NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**AN ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
DEMOCRACY IN LIBERIA DURING THE PERIOD OF 2011- 2021**

M.A. THESIS

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Dr. Zehra AZIZBEYLI

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Approval

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Rachelle T. Faeflen titled "**An Analysis of Barriers to Women's Participation in Democracy in Liberia During the Period of 2011- 2021**" and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

Examining Committee	Name-Surname	Signature
Head of the Committee:	Assoc. Prof. Dilek Latif	
Committee Member	Dr. Ibrahim Ayberk	
Supervisor:	Dr. Zehra Azizbeyli	

Approved by the Head of the Department

26./.7./2023

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sait Akşit

Head of Department

Approved by the Institute of Graduate Studies

...../...../2023

Prof. Dr. Kemal Hüsnü Can Başer

Head of the Institute

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.

Rachelle T. Faeflen

…../…../2023

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Rachelle T. Faeflen

Abstract

An Analysis of Barriers to Women's Participation in Democracy in Liberia during the Period of 2011- 2021

Faeflen, Rachelle T.

M.A., Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Dr. Zehra Azizbeyli

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The shockingly low percentage of female participation in politics is alarming. Research has shown that Liberians prefer electing men over women in the elections, regardless of the competence they can bring to administration, as a result of the patriarchal dominant component of that country's society. This Thesis examines the theoretical stances of liberal feminism in order to draw a conclusion on the level of women's political engagement. Therefore, the goal of the study was to identify the causes of women's marginalization as well as the elements contributing to the low level of participation of women in Liberian politics. This was achieved by developing research from secondary sources.

This Thesis shows that several women who ran for important political offices did not receive votes from the men or were viewed as unfit for office. According to research, Liberians place a higher value on religious and cultural beliefs than the country's constitution, which discourages women and results in a lower proportion of women in government than men. Perhaps the most important finding of the study is this one. Women must be made aware of their potential, ensure that they are well-versed in the country's constitution, and guard against being intimidated by men when it comes to taking part in political life.

Keywords: Liberia, democracy, women, participation, barriers.

Öz

Liberya'da 2011 ve 2021 Döneminde Kadınların Demokrasiye Katılımının Önündeki Engellerin Analizi

Faeflen, Rachelle T.
Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü
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Kadınların siyasete katılım oranının şok edici derecede düşük olması endişe vericidir. Araştırmalar, Liberyalıların, ülke toplumunun ataerkil yapısının bir sonucu olarak, yönetime getirebilecekleri yetkinliklere bakılmaksızın, seçimlerde erkekleri kadınlara tercih ettiklerini göstermektedir. Bu tez, kadınların siyasi katılım düzeyi hakkında bir sonuca varmak amacıyla liberal feminizmin bu sorunsala ilişkin teorik duruşlarını incelemektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın temel amacı, kadınların marjinalleşmesinin nedenlerinin yanı sıra Liberya siyasetinde kadınların düşük siyasi katılım düzeylerine katkıda bulunan unsurları tespit etmektir. Bu hedefe, ikincil kaynaklardan elde edilen araştırma yapılarak ulaşılmıştır. Bu tez, önemli siyasi makamlar için aday olan birçok kadının erkeklerden oy alamadığını ve/veya makam için uygun görülmediğini göstermektedir.

Araştırmaya göre Liberyalılar, dini ve kültürel inançlara ülke anayasasından daha fazla değer vermekte, bu da kadınların cesaretini kırmakta ve sonuç olarak da hükümetteki kadın oranının erkeklerden daha düşük olmasına yol açmaktadır. Araştırmanın belki de en önemli bulgusu budur. Kadınlar potansiyellerinin farkına varmalı, ülkenin anayasasını iyi bilmeleri sağlanmalı ve siyasi hayatta yer alma konusunda erkekler tarafından korkutulmaktan korunmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liberya, demokrasi, kadın katılımı, engeller.

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List of Abbreviations

AFELL:	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
AU:	African Union
AWID:	Association for Women's Rights in Development
CDC:	Congress for Democratic Change
CEDAW:	Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
ECC:	Elections Coordinating Committee
GoL:	Government of Liberia
LNP:	Liberia National Police
LWI:	Liberia Women Initiatives
MGD:	Ministry of Gender and Development
NEC:	National Election Commission
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
PRS:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
U.S.A:	United States of America
UN:	United Nation
UNMIL:	United Nation Mission in Liberia
UNW:	OMEN United Nation Women
UP:	Unity Party
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WEDO:	Women's Environment and Development Organization.
WIPNET:	Women in Peacebuilding Network
WONGOSOL:	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia

CHAPTER I
Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the barriers to women's involvement in democracy in Liberia from 2011 to 2021. This Thesis focuses on the impediments to women's participation in democracy from a Liberian viewpoint to that end. This study focuses on this time period because Liberia experienced a greater number of women's participation throughout the country during this time. The fact that most women around the world now have the right to vote has brought more attention to women's political representation, especially their place in freely elected leadership (Zambrano et al., 2018). While democracy is a relatively recent phenomenon in world history, successive 'waves' of democracy throughout the 20th century have resulted in more countries being administered democratically than non-democratically in the new millennium. Multiple attempts to enumerate the world's democracies concur that more than 60% of all nations currently have institutions and procedures of democracy in existence. The scope and importance of the United Nations International Conference on New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD) and the Community of Democracies, which was established in 1988 to serve as a platform for democratic expansion worldwide, have both expanded since their inception in 1988. There are governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations that view democracy as both an end in and a means to achieve other internationally recognized objectives, such as economic development, poverty reduction, and enhanced human rights protection. There is more to democracy than simply increasing the number of female legislators. Additionally, it encompasses the involvement of women in politics, allowing them to contribute to the formulation of public policy and judgment. In addition, it necessitates female political accountability, which increases the number of women in positions of authority. To achieve this objective, gender-sensitive reforms to governance that will make every elected official more effective at promoting gender equality in public policy and a provision mandating their performance must be enacted. Democracy requires increased female participation in domestic and international policymaking. It also aims to increase the participation and representation of all disadvantaged groups, and this is not limited to women. It applies to minorities, people with disabilities, and

the voiceless. Women will not have a voice in legislative bodies, political processes, or institutions until there is progress in the advancement of women's rights. Equality in politics requires the active involvement of women: Democratic systems are untenable without women; success is improbable without democracy (Mervis et al., 2013, p. 168).

Globally, reports on women's participation in politics by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women indicate that more than 80% of women are not adequately represented at any level of decision-making. Gender parity in politics remains an unattainable objective (Mervis et al., 2013). There are only 31 countries with female heads of state or government. There are 26.5% female members of Congress. With a representation of 22.8%, women comprise less than one-fourth of cabinet ministers worldwide. Women are in charge of critical policy portfolios concerning human rights, gender equality, and social protection, whereas males are in charge of defense and economic policy, according to new data (Barnes & Robinson, 2018).

Inglehart et al., (2002) stated that the women who have altered the world promptly bring to mind a number of remarkable female figures. Women such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former president of Liberia; Meaza Ashenafi, the first female Chief Justice of Ethiopia; Joyce Hilda Banda, the president of Malawi; and Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, among others, have served as heads of state. There is evidence that these women are politically strong and influential because of what they have done for world politics and the progress of their own countries. In spite of this, there is a gradual progression toward gender equality in some nations from reproductive rights to education enrolment to participation in government and access to the labor market. The liberties gained by women are stripped from them. The Taliban have declared that girls are not permitted to attend school beyond the sixth grade (age 10) until further notice. Primary education and university education remain accessible but are now completely segregated by gender. The Taliban's policies oppress women and girls in virtually every aspect of their existence. Few women now hold positions of political authority, including Sahle-Work Zewde, president of Ethiopia, prime minister of Finland, Sanna Mirella Marin, Natalia Gavrilita, and current prime minister of Moldova, and Mary Robinson, president of Ireland, among others (Akhtar & Metraux, 2013).

The issue of whether or not women should be permitted to attain positions of authority in politics has been the focus of contentious debate since the turn of the 20th century. The results of the research by Powell (2012) indicate that since the 1970s, governance has evolved in patriarchal, masculine terms and in conformity with a "masculine ethics". This is an example of a patriarchal worldview, which posits that men should serve as the primary arbiters of what constitutes reasonable thought and socially acceptable behavior. It should not come as a surprise that it took so long for males to be understood as being gendered, and for masculinity to be recognized as being an element of how gender is produced. The concept of masculinity relates to men's position in the gender hierarchy. According to Billing and Alvesson it was also thought that a masculine ethics would elevate characteristics that are often associated with men such as strength, courage, leadership, and assertiveness to the point where these characteristics would be necessary for successful men to hold executive positions (Borgerson, 2018). It is further believed that the cultural institutions and organizations such as the Church and Schools that forbid women from obtaining political positions and pass prejudiced judgment on those who do pursue political positions are linked to the pervasive and persistent masculinization of leadership. For women who are interested in attaining leadership positions within the global system, this has resulted in challenges and disincentives. In spite of the fact that there has been substantial progress for women in politics, the issue that the majority of them still fail to succeed politically persists in our contemporary culture.

Due to their intersecting identities and the places, they call home, women have quite different experiences with the city, with the local politics, and the services offered by the government than men. For instance, 65% incidents of assault and harassment against women and girls in metropolitan areas go unreported, these incidents are disproportionately common (Women, U. N, 2016). In order for cities to flourish sustainably, "gender-inclusive and gender responsive cities" must be built, according to the UN Women report, Gender Equality, and the New Urban Agenda UN Women (Women, U. N, 2016). This calls for significant female leadership and economic, political, and social empowerment in urban environments. This makes it plainly evident that "gender-inclusive and gender-responsive cities" are necessary for the cities' future healthy development. Women are underrepresented in the decision-making process that affects their lives, despite the fact that they routinely utilize city services and are directly impacted by municipal politics. In the same way, this worry

is clear when it comes to Liberia. Equal voting rights for men and women are closely linked to civil freedoms, human rights, the election process, and the idea of plurality. This Thesis recommends that governments should engage political players to make sure that they actively engage and appoint more women in their political structures with the help of public awareness and local NGOs. This includes consciousness raising such as encouraging women to think about running for public office or becoming appointed to a position of power in the government. In furtherance, nations should be encouraged to draft and implement a law that promotes female participation, as it is in the case of Liberia. Liberia passed a 30% gender equity law for women's participation in political activity in 2016, and this act was passed in 2016 (Women, U. N 2016).

According to a public opinion poll conducted by a Liberian newspaper, Daily Observer, most women in Liberian society think they must be actively involved in the political reform process if they are to be successful (Sylla, 2020). Many discussions and networking gatherings that took place at local, national, regional, and global levels of governance all contributed to the development of this consensus. Therefore, women who are committed to upholding the public trust and who believe in doing so should run for office. The majority of women have integrated the idea of inequality between men and women into their worldview as a result of being socialized into traditional roles within the patriarchal culture. Liberia is a patriarchal country with traditional cultural values, women have less access to education, health care, property, prosperity, and justice than men (Lawson, & Flomo, 2020).

Simply based on their gender, women defy simple classification or generalization in a variety of contexts. When a person's efforts to better themselves, their professional options, or their life goals are thwarted as a result of unfavorable preconceptions, this is when the harm starts to really add up. Some examples of damaging stereotypes include young girls being married off to older men at an early age and men being the breadwinners in the family while women stay at home to take care of the children. Other examples include the idea that men and women have equal roles in the house. When gender stereotypes are utilized, violations of human rights and fundamental liberties occur (Adams, & Loideáin, 2019). Widespread support has been shown for the technique of "gender mainstreaming" when it comes to advancing the cause of gender equality. In order to achieve gender equality and fight prejudice, it is necessary to incorporate a gender viewpoint into the process of formulating policies, formulating regulatory measures, implementing expenditure programs, as

well as monitoring and evaluating these activities (Casarico, 2019). It's possible that this is the reason why there is very few evidence of women voting in any country. Therefore, women in Liberia who succeeded in joining the political mainstream are most likely from the elites. In order to increase their chances of winning, some women who run for political office and/or their political parties go to great lengths to rule out any scenarios in which male voters would perceive them as constituting a threat to the interests of men such as economy empowerment, sexual exploitation and abuse, inheritance position of women and educational levels of women. Men have realized that, in order to get more votes, it is not in their best interest to be viewed as favoring women as a constituency or advancing gender issues as important. They frequently choose responsibilities that cater to the interests of the general public as if they were a single, unified group. In Liberia, politicians typically ignore or purposely distort the reality of the conflicting interests of different population sectors when they speak in terms of national interests (Jallah, et. al, 2021).

When it comes to assessing whether or not women can make a difference in the world, two of the most essential elements are the type of leadership that they arrive at, as well as the political center that they inhabit. It is taken as a given that individuals who hold positions of public trust will be vested with decision-making authority. This indicates that individuals in authority have a responsibility to account to the people who either choose their leaders at the polls or pay their wages. On the other hand, there are significant disparities across the states with regard to the degree to which they follow the notion of public accountability. Accountability has the tendency to be defined by an individual's more limited personal, family, or clan interests in addition to those of an individual's political party and patrons when the political system is more feudal and when patronage is a practice that has been thoroughly established for a longer period of time (Aspinall, et al. 2021). A significant number of nations have arrived at the consensus that democracy is the most effective system of governance due to its transparency and fairness; therefore, ensuring equitable participation necessitates an equivalent representation of men and women in positions of power. If there were no concerns about preserving security or law and order, those in charge might not feel the need to continually utilize the rhetoric of public service and welfare as a justification for their actions. At the very least, they would be less likely to put the needs of the majority of people ahead of their own demands. On the other hand, democratic government leads to the growth of public accountability systems,

politically mature citizens who know their rights and demand that public officials be held responsible, and elected or appointed officials who have a stronger sense of their responsibility to the public (Faguet, 2014, p.2-13).

1.2. Statement of the problem

By analysing the relationship between democracy and female political participation in Liberia, this thesis seeks to identify and address obstacles to women's participation in democracy in the country. Women have not been a key factor in Liberian political engagement; men have always controlled the political landscape. Without women, democracy can never be successful. The potential of democracy is severely hindered when women are not included in the political process. Everyone of both sexes ought to be able to have their opinions heard in democratic societies. The protection of human rights and the proper operation of democracies are both dependent on the effective execution of laws and programs addressing gender equality. To give you a precise date, the year is Nazneen 2023. When discussions on the best way to administer the society in which women live are held but women's viewpoints, knowledge, and difficulties are neglected, this constitutes an intolerable situation. According to Ionescu (2012), women and men should have equal rights and opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of political life and the democratic process. This is in accordance with international standards such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Ionescu (2012) argues that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of political life and the democratic process. The passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 also known as UNSCR 1325 is another crucial step forward for women's rights (Miller et al, 2014). UNSCR 1325 was adopted in the year 2000, it is the responsibility of all parties involved in the activities of the United Nations relating to peace and security to make every effort to ensure that women are fully represented and that their points of view are taken into consideration. "all parties to a conflict have a responsibility to work together to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual abuse in situations of armed conflict" (The United Nations, 2000, p.10). Nevertheless, despite policy improvements, women still do not participate equitably in peace and security initiatives that have an impact on the maintenance of peace more than twenty

years. Men still outnumber women in all facets of political engagement, despite the fact that women and men have received legislative recognition of equal political rights (Kassa, 2015). Considering what has been presented, it is possible to draw the conclusion that there is an unacceptable lack of female participation in the legislature of Liberia in general. Despite this, women's involvement in politics is nevertheless described as an issue that needs urgent attention and to adequately address those concerns. The fact that few women have been able to advance to influential positions in politics is a key barrier that women in politics must overcome. This issue is the main idea of this Thesis. The biggest challenge facing Liberian women today is discrimination from society, local communities, and political parties across the nation, families, customs, and religion. The system regards women interested in political participation in Liberia as unladylike and that is to say, politics is not appropriate for or typical of a well-bred, well-mannered woman as such politics is regarded as a filthy game. These male-dominated strategies have become commonplace in the political world (Bishu & Headley, 2020).

However, governments have used a variety of strategies to fulfil their obligation to guarantee that women are given equal representation in administrative posts because women make up a sizable segment of society as equal representation and participation bill which seeks to allocate five seats in the lower chamber of parliament to female politicians, one to youths, and one to those with disabilities. Nonetheless, all of these strategies have been successful in accomplishing the same goals (Hinojosa and Kittilson, 2020). Other women are the finest advocates for the demands of women, particularly those that pertain to female children's education, the prohibition of early marriage, and raising the legal age of consent to have sex. There should be a legal requirement that political parties run a specific proportion of female candidates for positions in the legislature in order to guarantee that politics is accessible to individuals of all genders. This would guarantee more diversity in politics. If there aren't enough women in leadership roles in the country, since there aren't any laws encouraging women to get engaged in politics, the growth of the next generation of girls will be insufficient, unmovable, and pathetic.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between democratization and women's participation in politics?

