshaw, 2017). The idea of gender equality is based on this fundamental idea. The unique objectives, actions, and requirements that men and women bring to the table must be taken into account in order to be recognized, valued, and given equal attention. (Green, 2017). The UN has designated reaching gender parity as one of its Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030. By giving them equal opportunities and integrating them into all aspects of life, this goal seeks to end discrimination and cruelty against girls and women. If there are more women in public office, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved more swiftly and efficiently. The target of Goal Five, "Ensure women's full and effective participation," also states that "Ensure women's equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life." The Women's UN Association, 2017. Several countries throughout the world have established legislation and started programs during the past few decades in an effort to increase the proportion of politically engaged women in their individual countries. Several of these approaches include applying the one-third gender rule, conducting research, and considering the prospect of designating newly created parliamentary seats solely for women legislators. Two other types of approaches are advocacy and capacity-building. Malongza, Apusigah, and Abagre (2017). The proportion of women in political leadership roles is still disgracefully low, despite the creation of these legislation and the implementation of numerous programs. This suggests that initiatives to increase the proportion of women in political leadership positions should focus on a particular set of issues, such as cultural traits, socioeconomic challenges, and political issues.

Political Empowerment of Women: Lessons from Africa

The entire economic development strategy now places a larger premium on the successful participation of women in leadership positions at the local, state, and federal levels. Despite this, a sizable portion of people still question whether it is crucial for women to work as activists in the civil society or as elected officials. Why should there be a quota on the number of female politicians? In addition to

strengthening democracies, the involvement of women in politics also encourages public support, collaboration across political institutions and ethnic barriers, and long-term safety. In addition to advancing the cause of gender equality, the presence of women in politics has a direct and immediate reflection on policies that are researched and the kinds of solutions that are put up. It has been discovered that there is a significant relationship between a politician's gender and the specific pieces of legislation they support. There is an increase in the creation of policies that prioritize preserving a good quality of life and reflect the interests of families, women, and members of racial and ethnic minorities when more women are elected to positions of responsibility in government (Pepera, 2018). In the same line, more policies are being developed that place a strong priority on maintaining a good level of living. What motivates women to run for office? Almost often, favorable consequences follow the inclusion of women in governmental roles.

Kofi Annan, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General from 1997 to 2006, is cited in Hellstrom (2017) as saying that "the empowerment of women is the most potent weapon for development." No other approach even comes close to having the same likelihood of reducing child and maternal mortality or increasing economic output to the same degree as this one. No other approach to enhancing nutrition and health, including HIV/AIDS prevention, can provide the same level of assurance as this one. No other strategy, according to Nkomo (2018), is as successful at increasing the number of educational chances available to the generation that will follow us. The pursuit of successful political and community leadership roles by women must be encouraged, emancipated, and supported in order to meet global development goals and build strong, long-lasting democracies.

In an ideal society, the particular attributes that determine the roles and responsibilities that men and women should play are granted to men and women by Africa's history and culture. Africa has endowed both men and women with these characteristics. This practice is in line with the roles that both men and women are supposed to play at home, as indicated by the norms that society places on families. Men are usually viewed as the head of the household and given the most influence over important choices, while women are generally expected to provide financial and emotional support for their families. Men are frequently said to as "natural born leaders" as a result. For many years, males treated women as if they were their own property, using and maintaining them as per the traditions of African cultures. This

behavior continued for many years. Some individuals think that educating girls or allowing them to go to school is dishonorable since they will eventually get married and join another family, which will cause them to provide less service to their own family. Some people believe that educating girls or allowing them to attend school in these circumstances is unethical. Women's participation in politics has changed significantly over the past few decades, and there has been a noticeable increase in the number of women holding political office across the continent of Africa (Konte & Kwadwo, 2019).

While the number of women holding legislative seats nearly quadrupled between 2000 and 2018, the percentage of women holding cabinet positions more than doubled, reaching 22%, between 1980 and 2015. Regrettably, the increase hasn't had much of an effect (Knumberonte and Kwadwo, 2019).

Women have made attempts to show their level of expertise, yet they still encounter obstacles that hinder them from moving up in many fields. In a democracy, everyone in the group of 31 is treated equally regardless of their gender, color, or religion. The most common kind of government is this one. Some assert that women are capable of carrying out any activity that males are capable of, sometimes even better (Arvay, 2017). In line with this, women don't need to show that they are capable of being effective political leaders or leaders in general. With the passage of time, a number of great women who went on to achieve positions of authority in their respective countries have emerged. Even though these women had a crucial role in the development of their nations, some of them have been remembered by history while others have been forgotten. There are many difficulties that women encounter, including but not limited to unfair treatment, abuse, and assault. The nature of women's participation in politics might be regarded as being more descriptive than substantive, according to Konte & Kwadwo (2019). This is something that we can all agree on. The barriers that have been put in place in Africa to prohibit women from being involved in politics and obtaining political posts are about to be taken down, but they still lack the power or control to influence important legislative, policy, and financial choices. They still have a lot of obstacles to overcome even though they are close to doing so. Powley (2006, p. 2) contends that until women are sufficiently represented to have a collective voice—that is, until they reach a critical mass—their ability to influence institutions that are controlled by men would be constrained. This suggests that until they reach this stage, women's ability to change the world will be

constrained. This is a statement of fact that implies that, despite having the chance to hold prominent government positions, women have had very little influence on decisions on public policy because men still predominate in politics. Women must become more numerous than they now are in order to gain greater prominence and influence over important decisions. This is the only way it can take place.

African women who hold leadership positions in African political institutions are particularly affected by the sociological perspective of African political systems. The following are some of these outcomes. They have frequently experienced actual violations of their rights, not just as a result of a governmental system that is prejudiced against them but also due to gender discrimination in a culture where men are mostly in positions of power. They have been denied their rights in a number of instances as a result of this. There are numerous factors that have contributed to this. Numerous appeals for gender-sensitive legislation and budgets, as well as for the emancipation of women via economic empowerment, education, political governance, and positive action, have been made by people from all over the world since the end of World War II. All of these elements go toward liberation. One of these needs was satisfied in 1995 at the Beijing Conference when it was revealed that the World Conference on Women will take place. (UNFPA, 1995). Seven pressing issues raised during the meeting were listed in the Beijing Plan of Action (BPFA) as significant barriers to the advancement of women. The report made strong statements on the underprivileged status of women around the world and offered recommendations for the government, non-governmental organizations, and members of civil society.

Despite this, the results of numerous studies show that there is no appreciable distinction between men and women in terms of the traits that define genuine leadership. The study conducted by Lockwood (2004) with the working title "The glass ceiling: domestic and international perspectives" is a superb instance of this. Lockwood (2004) examines how women in positions of authority now have more leadership responsibilities and abilities. According to Lockwood, strides have been made in recent years to address the problem of women's advancement in the office and corporate setting. She makes the observation that this issue has existed for a while.

The results of a number of studies indicate that the culture, which is in charge of the establishment of social attitudes about gender roles, is one of the main

obstacles that hinders women in Africa from running for political office or from being elected to political office. Men are viewed as being more qualified than women to take leadership roles in Africa (Yoon, 2011). They imply that women should be obedient rather than forceful since they are seen as belonging in the home as spouses and caregivers or in roles that appeal to women's inherent nurturing nature. This is due to their perception that women belong in the house. Many experts believe that one of the main reasons there aren't more women running for public office is because they encounter difficulties in the form of structural or environmental barriers. According to Genovese (2013), for a very long time, male dominance in politics has been explained by law and custom, and public life has traditionally been seen as the natural domain or home of 33 males. He claims that this has been the situation for a while. On the other hand, women have historically been seen as beings who belong in the private domain. Women are frequently perceived as belonging to the private sphere, and most of the time, they are preoccupied with taking care of their families and other domestic duties rather than thinking about a career in politics. As a result, there is a gender imbalance in public office.

These beliefs continue to prevent women from participating in politics, along with gendered economic and family injustice. Although making up half of the continent's population (World Population Index, 2021), women continue to face impediments that prevent them from serving in political leadership roles within communities and governments as well as being excluded from formal policy-making circles. The importance of highlighting the fact that, according to social theory, every facet of reality is the consequence of social production cannot be overstated when all of the aforementioned is taken into account, especially from the perspective of post-structural feminist theory. This implies that stereotypes and cultural preconceptions about the limitations of what women can do are untrue. So, rather than being a set and unalterable fact, society's perception of women is more of a creation or fabrication on the side of society. Additionally, one must acknowledge that the regime types and leadership culture does not support the outdated, male-dominated paradigm of leadership from the perspective of leadership theory. It is important to keep this in mind. This is something that has to be considered (Turock, 2001).

The findings of numerous studies on the traits of female leaders are consistent: flexible leadership strategies support traits like individuality and an introspective leadership style. The Southern African Development Community

(SADC) has set a more comprehensive objective for 2015: reaching 50 percent participation rate for women in political decision-making at all levels. This goal was founded on the idea that having more women in leadership roles will improve the effectiveness of organizational structures and enterprises, as well as the justice and efficiency of resource allocation. In order to reach the target of having 50% more women engage in the processes decision-making in the political realm, activities were launched in 2015 (SADC, 2012). Policies have been put in place to pledge that women are stand in governmental organizations in a number of African nations, including South Africa, Rwanda, Namibia, and Uganda (Burnett, 2008). These nations include South Africa, Uganda, and Rwanda.

Both the public and private sectors are included in this. Public and private sectors from both have involvement in this. As a direct result of women's participation in the democratic processes of numerous African nations as well as in the independence struggles that resulted in their foundation, significant advancements in politics have been made. For instance, Rwandan women in government worked with people in the community to create an inheritance law that made it acceptable for women to inherit money from their family (Burnett, 2008). Women were allowed to inherit from their relatives under this law.

Because it shows how the constituency she represents benefits from her involvement in politics, the capacity to influence policy is a crucial indicator of a political leadership of women. Similar to this, in 1998, a law criminalizing domestic abuse in South Africa was passed thanks in large part to the efforts of female members of parliament (MP) there. Similar to Namibia, where female legislators were essential in promoting laws that aided in the economic growth of women and girls, as well as in the repeal of laws from the apartheid era that discriminated against women (Coffe, 2013). Similar to this, female representatives in South Africa were instrumental in ensuring the passage of laws promoting the economic progress of women and girls. Women's organization Action for Development (ACFODE) in Uganda joined forces with other women's groups to effectively demand setting up of a Women's Ministry. This was a part of the strategy to make sure that women's representation is sustained in local government. With the aid of other women's organizations, this was done. It is imperative that more women pursue careers in municipal government-related industries because studies have found that women are more successful than men in these occupations. (2010) Goetz et al. Kang (2013)

claims that female activists in Niger pushed to pass legislation allowing political parties to endorse and accept female candidates. By giving women the chance to take on leadership positions in many organizations and institutions, this law has helped the nation. Even though women have made remarkable strides in a number of African nations, despite the fact that they now have more influence over public policy and a voice in how women are treated in their communities, equal representation of women in positions of political leadership is still a work in progress. This is true independent of the proportion of women who are acquiring the skills and knowledge required to carry out these occupations. Drude Dahlerup proposed the critical mass hypothesis, which states that a greater proportion of women must make up the population for women to have a greater impact on political leadership at the national and international levels. According to him, laws and policies that either support more women or give them the power to actively participate in discussions about the country's future would be adopted as the population of the country continues to grow. The idea that politics is not just a man's game has been successfully promoted by supporters of female representation and subsequent female political leadership (Coffe, 2013). The proponents of female representation did a good job of getting their point across. Campaigners who have used this strategy have had success. For instance, a sizable proportion of women who were entitled to vote actually participated in the election, which contributed to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's victory. Due to this, she received more female support from voters. Many African states are attempting to improve the political and social climate for women, despite the fact that many of these governments already have a sizable share of female leaders (Bauer and Barnett, 2013). However, despite the fact that a large number of these countries' governments already have a significant number of female presidents.

