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Regime Gender Policies and Women's Political Participation in Post Conflict Liberia

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Patriarchy has dominated political powers in many areas of the world. Until 2006, men

overwhelmingly held the highest political positions in Liberia. Female political

participation started to emerge in 2006 when women began to hold top political

positions. The main purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between the

gender policies of the administrations of Liberian Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen

Johnson Sirleaf and the political participation of women in Liberian politics, measured by

the holding of political offices. The research question guiding this study examined the

impact of the gender policies of the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

administrations on the political participation of women. The study also attempted to

understand the historical transition of Liberian women from their prewar patriarchal

suppression to their role in peace building after the war. The theories that framed this

study were that of democratic governance and African feminist theory. The study used a

qualitative approach designed to examine historical secondary data. Findings show that

there were more women in the Johnson Sirleaf government than that of the Taylor

administration. This phenomenon was caused by gender legislation that enabled women

to seek political power. Gender policies such as the ones enacted during the Charles

Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations are necessary to include more women

in positions of power and authority, thus, leading to positive social changes in education,

economy, and the protection of women from violence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background of the Study

Men dominate nearly all political systems in Europe, Asia, North America, South America, and Africa. However, since 2006, there has been an emergence of female leadership in many parts of the world. In Pakistan, for example, Bhutto became the prime minister in 1988; in Chile, Michelle Bachelet became president in 2006; in Germany, Angela Merkel, chancellor in 2005; and for the first time in the political history of Liberia, a woman, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was elected president.

In Liberia specifically, although the patriarchal system is still prevalent, women now occupy various significant political positions. Women were active contesting for legislative seats in the Senate and House of Representatives, holding public offices, serving as peacemakers in the civil wars, and exercising their voting rights (Frykholm, 2011). The urge for peace and stability has motivated many women to be actively involved as activists and politicians (Frykholm, 2011). This idea is vividly exemplified by Nobel Peace Prize winner LeymahGbowee, a peace activist (Frykholm, 2011).

Increased political stability in Liberia has allowed women to participate in its democratization. This political stability, in turn, has given more women opportunities to take part in the electoral process actively, take part in the electoral process and other political activities actively. These various forms of political participation have also allowed women to have more political voice and power in electing candidates who represent them.

Liberian women experienced sexual assault, political deprivation, alienation, and disrespect during the first (1989-1997) and second (1999-2003) Liberian civil wars Ellis

(1999) discussed women's perception of the first civil war from two different angles: an evil and an opportunity. In the first angle, women endured hardships and atrocities, physical and psychological: They were raped, tortured, and killed. In the second angle, they started to show more interest in their communities to empower themselves to have more voice as participatory citizens in seeking political power as peacemakers and legislators (Ellis, 1999).

Though the Liberian women were active in political participation before the civil war, the level and degree of organization and enthusiasm differed from the two civil wars in Liberia. The main difference was in the creation of various women's organizations, such as Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Manor River's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), and the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL; Greenberg, 2009). These organizations made unprecedented impacts on the socio and political aspects of Liberia (Bekoe&Parajon, 2007). They became active in searching for peace and demanding respect for human rights.

My goal with this research study was to increase the understanding of the historical transition women have gone through from active participation in the search for peace to political empowerment. The research can provide insight into the evolution of women's movements and the implementation of gender policies that could help find solutions to the problems women face in Liberia. Specifically, I conducted a comparative analysis between the Taylor and the Johnson Sirleaf administrations about gender policies to examine the progress made in the political participation of women in Liberia.

Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society (ACS) to voluntarily allow for the migration of the free slaves who had faced racial discrimination in the United

States (Julia, 2012). The motivation of the abolitionists and their good faith to bring the

free slaves to Liberia led to the establishment of a new nation in 1847 (Julia,

2012.) Liberia was one of two nations in Africa that was not colonized like the rest of the

African nations. The native Liberians were hostile to the new settlers as they were not

included as signatories of the ACS project (Julia, 2012), and their rights were not respected

in the constitution (Iloba, 2009). Native Liberians were subjugated into a class system by

the Americo-Liberians supported by the United States (Olukoju, 2006).

Conflicts between the settlers and the native Liberians continued to occur due to

the competition to control trade routes and the imposition of customs on overseas trade

and the slave trade, leading to an irreconcilable clash of interests (Gerdes, 2013). On the

one hand, the settlers wanted to have a nation in which they could collect taxes and have

international recognition. On the other hand, the native Liberians were fighting for their

lands and independence even though the native Liberians sympathized with the settlers as

their brothers and sisters who were liberated from slavery in the Americas (Gerdes, 2013).

The settlers, called the Americo-Liberians, constituted about 5% of the Liberian

population. Liberia became independent in 1847. Since the Americo-Liberians had

modern weapons, such as guns and canons, they overpowered the indigenous inhabitants

(Boyle, 2012). Hatred and class stratification fueled the hostility between the settlers and

the native Liberians. Skin pigmentation divided Liberia's population, namely White,

light-skinned, and dark-skinned (Kieh, 2009). All groups competed for trade, and clashes

over trade suppression were frequent (Gerdes, 2013). Liberian society was divided into

three major socioeconomic categories the upper stratum colonial agents who were White

and educated professional individuals), the middle segment of merchants and junior

managers who were light-skinned repatriates and the children of White slave owners enslaved mother; and the lowest category, which consisted of dark-skinned repatriates, the Congos or the recaptives; and the indigenes who were free laborers and indentured servants (Kieh, 2015).

The Americo-Liberians dominated almost all sectors of the society, from education to the judicial system. They created an oligarchy of one political party system, the True Whig Party (TWP), which dominated the entire political scene of the nation until 1980. The system of government was a replica of the racist and segregationist system in the United States that discriminated against African Americans. All decisions were carried out by Whites, leaving the nation in a segregationist state in which African-Americans did not have input on laws affecting the entire nation (Kieh, 2015). Although the country embraced the principles of democracy, this was not implemented in practice. The Liberian constitution (1847) was drafted by Simon Greenleaf, an American born lawyer (Kieh, 2006), who produced a document strikingly similar to the American constitution and applied it to the Liberian society. However, the Liberians did not grasp the central concepts of democracy and could not apply it in Liberia. Since President William Tubman's administration (1944-1971), after women gained the right to suffrage, women have participated in politics in various ways, including voting, and holding various political positions in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. This trend continued under the succeeding administrations, including presidents Tolbert, Doe, Taylor, and Johnson Sirleaf. The focus of this study is on the impact of gender policies on the political participation of women in Liberia, using the occupancy of political offices as the significant primary variable. It was interesting to see the number and types of political

positions women held during the Taylor regime and, now, under the Johnson Sirleaf Johnson. Since women gained suffrage in Liberia in 1947, they participated in Liberian politics in various significant ways and have held various major political positions. For example, during the Tubman administration, women served as chief of staff, senators, a member of the House of Representatives, and a junior cabinet member (Kieh, 2006). During the Tolbert administration, Angie Brooks served as Liberia's ambassador to the United Nations, and subsequently as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia. During the Doe regime, women served as members of the cabinet. During the first Liberian civil war (1989-1997), Ruth Perry served as chair of the Council of State, the equivalent of President of Liberia. Another way in which women have participated in Liberian politics was in the role of peacemakers. During the second Liberian civil war (1999-2003), women played an active role in ending the conflict. For example, the Women of Liberia for Mass Action helped mediate the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the war in 2003.

Female participation in Liberian politics, especially during the post-conflict era, occurred against the background of the United Nations (UN) and the African Union, which emphasized the concept of the protection of the rights of women (Kieh, 2006). In the case of the UN, the resolution called for the measure that ensures the protection of and respect for the human rights of women and girls (Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000). The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa emphasized the concept that women "have the right to participate in

promoting and maintenance of peace" (Resolution 1325 of the Security Council, 2000, p.123)

Women have been an important part of Liberian politics Legislation passed during the Taylor and the Johnson Sirleaf administrations generated such participation. However, there is less research regarding the evolution of women's movements and the implementation of gender policies. It is hypothesized that the participation of women in positions of power mitigated against the prevalence of the abusive conditions that women historically faced in Liberia. In this study, a comparative analysis was conducted between the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleafadministrations about gender policies to explore the progress made in the political participation of women in Liberia.

Problem Statement

In a patriarchal and tribal society, such as in Liberia, the participation of women in the democratic process is limited (Julia, 2009). Although Liberia achieved independence in 1847, the indigenous populations of the country only started voting in the 1950s (Herber, 2014).In 1996, following the Liberian Civil War, women finally began to participate in the country's political process in a more meaningful way (Herber, 2014). This increased political participation was spurred, in part, by women in Liberia having faced several difficulties during the civil war that started in 1989 and ended in 2003 (Herber, 2014). Women and children were used as laborers as well as providers of sexual services to the combatants. Like other conflicts in other nations such as the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda, women were victims of wars in many ways. They lost their husbands and their children. In some situations, they joined rebel factions for survival. In

doing so, they sought to get food to survive and exercised their political rights to vote.

At the same time that Liberian women were victims of the war, they also led movements that brought peace and stability. The WIPNET and WANEP put more pressure on the warring factions to sign a peace agreement in 2003 (McCarthy, 2001). In 2005, Johnson Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia. The women organizations were concerned about the needless killings and destruction that the conflict brought to Liberian society (McCarthy, 2001). As a result, the experience of activism in the organizations that helped in the peacemaking process, women became more active in exercising their constitutional rights, in electing their president, in taking part in legislation that will benefit them, as well as working in NGOs to bring awareness about the atrocities of the war.