2.   How can obstacles be investigated to increase women's participation in Liberia?

Given that men had traditionally occupied the majority of political positions in the country, it is noteworthy that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female president of Liberia to be democratically elected in the year 2006. This study's objective is to assess the political environment of Liberia from the perspective of women, as well as the career paths leading to prominent political positions that are open to them. This study assesses the barriers that women faced in Liberian democracy, looks at the chances President Sirleaf provided for women in Liberia to further their education and become more powerful, and assesses the likelihood that the country will elect another female leader in the future. This research provides information regarding the potential contribution of women to issues relating to social and economic initiatives for development. The study's results will serve as the foundation for this understanding.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By conducting a literature review on the topic, this thesis analyses the ongoing conversation on the challenges the women in Liberia experience, while attempting to exercise their democratic rights. Liberia is not very far ahead of other countries when it comes to allowing women to vote and be involved in political politics. As extra information for this thesis, issues that women face when they get involved in politics around the world will be compared to problems that women face in Liberia. The study that was done on Liberian women's political participation from 2011 to 2021 is what this thesis is based on. This research is particularly pertinent since it seeks to remove barriers that prevent women from participating fully in democratic processes in Liberia. The unequal distribution of land, capital, financial resources, and technology, as well as the pervasiveness of gender-based violence as a result of deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs, are only two examples of the challenges that exist. As is the case in many other democracies located all throughout the world, the functioning of Libera as a society is contingent on gender equality. It is essential for public institutions to show that they respect the different needs that men and women have in order for the promotion of human rights to be successful. This is because men and women have different expectations and requirements in life. The elimination of gender disparity and

the enhancement of women's capacities are both possible outcomes that could result from incorporating women into the decision-making, planning, and management processes of local governments. They are responsible for the preparation of family meals, the cleaning of the house, the care of the children, and the presence of their partners. This suggests that women are expected to undertake all of the household responsibilities, which significantly reduces the amount of time they have for extracurricular activities. Due to the fact that housework is their primary responsibility, they are prohibited from engaging in any other activities. This conduct hinders the democratic participation of many Liberian women. This assumes that society is patriarchal and males hold all domestic authority. Most Liberian women are expected to perform this role, and deviating from the norm is frowned upon. In Liberia, the average woman has little influence over issues that may affect her or her future. The fact that few women possess the courage to seek for positions of authority should not come as a surprise. For instance, in secondary schools, the head boy is given authoritative responsibilities, whereas the head girl is seen more as a helpless and submissive figure than as a woman in a position of authority. Because of this situation, laws that are discriminatory against women and girls have been created. Women in Liberia are in an increasingly risky scenario because there are currently fewer women holding legislative power there as a result of leadership role discrimination.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study assesses the obstacles impeding the involvement of women in democratic processes, with a specific focus on Liberia, a small nation located on the western coast of Africa. It would be a generalization to employ the same results for the barriers inhibiting women's participation in democracy in other countries or regions. Also, the limited time allotted to complete this study severely restricted the researcher's ability to cover a range of issues. Finally, inadequate financing to some extent limited the research as well as lack of adequate funds limited the research.

1.6. Research Design

The primary benefit of utilizing secondary data sources is that they are readily available, convenient, and inexpensive to access. Primary research, which requires beginning the study design and implementation processes from scratch, is more

expensive than secondary research, which can be conducted using previously collected data. The speed with which one can finish secondary research is comparable to that of the prior advantage. It enables you to derive novel inferences from the data that has been studied. By reanalysing data that was collected in the past, it is possible to get new perspectives and insights that are both valuable and novel. Finding patterns can be made easier with this information. In addition, secondary data ranging from a number of decades ago to the most recent few hours can be obtained Alaka (2017). Comparisons of data can be made throughout a variety of time periods. This inquiry is necessary because there are obstacles to the involvement of women in the democratic domain in Liberia. Since the 1960s, there has been no active participation of women in Liberian politics or the decision-making process of the government. As a direct consequence of this, it became very vital to do research on the various alternative replies. The purpose of this research is to identify and elucidate the barriers that prevent Liberian women from participating in the political process of their country. This study's research is predicated on secondary sources, including but not limited to books, newspapers, journal articles, and websites. To procure vital materials, the researcher availed the Internet. Trusted outlets such as the Daily Observer and the Front-Page Africa Newspaper from Liberia were consulted for news-based information. Furthermore, articles and books accessible through Research Gate, Google Scholar, and Academia were utilized. These sources concentrated on the hindrances impeding women's practical involvement in the political arena. Qualitative research yields meticulous and reliable process data based on the participants' interpretations, unlike quantitative analysis, which provides data that can be applied to larger populations. "Quantitative Research" in this context, refers to empirical research. This approach is generally taken in order to gain comprehension of the worldviews held by other individuals. It contributes to the conceptualization and theory-building processes that are necessary for future empirical study on a diverse variety of subjects (Alaka, 2018). This thesis uses Liberia as a case study to examine gender equality and to address impediments to women's involvement in democracy in Liberia. Some of these barriers include unequal access to resources (land, capital, money, and technology), as well as gender-based violence, which is a form of violence that has its roots in cultural norms and practices. Case study analysis is beneficial to a wide variety of entities, including individuals, groups, locales, events, institutions, and phenomena. They have a wide range of applications in a variety of sectors, including the economics, education,

medical, and social sciences, among others. By describing, comparing, evaluating, and comprehending various facets of research problems, case studies can aid researchers in gaining a better understanding of their subject matter. For this particular study, the case study method was selected to focus solely on Liberia. The researcher aims to address the specific barriers that heavily challenge women's participation in democracy in this tiny West African country. By studying Liberia, the researcher hopes to find unique solutions to promote more extraordinary women's participation in democracy.

CHAPTER II
Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical framework

This chapter provides a description of the theoretical foundations of the research, which are founded on previously conducted research. John Dewey, an American philosopher, said that democracy is the best form of government because it gives people the freedom they need to develop and grow as individuals. For example, democracy gives people the freedom to share their thoughts and ideas with others, to join groups to work toward common goals, and to choose and live their own idea of the good life. According to Dewey, democracy is more than just a system of governance; it is also a 'mode of associated existence' in which citizens work together to solve their common problems by logical means (i.e., critical inquiry and experimentation) in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good will. Furthermore, according to Dewey, the political systems of any democracy should not be seen as perfect and unchangeable. (Kauppi, & Drerup, 2021).

According to some democratic political theories, such as direct democracy and representative democracy theory, men and women have the same chances to take part. in politics and other aspects of public life, as well as the capacity to hold an equal number of political posts in democratic regimes. Additionally, democratic systems permit an   equal number of political positions to be held by men and women. Political empowerment, according to Gray (2013), must include the power of decision-making if democracy is extolled as the optimum form of government. This is a gender-neutral meaning of the phrase. Growth must include social acceptance of women's competence and credibility in the political and economic arenas if it is to be structured in any way. In other words, the hypothesis says that countries with higher levels of democracy are more likely to see more women get involved in politics and have access to political structures. In contrast to autocracies, democratic nations promote women's participation in public life (Stockemer, 2018). "Research papers and interviews with lawmakers show that countries and parties that are labeled as democratic have fewer women in political positions than those that are labeled as autocratic." (Bauer & Burnet, 2013). Stockemer & Sundström (2019) assert that women should ideally have the freedom to express their opinions on many subjects and the right to participate equally in decision-making processes. Women should also be entitled to equal

participation in the decision-making processes. She contends that the government should grant its people political freedom and encourage personal growth. Satymbekova (2016) argue that the length of the government can be used to explain why democracies have greater rates of female political participation than nondemocracies. Due to the longer existence of democracy, more women have engaged in its political processes. There are more problems for the government and the party when they try to change the system as a democracy lasts longer, according to Stockemer's interpretation of this phenomenon. However, Levitsky & Way (2022), concurs, noting that if a democracy has existed in a nation for 20–30 years, it will probably continue to do so. Yet, this does not disqualify nations that have just finished the progress of democratization. Stockemer & Sundström (2019), who agree that democracy necessitates the participation of both sexes in political life, cites Inglehart et al (2022) as giving real-world proof of the idea that women actively participate in democracies. According to Stockemer & Sundström (2019), the proportion of women serving in parliament is much higher in 65 democratic countries than it is in other states with different types of political structures. In contrast to other states, this is the case here.

Faucher also discusses the importance of national leaders encouraging women to get involved in politics. Women have equal rights to support and advance gender-related causes and to run for office in democracies. This leads them to believe that pressure from women is more likely to prevail over national leaders. He also contends that women have an equal right to advocate and promote matters pertaining to gender. He based this claim on the equal rights that women have to advocate and advance topics relating to gender. So, countries with strong presidents may encourage women's political participation more than democracies do such as Ethiopia. We may compare democracy to authoritarianism, which is defined by a setting that makes it more difficult for women to enter political life, in order to illustrate the impact of democracy. Waylen (2015) asserts that in authoritarian systems, women's roles are limited to that of housewife and mother, which are seen as traditional roles. These are the kinds of viewpoints that discourage women from aspiring to greater office in politics and actually hinder their ascent in the sector. The author contends that by attempting to hinder women's growth and participation in democratic processes, a conventional, strong, patriarchal value framework encourages role separation based on sexuality and so-called "traditional cultural norms" (Qing, 2020, p. 3). The author also contends that

this value system serves to limit women's ability to participate in democratic processes. According to Hyde (2010), the author truly used each and every one of these words. However, according to other theorists, the degree of democracy is not the main factor affecting women's political participation; rather, it is the process of democratization (Kuijpers, 2022). The study shows that factors related to the democratization process, such as a country's 'pre-democratic legacy, historical electoral experience, and the implementation of quotas', (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 380-408) have the potential to raise the proportion of women engaged in politics in both democratic and non-democratic nations. Nonetheless, there is a huge range in participation rates even among democracies.

According to study by Stockemer & Sundström (2019), in some democracies, there aren't enough women in positions of government power. He uses research on how the political system influences women's participation in politics from 98 various countries in Asia, the Pacific region, Africa, and America (Central, South) as an example. He concluded from his research that 'non-democracies, with an average of 16% of female members of parliament, had just a few more women in parliament than democracies, with 17.7% of national representatives were women (Stockemer & Sundström, 2019). This shows that there is about the same level of support for women entering politics as there is in non-democracies, or, to put it another way, democracy has about the same influence as non-democracy. The results of Kim & Fallon (2023) indicate that democratization has little impact on women's political engagement. These findings might support this claim. Kim & Fallon (2023) also state that countries that have recently finished the process of converting to democracy give more weight to party objectives and that women are typically punished in these countries. The type of system in existence, as well as internal causal factors, may have an impact on the proportion of women who participate in politics. In their discussions on democracy, scholars emphasize the function that voting systems provide. Democracies must include the freedom to vote without intervention from the executive branch. Academics examine the number of elected women to determine how democracy affects women's participation; this is done because democratic regimes often last for a brief period of time Hinojosa & Kittilson (2020). It's possible that this has anything to do with the struggles women waged throughout the period when democracy was being formed against being politically invisible. The best indicator of women's participation in politics, according to Stockemer & Sundström (2019), is the election process.

Additionally, he claims that the party list proportional election process utilized in all political systems has a positive impact on how many women participate in politics. The adoption of the proportional election system, according to Cole & Schofer (2023), increases the representation of female MPs in the legislature. Cole & Schofer (2023), those who argue that the implementation of the proportional election system leads to a greater presence of female Members of Parliament in the legislature concur with this perspective. Consequently, discrepancies arise in the research regarding the level of women's political involvement in democratic and non-democratic systems, and the regime fails to provide an answer as to whether the political system of a nation influences women's political engagement.

2.2. Feminist theory

Feminism looks at gender issues like identity, sex, sexuality, and gender expression from different fields of study. It was shaped by political activity and social theory (Cannon & Chu, 2021). Throughout history, feminism has evolved to include exploring the performative and social constructions of gender and sexuality, in addition to addressing inequality between genders. Feminists work tirelessly to create positive change in areas where power imbalances exist due to the intersectionality of these issues feminist theory also offers insights into how gender disparities manifest in education and socialization, with some feminists arguing that education reinforces patriarchal values (Cannon & Chu, 2021).

Wilhelmina Drucker proposed this notion for the first time in 1901 (Carlier, 2012). It investigated how men and women play distinct power roles. Feminism seeks to eliminate all psychological, social, and legal barriers that prevent women from acting independently. If society is to reach its full potential, women must have equal opportunity for competitive economic opportunities (Haile et. al, 2016). Women are viewed as passive change agents in this movement, which challenges and transforms deeply held beliefs about how women are perceived in psychological and historical settings. The concept also acknowledges routes, such as organizations, through which women can actively engage in the process of social reform in society. It investigates underlying political linkages that have an impact on gender and power relations in order to make sure that women get the same benefits and opportunities as men (Richardson-Self, 2021). The movement worked to expand women's civic rights, particularly the ability to vote or fight for women's suffrage (Slotwinski, et al., 2023).

The feminist movement advocated for gender equality in society and politics (Goetz & Jenkins, 2018)). The movement's origins may be traced back to New York, where it brought together hundreds of people to improve women's civil rights and economic equality (Arvonne, 2017). The assault's first wave was successful. Women were granted the right to vote as part of a larger campaign for gender equality in a number of European countries. China, Japan, and a few other countries soon followed (Paxton et. Al, 2020). On the other hand, the feminist movement has met with intense opposition in several regions of the world. For instance, in India, the issue of male supremacy was presented as having religious significance. As a result of this, a new wave of feminism is formed. The primary focus was on changing social and political behavior patterns that hampered women's freedom (Rho & Lee, 2018). With the second wave, feminism became an identity-politics movement. Within this environment, Simone de Beauvoir studied the ways in which women's social construction as the 'other' contributed to their disempowerment. Researchers examined social views of sexual discrimination, uneven career opportunities for women, and discriminatory remuneration for women in the second wave of the study (Hussein, 2023). It might be claimed that this wave is still operating in several countries worldwide. In brief, the third-wave feminist movement engaged with the politics of difference in a more radical fashion. Feminists continue to battle against women's inability to access equal career opportunities as well as their lower income relative to men (Duflo, 2012). For example, African-American women in the United States have persisted in their quest for equal representation in government jobs. This was possible as a result of third-wave feminism. Third-wave feminism represents an important rupture at this point (Mayerchyk, & Plakhotnik, 2019). Third-wave feminism argued that gender inequality and male dominance were not only the problem of white, urban, upper-middle-income women but, on the contrary, the problem of all women.

Concomitantly, the opinions of organizations such as low-income women, women in the developing world, and 'women of color' became increasingly vocal. As a result, more women are now in positions of political leadership throughout Europe, including some who lead nations and governments (Šiklová, 2018). This increase in the share of women in positions of leadership in Europe has triggered similar developments around the world. Women are increasingly taking up political leadership roles in countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Pappu, 2020).

This Thesis focuses on the analysis of the barriers to women's participation in democracy in Liberia, which is a fundamental problem and a violation of an individual right. Liberal feminism being one of the theories that speaks against the violation of individual freedom, democracy, equal rights, and equal opportunity, fits into this research as it seeks solutions to analyze the barriers to women's participation in democracy in Liberia (Knop, 2017). The concept of liberal feminism is to advocate for women's legal and political rights, and this research follows a similar path to gather information that is paramount in mitigating the issues of women's participation.

Liberia practices a liberal democracy where the country allows multiple parties to participate in an election, citizens are represented through their elected officials, and the government is divided into three branches with equal power. The three branches of government work independently of each other. Because of this, it is smart to look at this study problem that makes it hard for women in Liberia to take part in democratic processes through the lens of feminist theory. Liberal feminism is important to this study because it looks at women's rights in the law and in politics. In accordance with liberal feminism, women's oppression stems from the denial of their political and civil rights. Liberal feminism puts a lot of weight on the rights of the individual woman and objects to laws that make it harder for women to get equal rights and protection (Charlesworth & Chinkin, 2022). These issues highlighted by liberal feminism are no different from the issues faced by the women of Liberia in terms of political participation. The women of Liberia have not been major participants in the body politics of the country. The women of Liberia have always been marginalized by their male counterparts because of financial power and education, among others. Today, Liberian women have been given 30% of the rights to participate in political activities through an act passed by the Liberian parliament (De Almagro, 2022). This act is now an opener for more women's participation in the politics of Liberia.