The underrepresentation of women in many African governments is endemic and nongovernmental organizations, particularly in positions of power and leadership, despite efforts to assure their inclusion at all levels of government. According to the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), the institution is a groundbreaking movement of African women leaders that is being enforced and led by the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security, as well as the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Women's Empowerment. In parallel with Africa Agenda 2063 as well as 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, this mentioned

program intends to strengthen women's leadership in Africa's development. "The Africa We Want," Aspiration 6 of Africa Agenda 2063, sees an Africa that is people-centered, has gender equality, and where women are empowered and play their proper roles in all aspects of life. Goal 5 reflects this ambition as well. The AWLN effort is led by HE Moussa Faki Mahamat which is facilitated by the African Union Commission and the United Nations. However, some women have been exceptional in diverse leadership roles. Damilola Odufuwa and Odunayo Eweniyi formed the Feminist Coalition in 2020 to advocate for women's rights and safety, economic empowerment, and political engagement in Nigeria. Through this way, a feminist leader will acknowledge that all women and men are given equal opportunities to reach their careers. In addition, she will put proactive policies to drive meaningful change. also stated that; Damilola Odufuwa says that "A feminist leader is empathetic and understands the importance of intersectionality" (UN Women, 2023). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected woman president, guided Liberia through peace and recovery. Her leadership was critical during the post-war era as well as the 2014–2015 Ebola crisis. Sirleaf also has received international recognition for her leadership pertaining economic, social, and political policies and responses, and she was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for empowering women.

Particularly in positions of authority and leadership, this is valid. This is especially valid in nations with a background in colonial authority. The UN Women 2021 statistics shows that women are still glaringly underrepresented in Africa's political and economic arenas despite making up over half of the continent's population (Berry, & Lake, 2021). The severity of this issue is evidenced by the fact that, despite being enshrined in the manifestos and constitutions of 35 political parties, gender equality is not actually enforced inside the party structures. The purpose of this study is to identify and investigate a number of powerful women who have played or are now playing significant roles in the advancement of women's political activity. This is accomplished despite the fact that the culture in Africa still forbids women from occupying positions of political authority.

Given the importance of this study, it is crucial that it illuminates the contributions made by women who have held leadership positions in the past.

CHAPTER III

Theoretical Framework: Conceptualization of Democracy and Democratization

Patriarchy

The patriarchy concept is said to be coined by Hartman (1976). The two main axes that lead to male dominance and control over a wide range of activities, according to Hartman's research, are as follows. The home, the neighborhood, and other contexts all contain these axes. The guys were stronger physically, and that gave them an early advantage. Hartman argues that men are seen as superior while women are seen as inferior because of men's economic superiority and women's economic dependence on men. This idea is a result of men's dominance in the economy. Women are inferior, because of their reliance on males for financial support, while men are superior because of their material power (Anigwe, 2014). In the second half, the basis for the division of labor is laid by acknowledging the role that women play at home while males run the global economy today. Women's home responsibilities take up the majority of their time and energy, therefore they don't have the same amount of energy, leisure, or mental freedom that men do to engage in the kind of creative activities that are always done in the public realm. Men can maintain their dominance over key rungs of the social ladder and the fundamental institutions that go along with it, including the political and legal systems, because of this (Alzuabi, 2016). As a result, men's dominance in society and women's relegation to the position of careers and housewives serve as the basis of women's oppression and enslavement. In order to demonstrate how men's greater access to economic resources has contributed to their social dominance over women and, as a result, their predominance in positions of political authority, the research project will make use of the concept of patriarchy (Almasry, 2012). Gender stereotypes, such as those that depict women as unfit for positions of leadership and service and draw attention to their purported flaws, are largely to blame for the attitudes that society has toward women. These misconceptions have influenced how society perceives women (Altius & Raveloharimisy, 2016).

Democratic values are eroded in circumstances where women are prohibited from holding key roles, which has a detrimental effect on the expansion of the economy and society as a whole. Therefore, it is still crucial to implement policies

that encourage women to participate in politics if we want to achieve sustainable development.

Seeing Leadership from a Feminist Angle

In contrast to traditional masculine ideals, new feminine values are prized for leadership, as claimed by Cleas (1999). Consensual interactions, motivational speaking, haggling, control, and organizing are some of these new ideals. numerous research sources have been assembled to demonstrate the distinctions between the leadership philosophies of men and women. According to the results of several studies described in Hare et al. (1997), male leadership traits have a tendency to be transactional, whereas feminine leadership traits have a tendency to be transformational.

An individual's approach to leadership is frequently shaped by their personalities and life experiences. There is no relationship between the sexes and the many forms of leadership, despite the fact that there is no one generally applicable way of leadership. There is no such thing as a universal plan for leadership that can be used in every circumstance. Every leader has a distinctive personality that contributes to the development of their distinctive leadership style, which is prone to change as they advance in their careers. As a result, a leader's leadership style is subject to change depending on the situation and the decisions they are faced with. Every leadership style has a unique set of defining characteristics, each of which can have either positive or negative effects.

Women are, in fact, empathic. In other words, they care about those who are in need, and they are more engaged with building dependable relations, active communication, and a statement that clearly outlines what expectations they have of others, in addition to expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly and facilitating the flow of conversation. Women do better than men in terms of interpersonal skills including the potential to be loved, empathy, and listening, according to Kabacoff's research from 1998. According to Rosner's research (Rosner, 1990), in order to have the same level of fulfillment in romantic relationships, men and women approach love relationships from two different perspectives. People have mental prototypes of how leaders should behave in 46 various scenarios, according to the idea of leadership classification (Lord & Maher, 1993).

Prototypes construct and shape individuals' perceptions, encoding, and rescue of information that is consistent with their schema (Phillips & Lord, 1982). In this regard, Lord and Emrich (2001) contend that even physical traits connected to a person's race, gender, or cultural background can serve as models for how the public perceives both male and female leaders. Offer Mann et al. (1994) identified eight beliefs or characteristics that a majority of individuals share as the leader template. Leadership qualities that are equally important for men, women, and transgender people are intelligence, strength, masculinity, charisma, and determination. These are other essential qualities. These eight elements make up the most thorough examination of the leadership model, and subsequent studies have generally endorsed them (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Men and women interact in different ways, as demonstrated by the fact that their persuasion strategies and communication styles differ from one another (Merchant, 2012). Women rarely hold prominent leadership positions, although men's leadership philosophies have evolved over time. Other distinctions made between women and leaders include communal versus agentic, task-oriented versus interpersonal, participative versus authoritarian, transactional versus transformative, and so forth. Several studies (Helgesen 1990; Hennig and Jardin 1997; Rosner 1990) have looked into the possibility of gender differences in leadership styles.

It has been demonstrated that women are more adept at exercising democratic and participative leadership than men, who are more likely to adopt an authoritarian approach (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Eagly and Carli described women as having a communal nature in their research from 2007 because of their value placed on social dynamics and the decision-making process. Men, on the other hand, are thought to have an agentic personality because they prioritize getting things done and place a larger value on success (Madden, 2011). In contrast to the viewpoint held by men, who consider leadership to be setting an example for others to follow, having authority over how others carry out their tasks, and receiving all the credit, women perceive leadership as a function that enables others to carry out their responsibilities. This finding came from study done by Growe and Montgomery (2000).

Some scholars (Bass, 1985; Avolio, Bass, and Jung, 1999; Low Kroeck and Sivasubramania, 1996; Rowald and Rohmann, 2009) provided definitions of transactional leadership. These ideas are all interchangeable with one another. The

process by which a leader and some intangible assets that are of an economic, personal, political, psychological, or emotional nature is described by these definitions as transactional leadership. Transactional leadership specifically refers to the method used to trade different kinds of assets. Transformative leaders promote cooperation between their followers and themselves in order to accomplish a shared objective, according to Bas (1997) and Howell & Avolio (1993). In order to inspire their followers to achieve bigger things, they will take into account the specifics of each follower's situation and will exalt their followers by placing them in the spotlight.

A more favorable assessment of the abilities that women bring to the role of leadership has been linked to the solutions that claim that a woman's forms of leadership can be evolutionary. This is due to the fact that effective leaders are known to possess both transformational and transactional traits. Men tend to have a style that is more command and control focused, whereas women often have a style that is more interpersonal. In addition to encouraging involvement, sharing more power, and being more knowledgeable than men, women are better at creating strong connections with coworkers. When leaders use collaborative tactics, it creates a space for people to participate and offers them more agency through open communication. Men in leadership roles generally communicate in a one-sided, directive manner. There shouldn't be a need to contrast the leadership capacities of men and women if each of these traits is taken into account. All of the various female leadership prototypical guises have strong leadership qualities. Women perform substantially better than males when it comes to solving hanging difficulties. The only thing society has been succeeded in achieving is reducing women's capacity for leadership positions over time. The recognized template is almost incomparable to anything else when it comes to comprehending and identifying characteristics of leadership.

There has been a steady but slow improvement in people's understanding of how crucial it is for women to take leadership positions in politics over the past few years. It would seem that women's involvement in a country's decision-making processes contributes to the success of the country as a whole. Numerous studies have demonstrated that there is a link between higher percentages of women participating in political leadership and the advancement of societies in the areas of health education, family care, social welfare, and environmental protection. These

studies include the reports that were released in 2015 by the Global Gender Index (GGI). Numerous methods have been used to illustrate this association. On the other hand, in nations where women's engagement in public life is either insufficient or nonexistent, the quality of the services provided by the government has declined.

New Zealand, the one of the first democracies in the world, gave women the right to vote and participate in politics (Wilson, 2013). The first democratic nation in the world is thought to have been New Zealand. On the other hand, the proportion of women in leadership positions in politics remained notably underrepresented up until election reform was introduced in the 1990s. As a result, there are now increasingly more women in positions of political leadership, which has caused the nation's general growth to noticeably accelerate. Yet this didn't take place until after electoral reform was put into place. Index of global gender (2015).

In this regard, Cynthia Hook (2012) asserts that women are more adaptable to change than men are, and that women's views about change are different from men. They take an inclusive approach to negotiating, which means they take into account all of the concerns that people of different sexes, ages, and sexual orientations have. A better way to put it, in my opinion, is that women's political leadership affects people's capacity to influence, encourage, and enable them to meaningfully contribute to the well-being and accomplishment of their countries. Another way to put it is that the capacity to inspire humanity is impacted by women's political leadership. She believes that these capacities are unquestionably significantly impacted by the presence of women in political leadership. Peggy Antrobus, on the other hand, asserts that because it is so challenging for women to advance their causes within traditional governmental and bureaucratic structures, many female activists elect to lobby and campaign outside of these structures. This is among the factors that lead many female activists to opt for non-conventional governmental and bureaucratic organizations to further their goals. This is due to the fact that there are less women than men in positions of authority inside governments and bureaucracy.

She specifically identifies two causes for "the global women's movement to have achieved such remarkable success over the last two and a half decades" (Bunch et al., 2014, pp. 217-229). To begin with, there is a huge range in the objectives and pursuits of various women's organizations. Because of the differences that exist between women as a result of traits like class, race, color, and religion, among other things, she thinks that there is no cohesive collection of "women's interests" (Goetz

1998, p. 243). It is crucial to recognize and be willing to tolerate the fact that we will have different points of view on some issues when working together to achieve a common goal.

Second, by opposing the idea of gender equality, this action was performed in retaliation to conservative women's groups and other forces that had tried to sabotage the process. Their efforts had a direct impact on the decision that was made. This step has been done in reaction to the actions of right-wing women's organizations. The distinction between women's activity and feminist action must be made clear because it is commonly overlooked in written and verbal effort. An action is deemed feminist if it attempts to alter unfair power dynamics between the sexes. Feminist activities are those that aim to change the uneven power dynamics between the sexes. Oral and written discourse should be very obvious that not all women share the feminist viewpoint, just as it should be very evident that not all feminists are women. In light of these findings, she came up with the theory that, despite the fact that women don't necessarily have more energy than men do, they still perform noticeably better than males. She makes the claim that unless there is a remarkable increase in the representation of women political administration, a social issue that has endured for decades would not be resolved. She thus makes reference to the lack of female leaders in politics.

According to Farah Deeba Chowdhury, Margaret Wilson and Colleen Lowe Moran in the studies entitled "The Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development" another empirical definition of women in political leadership roles were examined. They argued that women's contributions to democracy and reconstruction process in the aftermath of the post-war era, particularly in Africa, are crucial. It makes the case that the cornerstone for post-conflict growth and progress is women in political leadership and uses Rwanda's remarkable post-ethnic war transformation as a standard to support its claim. The country in the world with the most women serving in parliament is Rwanda. A sizable portion of this scenario is also true in the case of Liberia, where women were not prominent in the history of the nation until after Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president during the country's post-war reconstruction. This is the case because, before to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's electoral victory following the presidential elections, women were largely invisible in that country.

Unpacking the concept of Democracy: Conceptual Tools

Every citizen of a nation has a voice and a vote in defining the laws, policies, and actions that are carried out by their state under a democracy, which is a kind of egalitarian government. Each and every citizen who meets the requirements must be given an equal opportunity to express their opinions under such a form of government. A political system is considered to be "a democracy" if it allows for some degree of democracy to approach the ideal of perfect democracy (Gboyega, 2004). In fact, the degree to which a given system approaches this ideal can be used to define democracy.