Several scholars, such as Bekoe and Parajon (2007) and Massaquoi (2007), have presented historical facts about the roles women played in the reconstruction of Liberia and how they used certain mechanisms to contribute peace and to advocate for change in Liberia. According to BeKoe and Parajon, women in Liberia planned to have meetings between Charles Taylor and the rebel leaders to achieve peace. Such meetings led to real peace talks between Taylor, the rebel leader, and the other rebel groups. Approaches presented by William (2007), Massaquoi (2007), Boserup (1970), Muyoyeti (19991) in terms of welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, and empowerment have contributed to the idea of the inclusiveness of women in the social, political, and economic aspects of the Liberian society. The main gap in the literature resides in the paucity of material on the participation of women in Liberian politics. One of the major under-researched areas is women's occupancy of various political positions. As discussed, women have held

various positions, including serving as senators, representatives, judges, cabinet ministers, and the heads of various autonomous agencies and public corporations.

I attempted to address this gap with my study by focusing on the impact of the gender policies of the Taylor and the Johnson Sirleaf regimes on the holding of political positions by Liberian women. I examined the relationship between the gender policies of the two regimes and the occupancy of various political positions by women in the three branches of the Liberian government. In addition, the study also analyzed the factors that shaped the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf administrations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf regimes and the participation of women in Liberian politics, measured by the holding of political offices. Research based on the role of women in peacebuilding in Liberia is crucial because it can reveal how Liberia experienced a new trend in the sociological aspects after the civil war. Furthering understanding on this topic might also demonstrate a dimension of alternative to the long history of patriarchal domination in politics and the suppression of women.

Historically, women were not active in political leadership positions in Liberia. However, after the civil war, women have been very active in advocating their rights. According to Adebayo (2002), policies implemented during the revised Abuja Accord (1989) or Abuja II (1996) in Nigeria were successful because they led to positive outcomes that contributed to the disarmament of the various warring factions. The main concept of Abuja II was to disarm the fighters (Adebayo, 2002). Disarmament was facilitated after the

provision of the major logistics by the United States and Holland. Adeleke (1999) emphasized the importance of politics and diplomacy of peacekeeping in West Africa.

Women organized themselves to contribute to the peacebuilding in Liberia. There were two female movements that collaborated to force the various warring factions to sign an agreement to end the conflict (McCarthy, 2001). These female organizations consisted of Muslims and Christians (McCarthy, 2001). Women have been victims in society but, at the same time, led movements that brought peace and stability to the nation. The WIPNET and WANEP played pivotal roles in applying more pressure on the warring factions to sign a peace agreement (McCarthy, 2001). These female organizations, along with other grass-root organizations, were extremely instrumental in their securing peace and encouraging women's political participation in Liberia.

The Accra Comprehensive Agreement of 2003 can be attributed with the mass organization and participation of women in finding a solution to the civil conflict in Liberia. Before the election, female-led organizations, such as WIPNET, began to motivate thousands of women to register (Institute of Democracy in South Africa [IDSA], 2012). They also collaborated on efforts to encourage other women to seek office. These collaborated efforts led to the election of the first female president in 2005 (IDSA, 2012). My study is critical because it identifies the levels of involvement of women in the postwar Liberia and presents the different activities women were involved in to elevate themselves to power (Meinjes et al., 2001).

Research Question

This study is guided by the following research question: What was the impact of the gender policies of the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations on the political participation of women in Liberian politics? Specifically, this study focused on the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity legislation enacted during the two regimes.

Conceptual Framework

The theories that guided this study include the liberal feminist and democratic governance theories, specifically those of Mafejee (2002) and Cheema (2005), because both helped clarify some of the intentions of female activism and its implications Liberian society. I explored the literature on the theories of gender and feminism to understand how women's movements have been active in promoting gender policies that would help ensure that women participate meaningfully in society. The focus was on how feminist development, liberal feminist, radical feminists, and Marxist feminist theories can explain the struggles of the women's movements in Liberia and around the world (Mannathoko, 1991). Comparisons between and among these various theories were highlighted.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative research approach for my study in order to answer the research question. Given the nature of the topic and the research problem, the use of the qualitative method was the best approach because it enabled the exploration of the issues

and enabled further understanding of the research topic. This research method was needed because it provided the defining aspects based on the contextual analysis of various data.

The nature and dynamics of the gender policies of the two administrations were examined qualitatively to determine their impact on the number and types of political positions women occupied. Specifically, the case study approach allowed me to explore women's occupancy of political positions in Liberia and their participation in the country's politics. Further, the focus was on the positions women occupied in the administrations of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Definition of Terms

African Union (AU): The African Union was created to help promote regional integration in Africa in various spheres, including cultural, economic, political, scientific, and social (Eke, 1999)

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): A regional organization that was created in 1975 to promote economic cooperation and to minimize conflicts in West Africa (Adebajo, 2002).

Gender Policy: According to the United Nations, gender policy is to "establish a clear vision and make commitments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment to influence policies, procedures, and practices which will accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non-discrimination, and fundamental human rights in Africa."

Political Participation: According to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), political participation means that everyone can participate in their country's government. (Adebajo, 2002).

United Nations (UN): The UN was created in 1945 after WWII to maintain peace and stability.

Assumptions

This research assumes that the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf regimes have led to an increase in women's political participation in Liberia as measured by the number and types of political offices women have occupied. In other words, it is assumed that the two regimes created an enabling environment that led to increased women's participation in politics in Liberia. Hence, I examined whether the assumption is correct. This was done by examining the two regimes' gender policies and the number and types of political positions.

Scope and Delimitation

I delimited the scope of this proposed study to two administrations, and so the results might not be replicable to other political and social eras of Liberia or other regions outside of the region being studied. The study is further delimited by the fact that the sources of data all are secondary; I did not conduct any interviews or observations of participants.

Limitations

The study has several limitations, including focusing only on one dimension of women's participation in politics in Liberia. The reason is that data on the other dimensions, such as voting, are not available. Another limitation is that interviews were not conducted with some of the women who have occupied political positions in the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regimes. The key reason was the lack of

resources to conduct field research in Liberia. However, since the intent of this study was to examine the written evidence of women's political participation, secondary material was sufficient, and interviews were not deemed necessary.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it has the potential to contribute to knowledge building and social change. For example, by helping to fill the gap on women's political participation in Liberia, the study will contribute to the development of the scholarly literature. Also, the study's findings will contribute to the refinement of existing gender policies and the formulation and implementation of new ones that would help address the vexing problem of patriarchy. In so doing, the study will contribute to positive social change.

Summary

This chapter laid the foundation of the main arguments of the research that attempts to address the question of the empowerment of women in the Liberian society within the context of the patriarchal system during and after the country's two civil wars. The Taylor and the Johnson Sirleaf administrations focused on studying to determine the relationships between the two governments regarding gender policies. Chapter 1 also introduced the main elements of the research, including the background, the problem and purpose statements, and the research question. Also, the chapter outlined the nature of the study as a mixed method approach to explore and examine the impact of the gender policies of the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regimes on women's participation in Liberian politics. The specific focus was on the number and types of political positions women have and continue to hold.

Chapter 2 focused on the various studies that have been conducted on women's political participation in general, in Africa, and specifically in Liberia. The main purpose of the chapter is to locate the study within the context of scholarly literature. Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology. Specifically, this included the discussion of the research tradition, the rationale for selecting it, the data collection and data analysis methods, as well as the ethical issues that are associated with conducting the research. In short, this chapter served as the roadmap for conducting the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The visibility and political power of women in the Liberian government increased sharply from 1960 to 2002 (Mariette, 2002). Women rose to prominent government positions such as ministers, ambassadors, superintendents, directors, judges, and even president. In the case of Liberia, women have played pivotal roles in leadership positions in politics, voting, and peace advocacy, as well as agents of change in society (Bekoe&Parajon, 2007).

During the administrations of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, women played active roles in the peace process of Liberia. In 1996, Charles Taylor became the first democratically elected president after the end of the civil war. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in 2005 and again in 2011. The women in Liberia mobilized society through the coordinated efforts of different women's organizations advocating for peace or playing their political roles to empower themselves and demand social justice. Such activity laid the groundwork for the election of the first female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. This chapter outlines the literature describing how women have been active and have empowered themselves to occupy important roles in Liberia.

In a patriarchal and tribal society, such as in Liberia, the participation of women in the democratic process is limited. (Julia, 2006) Most women were left out of the governments of the previous regimes because they were not given equal political power as men. There were no institutional avenues through which political participation could occur for women (Adebajo,2002). In addition to this situation, the political instability of Liberiamade, it very difficult for women to actively take part in the political process to

occupy various political leadership positions (Adebajo,2002). Women in Liberia have faced several difficulties during the civil war that started in 1989 and ended in 2003. Women and children were victims of human trafficking for labor purposes and sex trafficking providing services to combatants (Herber,2014). Several scholars have presented how women have played a role in the reconstruction of Liberia and how they used certain mechanisms to contribute to peace in Liberia. For example, according to BeKoe and Parajon (2007), women in Liberia arranged a peace accord between Taylor and the rebel leaders to achieve peace (Bekoe&Parajon,2007). Such a meeting led to real peace talks between Taylor and Kromah, the two rebel leaders (Bekoe&Parajon,2007).

Literature Search Strategy

I consulted several materials in writing this study. Most of the materials came from online databases and books found at the libraries at Walden University, the College of New York, the College of Staten Island, and Indiana State University as well as at the New York Public library and the St. George Library. My search terms included *women*, *Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*, *Charles Taylor*, *administration*, and *gender policies*.

Theoretical Foundation

Theories of Gender in African Context

Several theories exist regarding the perspectives of women on war and conflict resolution in relation to men. The main theories are feminist development theories, liberal feminist, radical feminist, and Marxist feminist theories. These theories, to some extent, explained the role of men in society and helped create rationales why men are considered as the aggressor, and the women are the victims(Mnnathoko, 1991). The reason for using the term 'victims' is that the feminists tend to believe that the relation between men and

women is unjust and discriminatory in nature (Mnnathoko, 1991). Some feminists critique male-dominated institutions as being very oppressive (Mnnathoko, 1991). They assert that capitalist patriarchal society undermines the roles of women through the means of production. But some African scholars, such as Nzegwu (2001) and Oyemumi (1997), argued that the concept of patriarchy is viewed differently by Africans and Europeans and that Europeans should not use the European definition of patriarchy to define feminism in Africa, especially when production and reproduction roles are involved.