"Mainstream feminism," also referred to as liberal feminism, constitutes a significant portion of it. Its objective is to effectuate legislative and governmental reforms that ensure gender equality, grounded in the principles of human rights and liberal democracy. The majority consider it to be economically and musically progressive. The oldest of the "Big Three" schools of feminist thought is liberal feminism. It comes from first-wave feminism in the 1800s, which was a movement linked to liberalism and progressivism that wanted to see women as equal citizens and focused on getting women the right to vote and go to school (Dixon, 2018). Liberal

feminism aims to integrate women into the framework of mainstream society. A big part of liberal feminism is the public sphere, like laws, political institutions, schools, and the workplace. Liberal feminism sees the biggest problem with equality as not having the same political and legal rights as men and women. So, liberal feminists have worked hard to get women involved in politics in a big way (Ha & Nhi, 2021). With this in mind, liberal feminism has made it much easier for women in Liberia to participate in the political process. Today, the government of Liberia is drafting and adopting a policy mandating 30% female participation in the country's democracy. According to the National Election Commission of Liberia, all political parties have been instructed to achieve this 30% female participation in the forthcoming national elections on October 10, 2023 (Pogoson 2012). In Liberia's democratic space, liberal feminism has provided an equitable playing field for gender equality.

According to Thornham Sue, it is reasonable to conclude that women may attain equal political and economic rights anywhere in the world if they are ready to advocate for such rights (Jolly, 2019). A black man was elected president of the United States of America in 2008 as a result of the improved rights for black people in the United States that evolved as a result of the struggle for equal rights (Dixit, 2022), it is obvious that gaining equal rights for women around the world is doable. The 1980s saw the start of the third wave of feminism, which is still going strong today. This wave was closely related to politics. This was a direct result of criticism levelled at the second wave, which claimed that while it promoted some rights, such as women's sexual rights, Lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, and transgender women, as well as individuals who identify as female, were deserving of less consideration. Furthermore, it was assumed that neither white nor black women's poverty was of considerable concern to the organization (Wilkerson & Wilson, 2017). As a result, the third wave began to investigate more fundamental themes such as racism, homophobia, and European behaviors (Bengtsson, & Bolander, 2020).

The feminist theoretical framework promotes women's equality through responsible decision-making and deeds (Ackerly, et al., 2021). The nation's brutal and devastating civil war ended in August 2003. Liberia has successfully held three free and fair elections since then. All of these elections went off without a hitch. In this democratic system, regardless of gender, country, or religion, everyone who meets the qualifications has the same ability to vote and run for office in any of the open posts. However, this is not always the case in practice. Within the context of this examination,

the country of Liberia was utilized as a case study for this thesis for a variety of reasons.

To begin with, unlike in other African countries where post-conflict reforms have encouraged women's inclusion in these bodies, Liberia's recent history of violence, as well as the significant democratic and political changes that have occurred there since 2005, have not encouraged women's admission to the country's legislature. Women make up 11.6 % of the total number of lawmakers in the Liberian Parliament. According to the evidence presented in IPU 2012a, 2012b, and 2012c, women made up 14 % of the total number of MPs in the Liberian Parliament in 2005. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that everyone has the right to be involved in the decisions made by their own ruling bodies. The development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 resulted in this one-of-a-kind circumstance. Women in positions of power will attract more attention to the need for policies that are more cooperative, peaceful, and focused on the well-being of families, women, and children, as people who favor gender equality and feminism agree. This is complicated by the growing amount of political speech claiming that politics is a man's domain and that the quest for power justifies any and all techniques.

However, one factor that may make it simpler for women to run for office is the growth of the economy within a given country (Hughes & Paxton, 2019). Liberal feminism views wage inequality and gender segregation of professions in the labor market as exclusionary mechanisms for women. The majority of anti-discrimination and equal-opportunity laws are motivated by liberal feminist doctrine. Consequently, there should be equal opportunity for prosperity regardless of gender. On the employment market, men and women should have equal access to opportunities. Both genders should receive equal compensation for their work. In areas with high levels of urbanization, where there are lots of occupations accessible and many educational alternatives, it is easier for women to participate in political life.

If they take place concurrently with those advances, changes in conventional beliefs regarding the paternalistic nature of politics may also boost women's involvement in political power (Stockemer & Sundström, 2019). In comparison to less developed civilizations, more democratic countries tend to embrace a more liberal and equitable society (Stockemer & Sundström, 2019). This claim is about women's participation in politics. Women's ability to participate in politics is hampered due to a lack of suitable financial resources. Women's lack of education in less developed

countries is a barrier to their participation in countries like Liberia and others with similar characteristics.

There are more opportunities for women to advance in their jobs and climb the corporate ladder when there are fewer women who are struggling financially. In this scenario, women would have more employment options, which would eventually lead to their involvement in politics. By combining them with social variables, they are referred to as 'socio-economic' factors: 'future efforts at separating out how factors impacting women's political representation in underdeveloped nations differ from those in affluent countries will be centered on women's socioeconomic standing' (Hughes & Paxton, 2019, p.33-51). Hessami & da Fonseca 2020, makes the similar claim that states economic variables may have an impact on women's engagement. They refer to these aspects as "socioeconomic" factors because they are seen in conjunction with social considerations. Yet, they show the higher effect of the latter two categories when contrasted with political and cultural issues. They find a relationship between women's access to secondary and higher education and political activity as a result of their research, and they provide evidence that this connection exists. This leads them to categorize two socioeconomic controls in the following way: While the other control, secondary education, has statistically significant results, the other control, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, does not. This shows that economic growth on its own has little impact on the status of women in politics, but that it does when pair with other social factors to determine the degree of female political engagement.

2.3. A Concise Feminist Viewpoint on International Relations

Feminism looks at gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality from different fields of study through social theories and political action (Wuschitz, 2022). Feminism has evolved throughout time, shifting from an emphasis on unequal treatment of men and women to a focus on how sexuality and gender are produced via performance and culture. Feminists strive to effect change in contexts where power imbalances are generated by intersectionality. Feminist theory also helps us comprehend the gender disparities in education, gender socialization, and how boys may find it simpler to navigate the education system than girls (De Welde & Stepnick,

2023). Many feminists consider education an agent of secondary socialization that contributes to patriarchy's maintenance.

Given the importance of this topic in understanding the barriers that women face in politics, it is critical that this research strive to include a feminist point of view in international relations. Feminism is a term that is used to describe the concept of gender equality. Feminist theory falls under the aegis of critical theory, whose purpose is to destabilize systems of oppression and authority. Using a feminist lens enables an understanding of how people engage within systems and may provide solutions to tackle and eliminate oppressive structures and systems, Few-Demo (2014). With a focus on oppression, feminist theory analyzes the lived experience of all people, not just women. Dismantling oppression is a central tenet of feminist work, but there is no consensus regarding the place of feminist theory as a framework or theory. Feminism, according to Bell Hooks (TAŞ, 2021), is an endeavor to eradicate sexism, misogyny, and oppression. Marxism and socialism are fundamental tenets that comprise the legacy of feminist theory. Feminist theory originated in the 18th century and experienced significant development throughout the equality movements that transpired in the 1970s and 1980s. Towards the conclusion of the 1980s, the field of international relations had been predominantly skewed towards the study of gender issues up to that point, but the open-ended nature of theoretical discussions allowed for the advancement of feminist scholarship. To expand their understanding of international relations, feminists who study them resort to the long and illustrious history of feminist philosophy, which extends back at least to the 18th century. This can be observed in what is sometimes referred to as 'feminist international relations', despite the fact that feminism has numerous subfields, just as other ideologies have multiple subfields. However, considering the range of subfields that go under the general title of feminist theory, the fact that there are numerous unique subfields of feminist theory in the subject of international relations studies should not be surprising. Liberal feminism is the most prevalent form of the feminist movement, according to scholars such as Judith Lorber, Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Harriet Taylor (Mohajan, & Mohajan, 2022). "Mainstream feminism" is an umbrella term for non-radical or socialist feminist organizations and ideas. Historically, the primary objective of the feminist movement has been to effectuate legislative and political reforms. It originates in the initial surge of liberal feminism during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In this broad, conventional view, liberal feminism is alternatively referred

to as "bourgeois feminism," "mainstream feminism," "reformist feminism," or "egalitarian feminism." This school of thought, along with socialist and radical feminism, is one of the "Big Three." When discussing third and fourth wave feminism, the term is often employed by cultural analysts and essayists to denote a movement that was rendered accessible to the wider populace. Mainstream feminism is frequently mockingly referred to as 'white feminism', implying that mainstream feminists do not struggle for integration with race, class, and sexual orientation. However, liberal feminism is essential to the advancement of this study because it addresses the fundamental issues of barriers to women's decision-making participation. The primary concerns of liberal feminism are the involvement of women and gender disparities. However, there are four types of feminist theory, and each differs from the other. The four theories are Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, Radical feminism, and Liberal feminism.

Marxism inspired Marxist and socialist feminism, which arose as a reaction to liberal feminism, whose struggle failed to go beyond equal rights (King, 2018). Legal emancipation is insufficient to 'liberate' women because it does not result in the elimination of patriarchy in social relationships. Equal rights are insufficient to eliminate economic disparities. The origins of Marxist and socialist feminism can be traced back to the late 19th century. Marxist feminism and socialist feminism are often conflated and used interchangeably. They differ in their perspectives on women's oppression: 'Marxist feminism attributes women's exploitation to capitalism, which it analyzes solely through the class paradigm, whereas socialist feminism considers both class and gender factors when examining how patriarchy and capitalism interact, (Giménez, 2018).

Radical feminism is a branch of feminism that aims to destroy oppressive male power and gender roles that have been around since ancient times. According to Guy-Evans, (2022), due to the fact that radical signifies "of or pertaining to the root," radical feminists seek to eradicate patriarchy as the primary cause of gender inequality. The need or desire of males to exert control over women, according to radical feminists, is the foundation of gender inequality (Salam, 2022). They contend that global change in patriarchal systems is necessary for women's liberation. They also assert that patriarchal systems, such as abortion and contraception laws, are in place to obtain control over women's bodies. In the view of radical feminists, women are objectified, and males frequently use violence as a means of gaining control and dominance over

women. They maintain that violence against women is a societal issue and not the result of a small number of perpetrators. The goal of radical feminists is to effect structural change in patriarchal systems that subjugate women. They argue that women cannot be truly liberated unless societal institutions are altered.

Alternatively, liberal feminism is a well-known form of feminism that puts a lot of value on freedom and says that it needs changes to the law and the way things are run in order to be achieved (Gruber & Benedikte, 2021). The political philosophy of liberalism advocates for greater liberty, particularly in the economic and political spheres. The philosophies of liberalism inform liberal feminism. Liberal feminism holds that women are inferior to males due to their lack of equal rights. They assert that once this is attained for women; it will eliminate all existing disparities. In addition, they believe that misogyny is the root cause of discrimination against women. Liberal feminists have mostly pushed for equal rights for women in terms of voting, jobs, schooling, and pay compared to men. Numerous liberal women consider their struggle for these liberties to have been largely fruitful. However, there are those who maintain that there are unresolved issues such as the gender pay gap, the underrepresentation of women in politics and the media, and the wage disparity. Liberal feminists desire that women receive the same social and political rights as men, receive equal compensation for performing the same work as men, and be treated equally in marriage and partnerships (Eidelweis, 2018). Many of these alterations are believed to result from legal and legislative reform. Furthermore, liberal feminists advocate for the equitable representation of women in political spheres, the media, and the workplace (Farris & Rottenberg, 2017). A greater representation of women in leadership positions and gender equality in film and television roles are objectives that they hold dear.

According to the nature of this research, the technique most appropriate for examining or evaluating Sirleaf's administration has liberal feminist characteristics. Given that the themes Sirleaf stressed throughout her presidency closely matched key liberal feminist ideas such as the pursuit of gender equality, Sirleaf can be classified as a liberal feminist. Gender equality was her primary objective, which she sought to accomplish through political and legal reforms within the framework of liberal democracy system is as similar as the characteristics possessed by former president Sirleaf in the fight to achieve gender equality. President Sirleaf has struggled for women's recognition in the political landscape of Liberia from 1985 to date. The

political system of Liberia is a purely liberal democracy. This provides a space for multi-party participation in an election for public office. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been able to challenge the status quo by contesting among men from 1985 until her last election in 2011. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has consistently advocated for the political involvement of women, both within Liberia and on a broader African scale.

Despite the fact that the different aspects of feminism have given rise to numerous differences, criticisms, and conflicts, each of these aspects has tremendously increased the understanding of the subject as a whole. Regardless of whether people think feminism is dreadful or fantastic, every aspect of life contains both positive and negative elements. The right to vote, the prohibition of sexual harassment, the right to an abortion, and the abolition of domestic abuse are some of the basic values that underpin liberal feminism. As intimated earlier in the research, liberal feminism is used as a key discussion point because it addresses gender inequality, in which women do not have the same rights as men. Liberal feminism argues that once this is attained for women, it will eliminate all existing disparities. In addition, the theory believes that misogyny is the root cause of discrimination against women. Most notably, liberal feminists have fought for women's rights to vote, labor, receive an education, and receive equal pay to men. Access to affordable healthcare, child care, education, and other fundamental ideals is also critical. The liberal feminist perspective calls into question regulations that restrict women from obtaining the same high levels of education and employment as men, and it investigates the concept of marriage as well as the legal framework that governs divorce and property laws (Kook & Harel-Shalev, 2021). The liberal school of feminism believes that expanding educational opportunities for women will benefit society as a whole. Liberal feminists are distinguished from radical feminists by their opposition to the demise of current political and social systems. Liberal feminists, on the other hand, are interested in reforming these institutions so that women and other disadvantaged groups can do well and fight with men on an even playing field. This would enable them to contend on an equivalent playing field with males. Feminists who are liberal care more about reducing the hurdles that have prevented women from obtaining jobs historically held by men. From the beginning, feminist thought has questioned the near absolute absence of women from traditional approaches in terms of both theory and practice of international relations. This omission is emphasized by the perception that women's daily lives are unaffected by or insignificant to foreign problems. These two examples

demonstrate how frequently women are excluded from decision-making processes. The achievements of feminism are also evident in the manner in which it deconstructed gender as a socially constructed identity and constructed a robust organizing framework. Aggestam & True (2020) discovered that the bulk of international relations are gender-blind. Feminist theory falls under the aegis of critical theory, whose purpose is to destabilize systems of oppression and authority. According to Alogaily, (2021), some scholars view critical paradigms as interpretivist extensions, but there is also a subjectivist emphasis on oppression and lived experience. Using a feminist lens enables an understanding of how people engage within systems and may provide solutions to tackle and eliminate oppressive structures and systems. With a focus on oppression, feminist theory analyzes the lived experience of all people, not just women.

Disruption of oppression is a central tenet of feminist work, although there is no unanimity on where feminist theory falls as a theory or paradigm. When it comes to International Relations theory, the feminist method is a type of relativism. It is different from approaches that take a rationalist view, which is based on the ideas of rational choice theory. Certain reflective approaches, such as poststructuralism, constructivism, and postcolonialism, hold that the identities and interests of states are in a constant state of flux. Consequently, identity and values assume ambivalent functions. Nonetheless, it would be erroneous to believe that feminist international relations consist solely of identifying the number of women's groups within the international political system. Feminist international relations have always exhibited a strong preoccupation with thinking about males and, more specifically, masculinities. The truth is that many feminist scholars say that international relations is mainly a field for guys. While feminist international relations theory looks at how men and women affect each other in international politics, it also looks at how basic ideas like conflict and security are gendered in the field. Along with the usual focus on states, disputes, diplomacy, and security, feminists in the field of international relations have made it a priority to look into how gender affects the modern global political economy.

In this regard, feminists engaged in the fields of international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) are remarkably similar. Feminist IR was largely comprised of concepts that emerged in the late 1980s and beyond. Following the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, standard IR theory was reconsidered, allowing for the gendering of IR. A close relationship exists between feminist international relations

(IR) and the critical endeavor within IR. Utilizing deconstructionist or postmodernist approaches, the majority of feminist research has attempted to shake up the politics of knowledge construction in the field.

Some early feminist scholars in the field of International Relations use the term "feminist consciousness" to talk about gender-related politics. Cynthia Enloe says in her piece "Gender is not enough: the need for a feminist consciousness" that International Relations should not only focus on issues that affect women and girls, but also on issues that affect men during times of conflict (Wright, 2020). To achieve this, Enloe advises International Relations scholars to adopt a "feminist consciousness" when analyzing issues, encompassing an acknowledgment of both masculine and feminine dimensions. Therefore, by adopting a gendered perspective and feminist awareness, scholars of international relations are better able to analyze and comprehend gender-related issues on a global scale when discussing international politics. Enloe says that girls and women are left out of discussions about foreign relations if the situations, actions, and ideas of these groups are not seriously looked at. One example that Enloe gives is how Carol Cohn's feminist perspective helped to write a paper that lays out the steps that should be taken during cease-fires, peace talks, and the writing of new constitutions. After giving enough background on the research question at hand and explaining how feminism and international relations are related, the investigation will now move on to feminist theory.