The vast majority of nations around the world still have regular elections that are, at least in theory, based on egalitarian ideas, despite the fact that no nation has ever granted the right to vote to all of its citizens (that is, including minors). This is true even though no country has ever given all of its inhabitants the ability to vote. Parliamentary democracy is the type of governance that is seen as being the most "democratic" in the modern world. Under this type of governance, citizens who are eligible to vote take part in elections and choose representatives to represent their interests in a legislative assembly on their behalf. Citizens who cast ballots elect their representatives. The assembly members will bring up suggestions and put them to a vote when it is time to make decisions. We have a direct democracy that is closer to its ideal form when voters make direct decisions or participate in the political process in an unmediated manner.

Several countries have local institutions of direct democracy, and some of those countries also have national institutions of direct democracy, even if these systems of government coexist with representative legislatures in many of those countries. The Greek word "*demokratia*," which was translated to mean "rule of the people" in English, is where the word "democracy" originates. It was used to describe the administrative structures that were in place in different Greek City-States at the time, most notably Athens after a popular uprising in 508 BC, which took place between the 5th and 4th century BC. The name "*democratia*," which is derived from these two Greek concepts, was created using the terms "people" and "rule," which are taken from the Greek word *demos* and *kratia*, respectively.

The development of representative democracy may have been significantly influenced by ideas and institutions that emerged during the European Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment, the American and French Revolutions, as well as other

historical eras. Voting rights were initially restricted to relatively small individuals (such as rich males of a particular ethnic group) in many jurisdictions over time. New Zealand was the first nation to grant universal suffrage to all of its citizens in 1983 (Gboyega, 2004).

The idea of democracy is fundamentally based on the democratic values of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to express one's political opinions. These rules make sure that people have access to enough information and can exercise their right to vote in ways that they believe would benefit their personal interests. It is common to abbreviate "liberal democracy" to "democracy," which can include traits like, equality before the law, political pluralism, the right to lodge grievances with elected officials, civil liberties, human rights, and civil society institutions that are functioning independently from the incumbent regimes. Often, the term "democracy" is used to refer to "liberal democracy." A common abbreviation for "liberal democracy" is "democracy." Democracy and the republican form of government are sometimes used interchangeably. There are many ways to define a republic, but all of them involve democracy. Some definitions consider "republic" to be a separate idea with no relation to the others.

Women and the Political Process

It has been forbidden to appoint women to the vast majority of important positions inside the government ever since the bulk of African countries won their independence from colonial rule. Since then, things have been the same. For instance, a woman has never served as head of state, and by the middle of the 1980s, women held less than 6% of Africa's legislative seats. The percentage of women in cabinet seats and jobs with cabinet-level authority was barely 2%. Anunobi (1997) said that none of the fifty nations that make up Africa's continent has a single African woman in a position of authority at the cabinet level. There were disproportionately more women in the lower, more decentralized levels of governance. Less than 8% of these positions are held by women, according to a recent survey by the Economic Commission for Africa in 27 different countries, showing that women's political participation at the national level has not significantly increased (Tripp, 1999). Being the nation with the highest percentage of female legislators, South Africa's new House of Assembly has female representation equivalent to one-fourth of its total seats (Lima, 1994). African governments have historically paid greater attention to

the concerns of male residents than those of female people since men have always held the majority of positions of power on the continent. Gender roles are seen as "natural" or "traditional" by the majority of male political leaders in Africa, and they shouldn't be changed in any way. Because of this, these men are reluctant to speak out against the widespread practice of male dominance on the continent. A prime illustration of this viewpoint is Daniel Moi, the president of Kenya at the moment. Moi delivered a response during the 1985 International Conference on Women in Nairobi. According to him, "God made man the head of the family" and "challenging that was comparable to condemning God" (Kabira & Nzioki, 1993). This comment was made in response to Kenyan women who attended the conference and suggested that women should have better representation in the legislature. These Kenyan women attended the meeting.

Having discussed the contributions of women in the political processes of their nation, the following chapter will discuss the theoretical framework; conceptualization of democracy and democratization, Women's Activism, civil society involvement, and executive elections, The Motivators behind Liberian Women's Exclusion from Public Life, Traditional and cultural norms as key factors, The influence that women's participation in public office has, Overview of women political participation in Liberia since 2005, Women's Political Inclusion, Freedom in the world report, and Women's Political Participation in 2005, 2011, and 2017 Elections.

Gender disparity

According to Merchant (2012), the idea that men and women belong to different groups of people has existed since the beginning of time and this perception is not likely to change any time soon, regardless of whether there are differences in the ways in which men and women interact with one another, influence others, or lead. In order for women to thrive, they must emulate the traits of male leaders, according to Vanderbroeck, who came to the conclusion that women who are climbing the corporate ladder fall into two traps. The first is the assumption that men and women are equally capable of leading (Vanderbroeck,2010). But these traps are ineffective, and the only thing they accomplish is prevent women from realizing their full potential. On top of that, they restrict companies from realizing their full

potential and from utilizing the talent at their disposal. Schein (1973) gathered 92 traits that people often exhibit and assumed that there were differences between males and girls in these traits. In 1973, Schein's research was published.

Whether or whether men and women approach leadership differently should not be up for discussion. The trait that is absolutely required for a leader to possess in order to be successful in achieving all of the requirements that are set on them is the capacity to achieve goals while serving in any function. Effective leaders are motivated by outcomes. One area where society has worked hard to uphold the idea that women are less skilled than males is politics. According to Cloud (2016), the level of muscular strength that each sex possesses is the sole important distinction between the sexes. Men and women may have different levels of physical strength. The findings of 46 different meta-analyses that were carried out during the course of the final two decades of the 20th century were examined in a 2005 study. The researchers came to the conclusion that in terms of personality, cognitive ability, and leadership, men and women are practically the same. At the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Janet Shibley Hyde, PhD, created the gender similarities theory. She discovered that most psychological traits, from childhood to adulthood, are more similar than they are different between men and women. Her research was reported in Hyde (2005).

Similar patterns of discoveries have been discovered in each of these nations, despite the fact that the national cultures of the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, China, Turkey, and Sweden are only a small portion of the nation's whose traditions differ greatly from one another.

Participants of both sexes were present in situations like these. According to a 2015 poll by PEW Research, more than 40% of American citizens believe that women who want to work in or run for office at the highest levels are held to a higher standard than men and must prove they have accomplished more than their peers (Anderson, 2015). In an effort to limit the options open to women to participate in political life, all of these barriers have been put in place. Simply said, the political structures of African nations aren't prepared for more women to take important political positions. To put it simply, there are just too many causes for concern regarding female leadership. There will be an environment where negative opinions of women in political leadership positions will predominate if gender standards for leadership choices fall short of public expectations.

But female leaders who have been successful in taking on positions in succeeding leadership posts provide a new gate into their mindset. The positions they have taken on for subsequent leadership responsibilities have been successfully filled by these leaders. Compared to men, women have faced a greater variety of difficulties throughout history. Negative preconceptions about women in positions of authority may be applied. To succeed in positions of power, they make an effort to take on masculine characteristics. The people who are most likely to suffer unfavorable effects are those who have a strong sense of identification with a certain group and who are threatened by negative stereotyping (Steele, 1997; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). Female leaders who alter their demeanor are perceived as aggressive and domineering by their subordinates. Sharp and manly traits thus lose their attractiveness. According to study, the presence of this risk may lead a person to unintentionally choose to perform below expectations and stick with the very stereotypical behaviors they were trying to break. In other words, the risk can prompt individuals to resume the bad habits they were attempting to kick.

Exploiting these gender inequalities to denigrate and undervalue women in leadership roles is a common tactic. It is unclear from the available data whether these disparities are the product of biological factors or the socialization process that imbues people with obligations. There isn't enough evidence to say which of these two causes is at fault, but they both might be.

Numerous traits that are linked to either masculine or feminine personalities or leadership styles are numerous. These traits are commonly invoked in an effort to minimize the unique leadership qualities that women possess. Despite the numerous social and cultural constraints placed on women in politics, their involvement is important to the smooth operation of democratic governance. The distinctive aspects of the African continent's history and culture have provided excellent explanations of the roles that men and women are intended to play in society. Tasks and obligations that are expected of both men and women are included in these attributes. This tradition clearly defines the duties that men and women play in the house and is congruent with the expectations that families have of one another. Men naturally occupy positions of leadership since they act as the foreleg of the family and are given the most power to make decisions while women are responsible for the upkeep and care of their homes. These years have produced a number of outstanding female politicians and leaders, some of whom will go down in history while others will be

forgotten, but all of whom have contributed greatly to the development of their respective countries. Some of these women have had a lasting impression on history, while others have been forgotten.

After discussing women's engagement and marginalization in democracy from many angles, the research will concentrate on the political recognition and participation of women at the grassroots level. In the following chapter, the research will provide a clear picture of women's participation in grassroots politics and contributions when given the opportunity to serve. Women should be given the opportunity to sit at round tables and participate in local decision-making processes. Giving women the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process will ensure that women enter politics with a strong voice and convictions.

CHAPTER IV

Factors Democratizing post-conflict Liberia: Women's Activism, civil society involvement, and executive elections

Many women were deprived of their financial security, subjected to torture, kidnapped, and sexually molested during the fourteen years of intermittent civil conflict that Liberia experienced. Many of these people were forced to go into hiding as a result of the brutal and deliberate recruitment of men and boys by militant organizations during the Liberian civil wars due to the nature of guerilla warfare (Okereke, 2013).

Women had to take on responsibilities and jobs that are often associated with men because there weren't enough men to do them. This includes providing for their families financially. Women also took part in the war, became merchants, and smuggled food under the radar past checkpoints and battle lines to sell in their neighborhood markets on both sides of the conflict in Liberia.

In an effort to put an end to the civil conflict that was raging in their nation, the women of Liberia banded together to create an organized peace movement. The standing of women in Liberian society began to significantly advance at this point. Christian and Muslim women in Liberia united to oppose the fight after becoming tired of the continued bloodshed and damage. They met with President Charles Taylor and the major opposition groups and eventually persuaded both sides to take part in the Accra peace negotiations. The ladies' tactic, when they felt that the peace talks were going too slowly, was to conduct rallies to force a complete agreement. There doesn't seem to have been any observable loss in either the visibility or the influence of women in Liberian society after the end of the country's civil war. After Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female head of state of an African nation in 2005, Liberian women significantly increased in power and official representation. This was true despite the fact that there was no discernible increase in the number of women who held posts in the government or the parliamentary chambers in the years that followed the signing of the peace treaty. She won the election in part due to the dedication of female political activists in Liberia to her campaign, as well as the fact that female voter turnout was on level with, if not higher than that of male voters.

Since taking office, Sirleaf has collaborated closely with NGOs that support women in order to enact significant policy changes that will benefit the women of Liberia (Fuest, 2008). Additionally, democracy has increased the effect that women in civil society have on issues of public policy as a direct result of the advancements made for women in politics. It seems that the fact that women's inclusion in parliament and the cabinet has remained stationary is of less relevance to the overall image of Liberian women's political voices when compared to the level of influence attained by women in civil society and the election of a female chief executive. This is as a result of the election of a female chief executive.

Liberian Women's Perspectives on the Conflict

Greed, disparities, ethnicity, and poverty are the core reasons for the Liberian civil war. Many Liberians were disenchanted by the fact that power was centered on a specific group of people, the Americo-Liberians. As a result, they feel marginalized and excluded from political participation. Furthermore, tribal groups are dissatisfied with the decentralization of power. Every ethnic group desired to be a part of the ruling system. However, this did not occur because some ethnic groups were marginalized during the process. This, among other causes, contributed to Liberia's civil war.

The devastating conflicts –the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars– and the fighting and violence culminated in thousands of Liberians seeking protection in camps. Charles Taylor's regime in Liberia treated its citizens with an equal degree of brutality, and it routinely threatened to forcibly transfer its citizens to IDP camps (Disney 2008). This was done out of concern that the camps would bring the administration into disrepute. The ability of women to defend their families, keep their physical integrity, and maintain their livelihoods were all threatened as a result of the nation's plunge into complete chaos and disorder.

In Liberia, women have been vulnerable to the economic destruction in the post-civil war era. The majority of Liberian women worked in the unofficial economy of the nation before the onset of the civil war, most frequently in markets or smaller towns. Even after the war started, this was the situation. Women were left without a means of subsistence as a result of the collapse of the informal sector and the development of warlord authority in rural regions (Liebling Kalifani et al. 2011). This happened as warlords seized control of the countryside and bloodshed engulfed

the nation. An overwhelming proportion of males died as a result of being forcibly recruited into militant groups during times of conflict (Liebling Kalifani et al. 2011, Tripp 2015). As a result, many women were compelled to take on the role of being their families' only source of income. The loss of their means of subsistence was a terrible blow to their way of living because women in Liberia were unable to rely on either the failing and violent state or their own families for assistance.