The feminists also criticize the international division of labor and how it negatively affects women (Rathgeber, 1990). These main criticisms explain the reasons why development affects women differently from men. They can be summarized in three theoretical models: Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD; Rathgeber, 1990).

The WID framework was supported by liberal feminists, who believe in integrating women in development planning ((Rathgeber, 1990). WID proponents believe that exclusion and marginalization of women have negative impacts (Rathgeber, 1990). Instead, the integration of women into development programs has more positive aspects (Mnnathoko, 1991). The liberal feminists asserted that theories of modernization could be corrected when women are not subordinated and not deprived of political, social, and economic conditions in order for a real development to take place(Mnnathoko, 1991). According to Connelly et al. (2000) and Mannthoko(1991), modernization (or westernization) strengthens egalitarian societies and can lead to women liberations and can allow more women to participate in social and economic activities which may benefit the poor.

The feminists believed that WID contributed to women's issues in three fundamental ways: focusing on women as an analytical issue creating special organizations to address women's issues, and finally, designing policies that will solve problems related to women (Chant, 2005). Some of these problems are raising children, breastfeeding, the education of females, and the eradication of stereotypes about women in the society (Chant, 2005). Though the initiatives of WID were positive, the organization was accused of false prediction, namely that women-oriented policies would enhance women's efficiency, which would improve economic development (IDRC, 2000). WID was also accused of not paying attention to the significant roles of race and class play in the lives of women (IDRC, 2000).

Radical Feminists

Radical feminists were influenced by the political and intellectual thoughts that emerged during the 1970s in Latin America, where the concept of dependency was perceived as an influential doctrine (Rothgeber, 1990). The WAD emerged as a way to correct the weakness of WID.WAD developers accused WID of allowing women to be integrated into the patriarchal system as subordinates in society (Parpart,1989; Rothgeber, 1990). But the focus of WAD is to create special programs for women (Parpart,1989; Rothgeber, 1990). WAD was mainly dominated by radical feminists in the West. These feminists challenged the structure of power of the society, which is a male-dominated one based on the subordination of women (Mannathoko,1991). These feminists attacked male institutions for being enemies to women, and they believed that the sexual aspects of women are personal and political (Mannathoko,1991). WAD was accused of not seeing

women as a homogenous class because women had differences in class and race (Connelly et al., 2000).

Marxist Feminists

Marxist feminists adopted their beliefs from the Marxist thought, which believed that women are deprived of the possession of the means of production (Connelly, 2000; Gundoz-Husgor, 2001). According to Marxist advocates, women reproduce the labor force, but men produce commodities in exchange for wages (Connelly, 2000; GundozHusgor, 2001). This group of feminists argued that because women are forced to rely on the "man of the house" (Connelly, 2000; Gundoz-Husgor, 2001,p.54) to survive, they are marginalized, which led to the emergence of patriarchal society (Connelly, 2000; Gundoz-Husgor, 2001). This group of feminists also argued that women are exploited twice. On the one hand, they are exploited when they do their natural domestic work as wives and mothers raising children and taking care of their husbands (Connelly, 2000; Gundoz-Husgor, 2001).

On the other hand, they are marginalized when they work outside the house in the job market as a reserve army for cheap labor. They work twice for less pay (Connelly, 2000; Gundoz-Husgor, 2001). The main argument of Marxist feminists is that capitalism constantly searches for cheap labor, and it manipulates women to make them subservient either in the house or outside the house (Taplin, 1989; Tiano, 1987).

Under this line of thinking, women are also subjugated by the international labor division in which they are sent to work for low wages in the agricultural sectors in the third world nations, while the highly skilled worker and high wages jobs are performed by

men in developed nations through the transnational corporations (TNC) (Taplin, 1989; Tiano, 1987). This system makes women more subservient to men and creates conditions for exploitation (Taplin, 1989; Tiano, 1987). Women, according to the Marxist feminists, are exploited in low wage jobs with little or no prospect of social mobility in the workforce.

Conceptual Framework

Social scientists recognize the word *gender* to include both men and women, but often the word is used to refer only to women (Moran, 2009). Some theorists of male violence believe that gender can be seen differently on the African continent.New forms of masculinity and femininity could establish a new relationship between the conflict of gender and democratization during and after the war. Ake (2000), for example, questioned the indigenous African system of governance as being authoritarian, autocratic, and patrimonial.

Literature Review

In 1989, the Liberian civil war caused death and the destruction of the infrastructure of Liberia (Boyle, 2012). Women were socially, psychologically, politically, and economically affected. During this time, the ECOWAS Seized Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was created to maintain peace and stability in Liberia (Adebajo,2002). During this situation, women managed to advocate for peace and demanding gender equality and political participation (Adebajo, 2002).

Historical Aspects of Political Participation of Women in Liberia

Understanding the historical chronology of the political participation of women in Liberian politics is crucial to discuss the emergence of women in political roles. Until

1946, Liberian women constituted three major categories: the settlers, who possessed

property; the poor settlers, who could not vote because they did not have property; and the

indigenous, who were deprived of owning property and excluded from voting until the

1950s (UN Women Liberia,2011, p.3). The indigenous women did not have any voice and

were excluded from any political participation. They were combatants, servants, and

sex slaves (Boyle, 2012).

Although Liberian indigenous women were known as being exploited by the

oppressed regimes in Liberia, they contributed tremendously to the peace treaty in

Liberia. Due to their efforts, a peace treaty was finally signed in Accra in 2003 (Boyle,

2012). Liberian women's activism can be traced back to the era of the most famous

Liberian woman, Suakoko, who was born around the 1880s (Boyle, 2012). She was the

first female paramount chief and contributed to ending the conflicts between the settlers

and the indigenous people (Boyle, 2012). She was the Zoe (priest) in the Sande tribe

(Boyle, 2012). Several other female activists or leaders among the Americo-Liberians

such as Brown Sherman, the first female president of any African university. Female

senators and legislators such as E. Collins and C. Collins existed alongside women like

LeymahGbowdee, the founder of the Liberian Women's Institute, and Angie Brooks, who

was the second woman and first African female president of the United Nations General

Assembly (Moran &Pitcher, 2004; Sandy, 2011). According to BeKoe and Parajon

(2007), it was the women in Liberia who arranged meetings between Charles

Taylor and the rebel leaders to achieve peace (Bekoe&Parajon, 2007).

Though women have played active roles in Liberia, they have encountered several

obstacles due to their gender. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is the first female president

of Liberia and Africa, in general. Before her, Sando Pery became chair of the Council of State to oversee the transition from war to peace in 1997 (Massaquoi, 2007). Women played significant roles in claiming their places in the world in different ways through perseverance and commitment. They broke barriers in higher institutions and gained respect and recognition in international organizations.

Empowerment of Women

According to William (2007), there are several approaches to the empowerment of women, including welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, empowerment, and rightbased approaches. The welfare approach emphasizes that rearing a child is the most important issue where men and women are involved. This approach relies on programs that are intended to assist women to meet her maternal, child health, and family nutritional needs (Massaquoi, 2007). The welfare approach intends to explain the basic approach that could interpret the foundation of the family to which women belong. The emphasis is placed on the idea of rearing children under the control of the mother. As a result, women bear most of the burden in society, which leads to the widening gap between men and women (Mannathoko, 1991). Within the Liberian context, women became, to some extent, victims because of such social responsibility because often, they are killed while having their children or in the attempt to protect their children.

The next approach is called the Equity approach, as emphasized by Boserup (1970). This approach shows how women were marginalized by underestimating women's economic activity, especially concerning women's unpaid work at home and paid work in the new economic sector. As a result, Boserup recommended the equity approach as a remedy to improve women's productivity. Some feminists criticized this approach for not

helping to end the marginalization of women since it focused only on decreasing income inequality (Mannathoko,1991). Finally, the top-down element in this approach was criticized for not empowering women to bring change to their lives.

The anti-poverty approach emphasized a correlation between women and poverty (Muyoyeti, 1991). Based on a study conducted in the 1970s, there were more poor female-headed households who found it very difficult to take care of the fundamental needs of families. (Muyoyeti, 1991). The World Bank contributed to popularizing this approach by using the slogan "economic growth to poverty reduction" (Mannathoko, 1991). This approach is closely related to the theories of WAD, which advocated that women have been an important element in society in playing a significant role as economic actors in development processes.

The efficiency approach was used when the Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) failed to address the economic problems of many third world nations. SAPs intended to decrease the expenditures of the government and to increase the power of the market. Nevertheless, this policy proved to be a fiasco since government expenditure did not reduce, and the power of the market did not rise. The World Bank and the IMF thought that such a policy could boost the economies of the underdeveloped nations and that women would benefit from economic prosperity. On the contrary, this policy made women the first to be seriously affected (Elson, 1992; Moser,1989). Governments used the efficiency approach to address the issues created by the SAPs. Women, children, the aged, and the disabled endured many hardships (Connelly et al.,2000). Services such as education, health care, and employment 1were cut, leaving women in a vulnerable

situation.

The empowerment approach was introduced by the economist Amartya Sen, who recognized that because about 70% of the world population that live in poverty are women, policies need to be made to have equality for women so that they can have access to political and economic opportunities to improve their lives (Connely et al., 2000). According to Sen (as cited by Connely et al., 2000), because 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women, major changes such as the affirmative action needed to be implemented to empower them. This new concept was promoted by the World Bank as it used the pro-poor growth strategies during the 1990s to address issues faced by women (Connely et al.,2000). The World Development Report (WDR) acknowledged the need to solve the institutional nature of women's subordination, which could be associated with kinship systems, community norms, legal systems, and public provision. The WDR proposed strategies to stop the subordination of women by establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men through reforming institutions; implementing a rights-based approach to development and growth to reduce gender disparity, especially in political voice.