2.4. International organizations work on gender equality

Mentioning the international organizations at this point is necessary in order to provide support for the hypothesis that is presented in this study. The United Nations Women's Organization (UN Women), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Plan International, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Women for Women International (WfWI), the Global Fund for Women (GFW), and Equality Now are some of the international organizations that support gender equality. The Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace are some of the Liberian organizations that have taken action to address major issues confronting women. Other organizations that have taken action include the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL). The Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is overseen by the impartial experts that make up the CEDAW Committee, which is charged with putting the convention into practice. The CEDAW Convention, which stands for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, was signed in 1979. This committee was initially constituted by the United Nations in the year 1979. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an important piece of legislation. According to the findings of the research that was reviewed, bringing awareness to this particular group is essential because of the unique part it plays in the fight against sexism. One of the most important documents that has ever been written is called the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, (CEDAW)

According to the findings of Robinson and Gottlieb (2021), a nation that has ratified CEDAW has a responsibility to be more receptive to the concept of include female members of parliament in its governing body. Another essential institution that is working to achieve gender equality is UN Women, which stands for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The United Nations' (UN) designated agency for the advancement of gender parity is called UN Women. The purpose of establishing this organization was to expedite the meeting of the needs of women all over the world. It works in close collaboration with both civil society organizations and governments in order to devise and enact policies, legislation, and services that are beneficial to women and to bring these to fruition. Additionally, it assists UN members in meeting global goals pertaining to gender equality. UN Women's commitment to ensure that women have equal access to and control over decision-making bodies is one of the organization's four pillars. 2) Women have secure job, a wage that enables them to support themselves, and economic independence. 3.) No woman or girl ever suffers from sexual or physical abuse; 4.) Women and girls have equal access to the benefits of disaster and conflict prevention and humanitarian operations, and they play an essential role in achieving long-lasting peace and resilience; 5.) No child ever suffers from malnutrition; 6.) No child dies from malnutrition; 7.) No child dies from malnutrition; 8.

UN Women also works with the governments that are a part of it to guarantee that gender equality is a core component of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and that the United Nations system lives up to its own obligations in this area. This is something that it does in conjunction with the states that are a part

of it. Another significant worldwide group that is fighting for women's rights in development is known by its acronym AWID, which stands for the Association for Women's Rights in Development. AWID is an international organization with the mission of advancing women's rights and promoting equality for people of both sexes. The principal objective of AWID is to "create a world in which feminist realities flourish, in which power and resources are shared in ways that allow everyone, and future generations, to flourish and achieve their full potential with dignity, love, and respect, and in which the Earth nurtures life in all its diversity" (Who are we and what are we doing). This organization advocates for the transition of gender justice activities into the driving forces of oppression. When it comes to exerting influence on gender-related policies and practices, A lot of work is done by the AWID with activists and officials in Liberia and other places. It connects people to share their skills, experiences, and thoughts on important topics, which encourages movements for gender equality to support group actions for feminist causes. This helps to forward the cause of feminist organizations. Activists and members of historically oppressed communities are given assistance in constructing networks of solidarity support for their safety and well-being, which is made possible by the program. In conclusion, AWID strives for tax fairness and the accountability of corporations so that there can be equitable distribution of funds. At every level of governance in Liberia, from the local to the national to the international, there have been discussions in which women have taken part and alliances that they have formed. Through these efforts, many women have reached a consensus that political transformation requires the active participation of women committed to serving the public trust and upholding public accountability. The United Nations Women's Group, AWID, and other organizations have intervened to reinforce this message (Jaquette, 2017).

In Liberia, conversely, women have traditionally occupied specific positions within a male-dominated society. Conventional wisdom that prohibits the equality of men and women has been integrated into these standards. Therefore, it would be incredible if an independent-learning feminist could tear down the glass ceiling and attain a higher political position (Teorey, 2022).

Plan International (PI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a global reach that works for children's rights and gender equality via development, human rights, and humanitarian operations. PI was founded in 1953 and is headquartered in the United Kingdom. Close engagement with teenagers, children, and

communities enables the identification of root reasons of discrimination against females, vulnerability, and exclusion, as well as the development of measures to counteract these factors and prepare participants for future work. In addition, this type of collaboration paves the way for future work. Plan International makes use of its knowledge, contacts, and power to influence policy and practice at all levels of government, ranging from the local to the international level. Plan International places a high priority on achieving gender equality, improving gender justice, and developing inclusive societies as three of its key priorities. The purpose of the organization is to advance human rights and gender equality by challenging gender stereotypes and unbalanced power dynamics among men, women, and children (Toft Roelsgaard, 2019). Plan International promotes a culture that values and supports gender equality, in addition to innovation, optimism, and acceptance of diversity. This culture appreciates and supports gender equality. The goal of the organization known as Women for Women International (WfWI) is to improve the quality of life for female residents of the world's most troubled and underdeveloped regions. The activities that are funded by the organization are aimed at empowering women on a variety of fronts, including the economic, social, physical, and emotional realms anew Since its inception, the charity has provided assistance to 478,00 women, enabling them to begin their lives anew after enduring the devastation of war.

The main goal of Women for Women International is to make more people aware of how important women are to making communities around the world more peaceful. The programs of this organization aim to educate women on a wide range of topics, including divorce, child custody, domestic violence, land ownership, and voting. By taking these measures, the organization encourages gender equality and provides the resources that women require in order to effectively speak for themselves. The organization collaborates with other organizations in an effort to exert an influence on both the policies and the practices that affect vulnerable women who have been exposed to conflict. Equality Now is an international organization that was established in 1990. Its responsibility includes utilizing the legal system to advocate for and safeguard the human rights of girls and women. This is done by using the law system to build a society that treats women and girls more fairly. International human rights law is used to argue with and put pressure on national government officials and decision-makers. At the moment, Equality collaborates with a number of other

organizations in order to keep specific concerns at the forefront of the agenda for the international community (Toft Roelsgaard, 2019).

Equality Now collaborates with a diverse range of organizations and individuals in its pursuit of gender equality. This assemblage comprises survivors, local activists, legal professionals, service providers, corporations, as well as national and regional women's organizations. Equality Now also draws upon the knowledge of these individuals and groups. It does this by holding governments accountable for violations of gender equality legislation and by encouraging nations to pass laws that promote gender equality. As an international advocacy organization, WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organization) was established in order to advance and safeguard the rights of women, as well as human rights and environmental protection. Worldwide goals are the goal of WEDO, which helps organize and coordinate efforts to reach those goals. The goal is to promote women's views and help them become better leaders. The Women's Environment and Development Organization collaborates with other organizations and individuals with similar goals, participates in lobbying and other endeavors that increase the likelihood that human rights for women will be considered during policy formulation. In addition to this, it makes it less difficult for the political voices of women to be heard on a local, national, and international basis. WEDO not only develops new information but also stores existing material on topics such as gender equality, women's rights, sustainable development, and environmental concerns. This is done in order to facilitate effective outreach and information exchange (Toft Roelsgaard, 2019)

The Global Fund for Women (GFW) is a leading global organization that fights for the rights of women and girls all over the world. The mission of this organization is to bring attention to the work being done by women to organize grassroots movements and challenge long-established power systems. The group's main goal is to educate the public, give women more power in politics and the business, and improve sexual and reproductive health in order to create a world without violence, equal rights, and poor sexual and reproductive health. In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Global Fund for Women works to promote gender equality by ensuring that all girls and women are able to exercise their human rights to the fullest extent. This is one of the ways in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is interpreted. The Fund preserves and promotes the autonomy of women by ensuring that they have access to high-quality prenatal and postnatal care

regardless of whether or not they choose to have children. This allows women to make their own decisions about whether or not they want to have children, which is an important aspect of autonomy. According to Toft Roelsgaard's argument, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have significant repercussions for the safeguarding of women's rights.

When there is peace and stability in Liberia, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) distributes emergency funding to local women's organizations. This is done as part of an effort to lessen the incidence of violent crimes against women., strengthen human rights, and make progress toward gender equality. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fun organization works along with members of the community to protect the rights of Liberian women and girls to life, liberty, and the opportunity to pursue happiness. Giving this money to social groups and organizations that fight for women's rights across the country is making them stronger. This includes groups that work with teens and groups that face different kinds of abuse at the same time (Toft Roelsgaard, 2019). The funds are designated to promote women's peace efforts, equality between the sexes, and women's liberties. Sisters, grandfathers, and mothers collaborated in the organization of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace campaign. The goal of the movement was to put pressure on Liberian males to accept peace, or else they would be separated from their spouses. At the fish market, a large number of women from Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, were seen congregating in full white attire in order to pray and sing. Their pictures were seen all over the world: "The women of Liberia say peace is our goal, peace is what matters, and peace is what we need" was written on a sign at the downtown fish market (Uzor, 2019). "Liberia was once known for its child soldiers," Uzor, (2019), said Leymah Gbowee, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning leader of the peace movement Uzor, (2019). 'They have come to recognize our nation by the Caucasian women. Their prolonged and fruitful endeavors persisted until the inaugural elections of the nation. It appeared that the male members of society were not willing to take a stand. Kuwonu (2018) cites Gbowee, who presently oversees the Women, Peace, and Security Program at Columbia University in New York, as saying (Uzor, 2019). "They were either combatants or remained completely silent, accepting the violence that was directed at our nation; therefore, we agreed to do something to rouse the silent men." According to Kuwonu (2018).

The women ultimately succeeded in convincing President Charles Taylor to engage in peace negotiations with the other belligerent factions through their efforts to secure a meeting with him. These meetings were facilitated by the sub-regional organization known as ECOWAS. During the pauses, the women engaged in a technique known as "corridor lobbying," in which they waited outside of the conference rooms for the male negotiators. In an effort to exert pressure on the Liberian government to find a solution, over two hundred Liberian women participated in a sit-in at the presidential palace in Ghana. As a result of their efforts, the palace was made available as a venue for negotiations to take place there. Women dressed in all white blocked all entrances and exits, including windows, to make certain that no one could leave the negotiating table without first reaching a compromise. They took a long trip to Ghana to talk to the leaders of the warring groups during peace talks and beg them to sign a cease-fire agreement. They also confronted the president at the time, Charles Taylor, and insisted that peace be given a chance. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement from 2003 was finally signed as a result of all of the pressure that was applied, including that of ECOWAS authorities (Gallo-Cruz & Remsberg, 2021).

Even though Liberian men were formally a part of the movement, it was the women who took the lead and never gave up. In the wake of the Accra peace accord, Liberian women continued their political activity until Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president in 2005. This was the year when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took office. Observers credit civic education and an initiative to register voters that was driven by women with ensuring that Liberians' votes were counted and that their opinions were heard. According to Gallo-Cruz & Remsberg (2021), in the first post-war presidential election on the African continent, nearly 80% of Liberian women voters chose to break with decades of patriarchy by putting a woman in charge of the country.

The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president is seen by a significant number of citizens as a watershed moment in the annals of Liberian history. The freshly elected president proclaimed with immense pride, 'We have shattered the glass ceiling theory' (Gallo-Cruz & Remsberg, 2021). She had urged them to 'seize the moment to become active in civil and political affairs' (Gallo-Cruz & Remsberg, 2021). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the first woman to lead Liberia as president, won the presidency in a vote that was both free and fair (Kuwonu, 2018). The conclusion of the 14-year civil war that had been raging in Liberia was largely brought about by the efforts of the country's female citizens. Because of this, our primary focus right now

is on establishing peace. The women have been given the nickname 'community watchdogs' as a result of their persistent activity and messages directed toward the general public. In addition, the ladies have conceived of 'peace huts' as places where other women can learn about leadership and entrepreneurship. WONGOSOL (Women's NGO Secretary of Liberia) is a network of 104 organizations that are fighting to end violence against women and support equal rights for men and women. Their goal is to build a just and fair Liberia in which women and men participate equally in decision-making at all levels and in all aspects of society. In order to accomplish this goal, WONGOSOL is striving to create a just and fair Liberia. WONGOSOL is an organization that strives to end discrimination against women and the abuse of power by working to increase public awareness of these issues, campaigning for legislation that are more stringent, and offering assistance to victims. This institution helps strengthen the capacity of community-based groups by providing them with educational opportunities, organizational assistance, and new options for collaborative work. All of the aforementioned organizations, including those headquartered outside of Liberia as well as those based within the country, are united in their dedication to achieving gender parity, amplifying women's voices, including them in policymaking, and reducing barriers to women's full participation in democracies in both Liberia and other nations (Gallo-Cruz & Remsberg, 2021).

2.5. Problems of women's participation in politics

Women face intense competition and challenges when trying to represent the administration due to the magnitude of the global population. Women continue to be underrepresented in public service in Liberia, as does their involvement in elections as candidates. The Bicameral National Legislature has nine females and 64 males in the House of Representatives and two females and 27 males in the Senate (Jallah, et. al, 2021). In the cabinet, there are five female ministers and 14 male ministers, and this underrepresentation extends throughout local government (Nchofoung et al, 2021). Rarely are women treated with the respect they deserve when they openly discuss the difficulties they have with their families and land. Women face many obstacles on their path to political participation.

When women hold public or political power, they are subjected to unwarranted scrutiny of their personal lives. This causes women to suffer. The media and advertising industries, for example, add to the predicament of women by brazenly

exploiting prejudices about them whenever they can use them to market a new line of clothing. This is one way in which these businesses contribute to the situation that women find themselves in today. The resolution known as UNSCR 1325 (Miller et al., 2014) it discusses how violent war and conflict hurt women and girls more than men, as well as the role women should and do play in preventing conflicts and achieving peace. This resolution was adopted in 2000. The absence of the proactive involvement of women in every facet of existence, a community will never be able to attain and maintain peace and prosperity for the long term. Within the context of the United Nations, the resolution urges all parties to incorporate a gendered perspective into their efforts to maintain peace and security. As a result, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence happen more often and are worse during times of conflict. It is the responsibility of everyone participating in a violent conflict to protect women and girls from this kind of abuse. The mandates of the organization are reflective of the four tenets of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which are participation, protection, prevention, and relief and rehabilitation. It is very important as it is the first time such a resolution has been widely accepted. In some regions of the world, such as Pakistan and Nepal, there are genuine risks of kidnapping, abduction, and murder. Abuse that is both verbal and physical is another risk.

According to the findings of the research 'Violence against Women in Politics', the key reasons for violence are the socio-economic gap, the current power structure, the inadequate application of the law, and the lack of support from the police and judiciary. In addition to this, women encounter issues inside political parties that are male-dominated and do not prioritize women. Women find it challenging to advance in political parties as a result of this. The political parties don't even support women's political empowerment, let alone provide them with the right seats. The parties are responsible for maintaining the viewpoint that women are unable to lead or make decisions. Women have been shown to be prevented from actively engaging in political processes due to sexual abuse (Mlambo, & Kapingura, 2019). Claims that the difficulties faced by women in Bangladeshi politics include the potential for sexual harassment, the existence of corruption, and a lack of control over one's own finances. Other issues were the involvement of families, the spouses' lack of cooperation, marital status, and age. 2019 marked the release of Chowdhury's study on the subject.

Political parties give female candidates very little room to run for office; party leaders explain their positions and assert that women lack the necessary qualifications;

who then runs for office? This calls into question the viability of the female candidate and raises concerns about her chances of winning. Political parties generally have apathetic attitudes toward women. The claim that women are represented fairly only applies to elections and is not supported in any other way. Jones & Solomon (2019) Some of the political problems women face are not having enough support from political parties, not being able to communicate and work together with other public groups like women's groups and labor unions, not being able to get a good education, the voting system not being fair to women candidates, and having to take care of both family and work responsibilities at the same time. Furthermore, as also noted (Jones & Solomon, 2019), the reality is that women bear a dual burden because they are expected to be housewives, and males tend to underestimate women in order to maintain their position of power. Women have no choice but to be the targets of prejudice inside their own families. Women who join politics cannot obtain support from their families, which is one of the reasons why they are unable to fully represent themselves in politics. Nazneen, (2023), outlined a variety of factors that contributed to women's underrepresentation in Nigerian politics.

Among these components are gender norms, a dearth of financial incentives, prejudiced laws and practices, and a lack of an affirmative action quota. Women must have a political partner in order to be successful in influencing politics. The problem of women not being represented enough in Liberian government jobs and elections as candidates is still going on (Nazneen, 2023).

CHAPTER III
Research Findings

3.1. Research Findings on the Female Participation in Politics in Liberia: A Requirement

It is absolutely necessary for women to be politically active if we are going to achieve gender parity and cultivate a true democracy. By promoting and facilitating the active engagement of women in the decision-making processes of public organizations, it enhances their accountability. Before anything else, there needs to be a big rise in the amount of women in leadership positions to make sure that women are held politically accountable. Gender-sensitive modifications to governmental operations, such as the affirmative action mandate, may facilitate the efforts of all elected officials to advocate for and ensure the implementation of gender equality in public policy. One example of such a reform is the aforementioned affirmative action law. This chapter provides an argument in support of the conclusions drawn from this Thesis. Investigating and looking into the things that make it hard for women in Liberia to take part in political processes is needed to get rid of those things. In the early 2000s, Africa made significant progress toward increasing the number of women in politics, largely as a result of the implementation of quota systems across the continent.

Rwanda's parliamentary representation of women is presently the most diverse in Africa and the globe, with 49% of seats held by women compared to the average of 15.1% seen worldwide (Paxton et al, 2020). According to the findings of the Interparliamentary Union, Rwanda's legislature has the largest proportion of female representatives (61.3%). The following three countries, all of which are located in Africa, are on the list: At least 40% of a country's total seats in parliament are held by women in Senegal, the Seychelles, and South Africa, respectively. Women constitute at least one-third of the entire population in the legislative bodies of Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, and Uganda (Tripp, 2023). A quick overview of the reasons why women's involvement in political life is so critically necessary is as follows: All citizens should be provided the same rights under the law, according to the Liberian Constitution of 1986, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' Article I, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All of these documents were written in 1986. Women are protected by these norms and are free to participate in whatever political activity that they feel is appropriate for them, regardless of their sexual

orientation. Because of these restrictions, the government cannot interfere with the political participation of women, which is another benefit. Two, the authors Raynauld and Lalancette (2023) estimate that women account for approximately half of Liberia's total population of 2.61 million people. The fact that women make up at least half of the population means that keeping them from voting would be a terrible violation of their basic human rights (Storage et al., 2020). If women were prevented from participating in politics, it would be a major breach of their human rights. According to Clayton & Zetterberg (2021), having more women in political leadership roles benefits other women and gives them the impression that being involved in politics is doable. When a legislature is predominately male, it creates a psychological barrier. Because of this, women and girls tend to believe that they should follow rather than assume the lead. A government that is proportionally representative of the people it governs presents a more democratic image. A pluralistic democratic society that opens door to women's political participation will be considered as friendly and egalitarian, which fosters participation from other disadvantaged groups and the contribution of new thoughts and innovation (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2021). Finally, women have the capacity to specifically advance the interests of children and other women. According to research, women in politics have different policy interests than their male colleagues. They advocate for laws that support families and children as well as policies that promote gender parity, and they occasionally do so by forming coalitions of women that cut across party lines.

The Women Legislative Caucus is a group that advocates for female politicians in Liberia. Compared to their male counterparts, female legislators exhibit a different voting pattern and a higher commitment to consensus-based legislative processes. In conclusion, the existence of women who actively engage in political processes motivates other women to do the same since these women are seen as possible role models. Social and structural perspectives regarding men and women differ in accordance with the proportion of women in positions of government. It is possible to impart these perspectives to infants and subsequently reinforce them in adults. Whether or not there are women in political roles can influence and reinforce these viewpoints. These points of view have the potential to be transmitted from one generation to the next.

It's likely that the lack of female political leaders is conveying the incorrect message to women and girls, leading them to believe that politics is a field that men

should dominate exclusively rather than one that women should pursue. The fact that more and more women are running for political office supports the idea that they can lead effectively. By raising the number of young girls who are exposed to women in public office, It is possible to expand the participation of women in political processes. (Beaman et al, 2012). In the section that follows, this Thesis focuses on the ways tradition and patriarchy have influenced Liberian politics, particularly how they've affected the underrepresentation of women in elected positions.

3.2. The Historical Perspective on Women's Rights to Vote, 1951

This is a historical analysis of the part played by women in the body politics of Liberia. It is vital to have a strong grip on the historical sequence of events leading up to the entrance of women into political life in Liberia if one is to analyze how women came to hold positions of power in that country. This sequence of events led up to the entry of women into political life in Liberia. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of putting a spotlight on the historical context of women's involvement in democratic processes in Liberia. After the nation of Liberia achieved its independence in 1847, it instituted a policy that prohibited women from holding public office. Many individuals believed that a woman's position was within the home; therefore, they forbade them from voting or discussing women's rights issues. This attitude also prevented women from addressing topics relating to women's rights. In spite of the fact that a constitutional vote took place on May 7, 1946, women continued to be accorded unequal treatment. It was accepted by the voters, and on December 10, 1946, it was signed into law. Since this time period and continuing until the present, the level of participation of women in political life in Liberia has been quite low. This This is not an account that is solely for Liberia. Ikwuegbu, (2022) says that in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, two nations in West Africa, the proportion of women in political leadership roles is low due to a combination of factors. These include a political culture characterized by discrimination and favoritism, in addition to gender-based economic and familial inequality. Other than that, women hold relatively few positions of political leadership.

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which secured women the right to vote, was ratified by the states on June 4, 1919, and it was confirmed by Congress on August 18, 1920. This occurred exactly 100 years ago. Nations including the United States did not grant voting rights to women until a

significant amount of time had passed. This victory was the result of a protracted and arduous fight that spanned many years and was preceded by decades of agitation and protest.

Women in Liberia were divided into three groups up until the 21st December 1946: those who were settlers and owned property; those who were poor settlers and did not own property but were still able to vote; and those who were indigenous and were not allowed to own property and thus were not allowed to vote until the 1950s. Native American women were left without a voice in the situation since they were not permitted to participate in any political debates or choices. They simultaneously carried out the tasks of servants, soldiers, and sex slaves because they were not granted citizenship as the male counterparts (Evrard, 2023). The native Liberian women had a huge impact on the peace agreement that was established in Liberia, despite the fact that it was well known that the authoritarian governments in Liberia exploited the indigenous Liberian women. They were largely responsible for making it possible for a peace treaty to be approved in Accra in 2003 (Evrard, 2023). The most well-known Liberian woman is Suakoko. Suakoko was an indigenous woman who originated from the central region of Liberia, Bong County. She was born in the 1880s, and because of her contributions as a woman, a district in Bong County was named in her honor. Suakoko's indelible contributions to Liberian society are regarded as the start of the story of women participating in politics in the nation (Dafia, 2022). She was the first woman in history to ever gain the position of supreme chief, and in that capacity, she was instrumental in putting an end to the bloodshed that had blighted relations between settlers and natives. In the Sande tribe, she held the position of Zoe, which is analogous to that of a priest, and she was of American and Liberian descent. According to Baker and O'Shanassy (2022), a number of women have held positions in the Senate and the Parliament. Leymah Gbowee, the founder of the Liberian Women's Institute, and Angie Brooks, who became the first African and the second woman to preside over the United Nations General Assembly, were among the other attendees at the event. There were also other women in attendance, including Angie Brooks, who became the second woman and first African-American to hold the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly (Tripp, 2023). According to Ugwuanyi and Kazeem (2022), Women from Liberia facilitated peace negotiations between Charles Taylor and the leaders of numerous rebel organizations in an effort to end the fighting amicably. Although Liberian women have made significant contributions to the history

of their country, in addition, they have faced many problems in many areas of Liberian society because they are women. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia is also the first female leader of a state on the African continent. Sando Perry assumed the presidency of the Council of State immediately following her departure from office in 1997, She was in charge of overseeing the change from war to peace during that time. As a part of the process of regaining their places in society, women persisted and devoted themselves in a number of ways to reassume considerable duties. This was done in an effort to reassume their historical roles. They were provided with the option to take on more responsibility, which they gladly accepted. They triumphed against obstacles in their pursuit of higher education, and today they stand out as influential leaders in multinational corporations.

In many parts of the globe, political authority has been held by men. Men dominated Liberia's top political roles until 2006. In 2006, women began to assume key political posts, a trend that had its roots in liberal feminist studies. Liberal feminists claimed that Johnson Sirleaf's government had more women serving in it than Taylor's had, based on the results of many studies. Because of regulations that made it simpler for women to run for office, this trend emerged. To achieve the objective of increasing the number of women in influential and leadership positions, gender policies must be implemented. An instance that exemplifies this is the affirmative action legislation that was enacted during the administrations of both Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. (Dunn & Mirzaie, 2023). The number of women in Liberia who are involved in politics has grown a lot, especially since the end of the war. This is because the African Union and the UN have taken steps to protect women's rights (Dunn & Mirzaie, 2023). This is especially true in the decade after the conflict. Resolution 1325 was adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2019 (Pierson, 2019) In order to safeguard and promote the human rights of females and women-specific. Individuals "have the right to participate in promoting and maintaining peace" (Alston & Mégret, 2013), Consistent with the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights concerning the Rights of Women in Africa. Since the inception of Liberian politics, women have been playing an essential part in the country's affairs. This was possible because of the laws that were passed during the Taylor and Johnson Sirleaf governments. On the other hand, there has been less focus on advancing women's organizations and putting gender legislation into place. It is thought that the fact that

women have historically been in leadership roles in Liberia has helped make bad conditions for women less common (Walker, 2023).

The first elections in Liberia to be held with universal suffrage began on May 1, 1951, the first day that women were given the opportunity to vote. On May 1, 1951, these elections took place. Women were granted the right to vote in Liberia for the first time in May 1946, during the inaugural term of President William V.S. Tubman. A constitutional referendum granted women the right to vote. This enabled them to seek political representation across all levels, including local, state, and federal. Despite this, women's engagement in democratic elections in Liberia was not nearly as evident as it would have been in the era that followed the end of the nation's civil conflict (Bedert, 2022). Liberia was founded to repatriate freed slaves from the United States. The emancipated slaves are also known as Americo-Liberians, settlers, and indigenous peoples. These individuals were transported from Africa to the United States to labor on sugar cane and cocoa plantations. The increasing number of these slaves poses a hazard to the survival of the United States. This conduct prompted the Americans to begin repatriating these slaves in order to protect their land and property. When the freed slaves settled in Liberia, they were entrusted with the responsibility of providing leadership to the local populace (Dafia, 2022). This was a result of the level of civilization and education they attained during their time as slaves in America. Male descendants of the settlers have historically been required to be present in order to cast a ballot. In addition to granting women the ability to vote, the Constitutional Referendum also granted property-owning native Liberians the same rights. This was a considerable improvement for Liberia as a nation (Bland, 2017).

who made history as the inaugural female paramount chief of Bong County, Northern Liberia, Angie Brooks Randolph was a Liberian woman who overcame social constraints and globally etched herself in the annul of history by becoming the first black woman president of the United Nations General Assembly. Angie Brooks Randolph served in various capacity both international and national despite the fact that Liberian women had to overcome a number of challenges, this was accomplished. She did not only serve as the Supreme Court Counselor-at-Law, Assistant Secretary of State, Supreme Court Judge, and Liberia's UN Ambassador, but she also made history by becoming the first African-Black woman to serve as the UN General Assembly's president. Over the course of her career in the Liberian government, she served in each of these roles. She served the Liberian government in the aforementioned roles and

also received this honor. Many women in Liberia at this point in its history did not talk about their experiences in the same way that Angie Brooks Randolph has been described as doing in relation to her testimony. Angie Brooks Randolph is one of the few brave number of women in Liberia who have resisted social expectations and persevered in order to achieve their objectives. These women are Liberian nationals. Liberia lacked a formal diplomatic service prior to the 1950s. The Liberian government and the United States Foreign Service Institute have reached an understanding about educational possibilities. The first group of trainees sent overseas for diplomatic relations training included David Thomas, Christie Doe, S. Edward Peal, George A. Padmore, and J. Dudley Lawrence. After completing the initial training, these people were assigned ambassadorial positions. No women were given consideration for the position of ambassador in Liberia after completing the program since the culture of the nation at the time limited women's ability to hold leadership positions Dunn & Mirzaie, (2023). The only reason for Angie Brooks Randolph's quick advancement in the United Nations ranks is her unwavering devotion to the group and her great desire to help others. Her situation was similar to that of other Liberian women in that she was compelled to get married young and was expected to take care of her home and raise children. By going above and beyond what was expected of her, she defied expectations and built the reputation and legacy she desired for herself. Henceforth, the fight for women's representation and granting women the right to participate in the democracy of Liberia validates the stand of liberal feminism. Prior to 1946, there were barriers to women's participation in democracy in Liberia. But due to the constant advocacy of prominent women in Liberia, such as Mrs. Angie Brooks Randolph and former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, among the other women.

3.3. Violence Against Women in The Realm of Politics

Women's involvement in politics is hindered in Liberia's tribal and patriarchal culture (Demmelmaier, 2022). The indigenous people of Liberia didn't have the right to vote until the 1950s, long after the nation gained its independence in 1847 (Gardner, 2022). Liberian women's political participation did not increase significantly until after the civil war ended in 1996 (Narang & Liu, 2022). Partially as a result of the challenges they endured throughout the civil war that began in 1989 and concluded in 2003 (Issifu, 2022), more Liberian women are becoming politically active. Women and children were exploited for their sexual and labor services to the warring parties. War casualties

were disproportionately female in countries like the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. They had to bury their children and spouses. In order to ensure their own safety, several people joined rebel groups. They were essentially trying to acquire food for themselves and casting a vote. Liberian women suffered much throughout the conflict, but they also spearheaded efforts that eventually led to peace and stability. By 2003, the WIPNET and WANEP had increased their pressure on the warring groups to accept a peace (Zanker, 2014).

Kellow (2010), focuses mostly on Liberia and Sierra Leone in his article concerning violence and elections in West Africa. He points to cultural and traditional conventions in this article that limit women's prospects and leave them with a lack of skills that lead to few or no opportunities, both formally and informally. The focus of Kellow's piece is on Sierra Leone and Liberia. Because of these patriarchal traditions, women are compelled to follow traditional roles out of a worry that their families will reject them if they try to get involved in politics. Women frequently encounter hostility and discrimination from the male dominated political milieu when they try to join political parties. Their political parties openly promote women, but they don't do much to actually support women in their ranks (Alfarran et al, 2018). Online use of violent methods has increased recently in politics. The ability to reach thousands of people— or perhaps more—with just one click can have far-reaching effects on both the positive and negative sides. In her 2018 book 'Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics', Fuller (2023) looks into the Internet and the role it has played in the evolution of politics in Kenya. She concentrates her attention, particularly on Kenya. She talks on how politics and technology are interacting, how technology has altered the way power is distributed, and how technology can instantly 'make or break' a person. Her area of interest is the confluence between politics and technology (Elhinnawy, 2020). Some use it to condemn women who enter politics, a field that is already somewhat foreign to them. Some people use it to have their ideas heard and amplified in order to bring about positive change. The Internet can be used to denigrate people who are already facing prejudice because of their identification as women, just as it can be used to disparage men. However, when this happens, the cyber-violence that is done against these people is intensified. The main topic of the discourse, according to Fuller, it is not conflict; it is agency.

Ehrhart (2023) states that, the violence against women is now a serious issue in Liberia, this is also the case in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbor, and other regions

of the globe, including Central America. Some of the women received negative press in the print media, while another had a social media post featuring a candidate in her nudist attire go viral. Another person's computer sales and repair business were broken into, resulting in property damage. Some people's posters were torn down as stated 'Some may claim that violence occurred against other people, but if it targets those who are unable to respond, such as women, then it becomes a barrier to political participation and constitutes violence against a group that is already marginalized: women' (Encinas-Franco & Laguna, 2023)

Women in Liberia encounter additional difficulties while attempting to enter the political sphere, in addition to cultural and social constraints. The main offender in this case is the National Elections Commission, since it limits the options open to female candidates. It is frequently too expensive to register, which makes it difficult for women to take part. There are no local elections in Liberia, unlike some other nations, where women start their political careers in lesser administrative roles at the local level. When appointments are made, men are frequently chosen for these positions. (Curtin et al, 2023).

Roseline Toweh, a representative from the Liberian Young Women's Christian Association is dissatisfied that political parties only allow men to hold the roles of standard bearer and deputy standard bearer. She even raises the issue of resources during the primaries and conventions of political parties as a means of inflicting harm on women. As a women's rights advocate, she takes this action to draw the public's attention to the discrimination against women in Liberia. Since the women of Liberia lack the resources to compete on an equal footing with men, they are given less attention. In reality, they raised convention registration costs to the point that only a very small number of women could afford to pay them. Roseline Toweh said, 'this is election-related violence', on July 13, 2019, while addressing the YWCA facilities in Congo Town (Dunn & Mirzaie, 2023). People deliberately trying to prevent women from participating in politics is not a new occurrence. Since female political leaders are perceived as disruptive in the predominately 'male' world of politics, there is prejudice against them. The gender pay disparity in political leadership is a result of this mentality. According to the information gathered, female politicians reportedly encounter challenges that their male colleagues do not. These difficulties can be linked to opponents—both male and female—who are against women's involvement in politics. It is conceivable for opponents to sabotage women's political campaigns, after

which those opponents might rape, harass, or threaten the lives of the women leading those campaigns. To dismiss these as 'political business as usual' (Freidenberg, & Gilas, 2022) would be irresponsible because they represent serious risks to democratic institutions.

Despite the fact that terminology can differ, there are three main points that are brought up when talking about violence against women: a) hostile activities targeted solely or primarily at political women; b) because they are women, typically using gendered attack methods; and c) intended to discourage participation in order to 'preserve' traditional gender roles and weaken democratic institutions. Advocates and scholars employ the term "violence" to encompass a broader scope than mere physical aggression directed at women in political spheres. Additionally, they employ terminology such as "emotional, psychological, economic, and symbolic 'violence' (Krook, 2022). This is so because violence refers to more than simply actual physical force.

The Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics (VAWIE/P) protocol was signed by both the National Election Commission and the leaders of political party organizations (Matfess et al, 2023). Political parties made a commitment to promote and ensure that the VAWIE/P Protocol is widely adopted throughout the country when they signed it. In the year 2022, the efforts of the gender department of the NEC and UN Women resulted in the successful execution of a City Hall program in the Liberian city of Buchanan. This program saw participation from a diverse array of election-related parties. Additionally, the National Elections Commission added that over twenty-six executives of political parties and the chairperson of the NEC, Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah, were part of what she described as an important endeavor. Madam Browne Lansanah informed the participants that the commission will work with political parties and all relevant stakeholders to fully implement the VAWIE/P protocol in an effort to end violence against women in elections and politics in Liberia.

The National Elections Commission, through its gender section, with support from UN Women and funding from Canada, initiated consultations with key Liberian electoral stakeholders to assess the prevalence of violence against women in elections and politics, identify its root causes, and propose instruments and guidelines to address gender equality, women's leadership, and political participation for achieving

sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030, as they require important progress in these areas as well as building a peaceful society, inclusive institutions, and accessible justice for all. This brought about the drafting of a protocol and its accompanying action plan. The NEC, through its Gender Section, had begun consultations with key Liberian electoral stakeholders to assess the prevalence of violence against women in elections and politics, identify its root causes, and propose instruments and guidelines to address gender equality, women's leadership, and political participation in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, which require significant progress in the field. This resulted in the creation of a protocol and its supporting action plan. Several representatives from the Ministry of Gender, UNDP Elections Project, Embassy of Sweden, UN Women, and the Chairperson of the Women Legislative Caucus, Hon. Rossana Shaack, WONGOSOL, CSOs, and the Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) spoke at the closing ceremony about the importance of the document and how to encourage key actors to take the VAWIE/P Protocol seriously.

3.4. The bill concerning affirmative action

The Equal Representation and Participation Act of 2016 was approved on September 29, 2016, by the Liberian House of Representatives and Senate. This law established seven 'Special Constituencies' and allotted five seats for women, one seat for minors, and one seat for people with disabilities (Hart, 2019). Additionally, the law established seven 'Special Constituencies'. In accordance with the Affirmative Action for Equitable Participation and Representation (Hart, 2019) statute, the total number of representatives in the House of Representatives ought to be raised by 21. We suggest that of these extra seats, 15 should go to women, 3 should go to individuals with disabilities, and 3 should go to members of groups that are underrepresented (Dunn & Mirzaie, 2023). At this time, there are seventy-three tickets available for purchase. Women must make up a minimum of two of the six nominations coming from the physically challenged and youthful demographics combined. Because of the degree of contention surrounding this law, it was brought up for debate in the Court of Public Opinion. Others thought it would lead to a rise in the number of women holding public office, while the proportion of those who said it was insensitive and discriminatory due to the fact that it would only benefit half of the population was significantly smaller. Furthermore, even if the new parliamentarians are elected, it's likely that they

won't be able to make a difference because male colleagues harass and coerce female members into complying with their demands. This is the case even if the new parliamentarians are elected. Think about what would happen to those who gained "silver platter" seats if those who joined the House on an equal footing were harassed and intimidated by the male members.

At this point, the Senate is discussing whether to add a mandatory quota for women to the New Elections Law. This would be a great chance for the 54th National Legislature to speak up for women in Liberia and build on Liberia's history of women leading in Africa and around the world (Gcabashe, 2022). The first nation in Africa to currently have a female president and vice president is Liberia. They are thus the inaugural African nation to elect a female president and vice president. When it comes to the number of women in national governments, Liberia is ranked 163rd out of 185 countries. The country is ranked 184th for equal rights for men and women, it is ranked 156th out of 162 countries. Both of these figures point to the persistent predominance of men in positions of authority within the government. Although the average for Sub-Saharan Africa is 26% and for West Africa it is 17%, less than 11% of the 103 seats in Liberia's National Legislature are held by women. This is significantly lower than the regional and continental averages. Given that women and girls make up approximately half of the population, these statistics point to a problem caused by a lack of adequate representation. According to Larmin and Banini (2022), in order for Liberia to reach its democratic and developmental goals, the country would need to enact legislation and put into place affirmative action policies in order to address the underrepresentation of women in the national assembly.

Conversely, Liberia has ratified several regional and international treaties with the objective of enhancing the political and civil liberties of women at the regional and national levels. These types of legal systems are present both domestically and internationally. A few examples of this are ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Gender Equality. Another is accepting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979. Liberia is required to comply with the AU's criteria of 50/50 gender parity because it is a member of the African Union (AU). Liberia might want to make its voting laws more advanced in order to move forward with the goals of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Women and Elections.

It's possible to include affirmative action and female requirements at all levels of government. This is one of the steps that should be taken to put the Gender and Elections Strategic Framework and Action Plan and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance into action.

Article 5 of the Liberian Constitution stipulates that the population of the country would be unified under a single political body and that laws will be implemented to encourage the participation of all Liberians in government. Both of these provisions are intended to ensure that all Liberians have an equal voice in governing the country. Diverse policies at the national level have attempted to advance gender parity in political participation and representation. Comparable to the approach taken by the Pro-Poverty Agenda for Prosperity and Development of the National Government (Nussey & Rigon, 2019), the National Gender Policy (World Health Organization, 2019) makes a commitment to the advancement of gender parity in all areas of government and to the implementation of affirmative action laws and regulations in order to increase the involvement of women. To be more explicit, the goal of Pillar One: Power to the People is to increase the number of women who are politically active at the national and municipal levels by 30% by the year 2023. When it comes to politics, gender quotas are a "temporary special measure" that are intended to speed up the process of women attaining parity with men in all substantive ways and bringing about the structural and socio-cultural changes that are required to address women's historical oppression. This is the case because gender quotas are supposed to speed up the process of women gaining parity with men in all substantive ways. The 2005 "Guidelines Relating to the Registration of Political Parties and Independent Candidates" said that every party "shall ensure" that 30% of its candidates were women. Liberia was the first country in the world to set such a limit on the number of women who could run for office.

Stephen Rodriques, who is the UN Resident Representative for the UN Development Programme in Liberia, Niels Scott, who is the UN Resident Coordinator in Liberia, and Comfort Lamptey, who is the UN Resident Representative for UN Women, have all said they support gender quotas as a "temporary special measure" to speed up the structural and sociocultural changes that are needed to make men and women truly equal and to make it easier for women to get jobs. The 'Guidelines Relating to the Registration of Political Parties and Independent Candidates' from 2005 specified that each party shall ensure' that 30% of its candidates are women. As a result,

Liberia became the first country in the world to impose a quota of this kind. In 2005, none of the major political parties had more than 30% of their candidate lists comprised of female candidates; the average number of women on candidate lists was 20% (the Congress for Democratic Change had 21.7%, the Unity Party had 8.2%, and the Liberty Party had 22%). In 2005, there were 207 women out of a total of 873 candidates, which is around 24% of the overall candidate pool. These numbers were higher than those of any election that was held after this one. As a direct consequence of this, a historic number of women—nearly 17% in the Senate and 14% in the House—were elected to positions in the legislative branch in the year 2005. By the time of the elections in 2011, the major parties had already ignored these conventions in their campaigning.

The 2014 amendments to the New Elections Law included the phrase "strive to ensure" without providing further clarification or establishing an accountability framework. Between 2005 and 2014, not a single political party achieved a 30% share. One of the twenty-four registered parties or coalitions fulfilled the quota in 2017. Not even the largest and most influential coalitions or parties could have come close. The Liberty Party (LP) is at 10%, while the Unity Party (UP) is at 17% and the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) is at 11.5%. In 2020, the quota was met by only two out of the nine political parties or coalitions that fielded numerous candidates. Lack of party support caused the number of women in the legislature to drop from 16% in 2006 to less than 13% in 2012 and 11% in 2014. This dropped even more to less than 10% in 2021 and is now back below 11%. A law to change some parts of the 1986 New Elections Law was passed by the House of Representatives in February 2022. Sections 4.5 of this bill call for changes. They say that political parties "shall have no less than 30%" of candidates and leaders of each gender. Additionally, the Act sets up a way for the National Elections Commission of Liberia to reject candidate lists that don't meet the 30% limit. This is crucial, as political organizations will disregard subsections b and c in the absence of repercussions. While the 30% target remains far from attaining gender parity, it would nonetheless constitute a significant stride in addressing the issue of inadequate female representation on candidate lists. Additionally, the term "gender quota" is not biased, as it could be applied to males in the future if women continue to be overrepresented. The active participation of women in politics and decision-making yields a wealth of diverse perspectives, problem-solving approaches,

and experiences. In addition, they may advocate for the interests of women on a vast array of issues.

We need men and women to work together to make decisions that benefit everyone. Liberia would be unable to solve the multiplicity of development issues it faces unless women were included in decision-making (De Almagro & Bargués, 2022). According to studies by UN Women, more money is given to health care, education, and social welfare when women have equal representation in national government. Having women in leadership roles is also linked to peace and security. In addition, they serve as role models for girls and women. Promoting female equality in the decision-making process is therefore not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. For decades, the Liberian women's movement has worked to get more women involved in politics (Garnett, & Roversi, 2023). The time has arrived to build an enabling atmosphere to address the hurdles to women's political engagement.

3.5. 30% Gender equity bill

In order to encourage greater female participation in politics, the Gender Equity in Politics Act 2010 was introduced for debate in the Liberian Senate on May 27, 2010. Political parties are required by the Gender Equity in Politics to Increase Participation and Representation of Women in the Political Process bill to ensure that no single gender comprises less than 30% or more than 70% of a candidate list submitted to the National Elections Commission, Dunn & Mirzaie, (2023). In order to compel them to guarantee compliance with the quota representation criteria, a more forceful expression is required. Additionally, it ought to include sanctions for future offenders, such as the rejection of the candidates' listing, campaigns of public humiliation, and even penalties. The appropriate punishments should be suggested based on how serious the violation was. However, men outnumber women in the Liberian legislature. In Liberia, this is particularly accurate. In the instance of the Liberian Legislature, this is particularly accurate. The Liberian National Legislature's two chambers are the House of Representatives and the House of Senate.

There are now only two female senators in the 54th Legislative Session. Only 0.6% of the senators now serving in the body are represented by this. In reality, it has fallen in 2019 as a result of the news that Geraldine Doe, the Montserrado County sheriff, passed away. The likelihood of women getting elected to the Senate does not

look good at all. There was a total of four female senators in the 53rd Legislature, making up 1.2% of the senatorial body. But this number has now dropped by 50% further. This situation has not changed to date, as the women's representation in the upper house remains the same. Liberia conducted a parliamentarian election in 2020, and two women were voted into the upper house Dunn & Mirzaie, (2023).

The number of male and female representatives serving in the House of Representatives during the 53rd and 54th Legislative Sessions is equal. The sample number is as follows. In the House of Representatives, 73 individuals are currently in office. Eight female legislators made up 5.84% of the total in the 53rd and 54th districts, compared to 94.16% of male legislators. Despite the efforts made by women to fight for inclusion and acknowledgment at all levels of governance, including leadership, both collectively and individually, achieving equity has proven to be very difficult without the direct involvement of the government. This includes contending for positions of authority (Bokeriya & Kiamba, 2023).

3.6. Political equity incentive bill

(Liberia's Legislature Introduces Bill to increase Women's participation in Government) On May 27, Legislators enacted the Liberia Gender Equity in Politics Act of 2010 in an effort to increase the number of women in government positions (Liberia's Legislative Body Introduces Bill to Expand Women's Roles in Government). In order for the policy to be implemented, there must be at least 30% of all elected positions at the national level held by women, as well as at least 30% of all leadership positions within political parties held by women. According to Berry and Lake (2021), the legislation states that "no less than 30% and no more than 70% of each gender shall be represented in national elected offices and heads of principal and subsidiary organs and structures of each registered political party in Liberia." This provision stipulates that the percentage of women in national elected positions must fall between 30% and 70%. The measure also states that the government will establish a special incentive funding scheme for political parties that achieve the minimal conditions for women's involvement in party leadership positions (Garnett & James, 2021). The bill received the support of 21 of the Liberian Senate's 30 senators. The government should create a fund to aid political parties in their efforts to implement the 30/70 quota, according to the 'Act to Provide for Equitable Participation and Representation of All People in Governance and Political Process', Political Equity Incentive Fund (Agbalajobi, 2010,

p. 75-82). The Political Equity Incentive Fund would be the name of this fund. It is assumed that if political parties are aware that doing so will benefit them financially or in another way, they will be more motivated to include women in political campaigns. This is because they will understand how much it will help them if women participate in political campaigns. Adopting such a policy, however, would be problematic because political parties might very well just utilize women as stand-ins in order to benefit from doing so. There is a risk that is inherent in the situation. The executive committees of political parties, which are the bodies in charge of making the most significant decisions, are also underrepresented by women. As a result, only one gender, specifically men, will be able to decide how the benefit would be used. It is feasible to learn this law and then pass it with more stringent requirements. As a result, it will be less likely that women will be used as simple bait to acquire benefits (Garnett & James, 2021).

During their fact-finding trip and meetings with the Women of Liberia's Constitutional Review Task Force in Liberia, all senators agreed that the Affirmative Action law should be put into place. Almost two-thirds of the bill's scope was reduced just prior to its enactment. This designates five seats exclusively for females, one for every age category, and two seats specifically for individuals with disabilities. If something comparable were to take place, it is quite improbable that an inept woman would be given the opportunity to occupy the one vacant seat. There has not been a vote taken on the bill in the House of Representatives as of yet. Although every chamber of Congress has had at least two chances to consider the other two topics, they have been unable to approve resolutions in support of either one of them. Neither chamber of Congress has yet to pass these bills into law. To summarize, the development of these institutions as well as the implementation of these policies have been essential in increasing the number of women who participate in the political life of Liberia (Nedziwe, & Tella, 2023). Liberal feminists believe that societal norms and regulations are to blame for the lack of women in high-level public office because they prevent women from achieving higher levels of public office. The problem of women's unequal access to educational and legal possibilities was a driving motivator for liberal feminists, according to Scott (2022). In a similar line, the laws and educational practices that are in place in Liberia are the primary tools that are used to combat sexism and other forms of discrimination that are directed towards women. There are a variety of national, regional, and international human rights treaties that Liberia has

either ratified or accepted. These treaties all contain clauses that aim to reduce the oppression and marginalization of women. A number of anti-discrimination measures aimed specifically at women have been enacted into legislation in Liberia's labor market. For instance, the government of Liberia contributes funding to an educational and training program with the goal of leveling the playing field for the country's younger population in terms of available opportunities. In addition to its own domestic legislation, Liberia has ratified a number of international treaties that strive to promote, defend, and realize human rights. These treaties include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were the four international human rights treaties that Liberia ratified between 1948 and 1993 (Khayyam & Tahir, 2019). In Liberian society, the social standing of women is relatively low. Women are denied the right to choose at all levels of society, despite the fact that they make major contributions to the well-being of their families and communities. The most glaring example of Liberian women's lack of autonomy can be found in the home. There are many different contexts in which women are at a disadvantage. The National Committee for the Eradication of Traditional Practices has compiled a list of problems that have been identified, including discrimination based on gender, insufficient protection of human rights, violence, and limited access to productive resources, education and training, basic health care, and employment opportunities (Dunn & Mirzaie, 2023). Women in Liberia are considered to be citizens of a lower status than men due to historical and cultural factors. Legislation and practices that, historically speaking, have kept males in positions of power in society and women in subordinate roles have been a contributing factor to these problems. This has both uncovered and strengthened existing inequalities in people's work-life balances, benefit-sharing, governmental policies, family structures, and interpersonal connections. According to Dunn & Mirzaie (2023), women make up over half of the population in Liberia and are strongly engaged in the political, economic, cultural, and social life of the country.

CHAPTER IV
Results

4.1. Perspectives on The Place of Women in Politics in Liberia: President Taylor's Policy Towards Women and Girls

It is said that following the conclusion of the civil war in 1996, Taylor ran for president in the following year, 1997. The second version of the Liberian history book that covers the years up to 1847 states this to be the case. The elections were monitored by authorities from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as peacekeepers from the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Taylor won the election with little difficulty and garnered 75% of the vote. The election was deemed to be free and fair by the majority of international observers, but Taylor had a significant advantage going into the race. There was a significant amount of anxiety that if Taylor lost the election, the civil war would continue since he had gained control of the Liberian airways and used them to disseminate propaganda and strengthen his image throughout the fight. If Taylor lost the election, the Liberian airways would be returned to their previous owners. As soon as he was sworn in as President of Liberia, Mr. Taylor made the decision to institute reforms throughout the government's many ministries and agencies. As a direct consequence of the reforms, the Ministry of Gender was influenced by them. A change in the statute (Chapter 10, Section 30) was one of the factors that contributed to the development of Taylor's gender policy (Adongo et al., 2023). Because of this shift, a new ministry called the Ministry of Gender and Formation was established.

Consisting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), shaped the policies that Taylor implemented during his time in office. It is the Ministry of Gender and Development's job to make sure that laws and rules that protect women's rights and promote gender equality are followed. On March 23, 2018, permission was given to start putting the rule into action. After looking at the gender policies put in place by former President Charles Taylor, the study then moves on to look at the Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development for Women's Education, Adjei (2019).

4.2 Ministry of Gender and Development for Women's Education in Liberia

In Liberia, the Ministry of Gender and Development was founded in 2001 with the purpose of acting as a government advising body on issues relating to the improvement of the quality of life for women and children. In light of the challenges that are unique to the education of women and young girls, the Ministry of Education has launched a number of different programs to address these issues. Women found themselves at a disadvantage inside the educational system as a result of the interruptions to educational programs brought on by the civil wars. As a result, young women had few options for employment, which led to many of them being pressured into prostitution and, more frequently, early marriages. Gender-related policies existed while former president Charles Taylor of Liberia was in office, particularly in 2002, but they were not put into practice (Sylla, 2020). There were no incentives for women who started out as teachers to stay in that line of work (Michael, 2020) On the other hand, Ministry of Education failed to provide even a single individual provision that addressed gender policy in adequate detail (Michael, 2020). 70% of female educators suffered as a direct result of their inability to successfully juggle the demands of both their personal and professional lives (Michael, 2020). Henceforth, Liberian women have typically held two different sorts of jobs while continuing to fulfil their obligations in society. They all work at different jobs to support themselves, but they are also expected to perform the obligations that society assigns to women because of their gender. They work to provide for their families while also being expected to carry out what are typically viewed as gender-specific obligations. So, the barriers to women's participation have been an old-age problem in Liberia, even with the presence of gender policies in the book. But today, Liberia is better than it was yesterday in terms of women's participation in the country's decision-making processes. The vast majority of women today have internalized the patriarchal norms of a culture that socializes women into stereotypical roles. Women's leadership trainings that include just one or two sessions on gender awareness may not be enough to counteract most women's extensive exposure to conventional beliefs Dunn & Mirzaie (2023). Women do not constitute a homogenous collective characterized only by their biological sex. The individual's interests may also be influenced by their socio-economic status, racial background, religious affiliation, ethnic identity, as well as other demographic factors such as age and geographical region. This observation may explain the scarcity of unequivocal evidence on women's suffrage across nations.

In addition, there is a higher probability that women who come from wealthy households will be the ones who succeed in entering the political mainstream. People are less prone to question the interests of their social class because of the conventional attitudes of loyalty and appreciation that are shown toward one's family and patrons. These attitudes strengthen the interests of one's social class. When women assume candidature for political office, some individuals and/or their affiliated political parties deliberately refrain from projecting themselves as a perceived threat to the interests of male voters. In order to get a greater number of votes, the individuals in question determine that it would be unwise to be viewed as advocating for gender-related issues or exhibiting a preference for women as their primary constituency. Individuals often tend to choose obligations that are attractive to the broader public, assuming a homogeneity among the public's interests, Mutungi (2022).

To run for office or to be appointed to a position of public service in Liberia, women generally lack the necessary money, political experience, education, and contacts. There is a widespread belief that women ought to remain at home and cook, rather than standing for office or serving on the board of a large corporation. Cultural beliefs that limit women's participation in politics continue to be held by both sexes. These may be seen in things like sexism in presidential nominations and media portrayal of female politicians, as well as efforts to limit women's political participation. Cultural taboos against women being visible and speaking publicly in front of males or questioning them contribute to the fact that many women are hesitant to run for office. Where these taboos are rigidly enforced, males tend to tune out female speakers and political leaders Mutungi, (2022).

4.3. Violence Against Women in Liberia

As part of its effort to stop violence against women, the Liberian government has passed and enforced a number of new laws and rules. According to Hart (2019), on August 18, 2005, the government of Liberia signed a series of agreements with the goal of shielding the country's most defenseless citizens from harm. There has been an increased recognition of the critical nature of addressing human rights violations, particularly in the context of atrocities against women and children. During the American Civil War, a lot more women than men were sexually assaulted or hurt in other ways (Tenu, 2019). The most helpless elements of society's civil freedoms were not adequately protected by the Taylor administration Hart, (2019). Injuries like child

abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault were not being looked into by the Liberian National Police, according to Tenu (2019). Despite the fact that they were created to protect people, they were ineffective at apprehending criminals. The difficulty of holding wrongdoers accountable was one of the many challenges that women had to face (Land & Aronson, 2020). Currently, the system is not operating as intended. The goal of passing these laws and rules was to remove the barriers that keep Liberian women from participating in democracy. These laws served as a barricade against women's marginalization and underrepresentation in the democratic space of Liberia.

Regardless of the aforementioned improvements, women's complete participation in power structures' decision-making is contingent on resolving a number of crucial issues. The question of gender equality and involvement in decision-making and leadership positions remains a significant gap. In a number of African nations, the election of female commanders as heads of state has not led to a rise in female representation in parliament (Tiran et al., 2023).

Liberia has a female president, but only 11% of the members in the lower house were women. In the upper house, that number rose to 13.3%. This shows that there are still gaps that need to be filled, especially since women still face many problems in politics. In spite of the fact that there are currently more women than ever before serving in public office, there has been very little advancement in terms of legislation or money. According to Uwa (Uwa et al., 2018), quotas have not led to an equal representation of men and women in positions of power, despite the fact that they are an essential step toward ending the political marginalization of women.

In the majority of African countries, there is a quota system in place that ensures women will hold a specific amount of governmental positions. However, in many countries, men are in control of moving women around in the government like chess pieces. Before women may fully profit from the rising trends in their political engagement, there are a lot of things that need to be corrected or changed. These things need to be fixed or changed before women can fully participate in politics. Changing patriarchal and religious views, as well as extending programs that enhance women's abilities and confidence, are some of the things that may be done to increase the number of women who hold political office. These things, in conjunction with a halt to political violence against women, are what is required (Uwa et al., 2018).

Unquestionably, significant progress has been achieved toward reaching gender parity in terms of political representation across the continent of Africa. Recent advancements in women's participation are a sign that the societal standing of women in Africa is on the rise, as this indicates that women are gaining ground. Therefore, this is a really fantastic move in the right way, and it's definitely moving in the right direction because increasing the participation of women in government is a tremendous step toward eradicating the fundamental reasons for gender disparity. According to Copeland and Boulianne (2022), when women have positions of political authority, they are better able to advocate their own interests while making decisions that will affect their entire life. Utilizing quotas is a time and labor-saving method that may be used to speedily and effectively increase the number of women who hold public office. In most African republics, including Liberia, women still don't have the same number of seats as men in the upper house of government. In this case, a big task still needs to be done. Despite an increase in the number of African women participating in politics at the grassroots level, there has not been much of a shift in the political institutions of the continent to better meet their needs. Even with quotas in place, there has been only a slight increase in the number of women holding public office, which suggests that further initiatives to address structural challenges are required. It is abundantly evident that it is extremely important to make changes to the patriarchal processes that control politics and decrease the role of women. It is important to acknowledge the steps taken by the Liberian government to remove barriers that prevent women from participating in political life. By elaborating on each of these aspects, the status of Liberian women in relation to the topic at issue can be comprehended in a more thorough manner.

4.4. Economic Opportunities for Women in Liberia

Elebute & Ocheni, (2020) claim that while Charles Taylor was president of Liberia, the initiatives designed to increase the economic prospects open to women and girls were not properly carried out. In comparison to official sectors like government, such as agriculture and traditional market operations, the percentage of working women in informal sectors like farming and traditional market operations was substantially lower. Particularly for employment in the government, this was true (De Almagro, 2022). Opportunities in the economic sphere have been created for women on a variety of different levels. The Local Enterprise Assistance initiative (LEAP), a

microfinance initiative with the express purpose of empowering women, was one of these strategies. The LEAP was viewed as a crucial resource for individuals who had survived the battle by many of its supporters.

Others saw it as a way to finance long-term economic activity because they believed that finding job was a more feasible option than continuing to depend on aid from humanitarian organizations. It was expected that the implementation of these financial mechanisms would result in approximately 82,000 active consumers and loan portfolios totaling $19 million, according to an evaluation that was carried out by the UNCD in the same year. However, just 10% of such clients, or 8,200 people, received any sort of service. Following the end of the Liberian civil war, President Taylor put into place a number of laws and initiatives aimed at resolving the gender inequality problem. The gender imbalance in the economy, in education, and in the efficiency of the battle against violence against women was addressed through well-developed legislation (Makama, 2013). However, because Charles Taylor was convicted of war crimes against humanity in 2005 and given a sentence of fifty years in prison for his crimes against humanity, the majority of his gender policies were never put into practice. These obstacles prevented his ideas from being implemented.

4.5. The President Johnson Sirleaf's stances on women's issues

President Sirleaf won the 2005 presidential election after competing in two previous elections in 1985 and 1997. After winning the election, President Sirleaf became the 24th and first female president of Liberia, as well as the continent's first female president. In 2011, she was re-elected president. She was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 in recognition of the work she has done to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first woman to lead the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the year 2016, marking a watershed moment in the organization's history. Before Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became president of Liberia, there were few opportunities for women working in government to further their careers. Before Ruth Sando Pery of Grand Cape Mount County became Chair of the INGL in the weeks leading up to the 1997 election, there were very few powerful positions held by women in Liberia. Councilor Gloria Musu Scott was born and raised in Maryland County. She was born and raised in the eastern region of Liberia. She held the position of Chief Justice during President Charles G. Taylor's administration. During Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's presidency, the number of

women actively participating in Liberian politics increased significantly. During the year 2009, President Johnson and the government of Liberia collaborated with organizations representing women in both the public and private sectors to draft a National Gender Policy. These organizations included non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil service agencies, faith-based organizations, youth groups, community groups, and corporations. This objective was accomplished during the term of President Taylor. In conjunction with the government of Liberia, a concentrated effort was undertaken to succeed in this endeavor. This statute was directly responsible for the formation of the Ministry for Women, Children, and Social Protection that we have today. De Almagro, (2022) This is a reference.

The goal of President Johnson's initiatives on gender equality and education for women was to increase the proportion of women who could read and write. Women had a very low literacy rate before President Johnson Sirleaf was elected. Women above the age of 15 were unable to read, write, or comprehend even the most basic of statements in their daily lives, which was the reason for this (Cunningham et al, 2023). As a result of President Johnson Sirleaf's election in 2005, the proportion of educated women in Liberia increased from 47% in 2009 to 56% in 2010. This indicates a huge increase above the 47% level from the prior year. The significant increase in literacy rates since President Taylor's administration shows great improvement in the welfare of the nation's female population. The World Bank estimates that the amount of money the Liberian government spends on education has increased; current spending is 12.6% higher than preceding spending, which was 0.7%, in 2010.

A vocational training program that is specifically tailored to the requirements and preferences of young girls in Liberia has also been established by the government of that nation. These young women of Liberia will have the chance to learn skills beyond those that are often associated with women, like sewing and cooking, by taking part in this program (Beckley, 2021). Gaining these abilities led to a 47% increase in the number of work opportunities available to women as well as a 60% increase in their earnings (Makama, 2013). Additionally, the Liberian government launched a variety of programs under the direction of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf that aim to advance the political and economic independence of young women and girls (Neuman, & Powers, 2021). The programs support young girls in Liberia in developing their technical abilities and provide them with training to get over some of the major challenges that hinder adolescent female development in that nation. The Liberian

government developed a three-year pilot initiative in 2009 with the aim of increasing the number of jobs and earnings available to 2,500 young women and teenage girls in Liberia between the ages of 16 and 27 Schulze, (2011).

In the Montserrado and Margibi Counties, 1,077 young women from nine different towns got training in company development, job skills, and life skills. It was advantageous for 84.3% of the registrants when they switched to a system in 2012 that gave self-employment and pay priority (Schulze, 2011). The counties of Montserrado and Margibi gave a combined total of fifty thousand dollars in the form of grants ranging in size from two thousand to five thousand dollars in order to improve the ability to provide programs and services for female empowerment. The purpose of these funds was to help the organizations that received them become more capable. The Joint Program for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment (GEWEE), which has the backing of the United Nations, has helped build more than 2000 firms that operate across international borders Sylla, (2020).

The Association of Women in Cross-Border Commerce was established with the intention of facilitating more access for women to various resources, including banking, savings clubs, education in subjects such as business and finance, mentoring, and possibilities for both professional and personal development. In addition, there are currently 1,400 semi-literate and literate women from 38 markets scattered over six counties (Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba, and Grand Cape Mount) who are participating in the training for business and financial literacy. They hope that by increasing their knowledge of the corporate world, they will be able to improve the choices they make. According to Gallo-Cruz and Remsberg's research (2021), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of the Liberian government is the organization that is putting on the training.

4.6. Protection against gender-based violence: a Liberian case

In Liberia, women constantly face the worst kinds of oppression and hardship, even though the country's law guarantees equal rights for men and women. Liberia could not live up to its promise to protect women's rights without enforcing a treaty it had signed on international human rights legislation. The contract became binding as soon as it was signed because it had been approved by the Liberian government. Cultural and societal standards in Liberian society are primarily to blame for the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence there. Gender-based violence takes

many forms in Liberia, but the most common include sexual assault, domestic abuse, incest, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation. Other kinds include forced marriage and early marriage. Other forms of violence against women include coerced marriages and marriages that take place at an age when the couple is not mature enough to be married. Dube (2022) describe marriage in a number of different ways, including as an arranged union, marriage at a young age, and marriage under duress. A significant portion of the population believes that violence against women increased throughout the conflict and still persists today, especially in periods of comparatively calm. Rape and other types of sexual assault fall under this category since they are among of the most commonly perpetrated crimes in the nation. The Demographic and Health Survey from 2007 provided estimates for the prevalence of gender-based violence across the nation. Women between the ages of 15 and 49 reported suffering 29% physical violence in the previous year, 44% having observed physical violence since they were 15, and 17.6% having witnessed sexual assault Bott et al, (2012). Women between the ages of 25 and 39 experienced higher rates of gender-based violence, with 22% reporting witnessing sexual violence, 32% reporting experiencing it at the hands of their current spouse or partner, 10.2% reporting it at the hands of a current or former lover, and 8.1% reporting it at the hands of law enforcement or the military (Bott et al., 2012).

4.7. The progression of women's rights and recognition throughout history

Women competed in a variety of sewing and needlework events at these fairs for the first time, showcasing their skills and taking home a number of awards. By no means, shape, or form, did this honor represent every single woman in Liberia. The majority of the participants were educated women of freed slave lineage from western civilizations (Gooding-Williams, 2020). There is proof that traditional women may have contributed to national and grassroots initiatives, but were disregarded and excluded due to their illiteracy (Parwez & Patel, 2022). The elite of the Liberian political establishment ignored them. Almost never were women from traditional civilizations given the credit and attention they earned for their talent in traditional arts including singing, dancing, performance, storytelling, costume, and fashion. With time, this started to alter.

In the end, Liberian women—especially traditional women—were granted the right to vote and take part in politics. This was a big step in the right direction for

gender equality in the nation. They were honored for their accomplishments and their involvement in neighborhood politics when Samuel Doe took over the business in 1980 (Gershoni, 2022). The opportunity to organize and make political demands for rights and equality was then granted to women. Women have stated a desire for more opportunities, such as employment prospects, educational options, and financial resources. More women were politically engaged and educated as a direct result of this, which ultimately improved the status of women in Liberia as a whole (Beoku-Betts, 2019) Women from both traditional and non-traditional families began speaking out and requesting their independence around the year 1980. Dr. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the president of Liberia, is an example of a woman with more education who banded together with women with less education to seek participation and recognition in political life. Before making the change, the consumers' requests were considered.

Since 1980, there has been a continual increase in female collaboration as well as a narrowing of the gap between the degrees of political engagement of unconventional women and traditional women (Ahmad et al, 2019). The 1980 coup created the conditions for the emergence of strong female coalitions. The 1989 revolution in Liberia was the fruitful conclusion of numerous alliances, partnerships, and group activities (Akhaze, 2015). Throughout the Liberian civil war, and particularly after the Accra Peace Accord, traditional Liberian women acquired notoriety. As a result, nontraditional Liberian women and the international community began to recognize the crucial role those 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. Pray the Devil Back to Hell (Chitando, 2020), a stunning documentary that came out in 2008, tells the story of the Liberian women who came together throughout the country's bloody civil war to fight the evil warlords. These brave people were successful in negotiating a peace deal for their country's war-torn nation in 2003.

To successfully bring an end to the civil war in Liberia, conventional and nontraditional groups—including Christians and Muslims—collaborated to draw a thin line between the opposing armies (Ouellet, 2013) This happened just as warlords and rebels in Ghana were about to give up on peace negotiations. These Liberian women serve as living examples of how moral courage and nonviolent resistance can succeed even in the face of diplomatic, international mediation, and negotiation failures. They continue to serve as an example for women everywhere.

In order for Liberia's post-war rehabilitation to be effective, it is essential to acknowledge the achievements that women have made to the nation (McMullin, 2022). It is crucial that women are acknowledged for the expertise and skills they bring to the table in both local and national politics. Government and leadership are two professions that might benefit from the knowledge and abilities acquired via a variety of life experiences. Cultural, religious, and political laws that served as an excuse to exclude women from participation were among the barriers that women in Liberia in earlier decades had to overcome in order to be recognized (Bokeriya & Kiamba, 2023). Governments and institutions can help remove these barriers by collaborating to allow more women to hold political office. Conventional and atypical women participate at varying levels, and their experiences and levels of accomplishment are significantly diverse. Consider the meanings of these expressions as well as potential explanations for any discrepancies.

4.8. Liberian women's organization

Women's organizations played a significant role in shaping Liberian history and society. Their presence was unavoidable during the civil wars, and it made a lasting impression on everyone during Ellen Johnson-presidential Sirleaf's campaign, which ultimately resulted in her triumph. Due to this, a discussion concerning these numerous organizations is important. As was mentioned previously, women and children are more vulnerable to harm when hostilities are at their peak (Wojciechowski, 2021). Governments frequently use sexual assault as a strategy during times of war. Women are also still in a dangerous position since they have lost a male family member who was the main breadwinner for the family, generally a son or husband, even after the violent issues have been addressed (Brück & Schindler, 2014).

The Liberian women endured far too many years of passive observation while their sons and husbands perished in the nation's civil wars. They knew that something had to change since they had personally suffered rape, physical violence, and displacement. As a result of realizing that there is power in numbers, the people of Liberia united in an effort to create positive change and peace in their country. Under the leadership of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who was then Liberia's president, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was developed and put into motion (Bokeriya & Kiamba, 2023). Its head, Leymah Gbowee, presided over the group (Adjei, 2019). The

leaders of these organizations believed that Liberian women were capable of bringing about positive cultural change. The Christian Women's Peace Initiative, formed with the intention of eradicating discrimination against women in Christian churches, was led by Leymah Gbowee (Masitoh, 2020). Asatu Bah Kenneth, a police officer with 25 years of service, was working with the Liberian Muslim Women's Organization at the same time to unite and empower Muslim women in the neighborhood. A coalition formed by numerous diverse women's organizations and organizations gave birth to the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace campaign. When it became clear how the war was affecting women of all religions, a number of women from various religious backgrounds came together to promote peace. A group that enhanced the amount of pressure put on the Taylor administration and the rebel factions to establish a peace agreement was founded by more than 300 women from various religions, ethnic backgrounds, ages, and socioeconomic classes. The goal of this group was to promote world peace. They also pushed for inclusion in the ECOWAS peace talks, which resulted in the 2003 comprehensive Peace Agreement (CAP) (Adetula et al, 2021). The civil unrest was ended by this accord, which also attracted attention and support from the international community.

4.9. Barriers Affecting Women in Politics in Liberia

The lack of wealth, political connections, political experience, and educational possibilities among women is one of the main barriers keeping them out of Liberia's political system. Because of this, it is challenging for women to run for office or fill appointed posts in the government. The general public believes that a woman belongs in the family home, notably the kitchen, rather than in government or business boardrooms Odusanya, (2022). Both male and female cultural views are common and make it harder for women to get involved in politics. Women's political rights and ideas are often shown by how women vote, who the president chooses, how the media covers female leaders, and how hard people try to stop women from exercising their political rights and ideas. Also, women's political rights and beliefs tend to show up in how they vote. Concerningly, several efforts have been undertaken throughout the years to restrict the franchise available to women. The fact that women are typically hesitant to run for political office contributes little to dispelling these stereotypes (Wojciechowski, 2021). The widespread acceptance of prejudiced ideas that prevent women from expressing themselves openly around men is a major cause to this

hesitation. These views encourage women to keep their emotions and thoughts to themselves when they are around males. Men pay no attention to women who speak from a podium or participate in political activities when these limits are strictly enforced because they perceive them to be a threat. Both running for office and holding political office require a significant amount of travel, which puts female politicians at a disadvantage and exposes them to potential danger. During the course of their political careers, the families of women who aspire to hold public office can find themselves the object of threats or slander. If a husband is concerned that his wife's political obsessions would lead her to have sexual connections with men who are not members of the family, he may discourage his wife from participating in political activities. In light of this, the issue that arises is, how can we address and overcome the challenges that have been set before women who wish to have a seat at the political table? Passing legislation mandating that women participate in all levels of decision-making is one thing; however, changing the attitudes and mentalities of those who would prohibit women from having that voice is quite another. We must engage men since they account for half of the 6.8 billion people on the planet if we are to be successful in accomplishing our overall goals and objectives. We must exert greater effort (Odusanya, 2022).

It is essential to engage in grassroots activism in addition to attempting to persuade men of the value of granting women access to and space in politics in order to develop future female political leaders. To make sure that women are properly involved in politics, supporters need to do the following: make lists of strong female candidates; encourage women to register to vote and teach them about the voting process; teach female candidates how to run effective campaigns; and develop their leadership skills (Odusanya, 2022).

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

5.1. Summary of the study

In conclusion, this study looks at all the problems women face in Liberia's political system. Since the goal of this thesis is to look into the things that make it hard for women to fully participate in Liberia's democratic process, it is important that the big issues that affect women's political engagement are talked about. The purpose of this dissertation is to find solutions to the issues that have prevented women in Liberia from participating equally in the democratic process taking place in that country. This report highlights and addresses significant challenges that are affecting women's participation in democratic processes in Liberia. These concerns are outlined throughout the report's chapters. Despite concerted efforts to improve representation, women continue to be underrepresented in numerous government and non-profit organizations, particularly in positions of authority and leadership. One example of this may be observed in the Liberian Legislature. It is required by the Constitution that everybody be paid the same amount for the same amount of work, and other laws require the same of their implementation.

For instance, as a direct result of modifications to party rules and election procedures, there has been some headway made toward the goal of electing a greater number of women to public office. The goal of the new rules is to bring a greater proportion of women into legislative positions. Although the Nation Elections Commission requires all political parties to make an effort to field at least 30% female candidates for public office in each election year, this condition was not met in either the presidential election of 2011 or the legislative election of 2017 Not a single one of the twenty-two political groups that ran in the 2017 general election could be seen as legitimate. Nearly eight years have gone since the "Affirmative Action Bill" was first filed into legislation for the purpose of being considered, yet it has not yet been passed.

Those who desire to see more women in positions of authority face a significant number of challenges. According to the findings of this study, the patriarchal system, which grants males the authority to make critical life decisions, restricts the freedom of action of women. Liberian society continues to attribute significant value to women on the basis of long-standing cultural practices and beliefs. The difficulty of breaking away from their cultural norms makes it tough for many Liberian women, thus many

choose instead to adhere to antiquated societal norms out of fear of being shunned by their peers. In spite of the fact that more and more women are getting degrees and finding jobs outside the home, the traditional role of a woman is still that of a caretaker for the family. On the other hand, the guy is the sole legal holder of property, the primary provider for his family, and a free citizen. In addition to this, the woman has difficulty traveling to and from public locations. The widespread custom of confining women's identities to the sphere of the home is one of the factors that makes it difficult for women to enter politics. The approach inhibits women from entering politics because politics by its very nature, forces one into public life (Schneider, 2013). In the vast majority of social and cultural contexts, it is considered inappropriate for women to be politically active. Because of this, it was necessary for women in positions of leadership to strike a balance between the expectations of society and the realities of their roles. This was in fact true the vast majority of the time. Despite having to overcome cultural barriers, there have been some women who have been successful in climbing the ranks to positions of leadership (whether in politics or otherwise).

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is one of the very few people in the history of Liberia to have won the President of her country twice in 2005 and 2011 elections, and she is largely considered as a pioneer for the advancement of women in political leadership roles. Her legacy inspires not only the people of Liberia but also people all around the world by demonstrating to them that females are capable of achieving just as much, if not more, as males in democratic systems. She was already a well-known personality at the World Bank and the United Nations before she ascended to the presidency of Liberia. Her rise to power in Liberia began in 2003. To the people of Liberia, it is now plainly evident just how significant a role this great African revolutionary is playing on the continent of Africa. She presided over the nations of the Mano River Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and a variety of other regional and global organizations during the twelve years that she was in office. She served as co-chair of the UN High Level Panel in 2013 that was charged with creating the sustainable Development Goals (Stevens, 2015).

Jowel Howard-Taylor, the current Vice President of the country and the wife of the country's former President Charles G. Taylor, has served in the Senate for a total of 12 years as the representative for Bong County. During that time, she has held the position of Senator. Finally, in addition to Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, another Liberian woman named Leymah Gbowee was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. They have

achieved a great deal of success with this. Therefore, increasing the number of women who hold public office has the potential to strengthen legislative and policy agendas, inspire voters' trust in the political system, and boost women's sense that they are empowered. However, this can also lead to more general advances in how society and culture perceive the potential of women when there are women in positions of authority. It is possible for cultural notions to be altered by the election of self-assured and capable women to public office, which, in turn, can contribute to the reduction or eradication of discrimination and stereotyping based on gender. It is to the advantage of society as a whole that more and more women are becoming active in political parties and assuming elected posts. It has been shown that putting more women in government leadership roles is good for society, the economy, and the quality of public discourse about issues that affect women. It is possible to get these benefits by increasing the number of women in political leadership roles.

It is possible that increasing the number of women who hold elected or appointed political positions will increase public trust in the government and legitimacy of the political system. Both sexes agree, as was stated before, that a more democratic type of government emerges when there are more women working in political institutions. 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 (Esteve-Volart & Bague, 2012).

Issues that disproportionately impact women will receive the attention they deserve once there are sufficient numbers of women in positions of power. When women's voices are included in legislative discussions, a larger variety of perspectives, experiences, interests, and areas of expertise are brought to the table. This is a hypothesis that is being supported by an increasing body of research. This is especially important to keep in mind when attempting to solve challenging challenges. These favorable results can be improved upon by electing a greater number of women who come from a diverse range of backgrounds and political parties. As a result, the viewpoints of women can be incorporated into conversations about public policy. Promoting gender equality is seen as desirable on both a moral and a practical level by a rising number of international actors, who are coming to a growing consensus on the issue. This is a significant advance. According to the findings of some pieces of research, a more balanced representation of women in political office might be beneficial to the economy.

For instance, according to the World Bank, fostering gender equality is an example of "smart economics" because it has been shown to increase productivity per worker by between 3% and 25% in a variety of countries. This expansion can be attributed to the growing number of women who are participating in the work sector. It has been established without a reasonable doubt that women's organizations were crucial in the growth of Liberian society as well as Liberian culture (Artner & Yin, 2023). They were impossible to avoid during the civil wars, and during Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's victorious campaign for the presidency, they left an indelible impact on everyone. The sheer number of them makes it absolutely necessary for us to have this conversation about them. Women and children, as was mentioned earlier, are particularly vulnerable when there is a lot of tension in the environment. It is not unheard of for parties on opposing sides of a conflict to turn to rape as a method of mediating their disagreements. Long after conflicts have come to an end, women who have lost a male family member who was the principal provider for the family — generally a husband or a son — remain susceptible to exploitation, even if that male family member was the primary breadwinner. The Liberian women stood by and did nothing as their sons and husbands were slaughtered in the civil battles raging throughout their country for far too long. They had been subjected to rape, physical violence, and forced relocation when they came to the realization that they needed to take action in order to make a change. The people of Liberia came to the realization that there is power in numbers, and as a result, they banded together to bring about constructive reforms and ensure peace in their country. After conventional diplomatic avenues were unsuccessful in bringing peace to Liberia, a group of female activists decided to take matters into their own hands and try to bring about change.

A concerted effort has been made, in accordance with the democratic ideal of equitable representation at all levels of government, to raise the percentage of women holding positions of authority. In a great number of countries, this is seen as a fundamental human right. This is the case due to the fact that the norms of democratic fairness are adhered to by such a representation. Affirmative action, the quota system (in which a set number of positions are assigned to women), and presidential nominations are the main strategies that have been applied to date to address the gender disparities that exist among the various organizations that make up the private and public sectors (Balafoutas et al, 2016, p. 87-98). These are the strategies that have been applied to date to address the gender disparities that exist among the various organizations that

make up the private and public sectors are affirmative action, the quota system (in which a set number of positions are assigned to women), and presidential nominations (Krook & Norris, 2023). To this day, these are the strategies that are utilized the most frequently in an effort to rectify the massive gender inequities that affect both the public and commercial sectors. The only way to apply for these positions is through a competitive process, and there is no indication that this will ever change until gender equality has been fully restored. The next step is for anyone who are interested to submit applications for the available vacancies. However, due to the numerous barriers that women confront while they are out in public, it does not appear that this objective will be reached any time in the near future. If Liberian women are given equal rights and opportunities, the country's future will be bright. As a result of the evidence that has been presented in this article, the topic of "investigating barriers to women's participation in democracy in Liberia" has been established as a valid research direction, and women in Liberia can anticipate having a bigger voice in the formulation of public policy (Mvukiyehe & Samii, 2017).

5.2. Recommendations

As a result of this research into the obstacles and circumstances that prevent women in Liberia from participating in the political system, I would like to provide the following suggestions to increase women's engagement in the political system:

1.   The government and political parties should make it a priority to provide financial support to women who are standing for elected positions, considering the costs associated with elections. The government of Liberia can achieve this policy by having a structure for revenue-generating plans. Liberia has lots of avenues to generate domestic revenue.

2.   Another thing that is necessary is a change in women's attitudes generally, and this can be done through education. The government of Canada must craft an educational policy that encourages women to enroll from primary school to university. In order to empower women and provide them with the capability and confidence to hold leadership roles without having to wait for those positions to be awarded to them, more work needs to be done in this area. It is critical that Liberian women have a sense of their own worth and dignity. On the other side, some issues require a systemic approach to be solved. Young girls' socialization and ideas about gender roles are two of these issues.

3.   During the post-election phase, establish and implement gender action plans to support successful female candidates and to guarantee that women have access to the resources necessary to be effective politicians;

These recommendations ought to act as a foundation for women who wish to become elected officials as well as candidates, so that they can accomplish their objectives. By putting these suggestions into practice, a large group of people would gain confidence, which would enable them to overcome traditional patriarchy and view women as trustworthy decision-makers and leaders. It is essential to successfully connect with the media in order to promote the positive qualities of women and how women's participation in society is critical for the creation of a society that works for all citizens, not only as a matter of basic human rights.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Turnitin Similarity Report

FEMINIST THEORY

ORIGINALITY REPORT

15%	14%	9%	13%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Leiden University Student Paper	<1%
2	en.wikipedia.org Internet Source	<1%
3	dokumen.pub Internet Source	<1%
4	Submitted to University of Salford Student Paper	<1%
5	Submitted to King's College Student Paper	<1%
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7	research-api.cbs.dk Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to Charles Darwin University Student Paper	<1%
9	Submitted to Aegean College Student Paper	<1%

Appendix B

Ethics Committee Approval

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

14.09.2023

Dear Rachelle T. Faeflen

Your project **"Investigating Barriers To Women Participation In Democracy In Liberia"** 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