As also put forward by feminist approaches, women were more vulnerable to economic uncertainties as a result of the civil wars' all-encompassing chaos than men were. They were also more likely to be tortured, kidnapped, and the victims of sexual abuse during the Liberian civil conflict (Cain, 1999). When they were inducted into the warlords' violent gangs, which included both young boys and men, these young boys and men were granted weapons and power. With their newly obtained power, these guerilla fighters launched a campaign of merciless destruction across the countryside.

The quote from Johnson that "these boys would go into your home, they could rape you in front of your children, they could rape you in front of your husband" (Disney 2008) is taken from. The Monrovia office of the World Health Organization (WHO) interrogated over 450 women from fifteen different shelters for displaced people. Three hundred thirty-three percent of the respondents said they had been raped. In addition, 84% of the group were raped while engaged in combat, 86% of the rape instances used weapons, and more than 50% of the occurrences had multiple attackers (Cain 1999, 275).

The WHO was informed by one woman that:

> *I had learned I was pregnant nine months prior. My spouse and I were taken into custody and bound as soon as the opponents came. My husband's head was separated from the rest of his body in front of me. That was followed by a gang of about fifteen young men assaulting me sexually. My baby was born the next day. My womb can no longer continue to be in the position it was in before (Cain, 1999, p. 280).*

All militant organizations regularly and extensively raped their victims. Women were frequently the victims of sexual assault and other forms of torture. A study published by the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) claims that:

There are numerous accounts of fighters seeking out expectant mothers to recruit for their cause among the displaced population in various areas. These accounts originate from several contexts. When they do find one, they wager on the gender of the fetus that hasn't yet been born. The baby is subsequently removed from the mother's *womb after which the winner of the wager is determined. The attackers then throw the woman and her child to the side of the road as they look for their next victim (Cain, 1999, p. 281).*

The Human Rights Watch World Report from 1995 recorded that NPFL militants forced men to rape women while holding hot metal rods between their legs as a form of torture. Women were also a target and occasionally forced into marriage with members of the rebel group, however, men made up the majority of those abducted and forced to join the military. A woman from the southeast Liberian city of Pleebo shared her experience of being abducted and held hostage by rebels:

I was abducted and sexually assaulted by a family member in 1992. Up until 1994, when I started to get sick and needed medical attention, I spent the entire time we were in the bush with the rebels. I was with them the whole time before that. After that, I relocated to Guinea, where I quickly developed a serious illness for the second time in my life in 1997. Despite having been tested at the hospital and the results being positive, only my sister is aware of my sickness (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2011, p. 8).

The little resources Liberian women had made it impossible for them to protect themselves from the widespread violence that afflicted their country. They were attacked by insurgents who broke into their homes and destroyed both their lives and their bodies.

Many women suffered from rape, torture, illness propagation, and/or execution. Women in Liberia were allegedly forced to leave their homes in order to find work, exposing them to the horrors of the nation's civil war, according to Cain (1999) and Liebling-Kalifani et al. (2011). This was caused by the widespread practice of recruiting physically fit men into rebel organizations.

The tremendous effort to enlist Liberian men into rebel groups had another gendered consequence: women began to assume the role of primary caregivers for their families and the local government. This came about as a result of the recruitment of men by rebel organizations. By helping with food distribution during times of shortage and protecting their husbands, sons, other family members, and friends from rebel captivity, women contributed more to the fight than men did. This improved the position of women in the fight. Additionally, women were crucial negotiators and supporters of the citizens of their towns and of Liberia as a whole.

These ladies transported food from rural areas to urban centers and other undeveloped regions of the nation. As a result, the ladies frequently had to negotiate with the NPFL forces for safe passage through the ULIMO checkpoints (Tripp 2015).

According to one of those questioned by Tripp, market ladies may be responsible for many Liberians' prosperity:

> *The city of Monrovia was broken up into regions throughout the fighting, each of which was governed by a different warlord. When they traveled between various areas of the city, the women who worked in the market were incredibly brave and open to taking many risks. We undoubtedly would have died of famine if not for the market ladies (Tripp, 2015, p. 85).*

A sizable number of women in Liberia played crucial roles in the security of the country's civilian population despite the serious personal risks they were subjected to. However, some women turned to aggressive measures. Nduka-Agwu (2009, p. 190), claims that at the height of the conflict, 21,000 ladies and female children were demobilized as a result of official DDR initiatives. This figure represents 20 to 30 percent or so of all female soldiers (Tripp, 2015, p. 86). Without a doubt, and in numerous different ways, Liberian women participated in and were affected by the two civil wars that occurred in their nation.

It is imperative to indicate that, women made remarkable contributions to the war effort during the First Liberian Civil War and the first few years of the Second Liberian Civil War. The real miracle, though, took place at the conclusion of the second war when Liberian women united to persuade the Taylor Regime and other fighting factions to attend the Accra, Ghana, peace talks. This was the pivotal moment in the fight that brought it to a close. The contributions made by women to the military effort were at their highest notable level during this time period. The majority of Liberian women believed that their country's civil wars were occurring because they did not actively participate in the political processes. One of the possible causes of the civil war, according to Leymah Gbowee, the head of Women in Liberia Mass Action for Peace, is the wealth gap between the rich and the poor, animosity between the various ethnic groups, and a desperate attempt to seize control of the country's natural resources. These elements have all been identified as potential civil war causes. The attitude that "there's nothing in my mind that should make people do what they did to the children of Liberia" was echoed by her and numerous other Liberian mothers, though (Disney 2008). She spoke the following to

convey her feelings. Due to the brutality, duration, and apparent futility of the hostilities, many Liberian women were inspired to dedicate all of their resources and efforts to putting an end to the civil wars in their nation.

Gbowee called for all the Christian women in Liberia to unite and put pressure on the opposing parties to take part in peace negotiations while the country's women's movement for peace was just getting started. The campaign first concentrated on the subject of religion. In response to the message of the Christian Women's Peace Initiative, Gbowee and Asatu Bah Kenneth, a Muslim woman who works as the assistant director of the Liberian National Police, decided to bring together Liberian women of all faiths in order to end the civil war in their nation (Disney, 2008; Johnson, 2012; Tripp, 2015). The Liberian Women's Coalition for Peace and Development is led by Leymah Gbowee and Asatu Bah Kenneth along with the Christian Women's Peace Initiative counts among its members. Since then, Liberian women have chanted, "Can the bullet pick and choose?" in support of the nation's various faith communities. Does the bullet recognize the distinction between Muslims and Christians? (Disney, 2008). The women used their connections to all facets of 64 society to put pressure on the Taylor dictatorship and the warlords to participate in peace negotiations after banding together as a group and building a core of supporters for their peace movement. Gbowee explained how both Taylor and the warlords used their own religions to defend their continuous rule over the populace and mistreatment of its members. She asserted that President Taylor frequently expressed gratitude to God for the office of president being bestowed upon him, and she stressed the importance of his faith in providing an explanation for his authority (Disney 2008). The warlords would utilize their Islamic faith in a similar manner, predicting that it would blossom when the Taylor regime was overthrown and using it to boost their popularity (Disney 2008). In order to invalidate Taylor and the warlords' use of religious vocabulary in their arguments, the women strategically pressured the leaders of their respective religions, both Christian and Muslim (Disney 2008). As a result, the spiritual leaders communicated a message of peace to their congregations.

The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) and the Women in Liberia Mass Action for Peace and also other women's organizations banded together and planned a sizable demonstration in the fish market in the center of the city after making appeals to the leaders of various religious institutions. Their intention was to

get Taylor's attention, meet with him, and make their peace argument. There were hundreds of attendees at the rally.

Nearly 2,500 women in Liberia went to the streets over the course of several days while donning nothing but white and pulling their hair back. The phrase "the women of Liberia want peace now" was repeatedly repeated by them as they sat in a circle (Disney, 2008). The women worked together to produce a "Women of Liberia-Position Statement on the Liberian Crisis," which they gave to Taylor. The women mounted a demonstration in which they marched to the Executive Mansion and sat outside the building from five in the morning until six in the evening in an effort to end the war after Taylor disregarded their objections for several days in a row. Over a thousand women gathered in front of Monrovia's City Hall on April 11, 2003 to protest the war (Tripp 2015, p. 99).

Taylor (2003) finally caved and agreed to meet with the campaign's female leaders. Around 2,505 female visitors to the Executive Mansion delivered copies of their Position Statements.

Esther Page, a well-known local figure and crucial figure in the Women's Peace Movement, claims that:

> *The female militants decided that they needed to lay down their weapons. We had not eaten during the whole of the war and had only prayed. The efforts to put an end to the fighting involved women in a big way. We were instrumental in bringing about peace in our country. In order to prepare for the elections, we urged the men to maintain their composure. We fed the insurgents while also convincing them to declare a truce* (Tripp, 2015, p. 97).

It is indisputable that Liberian women were the primary force behind the end of the second civil war in their nation. They did this by displaying incredible levels of cohesion and organization.

Grassroots Political Recognition and Participation of Women: Lessons from Liberia

The active involvement of women in local politics suggests that institutions and governments have a duty to work toward the creation of circumstances that will allow women to engage in political processes with an equal voice. Additionally, they need to be given the chance to contribute significantly to local and communal decision-making processes. There must be widespread public recognition of the

unique contributions and efforts made by women for this process to be effective, whether on the national or local level. Most significantly, this policy cannot be put into action until more women have access to chances for education, employment, and leadership roles with decision-making ability (Star News, 2005). This is necessary for its execution to be successful. After that date, it will be feasible to put it into practice. In most cases throughout history, the relevance of women's involvement in local politics as well as in positions of national leadership has been disregarded. Moreover, traditional women have had very little recognition or participation. In actuality, women in Liberia have generally stayed "invisible" for a long time. The right to vote, own property, hold leadership positions, engage in politics, and make decisions locally and nationally has effectively been denied to women. This prejudice has taken place both locally and nationally. The transition began as more individuals became aware of and grateful for the contributions that women had made to postwar reconstruction. These unseen ladies were starting to take shape and form.

Recognition of Women

This investigation supports Joseph Folger's (1998) idea of recognition. Recognizing an opponent as a fellow human being with their own set of legitimate circumstances and concerns is the act of doing so (Folger, 1998). In the context of this study, "recognition" refers to the political recognition of a person's validity, rights, and liberties in accordance with the standards established by public and private organizations. If one wants to have a good understanding of what it means for women to be recognized and to participate in the setting of Liberia, a thorough investigation of that country's history is a must. History will speak to us if we pay attention to it.

The History of Women's Participation and Recognition

More than 150 years after the country won its independence from colonial power, nationwide elections were held in Liberia for the first time in 1957, the same year that William VS Tubman was selected as the nation's president. This marked the first time that women in Liberia participated in elections. Up until 1957, Liberian women were not granted the right to vote and were barred from holding positions of political leadership. Housewives and social performers were traditionally roles reserved for women who conformed to traditional and unconventional gender ideals.

In addition, women were regarded through the same lenses and preconceptions that hold them back from fully participating in grassroots politics and community development. Hence, this silenced the voices of women. 1910 marked the first time in history that women had the freedom to organize themselves and receive credit for their artistic talent and sewing prowess. Women in Liberia have long been known for their generous hospitality and prowess in a wide range of traditional arts and crafts. Liberian women planned and oversaw national fairs between 1957 and 1958. Women engaged in a range of needlework and sewing competitions at these fairs for the first time ever, and as a result, several prizes were given out (Runn-Marcos, Kolleholon, and Ngovo, 2005). In no way, shape, or form did this honor represent all of the women who reside in Liberia. The majority of the participants were educated women descended from slave lineages that were freed by western civilizations. There is proof that traditional women may have contributed to national and grassroots initiatives, but were disregarded and excluded due to their illiteracy. The elite of the Liberian political establishment ignored them. In traditional arts including singing, dancing, performance, storytelling, clothing, and fashion, women from previous civilizations were virtually never accorded the praise and recognition they deserved. These traditional arts comprised storytelling, acting, dancing, and performance. As time went on, this began to alter. In the end, Liberian women—especially traditional women—were granted the right to vote and take part in political affairs (Fuest, 2008).