A rights-based approach is a comprehensive approach that provides an understanding of how women began to acquire their rights within the framework of global institutions in various international conferences and summits worldwide. The UN Commission on the Status of Women in 1947 stipulated its intention to "eliminate all discrimination against women in statutory law, legal maxims or rules" (UN ESOC, 1947, p. 153). In 1952, the Commission drafted the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and in 1957, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (Galey,

1979). After the Women's Year Conference in Mexico City in July 1975, participants came to a unanimous agreement to call for women's full and equal participation in policy and decision making and public life. During the conference in Copenhagen in 1980, there was the implementation of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Ratification was made in 1999 by 165 nations to include principles of equality in national constitutions to establish legal protection of women's rights, and abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that represent discrimination against women(CEDAW, 1999).

During the Beijing Platform For Action, about 189 nations considered women's rights as human rights. In 2001, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, expressing concerns about women and children affected by armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons who are constantly the target of combatants and armed elements(UNESCO, 2009). The rights-based approach has motivated several international institutions to design legislatures that will protect the rights of women in different environments. For instance, the OECD Development Assistance Committee, the UNHCR, and the ILO have contributed in making policies and guidelines to safeguard the rights of women in different situations (Hill,1986).

Scholars have explained gender in terms of two main theories: essentialism and constructionism. These two theories have dominated the study of gender for many years and have been analyzed differently by several scholars to know the causes of conflicts and their relations to gender. According to Skjelsback (1997:24), essentialism is a concept that some objects do not change no matter how they are described and defined. They are

timeless and cannot mutate. For example, women will remain women no matter how you define them.

On the other hand, constructionism believes that things are defined because of society and the environment. In other words, women can be defined according to what society believes about them (Burr,1951; Gergen,1994). Nevertheless, this concept was not accepted by several African scholars who introduced an alternative concept.

A concept specific to the involvement of women in the peace process of Liberia and the policies of ECOWAS in resolving the civil conflict in Liberia is *democratic governance*. This concept has been developed by African scholars as an alternative to the concept of "good governance," which was promoted by the World Bank because of the mismanagement of resources by the African leaders (Mafeje, 2002). According to Morris (2016), "Democratic governance is a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity are involved in the decision making about its affairs. It is a system in which representatives are elected to parliament or a law-making body" (p 16).

Within the domain of public administration, the concept of democratic governance in a civil society is a process that includes certain important components consisting of accountability and transparency, decentralization, fair and legitimate elections, checks and balances, protection of the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups, justice, the use of technology in the promotion of citizen access and participation in the development process and strengthening the partnership of various types to achieve objectives. The lack of democratic governance in many African countries, especially in Southern African nations, can be attributed to low levels of institutionalization because of rigid and

fragmented state institutions (Huntington, 1968). On the other hand, Chabal and Daloz (1999) attributed political economy disorder and lack of institutionalization to the post-modernist institutional-functional paradigm.

In general, democratic governance is a helpful concept that the women's movement in Liberia has advocated since the civil war. The role of civil society in the political system of Liberia has been very difficult. Two prominent civil service organizations were instrumental in the transformation of the political and administrative system of Liberia. The origin of the first civil society of Liberia traced to Albert Port (1906-1986), a school teacher who distributed pamphlets accusing the Americo-Liberian oligarchy and the True Whig Party regime for unconstitutional possession of power in Liberia. In 1975, the most transformational civil societies—Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) were created. University professors and students established these movements at the University of Liberia. In 1979, the leaders of these movements had an enormous impact on the political change of Liberia, as the famous Rice Riot led to change and an end to the dynasty of the AmericoLiberian power structure (Morris, 2016).

The women's movements in Liberia were supported by ECOWAS in promoting the concept of democratic governance. There is a link between the people and governance in terms of political participation and the process of equality among citizens in any opportunity and equity(Mafeje,2002). According to Cheema (2005), democratic governance is a system whereby citizens will be able to have a society in which regulations are implemented, human rights, laws, policies, and social structure in pursuit of justice, welfare, and environmental protections are respected. Many women took the initiative for

the first time to engage in the political aspects of Liberia (Cheema, 2005). Based on the statistics of the Liberian election of 2005, women actively took part in the election, which led to the election of the first female president of Liberia (Cheema, 2005).

Comparison with Other Research

The peacekeeping activities in Liberia were not only carried out by the regional peace organizations, such as ECOWAS, ECOMOG, and the NGO of the UN, UNMIL. Women'sorganizations also contributed to peacebuilding. Several women's organizations were very active in coordinating efforts to bring peace to Liberia. The famous women groups were the Liberian Women Initiative (LWI), The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), Women in Peace Network (WIPNET), West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), and Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS). These women organizations had fought for inclusion in the peace process (Bekoe& Parajon, 2007).

Women's Political Participation in General

Women constitute over 50% of the world's population. However, the representation of women in government, especially in parliament, whether in the Lower House or Upper House in Africa, is very small. Because they are underrepresented, their interests and their well-being have not been given serious consideration in many societies. Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been an increase in the numbers of women political leaders, from presidents to members in the cabinet. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female president in Liberia, followed by Joyce Banda in

Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza in the Central African Republic (African Development Bank, 2015). However, the pace of improvement in representation is slow in many nations. There are several reasons why there is an increase in women's political participation. These include the emergence of multiple parties and the demise of military regimes, the growing power of international women's movement, a shift of donor strategies, and the rise of frequent use of communication such as the internet and cell phones(Aili, 2003).

There are notable examples of the rise of the political participation of women across the world.

Women's Political Participation in the United States

Since the early establishment of America, women have been active in advocating for their rights under the patriarchal systems that prevailed not only in America but in the rest of the world. Religious communities in some states had a subservient view of women. As a result, women had to fight against those beliefs that categorized them as unequal to men. However, with time, women demanded their political and constitutional rights to vote. The famous women leaders who initiated this brave movement were Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Werner, 2008). Thanks to their efforts and the bravery of other women, the Seneca Falls Convention was held, setting the tone for the emancipation of women.

During the 21st century, there has been an increase in the political participation of women thanks to education and the spread of information technology. Several women competed for different political positions such as president, Senator, House of

Representative, Mayor, Governor and, City Council. In 1972, Shirley Chisholm was the first American woman to seek a major party nomination for president. In 2008, Hillary Clinton ran for the nomination to the presidency of the United States and lost the nomination to Senator Barack Obama. After the victory of Barack Obama, she was appointed Secretary of State. Clinton ran for President of the United States in 2016, and although she won the popular vote, she did not win the electoral college, which determined the election.

Women'sPolitical Participation in India

India is a country that does not have an impressive record of women's political participation. Since its independence 63 years ago, women have not been seen as active in the political arena. The percentage of women in the lower house parliament is around 10.8% lower than the other several nations (Cole, 2011). Though a bill was passed to increase women's participation to one-third of the seats in the national and state legislative assemblies, the bill has yet to be approved by the lower house, and at least 15 of India's 28 states a law.

Women's Political Participation in Japan

Japan is a nation deeply rooted in the patriarchal system, and women's political participation and the percentage of women in parliament is low (Funabashi, 2004). After 2003, the number of congresswomen in the House of Representative declined from 38 to 34. There has been a large decrease in the number of congresswomen candidates in the past 17 years (Funabashi, 2004). When women started to fight for comprehensive suffrage, the political participation of women began to increase in the 1990s, especially in the local assemblies. In 2003, after a nationwide local election, Japanese women got

4,804 votes, their largest ever. However, Japanese women realized that the political participation of women did not empower women, but the men instead. Though Japan is westernized and modernized on the surface, it is a nation that strongly believes in traditions based on male-dominated systems.

Women's Political Participation in Malaysia

Though many Asian nations have made significant improvements in the political representation of women in government, some, such as Malaysia, have made little progress in that area. Malaysia is a highly patriarchal society, and even though women have managed to make some efforts to gain major positions, their success has not been very impressive due to the nature of the political situation. The percentage of women's political representation in the House of Commons is 9.1% (20 of 219 members) and 25.7% of the Senate (18 of 70 members).

Women's Political Participation in Canada

The political participation of women in Canadian politics is not different from the rest of the world regarding the degree of struggles women have had to face to gain their rights. Women's representation in political office at the municipal level is roughly 21.7%. This has made Canada hold the 49th place behind Rwanda. There have been many barriers to women's political participation in Canada, including systemic discrimination, gender stereotypes, organizational culture, and marginalization.

Women's Political Participation in South Korea

South Korean women have been struggling to empower themselves through voting on legislation. The estimated percentage of votes of Korean women is around 3 to

4%. The main obstacles that South Koreans face include prejudice against women in participating in the decision-making process. The prevalent idea is that the women's place is to stay at home and to obey their parents and husband (Kirk, 2000). Part of the problem or bias comes from the teachings of Confucianism, which emphasizes that men are superior to women and that men are head of the state and the household. Though women make up over 46% of the workforce, they seldom reach executive positions or serve on the board of directors (Kirk, 2000).

Women's Political Participation in Indonesia

The women's political representation in Indonesia is very low as compared to some neighboring nations. Historically, women did not play a major role in parliament. Most of the members of parliament were men. Due to the strong patriarchal system in the Indonesian political system, women could not increase their representation, and to date, women had not passed 13% in the Indonesian national parliament (Waring, 2010). In 1999, only 45 women were elected out of 500 members. Even with the quota system, the number of women candidates did not increase (Waring, 2010). Though a proposal was made to increase the representation of women candidates to 30%, there was no guarantee that they would obtain that number. Even in recent years, especially in the election of 2005, the percentage of women representation was only 11.3% (Waring, 2010).

Women's Political Movement in the Ivory Coast

The women's movement in the Ivory Coast has been very active in the peace process. One of the most historical moments in the history of the Ivory Coast was when women stood up in February 2003, to demonstrate in front of the French and American

embassies demanding an end to the civil war (Badmus, 2009). Some of the famous

women's organizations were the Movement of Democratic Women (MIFED) and the

Federation of Women's Organization in Cote d'Ivoire (FOFCI) (Badmus, 2009).