This was a huge improvement for the nation. When Samuel Doe became the company's leader in 1980, he recognized their contributions and involvement in local politics. Women were given the chance to join political organizations and fight for their rights and fair treatment. Women fought for better access to opportunities like jobs, education, and money. As a result, more Liberian women were politically engaged and educated, which improved the position of women in the nation as a whole. In 1980, women from both conventional and non-conventional backgrounds began speaking out and clamoring for their freedom. More educated women, including the nation's current president, Dr. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, forged a coalition with less educated women to push for increased political participation and recognition. Before making the change, the consumers' requests were taken into account.

Since 1980, there has been a steady increase in female collaboration in addition to a reduction in the difference between traditional and unconventional women's levels of political engagement. The 1980 coup created the conditions for the emergence of strong female coalitions. The 1989 revolution in Liberia was the fruitful culmination of numerous alliances, partnerships, and group efforts. During the Liberian civil war, traditional Liberian women became well-known, especially during the Accra Peace Accord, which helped nontraditional Liberian women and the international community recognize the crucial role that traditional Liberian women play. With the aid of this new recognition and structure, they were able to find the strength required to persuade warring parties and political leaders to sign the Ghana peace treaty. The compelling 2008 film Back to Hell tells the tale of a group of Liberian women who joined forces to fight the vicious warlords during the civil war in their country. The women in this group were referred to as "Pray the Devil" (Pedersen 2016, pp. 400-418). These people eventually succeeded in 2003 in their attempts to broker a peace agreement for the country's war-torn nation. Both Christians and Muslims, as well as other conventional and unconventional organizations, collaborated in Liberia to successfully draw a thin line between the opposing armies in the country's civil war. As a result, the groups were able to successfully cease the dispute. This happened just as warlords and rebels in Ghana were about to give up on peace negotiations. Even when diplomatic efforts, international mediation, and negotiation have failed, these Liberian women serve as living examples of how moral courage and nonviolent resistance can be effective. They continue to serve as an example for women everywhere. The successful conclusion of Liberia's post-war reconstruction depends on acknowledging the contributions made by women to the nation. It is crucial that women are acknowledged for the knowledge and abilities they bring to the table in local and national politics.

Two professions that can benefit from the abilities and information acquired via a wide range of life experiences are leadership and governance. When women first wanted to be recognized in Liberia, they had to overcome legal restrictions that justified their exclusion from participation as well as cultural and religious customs. This was especially true during the early years of the nation. Governments and institutions may help remove these barriers and enable more women to hold political

office by cooperating to do so. The levels of participation, experiences, and levels of achievement that conventional and atypical women attain are very different from one another. It is beneficial to investigate the meanings of each of these terms as well as any potential contributing factors that might result in differences between them.

Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Agent of Change

During the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, laws protecting women were enacted, but she did not do much to secure them. Laws pertaining to rape, Gender-Based Violence, and 30 percent female representation in political parties. As president of the Republic of Liberia, she failed to completely implement these laws. As the first female president of Liberia and on the African continent, in addition to her political experience as a woman, she was expected to protect the women of Liberia and Africa. She was considered the savior of women's political participation. Many viewed her as the beginning of women's political participation in Africa. However, she did not accomplish much in this regard. During the general and presidential elections of 2017, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf pledged to actively campaign for female candidates in the October presidential and legislative elections. Her statement may seem commendable, but it is too little, too late. The 2017 election was the third since the end of a devastating 14-year civil war. Of the 1,026 approved candidates, only 163 (16%) are women, including one candidate for president in a field of over 20 males. This represents a marginal increase from 2005 and 2011, when women comprised 14% (110/762) and 11% (104/909) of candidates, respectively. Before the 2017 elections, the president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, met with 152 female candidates to lament the abysmally low number of women in elected office. In 2005, when she defeated footballer-turned-politician George Weah in the presidential election, only thirteen women had been elected to the national legislature. In 2011, when the president won a second mandate to govern Liberia, this number dropped to eight. There is a high probability that fewer women will be elected on October 10. This is both a result of and a reflection of Liberia's profoundly patriarchal political system. In the past twelve years, President Sirleaf has done little to position women favorably in order to win elections. Having said that, female politicians asked Sirleaf in 2009 to support a woman in her party during a by-election. Although a 2014 election law amendment promotes political parties to enhance their representation of women in administrative

positions, Madam Sirleaf's Unity Party ranks lower than smaller, less prominent parties in terms of fielding female candidates in 2014. This is partially due to Sirleaf's response to a gender equity in politics measure similar to those that propelled women to high public office in Rwanda, Senegal, and South Africa.

In 2010, a significant turning point marked the Liberian trend towards gender equality. The Liberian women's legislative committee proposed a law which mandated that at least 30 percent of political party leadership positions be held by women – with a trust fund established to finance their electoral campaigns. President Sirleaf did not actively support the proposed law, and it was never ratified. Sirleaf remained conspicuously silent when a less radical measure allocating five seats for women in special legislative constituencies was criticized as "unconstitutional" by predominantly male legislators in the same year. Regardless of the presence of the court, Liberian women and girls continue to lack access to justice as there are no viable forensic facilities. The recent failure of Liberian authorities to investigate and prosecute the alleged rape of a 13-year-old girl by a sitting member of the national legislature demonstrates the Sirleaf administration's incapacity to combat sexual violence. Implementing the rape law has also been hampered by Liberia's dual legal system, which consists of customary and statutory provisions. In addition, a decade after the court was established to expedite cases of gender-based violence, it remains inaccessible to the majority of women in Liberia because it is located in the capital, Monrovia. However, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf enacted policies to protect women and girls from male hostility, including the enactment of the most comprehensive anti-rape law in Africa and the formation of a specialized court to address gender-based violence. In addition, nine (9) women held ministerial positions during former President Sirleaf's first term in office. This was a watershed moment for women's participation in Liberia's democratic space. During the first term of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, these women held the highest-ranking government positions. For example, Olubanke King Akerele served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2010, Antoinette Saye was Minister of Finance and Development Planning from 2006 to 2008, Frances Johnson Morris was Minister of Justice and Attorney General from 2006 to 2007, Christiana Tah was Minister of Justice and Attorney General from 2009 to 2012, Miatta Beysolow was Minister of Commerce and Industry from 2008 to 2012, Vabah Gayflor was Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection from 2006 to 2012, and Jamesetta

However, the battle against women's marginalization in Liberia's political space was not without difficulty. It should also be noted that the battle against women's political marginalization was fraught with numerous obstacles. As an agent of change, Madam Sirleaf fought for the rights of women in Liberia's patriarchal society. Madame Sirleaf's accomplishments in the struggle against women's marginalization and political participation in Liberia are worthy of recognition by all well-intentioned individuals. Similar to Madam Sirleaf's first tenure in office, women were recognized in the Liberian government and held high-level positions. During her second term, six (6) women held top-level government positions, including Antoinette Weeks as Minister of Public Works from 2013–2014, Florence Chenoweth as Minister of Agriculture from 2012–2014, Bernice Dahn as Minister of Health and Social Welfare from 2015–2018, Axel Addy as Minister of Commerce and Industry from 2013–2018, Julia Duncan-Cassell as Minister of Gender of Children and Social Protection from 2012–2018, and Angela Cassell B as Minister of Health and This achievement surpasses that of the current president, George Weah, who also pledged to fight for women and referred to himself as the "Liberia Feminist-In-Chief" in reference to the number of women in top-level government positions. Currently, under the vigilant eye of President Weah, four (4) women hold Ministerial positions in Liberia. Ruth Coker-Collins currently serves as Minister of Public Works; Williamina Jallah is Minister of Health and Social Welfare; Williametta Piso Saydee-Tarr is Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection; and Jeanine M. Cooper is Minister of Agriculture. These positions are within the executive branch of government, where the president has the sole authority to appoint candidates who must be confirmed by the upper chamber of parliament. The former president had a cordial working relationship with women's organizations across the nation. These women actively participated in the reconstruction of the country. Women's organizations such as WIPNET, WONGOSOL's, CEDAW, AFELL, and the YWCA Today, few of these are active in Liberia's political landscape. This can be attributed to the patriarchal nature of Liberia's society.

The Motivators behind Liberian Women's Exclusion from Public Life

The male population of Liberia regularly and obviously pushes women to the side in all spheres of politics and public life. This thesis' focus will be primarily on three areas of public service, including teaching, religious leadership, and public

office. Although Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election as Africa's first female president is a source of inspiration for this generation, Helen Cooper argued in a *New York Times* article that women are still disproportionately underrepresented in many institutions, including churches, mosques, schools, and the government. Although the record of electing Africa's first female president is today an inspiration to this generation, Cooper's piece was published after she wrote it.

Many people think that achieving gender equality is hampered by religion. For many years now, women have fought for equality in all facets of society, particularly in positions of leadership and in the household and the workplace. This conflict has continued. Without a question, women have historically been marginalized both in general society and inside religious institutions like churches and mosques.

Education. The majority of Liberian women do not have the same access to educational opportunities that males do in this country. One of the main contributing factors is that there are fewer female teachers, professors, and administrators in secondary schools and higher education institutions. Most educational settings, on average, don't offer enough safe spaces for female students (such restrooms, sanitary pads, educational health workshops on the dos and don'ts, particularly related menstrual hygiene, etc.).

Religion. In Liberia, the two religions that are most prevalent are Christianity and Islam. Though they rarely occupy prominent roles, there are slightly more women practicing the Christian religion than other faiths. Men who identify as preachers preside over the majority of church services. However, it would appear that women cannot hold the position of Imam in Islam, which is responsible for leading the prayers in mosques. Women are not as marginalized in Islam as is commonly believed, according the essay "Women in Islam" written by the Harvard University Pluralism Project. In fact, the article goes on to point out that there are Muslim women working in a variety of fields, including politics, health, and education. Although not to a greater extent than it is in other nations, this is somewhat true in Liberia. Another thing that is true about them is that they do not serve the same purpose as their male colleagues in the mosques. To put things in perspective, some Christian women are actively involved in a wide range of professions. Contrarily, no woman ever holds the post of Iman in Liberia's mosques,

supporting the idea that, like Christianity, Islam does not allow women to hold positions of authority.

It has been asserted that women have been oppressed and marginalized in social, religious, political, and economic systems since the beginning of time. Women were taught to completely submit to their husbands or other male peers at this time. Academics in philosophy and theology have claimed that this practice has its roots in antiquity.

The majority of people in Liberia, as is the case in a large number of other nations, continue to cling on to their traditional religious and cultural views, as well as their cultural attitudes on the place and standing of women in society. Due to their fear of being shunned if they leave this culture, religion, and custom, many women who are a part of this system find it challenging to do so. In addition, a lot of these women worry about being shunned if they do. The conventional position of a woman is that of a homemaker, even though more women are earning degrees and joining the workforce. The male household member, however, is permitted to take part in public life because he supports his family and works as the main provider. The widespread prejudices and presumptions that confine women's identities to the domestic sphere are one of the challenges that women encounter on the road to full involvement in public life.

Politics. In Liberian society, women's participation in politics is typically seen unfavorably. Liberian women weren't finally given the opportunity to vote until 1946, which is a rather recent date given how long our country has been a democracy. Women are prevented from standing for office and winning elections for a variety of reasons, including fear, intimidation, a lack of financial resources, and stereotypes. Lack of representation in political parties is one of the challenges. There are fewer women holding elected and appointed positions in government than men, in part because of the sense of entitlement that many men in politics possess.

Cultural perspectives are against women participating in politics in many regions of the world. The majority of the time, it meant that women had to balance the demands of their leadership responsibilities with the cultural expectations of their positions. Despite the cultural barriers they had to overcome, some women were able to climb to leadership roles (whether in politics or elsewhere). One of those select few is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who in both the 2005 and 2011 elections cracked the

glass ceiling and broke free from restrictions to win the highest office in the Liberian state—the presidency. In Liberia and around the world, her legacy uplifts people's spirits and inspires other women to strive for greater levels of success in the democratic system.

Political violence. Elections in Liberia have been plagued by various sorts of political violence ever since the nation reverted to democracy. Women's engagement in party politics is hampered by the difficulties of the type of political violence that exists in Liberia and has historically been an integral element of that nation's democracy. As a result, there are much fewer women involved in politics. Political violence is tough for female candidates from a variety of political parties to endure.

During election seasons, there are frequently spikes in the number of murders, robberies, arsons, kidnappings, and other violent crimes. This is because tensions are at their peak during election campaigns. An excellent illustration of this is the event with Ms. Telia Urey, who was attacked with rocks and had her car smashed due of her unwavering tenacity in state politics. The civil society organizations have the ability to take the lead in addressing the violent confrontations that so frequently accompany political contests in Liberia.

Traditional and cultural norms

The ability of women to participate in politics both inside and outside of the rural constituency as elected politicians and community leaders is frequently impacted by cultural norms that serve as the foundation of larger social systems, according to George (2019). Regardless of whether the politics are conducted inside or outside the rural constituency, this is true. George asserted that this is the case since widespread social systems are mostly influenced by conventions. "One of the main reasons that women have to deal with restrictions is the entrenched patriarchal system, which places men in positions of authority within families and gives them the power to make decisions". Particularly in rural areas, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes—particularly those pertaining to the roles and position of women in society—remain prevalent. There is still a strong gender bias in the division of labor and the conventional obligations that go along with it. Social conventions, in accordance with Kangas et al. (2015), make it more challenging for women to move from roles that are more traditionally seen as domestic to those that are more public

and take place outside of the home. It is still challenging for women to hold official political positions since it is customary to consider women's gender identities in terms of their domestic duties. One of the reasons there is still a gender disparity in politics is due to this.

The influence that women's participation in public office

As a result, electing more women to public office can enhance legislative and policy agendas, increase voter faith in the political system, and increase the self-confidence of women. But having women in leadership roles can also bring about broader, more positive changes in how society and culture view women's potential. The election of strong and capable women to public office has the potential to alter cultural beliefs, which can also help to eradicate prejudice and gender-based stereotypes. The rise of women in elected office and in political party membership is advantageous for society as a whole. Women's involvement in politics has the ability to improve political discourse on topics that specifically affect women, increase public awareness of gender-based discrimination throughout all spheres of public and political life, and advance socioeconomic development. If the general population is informed about gender-based discrimination, these three objectives can be achieved.

When there are more women holding political office, whether they are elected or appointed, the legitimacy of the political system and the public's confidence in it may both increase. As was previously stated, both men and women share the opinion that more women working in political institutions results in a more democratic type of administration. Therefore, appointing more women to political positions can boost voters' capacity to identify with the political system, which may increase the number of individuals who cast ballots.

Political stability, one of the most effective tools for conflict avoidance, can be strengthened through increasing inclusion and representation of the people in political office. The premise underlying inclusion is that social harmony can only be preserved if individuals from different backgrounds feel that they can contribute to society on an equal footing.

Issues that disproportionately impact women can get the attention they require when there is a critical mass of women in politics. There is growing evidence that including female viewpoints in legislative discussions increases the variety of viewpoints, experiences, interests, and areas of competence that are brought up in the

discussion. This is especially true when dealing with challenging issues. By electing more women from a variety of backgrounds and political parties, these positive effects can be further increased. This will make it possible to incorporate the viewpoints of women into discussions of public policy.

Overview of women political participation in Liberia since 2005

After being an independent state for a number of years prior to that, Liberia became the first nation in the world to have a female head of state in November 2005. The long-awaited changeover delighted world-renowned organizations, and as a result, millions of dollars were donated to the nation to expand programs for women's empowerment and gender-based discrimination. Women from all around the nation viewed this as a radical change for the better for gender equality, daily watcher Liberia. However, the 2011 Senate and representative elections showed that after the first 5 (five) years of the female head of state, there was little impact made for women's emancipation in politics. Only 8 of the 73 seats in the lower House of Representatives, or 11.0 percent of the total, were won by women. Just 4 out of the 30 seats, or 13.3 percent of the total, were held by women in the chamber of senators (NEC-Liberia, 2005). Despite the issue at hand, partners on a local, national, and worldwide level have made significant contributions over the past ten years to the advancement of gender equality. David Yates who was the inaugural UN Women (2012), in partnership with the Liberia Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN-Liberia), has called a consultative meeting. The consultative meeting was held with representatives of the women's wings of the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) to discuss advocacy strategies for the acceptance of gender provisions in the electoral law amendments which were submitted to the parliament by the National Elections Commission (NEC). Discussion of the gender-related elements in the NEC's proposed modifications to the electoral legislation is the main objective of this meeting. USAID (2016) supports government and civil society partners in their initiatives to expand outreach to women, encourage women's participation in politics, and strengthen women's roles in good governance in an effort to advance equality in Liberia. Together with the Liberian government, we are pursuing each of these objectives. Additionally, USAID concentrates its efforts on enhancing institutional and human resources for gender-responsive land governance strategies. Women, development partners, and regional women's organizations across

Liberia continue to face difficulties in getting more women elected to the house of senate and the house of assembly as of 2018.

Women's Political Inclusion

Women in politics and women's organizations started their advocacy efforts for gender mainstreaming and political representation in 1994. In 2000, these attempts started to pick up speed. Two of the most important concerns facing women today are gender mainstreaming and political representation of women. This study claims that Edwina Cooper, who was at the time the Secretary General of Liberians Women's Initiative (LWI), was the first to mention a representative quota in the media. Cooper stated that, the Liberians Women's Initiative was pushing for at least 30% of influential public roles to be held by women by the year 2003, noting that women made up only 5% of the government (Nelson, 2000, August 31).

There was a small group of Liberian women who had a history of advocating for more political participation in the years leading up to the elections in 2005. The efforts of this organization were fruitless. This conflict lasted for many years.

In the early 1990s, Liberian women made an effort to create a national women's agenda, according to Mikell (1995). However, it appears that the demands of the fight derailed this desire. Liberia was engulfed in conflict at the time. Liberian women appeared to be ready to pick up this effort again during the early stages of the change. The first National Women's Conference was organized by the Ministry of Gender and Development and took place from May 10–14, 2004, with assistance from several different United Nations agencies and the Liberia Transition Initiative (LTI) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It featured over 250 women who represented a wide range of organizations, including NGOs, professional associations, religious organizations, women politicians, traditional leaders, and people who were internally displaced (Tapson, 2004). They also originated from a variety of families and origins. The former first lady of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was also there. The Conference's objectives, according to Tapson (2004), were to revitalize WONGOSOL and create a national agenda and framework for women's engagement. The conference's female attendees identified the causes of their political and economic marginalization and came up with a plan to guarantee that women have an equal voice in all decision-making processes. 28 ideas were developed as a result of the subsequent events and included

in the Unification Day Declaration. Additionally, it maintained the target of having 30% of elected and appointed public positions held by women by the year 2020 (Tapson, 2004). They also supported initiatives to inform women of their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and of gender-sensitive voting processes and forms. Additionally, they asked for the fulfillment of their material requirements, particularly the creation of training programs for women so they could compete in lucrative fields.

The Draft Electoral Reform Bill that was presented to the assembly contained a clause that specifically reserved 30 percent of parliamentary seats for women as a direct result of these kinds of actions. The Electoral Reform Bill had this clause. The UNMIL Gender Unit supplied support to the Ministry of Gender and Development throughout the process of writing the clause that was later adopted into the bill (UNSC, 2004c). Despite this, the NTLA voted to pass the Electoral Reform Bill in December 2004 without enacting any kind of gender equality legislation or even bringing up the subject once. Minister Vabah K. Gayflor was quoted as saying in a piece titled "NTLA Misleads Women Groups–Gender Minister Expresses Frustrations," "Unfortunately, the critical role of gender, although superficially acknowledged by the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) was left to be interpreted as a matter of appeasement or propitiation" (as cited in Daygbor, 2004, December 23, para. 4). This passage was taken from a piece that Daygbor wrote. This quotation may be found here; it was taken from the article that was written on December 23, 2004. Gayflor criticized the Electoral Reform Bill's omission of affirmative action for women and challenged the superficiality of previous commitments to gender in the Joint Needs Assessment by using international law and speaking in a rights-based, feminist terminology. She uttered:

> *… Another example of the challenges in achieving gender parity throughout the entire transitional process is the recent passage of the Electoral Reform Bill, which did not include an affirmative action for women that might have been in compliance with resolution 1325. This is due to the absence of an affirmative action provision for women in this law, which may have complied with resolution 1325. Every single one of us must replenish our terrible abuses of fundamental human rights, such as the denial of opportunities, resources, and power for women, in order to be prepared for whatever may come our way (year, paragraphs 6–8).*

The Liberia Women National Political Forum (LWNPF) was established in February 2005 by a group of women's organizations under the leadership of Ruth

Caesar, a legislator and former deputy minister at the Ministry of Planning (see "Women Want Greater Role," 2004, February 4). This step was taken in an effort to support the advancement of women "out of the background" and into greater positions of decision-making. The first Forum featured a discussion on "Women's Participation in the Political Process: Challenges and Opportunities" (Maeda, 2005, May). Creating a National Women's Manifesto, educating attendees about the political party platforms, compiling a list of potential candidates for the 2005 presidential and legislative elections, and creating a list of potential candidates for those elections were all goals of the event (Wrokpoh, 2005, February 23). The National Women's Manifesto Forum, which took place on February 23, 2005, was centered on these objectives (Wrokpoh, 2005). The founder of the 50/50 movement in Sierra Leone, Eshun-Baidan, said in his speech to the Forum that "a government that is exclusively or predominately made up of men cannot claim to be a government for the people, of the people, and by the people" (Eshun-Baidan's words were cited in "More Women, Better Politics," 2005, February 24, paragraph 4). There were many different types of women in attendance at this event, including those who work in politics, community-based organizations (CBOs), county authorities, political parties, and government. Authorities from the county were also present.

The concept for the Forum "was born out of consultations with UNMIL's Office of the Gender Advisor, which is also providing technical and material support to the year-long campaign to enhance women's political rights," according to a May article titled "UNMIL Focus" written by Maeda (2005). In his article, Maeda presented this information. The concept for the Forum, according to the information in the article, "was developed following consultations with UNMIL's Office of the Gender Advisor" (Nduka-Agwu, (2009).

The Liberian Women's Manifesto was created in 2005 by the Liberian Women's National Political Front (LWNPF) in an effort to more clearly and freely articulate their points of view. The first-ever National Women's Conference took place in 2004. The Manifesto contains remarks made by the Gender Minister Vabah Gayflor, Amelia Ward who was chair Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL's) at the time, and Ruth Ceasar (who was the steering committee chair for the Women 77 National Political Forum at the time). Minister Gayflor

mentions domestic law (the Constitution and the CPA) as well as international agreements the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and SCR1325 in the Foreword and claims that the Manifesto "establishes a firm basis for gender mainstreaming in planning and launching a holistic post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia" (p. 2). The author of this was Minister Gayflor. The document, according to Ruth Caesar's assertions, "sets the agenda of women's active participation in politics, political process, and every area of decision-making" (p. 4). For her part, Amelia Ward discusses the significance of achieving "women's full emancipation" (p. 3). The following list of the top 10 issues of concern is provided by the Manifesto: Women's human rights and the law, women and democracy, women and poverty, women and the economy, women's education and training, and women's rights to sexual and reproductive health care are just a few of the topics that are covered. The following are the ten topics: Women with Special Needs; Women and the Media; Women and the Environment; Women and the Environment (which covers physically challenged women, elderly women, widows, single and adolescent mothers, and female children).

Making sure that "the Government of Liberia prioritizes the concerns and interests of women, children, and all other marginalized groups in policy development and implementation" (p. 10) is the main goal of the Manifesto. On page 8, the Manifesto states that "a national gender policy to facilitate gender mainstreaming is still required" and urges for the implementation of gender-sensitive budgets and policies. In several places throughout the paper, these concerns are raised.

However, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected woman president, guided Liberia through peace and recovery following a decade-long civil war, as well as responding to the 2014–2015 Ebola crisis. She has received international recognition for her administration's economic, social, and political successes, and she was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work to empower women. Sirleaf is now a powerful advocate for increasing women's political engagement and involvement in decision-making processes. "

That is why we must keep working," she says. The passing of the Domestic Abuse Bill in 2017 was one of the Sirleaf administration's most major successes. Domestic violence against a person was made illegal as a result of this legislation,

and victims got legal protection. This law was important for emphasizing the government's commitment to eradicating gender-based violence and recognizing the gravity of violence against women. The fact that the bill was passed increased its significance. Sirleaf was also responsible for establishing the Ministry of Gender and Development in 2006, which was entrusted with campaigning for women's and girls' rights throughout the country. The ministry was in charge of a number of initiatives, such as the Girls' Education National Policy, which aimed to increase the number of girls who enrolled in school and continued their education, and the Liberia Women Economic Empowerment Program, which provided microloans to female business owners.