Women's Political Participation in Lebanon

Lebanon is in the Middle East. It was colonized by the French, and for years after

its independence, the Maronite Christians held power in ruling the nation and benefiting

from the business opportunities for many (Cleveland, 2004; Khalid, 1979). Also, since the

civil war, women's organizations in Lebanon have been active in fighting for the rights of

women. Several female organizations were active in advocating for the rights of women

during the war. The most common women organizations were the Lebanese

Women's Council and the Renaissance Women's Gathering (Ward, 2009).

In Lebanon before and during the war, women suffered in many ways. They were

raped, exploited, used as spies, as well as oppressed by all means. They did not have

effective representation to protect their interests. Being that Lebanon is a patriarchal

society where men dominate all aspects, women have been oppressed by the different

political regimes.

Nevertheless, women in Lebanon have been organizing themselves as a

movement since colonial times under both the Ottoman Empire and the French rules. The

main Lebanese women organization was the Lebanese Women's Council. Since 1979, the

organization stopped the civil war and sent a 10-woman delegation to present a request to

the prime minister-designate Rashid Karame (Whetstone, 2013). The main demands of

the Lebanese Women's Council were to condemn violence as an acceptable form of political action, to end fighting so that peace could prevail (Whetstone, 2013). Though the actions of the women's movements did not directly lead to the end of the war, they were very significant in showing the contribution of women to achieve peace in Lebanon.

Women's Political Participation in Kenya

The women's movement has been very active in Kenya. There have been several obstacles that women have encountered while trying to occupy political positions, which were traditionally claimed to be reserved for men (Wagadu, 2008). The obstacles of media, socialization of the female child, and discrimination and stereotyping have slowed the women's movement in Kenya (Wagadu, 2008).

Women's Political Participation in South Africa

South African women have made progress in activism since the 1990s. According to Mikell (1997), "contemporary African women sometimes think of themselves as walking a political/gender tightrope" (p.51). Indeed, the women's movement in South African fought hard and gained a 30% quota as representation in parliament and the political and decision-making structure (Moutlana, 2009). Women in high institutions or corporations find themselves trying to adapt to the cultures and values of the establishment. They become afraid of making mistakes simply because they are black women (Moutlana, 2009).

Women's Political Movement in Uganda

Women in Uganda have also been victimized during times of war. They were exploited as sex slaves and domestic laborers and tortured in humiliating manners

(Coackburn, 2004). Some took part in the war by defending and protecting themselves against gang rape and death. Not only did they act as combatants, but they were also used as spies against the enemies (Coackburn, 2004). The women formed organizations to have the opportunity to negotiate for peace with the different warring factions (Coackburn, 2004).In Northern Uganda, women voiced their opposition to the severe destruction that the fighting caused the nation (Coackburn, 2004). In collaboration with the Gulu District Women's Development Committee, they stood with one voice to condemn the war. The women's movement representative, Bigombe, initiated talks between the IRA and the government in 1993 to sign a peace agreement (Coackburn, 2004). Her delegation even met with Joseph Kony, the rebel leader who has been notoriously known for recruiting children for his rebellious movement in 1994 (Veney, 2006). The main purpose of the meeting was to advocate for peace.

Summary

Chapter 2 explained the historical narrations of how women became politically involved in the Liberian society from 1960 to 2002. It outlined how women have been active and have empowered themselves to occupy significant positions in the Liberian society. The chapters also presented several views of different scholars that explain the evolution of women based on various theories such as democratic governance and gender theories, which include feminist development, liberal feminist, radical feminist, and Marxist feminist theories.

This research will contribute to a complete understanding of the role of women in political participation in Liberia. Chapter 2 provided an overview of the study's

conceptual framework and a comparison of gender policies and female leadership over the past 50 years.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

The role of ECOWAS has been vital in creating a favorable environment suitable for women to claim their political powers actively. Women have been struggling to claim their rights in Liberia since its establishment in 1847. The administrations of Presidents Taylor and the Johnson Sirleaf made progress in the realm of rights for women and showed which administration made more significant progress in gender policies, such as Affirmative Action, equality, and legislation.

The role of women in political participation in Liberia addresses, among other things, the basis of equal citizenship, particularly in a patriarchal society in which men dominate the political sphere. Despite male dominance, women have participated in Liberian politics in various major ways, including the holding of major political positions in the government, voting, and serving as peacemakers in the country's two civil wars in 1989-1997 and 1999-2003. This study focused on women's roles as political leaders, presidents, senators, representatives, judges, cabinet ministers, among others, as a measure of their political participation.

Despite Liberia's patriarchal system, various regimes since the post-World War II era have formulated and pursued gender policies to appoint women to various political positions as a critical element. However, in this study, the focus was on the Taylor and Johnson Sirleaf regimes. Notably, the gender policies enacted in these two regimes, and their resulting impact on women holding major political positions.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of the study's methodological approach.

The first part provides the background to the research. Second, I map out the research design and its rationale. Specifically, this will include the restatement of the research question, the identification of the research tradition, and the rationale for choosing it, as well as the role of the researcher. Third, the methodology will be discussed, including participant selection logic, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the key issues.

Research Design and Rationale

This research was intended to discover the impacts of the gender policies of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations on the lives of women in terms of political empowerment in Liberia. I chose the qualitative research design to illustrate how women have held some high political positions by comparing how many women in both administrations have occupied top governmental positions. Qualitative research is appropriate in this study because it is characterized by its aims to understand some aspects of social life (Patton, 2002). The methodology used in qualitative research relies in general on words rather than on numbers to show a better analysis (Patton, 2002).

According to Yin (2014), there are five main rationales why a single case study design is used in research. They are critical, unusual, common, revelatory, and longitudinal reasons. The critical case as a single case study means it is critical to the researcher's theory. In this design, researchers specify a clear set of circumstances within which the prepositions are believed to be true. This design is intended to determine whether the propositions presented are correct or whether other alternatives give different explanations relevant to the theory (Yin, 2014).

The second rationale is an unusual case, which means it contains an unusual aspect that deviates from the theoretical norms. Such design is normally found in clinical psychology, where the findings may lead to discovering new insights about normal processes, but which may be connected to a large number of people with issues beyond those suffering from the original syndrome (Yin, 2012). The third rationale for a single case is the common case. In this design, the main objective is to understand what occurs in the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation (Patton & Cochran, 2002). For example, studying a street scene consisting of vendors could lead a researcher to the benefits of innovative ways in solving problems (Yin, 2012). A fourth rationale is a revelatory case. This design exists when a researcher seizes the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon inaccessible to social science inquiry (Yin, 2012). In this case, the author will seek the trust of those who are involved in such activities in order to study their lifestyles for a considerable period (Bourgois, 2003). The fifth rationale for a single-case study is the longitudinal case. Researchers use this when attempting to study the same single case at two or more different points in time. The purpose of such a study is to see or to observe how certain conditions and their underlying processes change over time (Yin, 2014).

The single case study deals with a single case, analogous to a single experiment (Gross, Berstein&Ciacquinta, 1971). The main purpose of qualitative research, according to Yin (2009), is to find out *how* and *why* (p. 2) of a phenomenon. The main goal of my study was to understand better whether gender policies in the administrations of Taylor and Sirleaf increased or decreased the empowerment of women in allowing them to

improve their status in Liberia. I used secondary sources as the data sources in my analysis.

According to Valerie (2011), qualitative research is holistic in the sense that it tries to understand the entire picture of the social context under study. Many qualitative researchers view research as a participatory, dialogic, transformative approach to research (Valerie, 2011). The essence of qualitative research, in my case, is to explain the legal factors that led to the empowerment of women in the Liberian society. I relied on secondary sources to analyze the affirmative policies enacted during the two regimes.

I sought to answer the following research question: What are the impacts of the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf administration on the participation of women in Liberian politics? The question enabled me to explore how two administrations (Charles Taylor regime, 1997-2003, and the Johnson Sirleaf administration, 2006-present) contributed to the active participation of women in Liberian politics, as reflected in their occupying of various significant political positions such as president, senators, representatives, judges, and cabinet ministers.

Methodology

Data Collection

I collected data from archival and internet sources, including reports of the Liberian government and various international organizations such as the UN, AU, and ECOWAS. Moreover, local Liberian newspaper sources also were used. The data from the Liberia collection at the Indiana University library contained information about women in both the Taylor and Sirleaf administrations. I explored factors leading to the political

participation of women in the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations by reading through the documents-making brief notes in the margin when relevant information was found. Furthermore, I went through the notes made in the margins and then categorized each item to describe its context. I then read through and found themes. I then compared the various major and minor categories. I repeated these steps with every single document that I analyzed.

When I completed the above for every document, I collected all of the categories and themes and examined each in detail and considered its relevance to the question, and I reviewed the above to make sure that the information was categorized correctly. Finally, I reviewed again and combined categories. Everything was reviewed to make sure everything was categorized. I described the women in political participation each year. Then, I identified the AA and EEO policies enacted each year that were observed.

While conducting this research, I also relied on data from the UN, the AU, ECOWAS, Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD), the archives of the World Bank, women's organizations such WIPNET and MARWOPNET, as well as on the archive of the Liberia Collection at the Indiana University. The data collected from the archive and internet sources concentrated on the participation of women in Liberian politics. These data were used to see whether women have politically progressed.

Data Analysis

For analyzing the data, I used document analysis to analyze the gender-related legislation of presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The gender legislations were put into three categories or themes to be able to know which administration had a better and effective gender policy.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the leading individual involved in the operation of the research and serves as the research instrument (Maxwell, 2005, p. 79); I relied on secondary data that were available in different sources such as the local newspapers, archives of the Liberia collection at Indiana University, archives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as historical documents about the political activism of women at the Ministry of gender. As the primary researcher of this dissertation, I followed the five suggestions proposed by Yin (2009). As one of the contemporary researchers of social science, Yin asserted that when conducting a qualitative case study, the researcher should take into consideration five major points: "ask good questions, be a good listener, be adaptive and flexible, have a firm grasp of the issues being studied and be unbiased by preconceived notions" (Yin, 2009, p. 66). However, since no interviews were conducted for this study, the major points related to interviews had to be transformed into reading documents and forming opinions based on an open mind and knowledge bases.