Having said that, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf signed the Land Rights Act in 2017, acknowledging women's rights to inherit and own land. This law was critical for a number of reasons, including the fact that women in Liberia have historically suffered discrimination in land access due to cultural and traditional norms that have kept them at a disadvantage. Sirleaf's leadership has had a tremendous impact on Liberian women's political participation. During her tenure, the proportion of female legislators in Liberia's legislature climbed by 100%, rising from 5% in 2005 to 11% in 2012. Among the remarkable posts chosen by Sirleaf in her administration were the first female Chief Justice and the first female Minister of Finance. Sirleaf is now a powerful advocate for increasing women's political engagement and involvement in decision-making processes. There is growing recognition that true gender equality will result in a stronger economy, a more developed nation, and a more peaceful nation. That is why we must keep working. Furthermore, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership had a tremendous impact on the narratives surrounding women's marginalization in Liberian culture. That shift occurred as a result of her election as president. Her administration enacted a variety of laws and initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and empowering women, including the Domestic Violence Bill, the Land Rights Act, and the Ministry of Gender and Development. Furthermore, as a result of her leadership, more women are participating in politics and holding political office in Liberia.

Are State Agencies Meeting Their Feminist Objectives?

In order to improve the status of women and address gender-based injustices in a variety of contexts, such as the political system, the economy, the legal system,

and the educational system, women who are active in politics and activism in Liberia engage in a variety of activities, such as lobbying and awareness-raising. The Inheritance Laws were finally approved for application in 2003 after more than five years of debate in the legislature. Additionally, the Penal Code was amended by the legislature in 2005, and the "Rape Court" was founded by the Liberian government the following year, in 2008. The Liberian Ministry of Education issued the National Policy on Girls' Education in 2006, at least five years after advocates for "uplifting" Liberian girls on a local and national level advocated for it. This resulted from the efforts of the campaigners. The work on this project was completed in 2006. The National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence was unveiled by the Ministry of Women and Gender Development (MGD) in 2006, followed by the Long-Term Action Plan in 2009, and the New Generation Plan in 2010. These three strategies are all meant to stop gender-based violence. These are managed by the Ministry of Gender and Development (MGD), Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), Association of Female Lawyer of Liberia (AFELL), other UN agencies, UNMIL-OGA, and the numerous transnational organizations listed throughout this thesis, in addition to the numerous other national development initiatives for market women, rural women farmers, and women business owners. The policies and initiatives of the government that are directed toward women and girls reflect the objectives stated in the Liberian Women's Manifesto. Additionally, the 12 Critical Areas of Concern listed in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) are reflected in these policies and programs. The basis for the strategy had actually been designed ten years earlier, even though the National Growth Plan was not fully completed until 2009 (Republic of Liberia, 1999).

The majority of the problems mentioned in the Ministry of Good Governance's annual reports (MGD, 2010, 2011, and 2012) have to do with problems with capacity. These problems include a lack of funds and reliance on donor financing, poor resource management, a lack of staff, and a lack of technical expertise within the workforce. The abilities and assistance required to work on gender mainstreaming inside their individual institutions for gender focal points are particularly inadequate. Their ability to do their duties is hampered by this. The lack of internet access, a lack of office supplies, and a lack of computers are just a few of the practical issues that have been cited as major roadblocks.

The county offices of the MGD make this kind of issue substantially worse. Additionally, the LNAP Secretariat lacks the skills required to oversee and coordinate the LNAP's actual implementation. In a similar vein, the UNMIL Mission Reports reveal a lack of competency and accountability on the part of the administration with relation to programs for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.

To put it another way, without the assistance of the UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund (UNIFEM), and other partners, the MGD would be unable to carry out its mandate and projects. The MGD is still very active and noticeable in and around the nation's capital. Having said that it works in tandem with other organizations on the EPAG, such as JP-GEWEE, the LNAP, the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence, the National Rural Women's Program, the Building Women Entrepreneurship Program, and the President's Special Initiative for the Sirleaf Women's Market Fund.

In recent years, achieving goals that are more concrete or more time-sensitive in nature has been the most successful for governmental organizations. It was discovered that just two of the five RNGS issues—political representation and job training—were of importance to Liberian feminist and women's movement participants. The last three topics—abortion, prostitution, job training, and "hot issue" areas—were all implicitly gendered but had implications for gender. It is important to remember this truth. The preceding three problems affected people of both genders even if they weren't explicitly gendered. The Research Network on Gender in Society (RNGS), which used policy disputes as its units of study across issue areas and nation-states, found that policy domains were a stronger indicator of the success or failure of feminism movements in particular states than national trends were. This was one of the RNGS's conclusions. This appears to be the situation in Liberia as well, where laws and policies that deal more directly with women's practical gender issues, such as those relating to rape and SGBV, education, and economic empowerment, did not appear to face much opposition and were approved with only minor challenges. For instance, rape and SGBV, education, and economic empowerment laws and policies all directly address the real gender issues that women face.

In a critical sense, the issues that appear to be "apolitical" are the ones that garner the most support from contributors on a worldwide level. The movement's demand for a parliamentary representation quota for women, on the other hand, has proven to be the most challenging because it directly challenges men's dominance of the national agenda. It is now the movement's most challenging demand as a result. Additionally, neither the government nor the international communities have provided adequate support for this issue. Despite the fact that UN agencies, multilateral organizations, and bilateral partners (such as USAID) appeared committed to increasing the number of qualified women to run for office and to mobilize female voters in 2005, this early dedication appears to have waned as the memories of conflict began to fade. Despite this, there were more women in 2005 that were able to run for office. There is a significant probability that international development agencies, in particular, are emphasizing sexual and gender-based violence excessively (for example, look at the UNMIL Mission Reports).

Despite the reality that rape and other types of violence against women are all too frequent throughout the nation; efforts to tackle these problems have not focused much on resolving the causes of these problems. Given that a significant portion of Liberians still lack access to basic necessities, reforms that can be justified in terms of how they advance the nation will undoubtedly be simpler to defend. Because these issues seem to have far fewer obvious advantages, it is much more difficult to win support for objectives like expanding the political representation of women. However, Liberian women have been promoting greater access to education, literacy initiatives, sexual and gender-based violence protection and punishment, agricultural skill development, inheritance rights, and property rights.

These difficulties are framed differently by different women's organizations: by some as development challenges, by others as strategic women's issues, and by still others as both at once. It is not surprising that the government and the international community give more assistance to issues that are cast as barriers to growth.

Given Liberia's unique social, political, and historical setting, it is crucial that feminist goals be not seen as having been "achieved." The status of women as a group has not significantly and broadly improved as a result of these, despite a number of important first steps having been taken and the existence of legal, legislative, and development frameworks. Despite the fact that women have received

a lot of attention lately, this is still the case. The scant advantages that are offered are restricted to the nation's capital due to the poor implementation of these procedures and the lack of awareness and enforcement in Liberia's rural districts. It is particularly difficult to implement reforms in a legal system that is dual in character, consisting of both statutory and customary laws, because the state must contend for authority with traditional councils and institutions. The gender committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the 44th session of the CEDAW Committee both reached the conclusion that the current state of affairs makes it difficult for Liberian women to seek justice and assert their legal rights. You may presently read through both of these studies right here.

The Revised Rules and Regulations Governing the Hinterland of Liberia still permit discrimination against women after being modified. The majority of people are still ignorant of the rules and ordinances, and there are typically no enforcement methods in place in rural regions. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been approved, but it has not yet been incorporated into Liberian law. Additionally, neither a definition of discrimination nor a foundation for gender equality is found in the Liberian Constitution (CEDAW, 2009b). There is still no legislation that forbids domestic abuse, and women are still denied the ability to possess property. Rape and other types of sexual assault continue to pose a serious threat to the safety of women and girls notwithstanding recent changes to the Penal Code and harsher penalties for offenders (United Nations, 2009). The prevalence of poverty motivates parents to accept monetary compensation, which leads to a tendency for victims to settle out of court (United Nations, 2009). Of course, a lot of rapes go unrecorded due to social pressure and shame. Additionally, victims frequently reach out-of-court agreements. Inadequate health care, barriers to accessing justice, and undereducated law enforcement are all factors that lead to the failure to file charges, the dismissal of charges, and acquittals, according to a 2009 report by the United Nations. State authorities are working to find solutions to some of these issues and take care of some of these worries through the implementation of the NAP-GBV. The CEDAW Committee also expressed regret over "the fact that no sustained and systematic action has been taken by the State party to modify or eliminate such harmful traditional practices, patriarchal attitudes, and stereotypes," as well as its grave concern over "the persistence of harmful traditional practices, patriarchal attitudes,

and deeply rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities, and identities of women and men in all spheres of life."50 Female genital mutilation and cutting were practices that the CEDAW Committee was particularly concerned about, and it criticized the Ministry of Internal Affairs for granting permits to those who engaged in these practices because it was thought that this supported the practice (p. 6). The Liberian government provided very little help for ending the practice until quite recently.

Politics is one of the elements that has increased the severity of the issue; the Sande are well-known for their extensive social networks and for being a potent political force in the country. One of the causes of the issue's extreme severity is this. The first times that FGM/C was featured in the Liberian national media as a problem that Liberian women were denouncing were the Berry Peal case and the Azango whistleblower incident. Berry Peal has received help from AFELL, WOLPNET, and WONGOSOL during her trip. It wasn't until the Azango whistleblowing episode that first noticed FGM being highlighted in the Liberian news media. Before this, the conduct was justified as a custom and cast as a problem caused by Westerners trying to impose their ideals on Liberians. Those who supported its continuation asserted that Liberians were being forced to adopt Western values by Westerners. Despite making some initial attempts to end the practice in November 2011, the government has not yet criminalized it or made significant investments to inform the public about the risks involved (as well as the injustice of it) (Boley, 2013).

For a very long time, proponents of gender equality have been trying to figure out how to fit into the national reconciliation and rebuilding processes. Although it arrives early in the technique, the LNAP is a crucial component of the process. According to the recommendations made by the LNAP Civil Society Monitoring Group (Luppino & Webbe, 2011), the Liberian government and state agencies should step up their efforts "to identify and mentor qualified women for appointed positions in national and local leadership" and work with their global partners to enhance the skills of local female chiefs and other leaders to oversee and support economic and agricultural programs that The government of Liberia must also evaluate the progress of all the gender-sensitive reforms it has started, and it must "rededicate themselves to the implementation of the National Gender Policy, as well as all other gender-related policies, including the National Gender Based Violence Plan of Action" (p. 132). The Group also suggests that the government and the Law Reform Commission

take up the age of consent issue, add rape and inheritance laws to the Penal Code, and meet and surpass the security industry's 20% affirmative action target.

The final set of suggestions deals with the problem of women's underrepresentation in the media. The Group requests that the Liberian government, the Liberian Press Union, neighboring universities, and any other interested parties create professional development programs for editors and managers that take gender into consideration, offer opportunities for mentoring and scholarships for female journalists, and create a code of conduct "to address sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in the media" (Porter et al., 2008, pp: 230-252).

It's fascinating to observe how a feminist goal may have been reflected in Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election as president. They surely thought of Ellen as "one of their kind," and they saw their backing for her as a sign that they were prepared to fight against men's privilege and the exclusion of women. It's likely that many Liberian women chose Ellen in part because to this conviction. Since 2004, Liberian women have pushed for training from the Ministry of Good Governance and the UN so they can advance their political agenda through the associations to which they belong and the numerous national forums they have organized. These events were frequently sponsored by the Ministry of Good Governance, which was frequently joined by UNIFEM and other foreign partners. Staff and leaders were almost always present. The Electoral Reform Bill's decision to exclude the affirmative action provision from the NTLA's proposed law was strongly opposed by Minister Gayflor. It is important to note that the Manifesto includes several demands for the GoL as well as for NGOs, CBOs, international organizations, and the UN system as a whole under each major area of concern. The pages 12-28 contain these requests.

This is something that has to be thought about. In fact, the GoL was commended for its "regular cooperation and partnership with nongovernmental organizations and community-based women's organizations in the country, which assist the State party in its efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women" (CEDAW, 2009b, p. 3). This was one of the findings from the recent CEDAW meetings. This was mentioned as one of the justifications for the GoL receiving this praise. Even while the Ministry of Good Governance has occasionally come under fire for employing grassroots women to advance particular political objectives. Evidence reveals that these grassroots women submit accusations against the Ministry of Good Governance as well as international organizations, according to

51 (personal communication, 2012–2013). This illustrates how women's organizations have evolved as fairly shrewd recipients of development aid. It is obvious that not everyone fully understands the motivations behind specific behavior. We might never be able to determine whether a specific idea (like educating and registering female voters) came from grassroots women's organizations, governmental bodies, or outside donors, but it is very likely that someone at each of these "levels" had the same idea. It is considered that WIPNET and the Gender Ministry certainly had considerably greater validity in the opinion of Liberians during this time because the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was hardly ever referenced in the local news media. This is true even though UNIFEM's own report asserts that it was the driving force behind the effort to encourage women to vote. This is because, according to UNIFEM's own assessment, it was the program that encouraged more women to exercise their right to vote.