There are several categories of documents I consulted, including newspapers, affirmative action and EEO policies (legislation and regulations) enacted during both regimes, and pertinent official correspondence transmitted during the two regimes related to AA and EEO. Some of the local newspapers that I consulted include *The Daily Observer*, *The Informer*, *The Liberian Times*, *New Democrat*, the *New Era*, *The Inquirer Newspaper,* and the *New Republic*.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (as cited by Rajendran, 2001), a qualitative researcher must "objectively study the subject states of their subjects" (p. 3). Valian (n.d.)

mentioned that "every one of us brings a lifetime of experience and cultural history that shapes the review process" (p. 1). Professional and personal bias may arise due to experience. To avoid such an issue, the researcher should make sure there is no relation between him and her with the participants. The researcher is advised to follow the five characteristics mentioned by Yin (2009) to avoid biases, especially if they attempt to use a case study to support a preconceived position. However, as mentioned previously, because there were no interviews conducted in this study, the comments by Yin regarding listening did not apply strictly. I did not have any affiliation with the Liberian collection at Indiana University. I also did not have any personal conflict of interest with the Liberian political system.

As an observer, my responsibility was to examine the impact of the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf regimes on women's political participation in Liberia, as reflected in women holding various significant political positions. I did not attempt to manipulate the data that were available about the statistics of women holding higher political positions and what were the different circumstances that led to the political participation of women in Liberia. The statistics were not manipulated or misused for hidden agendas in an adverse manner.

The ethical aspects of the research included being objective to make sure I relied on the statistical factors or charts that are available about the numbers of women that held or hold political and leadership positions in both the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations. I relied on the historical facts in archives and internet sources. There was no conflict of interest because this could jeopardize the entire research. I did not research

on behalf of a company I work for. Also, I did not disguise myself to gain access to important research sites. I was clear by introducing myself and mentioned the purpose for which the research was conducted (Nachmias&Nachmias, 1996).

Reliability and Validity

In this study, the main sources of the content analysis came from local newspapers such as *Daily Observer* and *The Informer*, the Jimmy Carter Foundation, and the Indiana University Liberian Collection. I used a comparative analysis of data about women in higher political positions in both Taylor and Sirleaf administrations to see which government had effective gender policies that promoted the empowerment of women. Because I did not conduct interviews, the study is limited to include only secondary data.

Within the context of female political participation in leadership positions in Liberia, the data about the different women in government positions must be accurate and based on facts. In order to validate their authenticities, a triangulation process was used. The triangulation process included checking one document's content against another to ensure that both documents centered on the same facts. This can be done to minimize the level of specificity or dependence on certain kinds of methods, which could restrict the limit of validity (Frankfort &Nachmias, 2008).

Validity

Validity refers to when researchers measure something several times and get the same result or outcome. On the contrary, reliability is when measurements give very consistent results.To ensure validity, I consulted with a specialist on gender issues and data at the Ministry of Gender in Liberia regarding the authentic information about the political

participation of women in Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations. A consent form indicating the purpose of the research was submitted to the Liberian collection at Indiana University. There was no manipulation of the data. The main questions related to the causes of the political participation of women were viewed from different perspectives.

Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness has many aspects. Dependability, credibility, and transferability have been used to describe various aspects of trustworthiness. According to Polit and Hunler (1999), credibility deals with how data and processes of analysis address the intended focus. It is a way to judge the similarities within and differences between categories. Transferability refers to which extent findings can be transferred to other settings or groups. The concept of dependability is, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), to see to which degree data change over time, and can lead to different findings. When there is inconsistency in results because of time duration or difference in time when the data was collected, the research team needs to address the issue in an open dialogue. Since transferability deals with the transfer of findings to another setting, the reader has the choice to transfer findings to another context. In terms of interpretation, there is no one single correct meaning of research findings. It can only be based on interpretation from a specific perspective.

The concept of confirmability is to ensure that bias could be avoided by acknowledging one's predispositions. It is also very important to admit favoring one method over another, especially when the other method or approach could explain the

weaknesses of the other approach (Patton, 1990). I relied on empirical, primary evidence in the form of legislative actions about the gender policies that impacted women's occupation of major political positions in Liberia to establish trustworthiness. I compared and analyzed various secondary sources, noting similarities in the content of the sources.

I double-checked my findings with an expert to establish a logical explanation. There were no traditional participants because I did not conduct interviews, so I did not need to conduct member checking.

Ethical Procedures

The data that were collected from several sources, such as from the Liberian collection at Indiana University, were scrutinized in such a way that the information was based on facts. The data on women's political positions were used professionally to suit the research purpose. I did not change the objective of the research. There were no interviews; rather, charts and tables were developed from the data collected about the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf regimes and their impact on women's occupation of major political positions. Because a letter of consent was requested from the Liberian collection at Indiana University, indicating that data collected were treated according to an academic protocol, I had to respect the promise. Under no circumstances were the data of the female political officials to be misused. I saved the data I collected in a special place, and a back-up document was kept in case of an emergency.

Summary

This study used the qualitative case study approach, giving a precise and specific examination about the different mechanisms of theories on gender. Data were based on

sources that described how women started advocating for their rights (Adebajo, 2012). Data were analyzed professionally to understand further the rise of women in occupying different governmental leadership positions. Serious consideration was given to the statistics of the periods between 1997 and 2015 in order to examine the increase or the decrease of political participation of women in occupying governmental positions.

Chapter 3 addressed the methodology that was used to conduct the research. For example, it addressed the research design tradition, which is a qualitative method. In terms of the data, the study used secondary sources. Further, the chapter articulated the data analysis plan and addressed the issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures. The chapter also addressed the issues of trustworthiness and validity. It focused on the ethical aspects of collecting data about women occupying leadership positions. The data might offer a possible explanation of women's political positions in a society dominated by a patriarchal system.

Chapter 4: Results of the Research

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the gender policies of the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regimes and the participation of women in Liberian politics, as measured by the holding of political offices. The research question was, *What was the impact of the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf administrations on the participation of women in Liberian politics?* Specifically, I focused on the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity legislation enacted during the two regimes.

Though women have faced different hurdles in Liberian politics, they have played significant roles in various sectors in Liberian society. For example, Liberian women have occupied various political positions such as governor, minister, ambassador, representative, senator, superintendent, and board of directors in different administrations.

In this chapter, I summarize the results from my comparative study of the administrations of Taylor and Johnson to determine which administration was more effective in the empowerment of women in Liberia. The results include the number of women in different political positions under both the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administrations and the findings of my analysis of legislation that was enacted passed to empower women under both administrations. Table 1 displays the number of women in higher government positions in both administrations of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. It shows that the Johnson Sirleaf administration included more women compared to that of Taylor's.

Table 1

Female Positions within Administrations of Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Position	Taylor Number	Johnson Sirleaf Number	Difference
President	0	1	1
Vice President	0	0	0
Speaker of the House of Representatives	0	0	0
Chief Justice	2	0	2
President ProTempore of the Senate	0	0	0
Senators	0	1	1
Representatives	0	3	3
Associate Justices	0	2	2
Cabinet Ministers	8	17	9
County Superintendents	1	2	1
Agencies	1	13	12
Total	12	39	225%

Gender policies during the two administrations in Liberia were very different. Former presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had different perspectives on the concept of empowerment of women. Symbolizing the degree of seriousness and efforts the governments made to empower women are evident in the various political roles of women and legislation that was passed to improve the conditions of women.

After coding the data, three major themes emerged that distinguish the two administrations: education, employment, and protection of women.

The Gender Policies of Taylor

The gender polices of Taylor were created by an amendment to legislation in Section 30, Chapter 10, which created The Ministry of Gender and Development. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related documents such as the UN's 1979 Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], and the Convention on the Rights of the Child inspired Taylor's policies. The Ministry of Gender and Development deals with policies that protect the interests of women. Those policies were approved on March 23, 2018.

Education

The Ministry of Gender and Development, created in 2001, was intended to advise the government about issues related to the advancement of women and the development of children in Liberia. The Ministry designed programs to address the educational affairs of women, especially young girls. The educational status of women was inadequate because of the disruption of educational programs that had taken place during the civil wars. Employment opportunities for many young girls were lacking, forcing them into early marriage, and frequently into prostitution. The Taylor administration was not stable, and women did not have real or consistent protection from the government. Taylor was accused of rape and sexual abuse by the International Tribunal. During Taylor's administration, especially in 2002, although there were policies about gender, they lacked implementation (*International Journal of Educational Development*, 2002). Women who became teachers were not given incentives to continue

with such occupation (Julia, 2006). The Ministry of Education did not make any tangible provision to provide for gender policies (Julia, 2006). As a result, women teachers suffered because they found it problematic to meet the demands of work and home affairs (Julia, 2006).Women have been having two kinds of works while performing their duties in the Liberian society. On the one hand, they work to earn their daily bread in their different careers; on the other simultaneously, they had to perform what was considered by society as their gender-related responsibilities.

Violence Against Women

During the civil conflict, women, especially younger girls, between the ages of 15 and 20, were subjected to violence (Julia,2006). The Liberian government designed policies to deal with violence against women. On August 18, 2018, the Liberian government signed several treaties to protect vulnerable segments of the society (Julia, 2006). More emphasis was put on the significance of addressing human rights violations, especially when dealing with atrocities against women and children. Sexual violence against girls was very prevalent during the civil war (Unicef, 2005). The Taylor administration was not effective in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable in society (Julia, 2006). The Liberian National Police was not handling cases such as domestic abuse, child abuse, and sexual assault (Julia, 2006) (citation). Instead of providing protection, they failed to bring cases to justice (Julia, 2006).Women faced many problems, especially in terms of bringing culprits to justice. The system of not working.

Economics

During the administration of Taylor, policies that were designed to create economic opportunities for women and girls were not implemented well

(Affisco&Soliman, 2006). The percentage of women in the workforce, especially in government jobs, was low as compared to that of the unaccounted jobs such as farming and traditional market activities (Julia, 2006). Different mechanisms were designed to provide economic opportunities to women. One of those mechanisms was the Local Enterprise Assistance Program (LEAP), which was intended to empower women through microfinancing. Many advocates believed that the LEAP was an essential tool for people who survived the war. Others saw it as a way to provide financial support for long term economic activity as employment was a more viable option to continued humanitarian handouts ((Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection,2009).

According to a UNCD assessment conducted in 2004, such financial mechanisms were estimated to create a potential market of about 82,000 active clients with loan portfolios of $19 million, but only 10% or 8,200 clients were served(Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection,2009).

The gender policies of Taylor were all enacted to solve gender issues in Liberia after the civil war. The policies were well designed in such a way to deal with the disparity in gender in terms of education, economy, and effectiveness in dealing with violence against women. However, Charles Taylor was found guilty of war crimes against humanity and sentenced to 50 years of imprisonment in 2005, and as a result, most of his gender policies were not implemented.

The Gender Policies of President Johnson Sirleaf

After the Taylor administration, President Johnson developed the National Gender Policy in 2009 in collaboration with the Liberian Government, women's NGOs and civil

service groups, religious organizations, youth, and community-based entities, as well as private institutions (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2009).

This act stipulated the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2009).

Education

The educational gender policies of President Johnson consisted of increasing the female literacy rate. Before the election of President Johnson Sirleaf, the literacy of females was very low because females ages 15 and older could neither read, nor write or understand a simple statement in their daily life. After President Johnson Sirleaf won in 2005, the female literacy rate increased from 47% in 2009 to 56% in 2010. The literacy increase shows excellent improvement for the wellbeing of the female population as compared to President Taylor's administration. According to the World Bank, the Liberian government has spent more money on education; the current expenditure is 12.6% compared to the past, which was 0.7% (World Bank, 2010).

Additionally, a vocational program has been designed by the government to benefit the Liberian adolescent girl, as she will be able to learn skills that will go beyond the conventional female like sewing and cooking (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2009). These skills contributed to increased employment opportunities for girls by 47% and wages by 60%, respectively (MoGD, 2015).

Economy

During the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administration, the government created programs to empower adolescent girls and young women. The programs enhance the

technical abilities of young girls and provide training to address some of the significant

barriers to the development of adolescent girls in Liberia.

The government started a 3-year pilot in 2009 to increase employment and

incomes among 2,500 Liberian adolescent girls and young women between the ages of

16-27.Nine communities in Montserrado and Margibi Counties provided training to 1,077

young girls in business development, job, and life skills. As a result, they transitioned into

a wage-oriented and self-employment system in 2012, which benefited 84.3% of the

enrollees. Montserrado and Margibi counties provided grants totaling $50,000, given in

small sizes ranging from $2,000.00 to $5,000.00, to solidify capacities to deliver female

empowerment programs and services.

The UN-supported Joint Program for Gender Equality and Women's Economic

Empowerment (GEWEE) was successful in organizing more than 2,000 cross-border

traders. The Association of Women in Cross Border Trade was created with access to

new credit opportunities, savings associations, business, and financial literacy skills

training, organizational development, leadership training, and mentorship. Moreover,

1,400 semi-literate and literate women from 38 markets across six counties (Montserrado,

Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, and Grand Cape Mount) are currently taking part in

the business and financial literacy training to increase their knowledge and to improve

their understanding of business (MoMG, 2016).

Protection Against Gender-Based Violence

Even though the Liberian Constitution stipulates that women and men are equal,

women are the most discriminated against and deprived of society. To protect the rights

of women, Liberia had to implement an international human rights legislation treaty, which the government has signed. The most common factors of gender-based violence within Liberian society are cultural and traditional constructions that allowed it to continue. Sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, incest, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation are the most prevalent types of gender-based violence in Liberia. Many people believe that violence against women became common during the conflict, and it continues during peace. Rape and other sexual offenses are considered as one of the common crimes reported nationwide.

Based on the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey, estimations for gender-based violence in the nation are as follows. For women aged between 15 and 49, 44% have witnessed physical violence since they were 15 years old, 29% reported physical violence in the past 12 months, and 17.6% sexual violence in their lifetime. For women between ages 25 and 39, gender-based violence rates increased to 22% who witnessed sexual violence, 32% reported gender-based violence done by a current husband or partner, 10.2% from a current or former boyfriend, and 8.1% police or military.

Legislation Passed in Support of Gender Policies

Legislature on Education and Its Impact

There are discrepancies between the education of boys and girls in Liberia. Girls have unequal access to schooling as compared to boys. As a result, there is a high rate of illiteracy among girls and women (Ministry of Gender, 2015). Literacy rate in rural areas is low at 26% compared to 61% for urban women, and 60% and 86% for rural and urban men. The disparity is also wide in secondary education for men and women in rural areas

with a low 6% net attendance ratio for females and 13% for males. However, this gap is less, 29% and 32%, respectively (*International Women Journal*, 2013).

Many positive changes took place in favor of education for younger females, thanks to legislation passed by the Liberian government. The gap in the progress made educationally between females and males is more significant among older females. Attempting to close this gap, the Liberian government passed the National Action Plan 2004-2015, declaring education for females. The Free and Compulsory Education Law of 2015 was another law passed that contributed to narrowing the gap in women's and girl's equality in education. These laws had helped reduce the disparities in female education, especially in urban areas. There have been some difficulties implementing these laws in rural areas because of factors such as traditions and customs.

Legislature on the Economy and its Impact

Women constitute a large percentage of the population of Liberia. They are very active in the agricultural sector, providing 80% of the agricultural labor force. They are involved in 76% of cash crop production, 93% of food crop production, and 80% of all marketing and trading. Despite these contributions of women to the agricultural sector, they own less land, generally depend on male relatives to access land, thus making their rights to land more insecure than that of men.

Though women constitute about 54% of the labor force, women and men are neither equally distributed across the productive sectors nor in the salary scale. Legislation was passed to close the gender gap in the labor force (The National Gender Policy, 2009), but the implementation of these laws became very challenging. Different governmental initiatives have managed to narrow some of the gaps between men and

women, especially in urban areas. On the contrary, in rural areas, progress has been very gradual due to traditions and customs that remain obstacles for the advancement of women. Since most females do not go further in education, they marry at an early age. Consequently, they are subject to their husbands for subsistence (The National Liberian Gender Policy, 2009).

Legislation Against Gender-Based Violence and its Impact

Women and girls have been experiencing violence in Liberian society. It was very prevalent during the civil war. Even after the civil war, there were several cases of violence against women and young girls. This research was conducted and published in the *Journal of International Women's Studies* (2012). Social, cultural, and traditional norms allowed the practice of violence against women and girls. The most common aspects of violence are sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, incest, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation. Even though there are statutory provisions that indicate equality for women; customary law, and how it is implemented, especially in the rural and semi-urban areas, limits the rights of women (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2009). Women who do not follow the traditional gender norms frequently encounter harsh "backlash," which leads typically to stigmatization and isolation. It could also involve violent repercussions. The breakdown of social structures resulting from conflict often leaves women of all ages the caretakers and caregivers of family members and relatives.

Rape and other sexual offenses are categorized as universal aspects of violence used against women and young girls on the national level in Liberia. The results of the

2007 Demographic and Health Survey provided the following estimates for gender-based violence. Of Liberian women aged 15-49: 44% have witnessed physical violence since the age of 15, 29% have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months, and 17.6% have experienced sexual violence. Of women aged 25-39: 22% - 32% experienced sexual violence by husbands/partner, 10.2% from their current /former boyfriend, and 8.1% from a police/soldier.

With the alarming increase in the rate of sexual violence against women, the Liberian government had made some progress in dealing with social and emotional problems. Laws have been passed to minimize violence against children, including boys. However, the main challenges lie in the capacity of the government to provide more legal/ justice, security, health, and psychological support. Challenges include lack of data, weak legal and protection systems, financial supports, shortages of human resources, and limited technical capacity.

The government, under the Ministry of Gender and Development Justice, passed some proactive initiatives protecting the rights of all sexes, especially those of women. In 2005, the government passed a Rape Law of 2005, which stipulates that rape is a crime punishable by law. The Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Crimes Unit is also being established at the Ministry of Justice to help provide the government with the necessary capacity to prosecute all crimes related to gender-based violence. Since its creation, the Ministry of Gender and Development has helped reduce violence against women.

Evidence from Local Newspapers on Legislative Efforts in Liberia

The Liberian newspaper Inquirer stated that the former president of Liberia,

Charles Taylor, was accused by fellow citizens of committing atrocities (*Inquirer*, Monday, 20 August 2007). In 2010 The World Crime Tribunal found Charles Taylor guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced him to 50 years in prison. As a result, his legislative gender policies were not wholly enforced **(***Daily Observer***, June 23, 2010)**. His government itself was accused of several crimes, including rape, killing, and crimes against humanity(https://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/index.php Daily*Observer*,2011)**.**Taylor was additionally accused of terrorism because the public raping of women and girls was deemed part of his campaign to terrorize the civilian population (Charles Taylor: A Judgment, a Victory for Gender Justice, 2012).His gender policies were not implemented until Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was instrumental in promoting gender equality in Liberia during her tenure as the first elected female head of state in Africa. In the 2005 and the 2011 elections, she won against her rival, the ex-international footballer, George M. Weah. President Johnson Sirleaf encouraged women to go door to door, from house to house, to motivate voters to vote for women to get them elected to the legislature of various political parties (*Daily Observer*, August 3, 2017).The visit of the Prime Minister of Canada to Liberia in 2016 was very significant, as he praised President Sirleaf for the progress she made for women in Liberia (Johnson, *Daily Observer*, November 2016). During the occasion of International Women's Colloquium in March 2009, President Johnson Sirleaf stated that Liberia had made progress in the empowerment of women. Despite this, the Human Development Index reported that Liberia had a Gender Inequality Index rank of 143 out of 147; President Johnson Sirleaf emphasized the rank of girls because they are more structurally subordinated and disadvantaged within

existing systems (George, Young Professional, YMCA-*Liberian Observer,* 2009).

The Rape Act of 2005 was approved in December 2005 and published on January 17, 2006. The legislature has well defined key terms such as rape, gang rape, consent, sexual intercourse, and prison sentences. The Act of 2001 was amended in the new Penal Code chapter 14, sections 14.701. The national transitional legislative assembly approved this legislation of the Liberia National Transitional Government of the Republic of Liberia (https://www.law.cornell.edu/women-and-justice/location/liberia).

In the administration of Charles Taylor, there were fewer women in higher ranking positions in the government. Additionally, many women occupied only deputy positions. Though Charles Taylor introduced the new gender policies, this did not indicate that women supported him. Many women voted for Charles Taylor for the sake of ending the civil war. In contrast, in the Johnson Sirleaf administration, women held more significant positions than those in the Taylor Administration. For the first time, there was a female president, one senator, three female representatives, three female associate justices, seventeen female cabinet ministers, two female county superintendents, and thirteen female heads of agencies.

The difference between Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administrations is significant. Most of the women voted for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf because she was a woman. Her image as "one of us" made her campaign very successful in gaining the votes of many women. Her gender policies had many achievements in empowering women, such as in education, in the economy, and protecting violence. Even though her gender policies were more successful than that of Charles Taylor, resource

limitations impeded their implementation. Funds were not adequately distributed to help the gender programs put in place.

Summary

In this chapter, findings are reported comparing the gender policies of Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. We found considerable discrepancies in the success of both administrations. In President Johnson Sirleaf's government, the number of women in her cabinet was many. It was the administration with the most significant number of women in higher government positions capable of enacting successful policies. On the contrary, President Charles Taylor's administration did not have many women in sensitive and influential positions. He was accused of crimes against humanity, left power, and went on trial in the Hague. As a result, his gender policies were not implemented well.

Conclusion

The gender policies of Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf are similar in terms of legislation, but not in implementation. While Charles Taylor did not have enough years to see success in his gender policies, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf did not have adequate funds to implement the several gender policies enacted during her tenure. President Johnson Sirleaf successfully gained the trust of the women during her first term, but during the second term, she was accused of massive corruption. Her tenure was marked by the lack of funding for the various gender programs. That said, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration created and expanded programs that benefited women. Women had more political power in the Johnson Sirleaf administration than in the Taylor administration. Different ministerial and judicial positions held by women are an

indication that women enjoyed more power in the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administration, compared to the government before her.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

Liberia has been a country where gender policies have drawn attention recently. This attention has been spearheaded by the civil war when women decided to take part in the shifting destiny of the nation. Their activity challenged the patriarchal ideology that had been the dominant force in the making of major political and economic decisions since 1847 (Kieh, 1994). The civil war, which started in 1989, not only exposed how women were oppressed, exploited, and became victimized, it also allowed them to be peace and decisionmakers (Kieh, 1994).

In this chapter, I provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, interpretation, limitation of the research, solution, recommendation, social implication, and conclusion. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the gender policies of Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the participation of women in Liberian politics, as measured by the holding of political offices. The main goal of this study was to find the impact of the gender policies of the administrations of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on the participation of women in Liberian politics.

The most practical political philosophical perspective that guided this dissertation was democratic governance in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free and fair election. It is a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity are involved in the decision making about its affairs (Kieh, 1994). It is a system in which representatives are elected to parliament or a law-making body (Morris, 2016). This political philosophy highlighted the empowerment of women,

especially in advocating for their rights in the Liberian society. Women were at the front of the peace resolution process when the civil war started (Kieh,1994). They had delegations in all the treaties that were signed (Kieh, 1994). Other theories, such as the feminist development theories, liberal feminist, radical feminist, and Marxist feminist theories, also helped in understanding women demanding their rights in the political and economic aspects of Liberia. For the first time, there have been a significant number of women in Liberian history who have exercised their rights by being very active in President Johnson Sirleaf's administration as compared to that of the administration of Charles Taylor. Johnson Sirleaf's gender might have encouraged more women to join politics since she was one of the few female politicians in Liberia.

Overview of the Research Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the gender policies of the Taylor and Sirleaf regimes and the participation of women in Liberian politics, as measured by holding political positions. The study was a comparative study to see which administration had effective gender policies to empower women in the political, economic, and social aspects. The study was intended to answer questions about the impacts of gender policies of the administration of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the participation of women in Liberian politics.

Interpretation

The research has several interpretations. Table 1. represented the number of women in high government positions in both administrations. The Table shows 225% more women in high government positions in the Johnson Sirleaf administration than in the Charles

Taylor one. While the Johnson Sirleaf government had 17 women cabinet members, the Taylor administration had only eight. This means women were underrepresented in Charles Taylor's administration. The implementation of Charles Taylor's gender policies was ineffective because he left power before ending his official mandate (Kieh,1994). Monitoring the implementation of his policies was not adequately followed up due to his removal from his leadership position, since he was removed to Nigeria by an agreement with the ECOMOG (Kieh, 1994). The gender policies of Johnson Sirleaf were implemented and monitored (Kieh, 1994). They were improving the lives of women, but due to lack of funding, most of the programs did not get the adequate resources that are needed to expand the program in order to include higher numbers of women or girls in the society (Kieh,1994).

In summary, in one case, that of the Charles Taylor administration, gender policies could not be fully implemented since the administration was terminated and the president removed from power. In the other, the Johnson Sirleaf administration, there was consistent power to implement the gender policies developed by that administration, but the resources were not there to support their implementation.

Limitation of the Study

The study has several limitations. Among them are that it focused only on one dimension of women's participation in politics in Liberia. Data on other dimensions, such as voting, were not available. The women who have, and are occupying, political positions in the Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regimes were not interviewed. The key reason was the lack of funds to conduct field research in Liberia.

Recommendation

The civil war has been ruthless in Liberian history. Women were exploited, victimized, and abused in different ways (Kieh, 1994). The domination of the patriarchal system in the socio-economic life of Liberia has been a significant issue since women were historically deprived of their rights, both politically and economically. The gender policies of both presidents, Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, were different, and their implementation reflected the different character of the leaders. On the one hand, Taylor was a rebel who gained power through war, and his election took place in the climate fear (Kieh, 1994). His regime did not last long because he was accused of crimes against humanity. He was sent into exile, put on trial in the Hague, and sentenced to 50 years in prison. President Johnson Sirleaf was the only female presidential candidate in Liberian history who won two terms and became the first African female president democratically elected (Kieh, 1994).

To encourage the political participation of women in the Liberian society, specific significant changes are needed to be implemented. Some of these recommendations are as follows:

- The government needs to encourage training and sensitization programs for local leaders, policy makers, and health workers in Liberia on the gendered effects of war, service, and policy changes.

- The government should introduce a plan based on multisector and multidisciplinary post-conflict recovery to address the psychological, social, and physical health problems for women and girls in Liberia. A gender-

balanced health workforce with the skill mix needed by different levels of health services can provide a long-term program.

- Establish mobile and survivor-informed mental health services to address the massive psychological problems of the population, including war trauma and alcohol and drug use.

- Establish a holistic and accessible gender-sensitive public health intervention system to address the reproductive health needs of women and girl war survivors.

- Establish income-generating activities, vocational training, and micro-finance schemes that empower women and girls economically to enable them to access health services.

- Appoint women survivors as advisors to the peacebuilding processes in Liberia. The disarmament-demobilization-re-integration and rehabilitation program should extend to all those women and girl war survivors.

- The Ministry of Gender and Development should well fund The National Gender Policy of Liberia according to the plan of the Security Council Resolution1325 to be able to address all significant tasks in dealing with gender issues.

- Encourage the media to eradicate the stereotypical views of women in society because the role of the media is very significant in portraying specific images. The portrayal of women should be positive in order to encourage the young generation of females or younger girls to excel and to be what they want to be

by using their potential.

- Encourage conducting a periodical evaluation of progress made by women in all sectors and correct the deficiencies.

- Encourage civil societies to advocate the rights of women and to work with the government in breaking down the barriers to gender equality.

Women should be represented in all sectors of the Liberian society. Their gender should not be a predicament. Instead, their skills and abilities should be a central yardstick to determine whether they can occupy a specific position.

Implications

Positive Social Change

Gender policies are necessary to change the perceptions of people about women in society. There is a need to support education, economy, and the protection of women from violence. Providing educational opportunities to female citizens can motivate all little girls to be prepared to learn and to have a career to be financially independent. The implementation of gender policies in Liberia could increase the number of women seeking higher education. It could also help in reducing the gap between men and women

Conclusion

The patriarchal system that dominated the political scene of Liberia since 1847, though devastating, allowed women to be heard in Liberia. The gender policies in Liberia began to take a new direction, especially during the administration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The gender policies of Charles Taylor were not as effective as those of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. He did not have many women in his cabinet. Moreover, his regime was based more on fear rather than on a democratic process. Women voted for him just to

end the war and so that he would not return to war in case he did not win.

Women became very active in advocating for their rights at the end of the war, in which they played a major role in shifting the direction of the nation. They overwhelmingly voted for President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during her first term. However, in her second term, the turnout was less. One explanation for that situation was that women became disappointed in her second administration as she was accused of corruption, especially when her sons were holding very lucrative and sensitive positions in the government.

Summary

In Chapter 5, I reviewed the theories that provided a framework that supported my findings. The results presented evidence regarding the advancement of women's roles in positions of power when comparing the gender policies of President Charles Taylor and those of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The Civil War offered an opportunity for women to advocate for peace actively. The enactment of gender-related policies during both Presidents Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf created the framework enabling women to hold positions of power officially. Policies affecting all aspects of women's social, political, and economic life grew as the number of women in power grew. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was more effective in creating policies affecting because she had more women in her cabinet. Although Johnson Sirleaf made much progress in empowering women, some of her gender policies did not have sufficient financial resources to be fully implemented.

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