As a result, the MGD helped women in many different ways, some of which were really little and others of which were absolutely essential. On the other hand, the underwhelming results of other female candidates raises questions about the effectiveness of regional and international initiatives meant to increase the proportion of women in national political office. The goal of these initiatives is to increase the number of women holding national political office. The fact that there were so few female voters in the 2011 elections is quite worrying; especially in light of how recently they were held. With regard to the Laotian government, the CEDAW Committee responded by criticizing it once more for its "lack of concrete steps to address the underlying causes, including prevalent social and cultural attitudes" (2009b: 8). Despite the NGP's inclusion of a commitment to gender budgeting and its allocation of 30% of the national budget for gender mainstreaming, these funds have not yet been made available. The Coalition for Gender Responsive Budgeting was established in Liberia in 2012 at the initiative of the United Nations Women's Organization, formerly known as UNIFEM (Johnson, 2012; "GoL Budget," 2012). At the time, UN Women condemned the Liberian government for ignoring requests to change the nation's national budget in order to better support gender equality.

Despite the fact that some women have important roles in legislative bodies, the proportion of women holding seats is still startlingly low. Any of the three bills that would have introduced affirmative action for women in political offices have not

advanced in the House of Representatives. In terms of the percentage of women represented in a national parliament, Liberia is now ranked 110th in the world, according to the International Political Union's most recent rankings from 2012. In the Senate, which has 30 seats, there are now 4 women in office as a consequence of the general election that was held in 2011 (IPU, 2012). This represents 13.3% of the Senate. Women hold 8 out of the 73 seats in the House of Representatives, making about 11% of the body. This number is actually lower than the results of the elections held in 2005, when there were 12.5% and 16.7%, respectively, of women serving in each of these organizations (IPU, 2010).

Democracy

Given that women in Liberia are disadvantaged, there has to be a place to accommodate complete democracy in order to promote gender equality. In Liberia, more work has to be done to create a welcoming environment for democracy for all people, regardless of gender. Only a fully functional democratic society can provide the freedom of speech and civic liberties that promote gender parity. In line with this, Liberia is classified as a partially free nation with a score of 60 out of 100 in the country profile of freedom in the world (Freedom House, 2022). Liberia received a score of 27 out of 40 in the area of political rights freedom, which covers elections and political association, and a score of 33 out of 60 in the category of civil liberty. This demonstrates that Liberia is not a democracy that is completely functional.

Table 1: Freedom in the World, Profile of Liberia

Descriptions	Liberia Scores	Total Points
Over All Score	60	100
Political Rights	27	40
Civil Liberty	33	60

Source: Freedom House, 2022

Women Participation in elections

Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected as Liberia's first female president in 2005's legislative and presidential elections, which also saw 14% of women elected out of the 64 MPs and 17% out of the 30 senators. This was the reason why

there were more women than ever before in Liberia's bicameral legislature (UNDP, 2021). There were 109 female candidates out of 802 registered candidates, or 13.5% of all candidates. Only 14 women were elected to posts in these elections, including the presidency, which resulted in the election of 105 people.

Table 2: Women's Political Participation in 2005 Election

Gender	Candd	President	V.P	Senate	Rep.	Elected	Voters
Total	802	22	22	215	543	105	1,352,720
Males	693	20	21	194	458	91	676,340
Females	109	2	1	21	85	14	676,360
% of Females	13.5%	9%	4.5%	9.7%	15.6%	13%	50%

Source: NEC Voter's Registration Statistics, 2005

In Liberia's 2011 general election, there were a total of 860 candidates running for political office; 158 of them were women. Just eight of the 90 elected politicians were female, and they represented the legislative and executive branches, including Madam Sirleaf, who was re-elected. Out of the 103 members of the bicameral legislature, seven women were elected. As of 2012, there were 10.7% fewer female lawmakers than there were in 2005, when there were 13. From 2014 to 2022, the ratio of female parliamentarians will be 11%.

Table 3: Women's Political Participation in 2011 Elections

Gender	Candd	President	V.P	Senate	Rep.	Elected	Voters
Total	860	16	16	248	580	90	1,798,930
Males	702	15	15	238	450	82	920,448
Females	158	1	1	10	130	8	878,482
% of Females	18.3%	6%	6%	4%	22%	9%	49%

Source: NEC Voter's Registration Statistics, 2011.

Table 4: Women's Political Participation in 2017 Elections

Gender	Candd	President	V.P	Senate	Rep.	Elected	Voters
Total	1024	20	20	NA	984	74	2,183,683
Males	861	17	14	NA	828	64	1,120,733
Females	163	1	6	NA	156	10	1,062,733
% of Females	16%	5%	30%	NA	15.8%	13.5%	49%

Source: NEC Voter's Registration Statistics, 2017

In spite of these increases in the number of women participating in politics over the time under consideration, males are still in the majority when it comes to making political decisions. Because men predominate in Liberian state institutions, it is difficult for women to compete on an equal footing with men at the table where decisions about the country are made.

CHAPTER V
Conclusion

As this thesis puts forwards, the UN records that Liberia does not exemplify a good case for gender quality. Having said that, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a well-known advocate for democracy, justice, and world peace who supported women's rights and a voice for freedom. She was also the former President of Liberia and the first democratically elected female head of state on the African continent. As she is a well-known supporter of women's rights, Sirleaf also became the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. When she was president of Liberia, Madam Sirleaf played a crucial role in eliminating the nation's entire debt load. Additionally, she secured a constitutional guarantee for free and universal elementary education. When she left office in 2017, she also made sure that the nation would have its first democratic and peaceful transfer of power in 73 years, which occurred in January 2018.

In order to provide women and girls a stronger voice in all spheres of life, she has dedicated her time and efforts to boosting the proportion of women in Africa's public-sector leadership roles. This is a component of her dedication to amplify the voices of women and girls in all spheres of life. The Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development was established by Johnson Sirleaf, the former leader of Liberia, in 2018. It is a prestigious organization whose goal is to maintain and advance women's advancement in the political and social arenas across the continent. Its stated purpose is to "be a catalyst for change throughout Africa by assisting in the unleashing of the most abundant and untapped power—its women" (Hayhurst 2011, pp. 531-549).

In order to achieve gender equality, there are still issues that need to be resolved in every nation on earth. Women and girls generally lack economic independence, have poorer access to education and healthcare, and are underrepresented in all levels of decision-making. Additionally, girls and women have fewer opportunities to get involved in politics. It is more challenging for women and girls to succeed in both their personal and professional life as a result of all of these issues taken together. Despite the fact that it has been gradual and incremental, the progress made toward gender equality over the past 25 years shows

that it is possible to bring about change. Despite the fact that it has been slow, it has been consistent and incremental. Legal reform, representation quotas for women, increased delivery of social protection and public services that are gender-responsive, and support for women's movements are all tactics that have had an impact and could be scaled up more. By cooperating to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the United Nations "Decade of Action" on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, governments, the UN, civil society, and the private sector have the opportunity to improve the lives of women and girls for the benefit of all.

The results of this study show that Liberia is mostly a male-dominated society, which has a big impact on the political culture that is now being used in the nation. Men are given more possibilities to participate fully in politics, but women are perceived as not being capable of carrying out specific duties and obligations. Men are given more chances to actively engage in politics.

The states must conduct development, education, and training initiatives to improve women's potential to take on political leadership roles and to engage fully and constructively in political processes and decision-making. State governments and UN delegates must work to attain gender parity in their membership in order to guarantee that women may participate in political institutions and decisions in a meaningful way. This will enable women to participate fully and equally in political life. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women participating in political processes globally, and this increase has been directly attributed to this. On the other hand, it has been difficult for African women to rise to positions of leadership across the continent due to a variety of issues, including gender stereotypes. Attempts to raise the representation of women in politics and other major institutions have been tried throughout Africa, although progress has generally been gradual and, in some cases, impossible to make. The activity of both women's organizations and the female members of political parties has considerably benefited attempts to increase the number of women who are participating in political life in Africa. There has been much work done to enhance the representation of women in politics and other important African institutions, but there is still a long way to go. This is due to the widespread belief in many African countries that men are better qualified than women to hold leadership roles. As a result, women in these cultures

experience unwitting pressure to acquire masculine traits in order to fit into hierarchical structures and systems that are predominately male.

As part of its area of investigation, this study has also examined the obstacles that women in Liberia face in their attempts to participate in politics. The process of voting and the political involvement of women in various elections were also covered. This study has also covered the concept of democracy as it is practiced in this country. The political system in this nation has flaws and problems, including thuggery and violence during elections, which permits electoral malpractices including vote buying, fighting, and murders during elections, among other things.

The Liberian government should take action to lessen acts of violence that take place around election times in order to create space for free and fair elections in Liberia and to give Liberian women a chance to engage in politics. One factor that adds to the marginalization of women in this nation is the rise in thuggery and violence that takes place during election seasons. But there are also a lot of additional reasons. To achieve its stated objective of raising the proportion of politically active women, programs aimed at empowering women, such as the Women for Change Initiative Program and the Women Empowerment Program must have greater financing and support. To ensure that elections in the country will be free and fair, the government of Liberia should take steps to ensure that they are conducted properly and that electoral malpractices, violence, thuggery, harassments, and vote buying are avoided during the process. This will enable free and fair elections across the country. Even though great progress has been made over the past ten years to encourage meaningful engagement of women in Liberia's political and electoral processes, there is still a sizable gender gap in politics. On the other hand, the results of this study suggest that an increase in the number of women who run for elected office on a national level is positively associated with the presence of women in significant and crucial leadership roles. Currently, women occupy only 12% of all elected governmental positions. Several measures, some of which are listed below for your reference, could be implemented to increase women's overall participation in electoral politics. These strategies include the following: (1) motivating women to run for office; (2) giving financial support so that women can run for office; and (3) mobilizing the general public in favor of female candidates.

The results of this study show that women are crucial to the campaigning and support-raising efforts of political parties. Using this effort as leverage to push for

women to have decision-making positions within these frameworks can be effective. One of the most significant societal factors that is related to how much representation women have is a nation's degree of development. Development results in the erosion of traditional values, as well as reduced fertility rates, a rise in urbanization, higher levels of education for women, and a rise in the participation of women in the labor. It is crucial for social forces to change their mentalities in order to change their beliefs and norms about the appropriate role for women in society. This will lead to the removal of the financial, social, and political barriers that keep women from participating in political activities. In order to improve the political resources accessible to women and to reduce opposition to progressive legislation and activities aimed at eradicating gender discrimination in politics, these kinds of modifications are crucial. Everyone, regardless of sex, race, nationality, religion, or faith, has the right to participate in the administration of their country, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed by the government of Liberia. Both citizens and non-citizens are entitled to use this right. Given that women make up more than half of Liberia's population, the nation must take all necessary steps to ensure that females have full and equal access to political decision-making positions and opportunities. As a result, accomplishing the goal of having both men and women participate equally in decision-making positions will create a gender balance and increase the likelihood that women will contribute to the development of Liberian society. Only if those people's voices are heard in the halls of power as a catalyst for national advancement will society be able to profit from the diversity of opinions, experiences, abilities, and talents that exist.

Recommendations:

1. The researchers acknowledge the significant role women have had in Liberia's recent history, but they argue that merely participating in politics will not be enough to bring about the kinds of changes that will give regular women economic advantages. This is particularly valid for women who reside in more rural areas like small towns and villages. The different levels of interest and involvement that conventional and nonconventional women have must also be taken into account. The women's movement cannot guarantee automatic and equal representation

for all women in every position on its own. Any effort to ensure women's growth needs a strong, pro-active state with leaders capable of enacting strict laws. Any endeavor to ensure women's growth would be unsuccessful without it.

2. When developing and executing legal reforms and public policies with the aim of extending women's equal rights, consideration must be given to the social environment and regional customs, through which people in a specific area negotiate their different interactions. Turning a blind eye to violence against women is wrong.

3. It is crucial that women are given more media attention and exposure, especially when it comes to election campaigns.

4. To be able to participate in upcoming elections and make decisions based on factual information, women, especially those who live in rural areas, require civic education more than men do.

5. Foreign non-governmental organizations should donate money directly to independent women's organizations rather than going through the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. This financing should instead come from other sources.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I

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by Donetta Kokeh

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Rethinking Democracy and Continuing Marginalization of Women in Liberian Politics between 2005-2017

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

RETHINKING DEMOCRACY AND CONTINUING MARGINALIZATION OF WOMENIN LIBERIAN POLITICS BETWEEN 2005-2017

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APPENDICIES

Appendix II

Ethics Committee Approval

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

19.06.2023

Dear Donetta M. Kokeh

Your project **"Rethinking Democracy and Marginalization of Women in Liberian Politics"** has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KİRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee