

7-12-2024

The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

Bofor Rahim Toh, II
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Bofor Rahim Toh, II

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Review Committee

Dr. Victoria Landu-Adams, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Jennifer Morrison, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

by

Bofor Rahim Toh, II

MPM, Devry University – Keller Graduate School, 2016

MBA, Strayer University, 2015

BA, University of Liberia, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

AUGUST 2024

Abstract

There is an inadequacy in strategies to address homeless and vulnerable youth “Zogos” in post-war Liberia. Homelessness among youth is a severe problem in post-war Liberia, with many sleeping in Palm Groove Cemetery and other informal housing settings in Monrovia and other parts of the country. This qualitative study explored post-war Liberia’s public housing program policy roles that professional competency and human capacity play in effectively mitigating homelessness of youth in Monrovia. Glasser’s choice theory was the theoretical framework used for this study. The research question explored how human capacity, selection eligibility, and professional competency at the National Housing Authority (NHA) have impacted resource utilization and implementation of public housing infrastructure and policies in post-war Liberia. A case study design was employed, using field notes, observation, and semi-structured interviews of 13 participants, i.e., homeless youth living in the cemetery, NHA staff, and other major stakeholders. Findings from the study and coding analysis were used to indicate the impact of the lack of government policies and strategies on homeless youth in Monrovia. The participants agreed on the need for robust public policy changes, a transparent selection process, the appointment of skilled professionals, and staff development to adequately address Liberia’s homeless situation. The implications for positive social change may lead to the formulation of public policies and the passing of legislation to address homelessness, thereby improving the living conditions of these youth.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this degree to my late father, Blidi Bofor Toh, Sr., who encouraged me to pursue this path. He asked me to promise him that I would obtain a Ph.D. once I immigrated to the United States of America. This is in fulfillment of my promise to you in November 2008. Dad, I am so sorry you are not here to receive this degree. I'm sure you're delighted to see me graduating with this degree as you watch from Heaven. To the friends and family I had before I started this journey and the friends and family I gained on this challenging road.

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude to you, my Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ, for your unwavering presence and guidance throughout this arduous journey. Your divine protection and support have been my strength during countless trials and tribulations. There were days when I was on the brink of surrender, but your steadfastness pulled me through. With you, all things are indeed possible.

Thank you to Dr. Victoria Landu-Adams, Dr. Douglas J. MacKinnon, Dr. Jennifer Morrison, my program director, methodologist, student advisor, and the Walden support team for helping me reach this point in my academic career. Dr. Victoria Landu-Adams, thank you for your tireless support and for playing a unique part in this journey.

To my beloved wife, Ms. Koutou Taryor Toh, and my beautiful children (Bofor Rahim Toh, III, Christal Angel Toh, Rebecca Favor Toh & Veronica Musa Toh), I am eternally grateful for your unwavering support. This journey has demanded much from our family, and I am deeply appreciative of your understanding and patience. I have set a challenge for my children, and I am confident in your ability to rise to it. If I could accomplish this while juggling two jobs and your needs, there is no limit to what you can achieve. Special thanks to my mothers, brothers, sisters, and in-laws for your constant encouragement.

Thank you, Dr. Othello O.O. Scott, for being a supportive big brother, mentor, and friend. I truly appreciate all the support you and your family gave me through this process. Pastor Chet Lowe, Pastor Dr. David Tongor, and Hon. Rosanna Schaack, I say thank you. Words are inadequate to express how much I appreciate your support.

To my brother and friend, Henry Flanpor, I say thank you, brother. You left your busy schedule numerous times to run errands for me. Jaheim Tumu, thank you for taking me to meet my participants on the beach and cemetery. I also want to thank the University of Liberia IRB team for their support. I want to thank my bosses at DHS for their patience and support, which made this possible. Lastly, thank you, Trokon Richards, for helping to edit my work. I also want to thank all my friends who started this journey with me and the ones I gained. You all, and many others, made this possible. I will forever remain grateful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

There is a distinct inadequacy of Liberia's public housing program and the lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness in the country. This has resulted in, among other things, youth vandalizing cemeteries in search of homes and an increased number of people sleeping in the streets and abandoned houses (Dominguez et al., 2013). The government's laissez-faire attitude is prompting these individuals to wander the streets in search of shelter due to inefficiencies in public housing programs (Petruzzi et al., 2018). This said, homelessness has become a significant problem, with hundreds of displaced youths living in graveyards, as the Monrovia City Corporation demolishes makeshift structures in the city (Jozwiak, 2015).

Many factors may have contributed to this problem. Among these fundamental causes appear to be a 14-year civil war, the prevailing economic situation, the demolition of makeshift homes, and road expansion (World Bank, 2018). Liberia was founded by freed slaves from the United States of America in 1822. It is the only country in Africa that was not colonized by a country; instead, the American Colonization Society colonized Liberia. Liberia was the first independent country in Africa after independence in 1847. It is located on the west coast of Africa and has a population of about 5 million people. Liberia consists of 16 tribes (indigenous people) and the freed slaves (Americo-Liberian minority). Since independence, Liberia has been ruled by these formerly enslaved people, leading to discontentment amongst the majority of those indigenous to Liberia. This led to the brutal overthrow of the minority government on April 12, 1980,

ending more than a century of minority dominance in Liberian politics. This was a bloody coup de 'tat led by Samuel K. Doe that claimed the lives of many Liberians and forced many of the elite Americo-Liberians into exile. There were many unsuccessful attempts to topple the Doe administration until December 29, 1989, when rebels loyal to Charles G. Taylor (an Americo-Liberian) invaded Liberia. This civil war became one of the bloodiest in Africa and claimed the lives of more than 250,000 Liberians, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and made thousands more refugees in different parts of the world. The electricity grid and sewage system were damaged, and houses, hospitals, villages, etc., were destroyed. This 14-year civil war led to a collapse of all sectors of Liberia, especially the country's poor infrastructure.

The civil war ended in 2003, but Liberia is still struggling to regain its pre-war status due to economic mismanagement, corruption, a very high poverty rate, and a high illiteracy rate, among others (World Bank, 2018SA). According to the World Bank, 48.3% of people above age 15 are literate, and 44% of Liberians live with less than \$2.00 per day in 2016, a rate projected to reach 52% in 2021. Liberia has abundant natural resources and a suitable geographical position but remains among the poorest countries in the world due to rampant corruption, wasteful spending, financial mismanagement, etc. (World Bank, 2018). A lack of trained human resources and infrastructure and the aftermath of the civil war and the Ebola epidemic are some of the issues responsible for Liberia's current situation. In 2016, more than 2.2 million Liberians could not meet their basic food needs, of which 1.5 million lived in rural areas, 1.6 million were below the food poverty line, and about 670,000 lived in extreme poverty (World Band, 2018).

Corruption is visible at every level of society, thus making Liberia one of the most corrupt nations globally (USAID, 2018). In 2018, Liberia was ranked the fifth most corrupt country in Africa, scoring 28/100 and 137 out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2020).

The civil war created many potential social implications for this study, with the inadequacy of Liberia's public housing program and the lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness in Liberia being the core issue. Many homeless youths sleep in the cemetery, deserted or unfinished buildings, open markets, and makeshift structures throughout Monrovia and other parts of the country. Besides the homelessness issue, some of these youths were either child soldiers or victims of the 14-year civil war who were not adequately rehabilitated and provided skills training to sustain themselves in society. Then came the Ebola epidemic in 2014 that paralyzed the entire country, making some of these children orphans as they lost their adult caregivers. As a result of the civil war and Ebola crisis, many of these youth/children have severe mental health issues and engage in substance abuse as a way of coping (Knight, 2013). These vulnerable youth have become a menace to society due to their deviant lifestyles, which include pickpocketing, drug addiction, armed robbery, prostitution, stealing, and vandalizing cemeteries in search of shelter. The government's laissez-faire attitude prompted these homeless youth to wander the streets in search of homes because of inefficiencies in public housing programs (Petruzzi et al., 2018). The high illiteracy rate of about 48 percent (World Bank, 2018) could also be a factor in the professional competency needed to craft new public policy to address the country's homelessness issue.

Based on the abovementioned issues, this qualitative study aimed to review, assess, and analyze post-war Liberia's public housing program policies. Professional competency and human capacity play roles in effectively mitigating homelessness of youth in Monrovia, as well as in how resource utilization, implementation of public housing infrastructure, and professional competency support the National Housing Authority's policy towards homelessness in Liberia. In this chapter, the background of the study, problem, and purpose statement were expanded upon to provide details on the necessity of this research. It provided the significance of the study, which highlighted the importance of undertaking this study. The nature of the study, research question, and theoretical framework were detailed. Definitions of key terms/words were given; assumptions and limitations were also highlighted in this chapter. The chapter closes with a summary that connects to Chapter 2.

Background

The Liberian Civil War and Ebola epidemics are major contributing factors for increased homelessness and lapses in post-war Liberia's public policy strategies. Many Liberians were displaced and became refugees because of the 14 years of civil war and rebuilding the country's poor infrastructure is a serious challenge. There was a complete breakdown in the country's poor infrastructure, leading to increased squatters in low-income homes (estates) in Liberia. These are people who should be direct beneficiaries of low-income housing. Still, many sleep in makeshift structures throughout the country while struggling to provide for their immediate families.

Guided by this reason, this paper sought to analyze the policies and legislative frameworks for homelessness, its causes, and challenges, explicitly analyzing the content, along with government interventions that might mitigate issues within this issue. Studies conducted by other researchers failed to address the issue of homelessness. They focused on low-income housing, slum communities, substance abuse among youth, mental health, and teen prostitution, among many others, while negating the paramount issue faced by these vulnerable and disadvantaged youth (Knight, 2013; Kiel, 2017; Dominguez et al., 2013). Some of these studies included those conducted by Dominguez et al. (2013) that explored ways in which Liberian youths are surviving in post-war Liberia, as many of them are experiencing trauma and engaging in substance abuse, sexual and physical violence due to their participation in the war either as victims or perpetrators. Another study by (Kohrt et al., 2015) explored ways to develop a curriculum and collaboration model for law enforcement and mental health services in Liberia. Knight (2013) examined the sociocultural and historical factors impacting the assessment and treatment of mental health and substance abuse issues in Liberia, explored the potential causes and consequences of these problems, and the challenges the country is faced with in assessing, diagnosing, and treating people with mental health and substance abuse. Stevenson et al. (2016), on the other hand, examined the impact of the civil war on Liberian youths, especially on mental health issues derived from the war.

Liberia's National Housing Authority (NHA) and Habitat for Humanity International signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate increased access to affordable housing for low-income households (Habitat for Humanity, 2018).

This study focused on slum communities in Liberia. However, it fell short of including the homeless population, many of whom live in cemeteries, markets, streets, and other informal settings throughout Liberia. The National Housing Authority Strategic Plan (2018) reviewed the mandate that created the NHA in 1960 to plan, initiate, develop, and implement housing programs across the country. Kriel (2017) examined the international responses to homelessness in the City of Tshwane, South Africa, and the international response to this situation. At the same time, Naidoo (2010) assessed the government responses to street homelessness in Tshwane, South Africa, by legislating and formulating policy responses that shaped the broader circumstances of a larger population living in informal housing.

Levey et al. (2016) used a qualitative design to study factors impacting resilience among youth in post-conflict Liberia. They examined the trauma and loss that Liberian children experienced because of the civil war. These youth developed various coping mechanisms because of the civil war and Ebola epidemics. Petruzzi et al. (2018), on the other hand, explored the risk factors associated with substance abuse among young Liberians in public schools and slum communities. USAID (2018) examined Liberia's development challenges after 14 years of civil war and the progress being made. World Bank (2018) assessed Liberia's new country partnership framework to boost sustainable economic growth and development. The existing literature did not address the homeless situation among youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. This research sought to fill this gap in literature.

This study was different because it sought to explore many perspectives from which to analyze homelessness amongst low-income families and discrepancies in the selection of tenants for public housing in Liberia. It reviewed the government's (National Housing Authority) responses to post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, explicitly focusing on resource utilization, human capacity, and the government's laissez-faire approach to homelessness. The importance of this study was to shed light on a problem that has been overlooked. Also, this study may serve policymakers in developing national guidelines on instituting standard public policies that will make public housing more affordable and accessible for low-income families in Liberia. Specifically, I explored what infrastructure and policies were available to low-income families in Liberia. This study also generated new knowledge on the selection or eligibility criteria used by the government or NHA in providing homes to struggling families. It also assessed discrepancies in the process and the policy framework of the NHA.

Problem Statement

Liberia's inadequate public housing program and lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness continue to be a problem. A literature review suggested inadequate housing policy (National Housing Authority, 2014), squatters in abandoned homes (Kiel, 2017), and government responses to homelessness are potential causes of Liberia's deteriorating public housing sector. However, these studies overlooked Liberia's post-war public housing policy and programs to build human capacity and enhance professional competency. It also seems to downplay the availability of technical, logistical, and financial

resources that can serve to effectively address the problem of homelessness of youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery.

Studies performed by Habitat of Humanity International in 2018 focused on Slum Communities housing projects while the government, through the National Housing Authority, focused on constructing low-income homes and middle-income homes but none for the most vulnerable homeless Liberians lavishing in the streets of Monrovia and cemeteries. Other studies focused on substance abuse, mental health, teenage pregnancy, and prostitution (Knight, 2013; Kiel, 2017; Dominguez et al., 2013) but not homelessness, especially those youth residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. This study sought to help fill this gap with research that examined Liberia's public housing program policy and the roles that professional competency and human capacity played in effectively mitigating homelessness of youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, especially those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery. It reviewed, assessed, and analyzed resource utilization, implementation of public housing infrastructure, professional competency, and support of the National Housing Authority's policy towards homelessness in the country.

This study focuses on the perceptions of the "Zogos" and analyzed the government responses to homelessness in a condensed context. It also shaped the broader circumstances of the larger population with whom these disadvantaged youth ("Zogos")

share intimate ties through economic poverty and social instability. The results may inform development of an intersectoral public policy and legislative framework shaped by housing and social welfare that will prioritize preventative and sustainability measures to minimize social, structural, and economic vulnerability and risks of becoming homeless in Liberia. It also explored the inability of the government to mitigate the social, economic, and public policy issues these “Zogos” are posing to the public. Based on the findings, recommendations were made to minimize this societal menace.

Research Questions

The research question utilized for this case study are as follows: (RQ) How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The sub-research questions are as follows:

SRQ1: In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the “Zogos” housing situation?

SRQ2: How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Glasser’s choice theory (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser’s theory assesses basic human needs, the quality world, the perceived world, the comparing place, and the total behavior system (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser’s choice theory states that humans’ behavior is chosen as they continually attempt to meet one or more of their five basic needs that are part of the

human genetic structure (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser's choice theory offers a framework to assess, evaluate, and examine the inadequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy, the incompetence of personnel at the NHA, the eligibility criteria used to select low-income families for housing, and ineffective strategies used by the NHA to address homelessness.

Glasser's choice theory emphasizes the need to address long-lasting human problems and satisfy people's basic needs of survival, love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). This can be done in collaboration with other government agencies with similar statutory responsibilities (Ministry of Public Works, Land, Mines & Energy, Justice, Finance & Planning, Gender & Children, Health & Social Welfare, Youth & Sports, Development Partners, NGOs, etc.) through connectedness as a requisite for meeting the needs of these individuals in the quality world. Glasser's theoretical work has been used extensively in studies relating to social change and challenges associated with human behavior.

Glasser's choice theory also aligns with the Inclusive Market System of Development Theoretical Framework that is being used at the National Housing Authority. This system allows the NHA to take a major step towards a pro-poor urban housing policy with the establishment of a Slum Upgrading Unit in September 2017, which aims to ensure that low-income housing and vulnerable communities have access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing by effectively mobilizing and allocating public resources, subsidies, and grants (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). This was a significant step taken by the National Housing Authority. Still, as seen, the emphasis continues to be on

low income and not homelessness, which is of more concern at this time due to the civil war and Ebola epidemic impact on all sectors of Liberia. Glasser's choice theory provides an assessment that applies to disadvantaged people, people fighting for survival, those who are unhappy, people with sexualized behavior, alcoholics, and the homeless, all of which describe these "Zogos." The theory reveals that human relationships or behavior problems are the most difficult to solve, but surprisingly, they are easy to understand. That is why Glasser's choice theory was used in this study to understand the government's responses to homelessness at this critical time of Liberia's rebuilding process.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative methodology and used case study design to understand the experiences, lifestyles, challenges, and complex social environments of homelessness and the inadequacy of post-conflict Liberia's public housing policies on low-income families. A case study design focuses on generating meaning and understanding through a detailed description of problems that requires developing an understanding of complex social environments and the experiences of these families struggling to be awarded public housing (Nilmanat & Kurniawan, 2021). This involved an investigative process where I made sense of the ongoing social phenomenon by comparing, contrasting, classifying, cataloging, and replicating the social and environmental conditions of impoverished families in the streets of Liberia. In so doing, I transitioned into these families' worlds through ongoing interactions and analyzed their perspectives to give meaning to their choice to live in a cemetery, open markets,

abandoned house, etc., in Monrovia. This method was ideal for this study because of the experiences of people living in desperation and the impact the environment is having on their psychological and emotional well-being.

A case study method was used because it is an investigative approach to individuals or groups' circumstances that involves collecting in-depth data about these youth through various collection methods such as interviews, observation, and field notes (Nilmanat & Kurniawan, 2021). It can combine any number of qualitative traditions to meet the specific needs of the research situation and is regarded as the most flexible methodology that can blend several traditions into a valid research design. Case study design addresses problems arising from different philosophical views and seeks to achieve different goals using various methods. It focuses on the quality of experience by trying to understand or describe the essence of human experience through the use of measurable factors (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). I used field notes, observations, and interviews in real-life settings with low-income families, NHA staff, and other relevant stakeholders for this qualitative study.

In this study, I used three sources of data collection and tools to address the impact of Liberia's post-war public housing policy on homelessness, which this research paper sought to address. The first was observation, which involves an intensive exploration of a single unit of study and multiple sources of evidence to confirm a single observation (Rudestam et al., 2015). This data collection method makes sense of what is going on in the graveyard and the lives of these youth. It allowed me to reach out to relevant authorities for an understanding or explanation of their lack of actions to address

the plights of these homeless youth. The second was interviews, which is an in-depth process that allows firsthand information to be gathered from those homeless, impoverished, and vulnerable youth themselves, who are the prime subject of this study, to understand the reason behind their action of living in the cemetery. This was a one-to-one interview between the researcher and the participants. The third was field notes to record things observed during the recruitment and interview of participants in the streets, Palm Grove Cemetery, ELWA Fishing Beach, and the conference room at Carver Christian University.

Other stakeholders from the Ministry of Youth & Sports, House of Representatives, International Rescue Committee, and others participated in the individual interview to address the homeless situation in Liberia. I wrote to these agencies requesting their voluntary participation to solicit their view on the homeless situation among youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. It was essential to have a representative from these agencies because of their statutory responsibility to address Liberia's youth and housing needs. I recorded field notes from my interaction with individuals from these agencies on things observed during the interview. The benefits of triangulation include increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging, and integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem (Farquhar et al., 2020).

Definitions

Homelessness: Homelessness is regarded as a visible manifestation of being without shelter (Naidoo, 2010). The extent and nature of socio-economic poverty in Liberia mean that the notion of being homeless is subsumed under a broader definitional umbrella, where significant numbers of these youth have no access to adequate shelter, resulting in them living in informal shelters like cemeteries, makeshift structures, deserted buildings, open markets among others. This broader definition of homelessness has several social and economic factors that have aggravated the risk of homelessness in Liberia: poverty, non-affordability of rent, unemployment, family disintegration, physical abuse, lack of skills, partial education, or none, and violence (Naidoo, 2010). These observations have raised important questions about public policy responses for the homeless in Liberia, as thousands of the population are living in inadequate shelters. Homelessness can be considered a condition of detachment from a society characterized by the attenuation or absence of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures (Naidoo, 2010). The government of Liberia, despite financial constraints, corruption, and political competency, is striving to deliver houses to low-income families but neglecting the most vulnerable homeless.

Human Capacity: Human capacity is the process by which people, groups, institutions, organizations, and societies develop their abilities individually and collectively to set and achieve objectives, solve problems, perform functions, and establish the means required to complete them (Reinhold et al., 2011). This involves

capacity development by providing an enabling environment for individuals at the NHA to acquire skills, education, and training to enhance their potential and that of the organization. Human capacity can also be defined as how individuals, institutions, and societies strengthen, obtain, and maintain the capabilities to achieve and set their developmental objectives (Reinhold et al., 2011).

Professional Competency: The judicious and habitual use of knowledge, communication, reasoning, technical skills, emotion, reflections, and values in daily practice to serve individuals and organizations (LiVecchi & Mazzula, 2017). This requires cognitive, integrative, affective, and relational functions. It is impermanent, developmental, and context-dependent; it refers to one's ability to effectively perform within one's professional role (LiVecchi & Mazzula, 2017). Professional competence is also defined as effectively completing a task using skills, knowledge, and sound judgment per professional standards and practice (Booker & Dunsmore, 2017). These are knowledge, attitude, and skills required to work in a specialized or professional setting like the NHA, which involves training, education, and experience to produce an acceptable quality of work.

Implementation: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, implementation is the process of putting a plan, decision, or action into effect, execution. It is executing a plan, method, design, idea, specification, model, standard, intentional activities, or policy that works for people or organizations.

“Zogos:”: The word “Zogos” is from the Bassa Dialect, a local Liberian language, which means wanderer or someone who gallivants. However, their lifestyles

and activities somehow mirror the life of “Zombies” in Western movies. These “Zogos” can be best identified by slurred speech, blood-red eyes, rag-tag clothes, struggle to maintain balance as they walk, alcoholics, drug addicts, mentally retarded, criminals, and prostitutes (women), among others. Many of these youth are former child soldiers and victims of the war. The “Zogos” illegal occupation of the Palm Grove Cemetery makes it impossible for families. Residents and visitors of Monrovia are being terrorized by the “Zogos,” many of whom are car loaders, pick-pockets - stealing valuable properties (cell phones, laptops, jewelry, etc.) from these people and at times assaulting them (Jozwiak, 2015). The female “Zogos” engage in prostitution, thereby increasing the risk of STDs/STI transmission in Monrovia.

Monrovia: Monrovia is the capital of Liberia, named after former U.S. president James Monroe. It is located on the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Mesurado. It is the largest city in Liberia and home to many government ministries and agencies (World Bank, 2018).

National Housing Authority (NHA): This government agency was established in the early 1960s to address Liberians’ housing needs (NHA, 2018). It is headed by an Executive Director appointed by the president.

Palm Grove Cemetery: The Palm Grove Cemetery was Monrovia’s main burying ground until recently. It was opened at the founding of Liberia in the early 1820s. During Liberia’s civil wars of the 1980s and 1990s, armed combatants (rebels and soldiers) used the cemetery’s concrete tombs for cover and concealment, and many fighters were also buried here. At present, the cemetery is a haven for illegal drug users and the homeless and is also used as a public dump site (Jozwiak, 2015).

Mental Health: Mental health is defined as a person's condition concerning their emotional and psychological well-being (Knight, 2013). In Liberia, people with mental health issues (schizophrenia) are often referred to as "crazy" or labeled as witches. As a result, they are often neglected by families and the community. Mental health issues are often downplayed in Liberia, with little or no attention given to these people (Knight, 2013).

Assumptions

This study contained several assumptions. The first assumption was that the government of Liberia is doing little or nothing to address the situation at Palm Grove Cemetery and the increasing homeless situation in the country. The second assumption was that the government has no immediate housing plan, mental health, and drugs and alcohol (D&A) facilities as a housing alternative for the homeless. Thirdly, it was assumed that the impact of mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness on the "Zogos" are posing significant social and public policy problems for Liberians (Knight, 2013). Fourth was the assumption that babies born in the cemetery could adapt to the lifestyle of the adults around them, thereby leading to increased social issues in Liberia if nothing is done to improve the homeless situation amongst these vulnerable populations. A related assumption was that all the interview questions would be answered correctly and that participants would be honest with their responses. Lastly, there was an assumption that the government, through the National Housing Authority, is prioritizing the construction of low and middle-income homes for rent and mortgage rather than

building shelters for the homeless (NHA, 2018). These assumptions helped me to answer my research question.

Scope and Delimitations

The sampling strategy considered the participants to be interviewed or observed, as well as the setting and culture in this study. With this information, I learned the sample size, which was determined by the resources available, the timeframe, and the purpose of the study. This enabled the researcher to assess the inadequacy of Liberia's public housing program and the lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness in the country. This has resulted in these youth vandalizing cemeteries in search of homes, with an increased number of people sleeping in the streets and abandoned houses (Dominguez et al., 2013). Many of these youth are former child soldiers and victims of the war. Those living in Palm Gove Cemetery were the targeted population for this study due to resource constraints, and this is the epicenter for homelessness in Monrovia.

For this study, I used a qualitative research design because it focused on generating meaning and understanding through a detailed description of problems that require developing an understanding of the complex social environments of homeless youth ("Zogos") in Palm Grove Cemetery and the meaning that these youth within those environments (cemetery) bring to their experience (Laureate Education, 2016).

Qualitative design entails observational design, survey research design, etc.

Observational design involves field observation, which provides the researcher with a method to collect data about the phenomenon of interest using causal ordering.

A case study is the most common observational design, which involves an intensive exploration of a single unit of research and multiple sources of evidence to confirm a single observation (Rudestam et al., 2015). Selecting the appropriate sample size depended on collecting rich participant data until saturation. Thus, a sample size of 13 respondents was used for this study. These respondents participated in semi-structured interviews to provide insight into their experiences regarding the inadequacy of post-war Liberia public housing policy. Selected National Housing Authority (NHA) participants provided information on the government's approach to addressing homelessness amidst the challenges. Those selected from the homeless population provided their perspective on homelessness and what they expect the government to do to mitigate the situation. I also interviewed stakeholders from the Ministry of Youth & Sports, House of Representatives, International Rescue Committee, and others to provide their perspectives on addressing the homeless situation in Liberia.

The case study can turn the client's observations into usable data by offering verifiable data from direct observations of the participant. Other researchers could use those observations in similar circumstances to replicate the result of the study. A case study can also turn an opinion into fact by analyzing data generated in real-time, as there are proven paths of negative or positive development (Laureate Education, 2010b). This method is also relevant to all parties involved as the researcher is actively engaged in the data collection process, and participants can further their knowledge by expressing their interest in the study's outcome. The case study uses numerous research methodologies for data collection. It is inexpensive and can be done remotely.

Limitations

A case study approach was used to investigate the phenomenon of interest in this study. It was essential to select the study participants before selecting the data collection method (Laureate Education, 2010b). Participants for this study were based in Monrovia, considered the epicenter of the “Zogos” and the location of the National Housing Authority (NHA) head office. This present study was a case study that will not be used in other parts of the country. Future studies can explore other geopolitical regions in Liberia.

As the researcher in this present study, I am a research instrument that applied objectivity and professionalism to enhance credibility in the study. I also applied reliability and validity as vital tools in this study to analyze data for transparency throughout this research. Internal validity is the validity of causal inference. Validation is the process of evaluating the trustworthiness of things observed, interpreted, and generalized (Rudestam et al., 2015). Creswell (2007) posits that qualitative researchers use different strategies to ensure the validity of their findings. Prolonged engagement and persistent data gathering ensure that the researcher does not draw conclusions based on isolated experiences with the study.

The issue of validity occurs at every step of the qualitative research design. As such, I exercised flexibility throughout the process to ensure the accuracy of my findings in this present study. Researchers using a qualitative approach are encouraged to ensure accuracy during data collection and entry, as these are vital to the study’s outcome (Rudestam et al., 2015). Triangulation is a strategy that uses multiple data sources to

build up a complete picture of a phenomenon. Triangulation helped me to enhance the richness of the study's outcomes due to the use of multiple data sources. Data used for this study were generated from observation, field notes, and interviews. These data were organized and transcribed immediately after the collection to make sure to include all valuable information during the data collection process.

Significance

This study was significant because it shed light on a problem that has been overlooked by the literature reviewed (Habitat for Humanity, 2018; Knight, 2013; Kiel, 2017; Dominguez et al., 2013) as they highlighted the inadequacy of the government post-war housing policy. Habitat for Humanity developed a low-income housing project that focused on improving the housing condition of those living in slum communities in Liberia, which could be used as a catalyst to enhance Liberia's post-war housing program (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The NHA has been constructing low-income homes in different parts of the country for various reasons, including fulfilling campaign promises and providing homes for families affected by natural disasters.

The NHA has also prioritized building modern middle-income homes to attract diaspora Liberians and middle-income families through their mortgage program, but little or no attention has been given to addressing the homeless (NHA, 2018). Also, this study may help policymakers develop national guidelines on instituting standard public policies to make public housing more affordable and accessible for low-income families in Liberia. This study also explored what infrastructure and policies are available to low-income families in Liberia. Hence, findings may generate new knowledge on the

selection or eligibility criteria used by the government or NHA in providing homes to struggling families.

In this study, an assessment was conducted on any discrepancies in the process and the policy framework of the NHA. The NHA has the statutory responsibility to address this problem but is constrained by budgetary pitfalls, corruption, and poor staff work ethics, among others. Through this study, I investigated how policies or infrastructure are utilized while assessing the availability of qualified personnel and malpractices affecting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing strategies and programs to address homelessness. This study sought to assess why homelessness is increasing in Monrovia, the eligibility criteria for low-income families, and the coordinated activities of the NHA in providing services to the most impoverished households as stipulated in its mandate (National Housing Authority, 2018). This study filled the gap in public policy and administration's body of knowledge by concentrating on implementing the post-war Liberia public housing program to address the issue of homelessness in Monrovia adequately.

Implications for Social Change

Being the voice of the voiceless in society is cardinal in understanding and championing positive social change. Findings from this study will help develop and implement post-war Liberia's public housing policy to address the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness. This could lead to legislation and public policy making affordable housing a right for every Liberian.

Social change is the ability of someone or a group to impact the lives of others or society for the better (Laureate Education, 2016). Society is a moral order constituted by institutionalized values, norms, and beliefs (Mucha & Leszczyńska, 2010). These conditions lead to numerous deviant behaviors in society, such as crime, drug addiction, suicide, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution, among others, which are the lifestyles of these homeless youth (“Zogos”). The government or authority must intervene to recreate social harmony because social problems are different conditions and aberrant behaviors manifested in social disorganization, as portrayed in this study (Mucha & Leszczyńska, 2010). This study sought to address these undesirable conditions that need to be corrected through social planning, public policy measures or formulation, resource allocation, etc. Many social problems derive from social change, as a changing society inevitably creates social issues. The transition period may bring about disequilibrium in the formal functioning of society, and social problems are the price the community pays for social change.

This study could contribute to social change with a public policy for the government of Liberia, and other major stakeholders will apply to prioritize improving the lives of these homeless youth in the cemeteries and other parts of the country by providing appropriate housing. Major stakeholders’ understanding of social change is crucial to a positive transformation of Liberian society. This transformation can occur through a change in belief, norms, compliance, and conformity to certain core principles. An agent of change is often regarded as a leader who works collaboratively with others with shared values to effectuate positive social change (Laureate Education, 2016). As an

agent of social change leading this study, one of the goals was to make major stakeholders responsible for addressing the homeless situation in Liberia buy into my vision using my influence and leadership qualities. Students of Walden are to make a positive impact in their neighborhoods around the world and advance the university's mission to make the world a better place for everyone. It is helping to make others reach their full potential through individual and collective initiatives; students sharing their expertise about social change contribute to meaningful projects in their communities.

Summary

Liberia emerged from its intermittent civil war in 2003, a conflict that claimed the lives of approximately 250,000 people, half a million internally displaced, hundreds of thousands made refugees, and countless traumatized by violence, rape, looting, destruction of property, and recruitment of child soldiers. Then, the Ebola Epidemic grappled the country in 2014 while Liberia was still trying to recover from the impact of the bloody civil war, and this epidemic left similar devastating effects just as the war. These crises led to significant population shifts in and out of Liberia or Monrovia, whose poor infrastructures were severely damaged, causing significant strain on the fragile economy and other government sectors.

As a result of the war and the Ebola epidemic, many children lost their adult caregivers, making them orphans, homeless, destitute, and vulnerable. Many of these youth sought shelter in informal settings like cemeteries, open markets, unfinished buildings, and other makeshift structures around the country. Their deviant lifestyles (substance abuse, robbery, prostitution, etc.) became a menace to the general populace,

making it difficult for them to be accepted by families and relatives. The government of Liberia has tried to get these youth out of the streets and cemeteries. However, it has been unsuccessful due in part to resource constraints, lack of public policy on homelessness, political competency, and other challenges.

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is the government arm responsible for providing affordable housing in Liberia, but this remains a massive challenge for the NHA to achieve, given budgetary constraints, limited resources, capacity, and political competency. The government, through the NHA, continues to focus on low-income housing instead of homelessness. New and affordable low-income housing units (estates) are being constructed in many counties to fulfill campaign promises and other political motives. Still, the country has no homeless shelter to address the increasing homeless population.

In this chapter, the problem and purpose statement as they relate to the research question were discussed, along with the use of the theoretical framework and case study design in this research, and the background, significance, and nature of the study while defining keywords, assumptions, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 expands on the organization (National Housing Authority) and its role in addressing homelessness in Liberia. Chapter 2 also includes an in depth discussion of the historical overview of NHA and the homeless population, current findings, research variables, and analysis that made it easier to understand this study's importance and bridge the literature gap for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The topic of this study is “The Impact of Liberia’s Post-War Public Housing on Homeless.” This qualitative study explored post-war Liberia’s public housing program policies and the roles that professional competency and human capacity play in effectively mitigating homelessness of youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. It also assessed how resource utilization, implementation of public housing infrastructure, and professional competency support the National Housing Authority’s policy towards homelessness in Liberia. The 14 years of civil war and the Ebola epidemic affected all sectors of Liberia’s society and destroyed the country’s poor infrastructure.

This chapter analyzed the roles and responsibilities of the National Housing Authority (NHA) in addressing homelessness in Liberia, especially those living in Palm Grove Cemetery. The act that created the NHA were reviewed, along with its goals, challenges, and public policy changes needed to divert resources and attention to the increasing homeless population rather than focusing primarily on low-income housing and other revenue-generating housing programs. This chapter includes a review of literature on other government agencies’ roles with statutory responsibility in addressing homelessness in Liberia and legislative reforms needed to fuel robust action to mitigate homelessness. Next, the literature are reviewed on the root causes of these youth moving into the cemetery, their lifestyles, and why they feel neglected by society. Lastly, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine existing literature on public

housing in Liberia and Africa, specifically Ghana and South Africa, with a detailed analysis of the theoretical framework, research design, and methodology relative to the research question and selected approach used in this study. This also detailed databases and search engines used in the iterative search process. The rationale for choosing the literature used was to provide, review, and synthesize studies related to key concepts and the phenomena under investigation. This will connect to Chapter 3, focusing more on the research method, the targeted population, and data collection and analysis.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy used in this study aligns with Walden's qualitative research and scholarly work standards. Walden has one of the best databases and search engines to facilitate scholarly research using its library and writing center. Walden Library serves as the center of expertise for information integrated into the student experience and offers research-based programs to guide students through their studies. Many search engines were used for this study, such as Thoreau Multi-data search, Google Scholar, Ulrich's: Verify Peer Review, and Databases A-Z. Databases A-Z contains about 176 databases covering many subjects, studies fields, and professions.

For this study, Dissertations & Theses @ Walden University was used to search for dissertations and theses written by Walden students related to this study. EBSCO e-books were used to include theoretical works, primary source materials, reference materials, etc. ProQuest was another search engine used to find peer-reviewed publications appropriate for my study and newspapers, journals, dissertations, and many others. Sage is another vital search engine containing peer-reviewed journal articles, encyclopedias, handbooks, and

online research methods to explore chosen methodology and concepts to help design research projects and write up findings. Thoreau is a tool that I used across many databases for quick, simple searches for my study. UN Data, UNICEF, and USAID were used to access UN statistical databases for various statistical resources relative to my research.

The World Bank is the largest single source of development knowledge that provided much information for my research, mainly because of the need for vital information at government agencies in Liberia. Google Scholar is a search engine that provides information on academic publishers and research institutions. It helped me find other studies by researchers that cited this article that were somehow connected to my research. The iterative search process was utilized in Google Scholar, Thoreau, EBSCO, ProQuest, and other databases to search for key terms such as social policy, urban planning, public welfare, housing policy, housing projects, and public housing in Liberia, West Africa, and Costa Rica. This was successful, but because of little current research on public housing in Liberia, I had to broaden my search to West Africa and Africa at large, which led to some success. Public housing and homeless articles and studies were found on Ghana and South Africa as they faced similar situations and how they addressed them. Lastly, I used the Walden Writing Center because it supports research productivity and methodology and helps me track my progress as a doctoral student of *Public Policy and Administration*.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Glasser's choice theory (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser's theory assesses basic human needs, the quality

world, the perceived world, the comparing place, and the total behavior system (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser's choice theory states that humans' behavior is chosen as they continually attempt to meet one or more of their five basic needs that are part of the human genetic structure (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser's choice theory offers a framework to assess, evaluate, and examine the inadequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy, the incompetence of personnel at the National Housing Authority (NHA), and the eligibility criteria used to select low-income families for housing.

Glasser's choice theory emphasizes the need to address long-lasting human problems and satisfy people's basic needs of survival, love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). This can be done in collaboration with other government agencies with similar statutory responsibilities (Ministry of Public Works, Land, Mines & Energy, Justice, Finance & Planning, Gender & Children, Health & Social Welfare, Youth & Sports, Development Partners, NGOs, etc.) through connectedness as a requisite for meeting the needs of these individuals in the quality world. Glasser's theoretical work has been used extensively in studies relating to social change and challenges associated with human behavior.

Glasser's choice theory also aligned with the Inclusive Market System of Development Theoretical Framework used at the National Housing Authority. Glasser's choice theory provided an assessment that applies to disadvantaged people, people fighting for survival, those unhappy, people with sexualized behavior, alcoholics, and the homeless, all of which describe these "Zogos." The theory reveals that human relationships or behavior problems are the most difficult to solve, but surprisingly, they

are easy to understand. That is why Glasser's choice theory was used in this study to understand the government's responses to homelessness at this critical time of Liberia's rebuilding process.

Glasser's choice theory states that chosen behavior (choices) is central to human existence as they are driven by these five genetic needs: survival, love and belonging, freedom, fun, and power. Survival needs include food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, breathing, security and sex, and having children. The other four are fundamental psychological needs: connecting, belonging & love; power, significance & competence; freedom & autonomy; and the last fun & learning. These formed the basis of Glasser's concept of a quality world; however, the quality world is distinguishable from an individual perspective. A quality world for these homeless youth could be having affordable housing, food, good healthcare, employment, and a loving support system, while it could be quite different for others (Olutayo, 2012).

Starting from birth and continuing throughout our lives, each person places significant role models, significant possessions, and significant systems of belief such as religion, cultural values, morals, etc., into a mostly unconscious framework Glasser called our "Quality World" (Olutayo, 2012). However, little attention is given to stereotypes and negative role models in Glasser's choice theory, especially in developing countries like Liberia. Glasser posits that a "comparing place" where people compare and contrast individual perception of others, places, and things immediately before us against our ideal images (archetypes) of these in our quality world framework leads to

subconsciousness that pushes us towards calibrating as best as we can into our real-world experience with our quality world (Olutayo, 2012).

Glasser posits that we have considerable choice or control over acting and thinking but little ability over feeling and physiology due to their unconscious and subconscious nature (Olutayo, 2012). Concerning this study, these homeless youth chose to live in the cemetery and other informal settings. They thought about it and acted out due to their feelings and physiology of being neglected by the government and other stakeholders. The National Housing Authority, for its part, has overlooked or downplayed the importance of providing adequate shelter for these “Zogos” through their actions and lackadaisical behavior in addressing the homeless situation in Monrovia. According to Glasser, behavior consists of four components: thinking, feeling, acting, and physiology (Olutayo, 2012). It is important to note that these four behaviors are intertwined as our choices in our thoughts and acts affect our feelings and physiology, as seen by these vulnerable youth in this study.

The ten axioms of Glasser’s choice theory are as follows (Olutayo, 2012):

1. The only person whose behavior we can control is our own.
2. All we can give another person is information.
3. All long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.
4. The problem relationship is always part of our present life.
5. What happened in the past has everything to do with what we are today, but we can only satisfy our basic needs right now and plan to continue satisfying them in the future.

6. We can only satisfy our needs by satisfying the pictures in our quality world.

7. All we do is behave.

8. All behavior is total behavior and is made up of four components: acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology

9. All total behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over the acting and thinking components. We can only control our feelings and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think.

10. All total behavior is designated by verbs and named by the most recognizable part.

Glasser states that behavior is not separate from choice as we choose how to behave at any time given the situation, and people can only control their behaviors and not others (Olutayo, 2012). That is why individual interviews were appropriate for this study with the goal to bring major stakeholders to the table and get their perspectives on remedying the homeless situation in Monrovia. Glasser believed in the validity of meetings to improve outcomes and solve problems for quality existence (Olutayo, 2012). The crux of this meeting will be a humanistic approach to the group process between the “Zogos” and authorities at the National Housing Authority.

The choice theory provides valuable insights into the choices of individuals (“Zogos”) and groups (NHA). Glasser postulates that the behavior and activities of these underprivileged youth result from an individual’s brain creativity expressing unhappiness and the National Housing Authority’s approach to homelessness in Liberia (Olutayo, 2012). The profile of these disadvantaged youth and the government demonstrated more

substantial needs for survival, belonging, freedom, and power. These differences may indicate more self-reflection and sensitivity on the part of the National Housing Authority (NHA) as they should be aware of their behavior choices and the impact of their choices on these “Zogos.”

Glasser’s choice theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. It assessed the basic human needs of these youth, the total behavior of these youth and NHA officials, the perceived world, and a quality world for these youth. It expanded on these “Zogos” theoretical perspectives through their experiences, inadequate strategies to curb homelessness, and the formulation of public policies to address homelessness in Monrovia. The goal of using Glasser’s choice theory was to examine the NHA and the attitudes of the homeless and life choices perceived to be a crucial influence in enhancing the provision of affordable formal public housing to remedy the homeless situation in Palm Grove Cemetery and Monrovia at large.

A study conducted by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) emphasized the urgency of engaging with the NHA as part of a five-year Liberia Country Program (LCP). This program aims to shift the NHA's policy towards supporting slum upgrading and addressing the housing needs of low-income and vulnerable communities (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The establishment of a Slum Upgrading unit at the NHA in 2017 was a step towards ensuring that low-income families and vulnerable communities have access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing through effective mobilization and allocation of public resources, subsidies, and grants (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). However, the study did not specifically address the urgent need for affordable public

housing for the most vulnerable 'Zogos' living in Monrovia's cemeteries and streets. The consequences of not addressing their housing needs are immediate and severe, including deviant social behaviors like theft, pickpocketing, armed robbery, prostitution, desecrating the cemeteries, and littering, among others.

A study done by Habitat for Humanity focused on slum communities upgrading to provide access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing through effective mobilization and allocation of public resources to low-income families and vulnerable communities (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). Hundreds of "Zogos" continue to wander the streets searching for homes and sleep in these informal settings wherever night meets them. This study did not include these "Zogos" living in the cemeteries and streets of Monrovia. National Housing Authority-Slum Upgrading Unit indicated that Liberia needs 512,000 new dwellings by 2030 to address the country's housing needs, especially in greater Monrovia (Worzi, 2017). It is estimated that there are thousands of 'Zogos' in Liberia, and a similar situation exists in Ghana.

This article highlights that about 70 percent of Monrovia's population lives in slums under devastating housing conditions in poorly constructed homes. The lack of essential social services, finance, and infrastructure leads to severe overcrowding in the city (Worzi, 2017). These 'Zogos' are living examples of people trapped in such devastating housing conditions due to inadequate public housing. In 2018, the government of Liberia, in collaboration with the National Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity, signed an MOU to facilitate increased access to affordable housing for low-income households. The MOU includes the government providing land for housing

development, Habitat for Humanity providing funding for housing development, and beneficiaries being those affected by floods in coastal and swamp communities, among others. However, the situation for these 'Zogos' remains unchanged. Other studies in Liberia have focused on the lifestyles of these youth, neglecting their housing needs. This situation presents an opportunity for positive change, inspiring us to consider the potential for a brighter future for housing in Liberia.

The literature reviewed on Ghana's approach to public housing reveals a promising shift. The government of Ghana has taken a proactive stance, recognizing adequate housing as a fundamental right for its citizens. This significant policy change, coupled with the active participation of the private sector in addressing the country's housing needs, holds the promise of a brighter future for housing in Ghana (Arku, 2009). This positive shift should serve as an inspiration for Liberia and other countries facing similar challenges, demonstrating the potential for transformative changes in housing policies and practices.

The literature reviewed on South Africa's approach to addressing homelessness shows that the government instituted a legislative framework and intersectoral policy in the housing sector to prioritize preventative measures to mitigate economic, social, and structural risks vulnerability and risks of becoming homeless (Naidoo, 2010). These measures are still in place even though implementation remains challenging depending on the government in power. A robust and comprehensive analysis of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Tshwane, South Africa, was used as a national blueprint. These frameworks and regulations led to better collaboration and coordination

of social welfare and the government agencies responsible for housing. A synopsis of the current literature established the relevance of the homeless situation in Liberia by revealing the ineffectiveness of government strategies in mitigating this problem. That is why the National Housing Authority needs to be creative in bringing all stakeholders together, including the “Zogos,” to discuss a workable strategy to solve this alarming homeless problem in the country.

Glasser’s 10 Axioms

Glasser’s ten axioms can be applied across many disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, criminology, and others because they help understand individuals and collective behavior (Olutayo, 2012). This study focused on the five basic human needs principles of Choice’s Theory, which are embedded in the ten axioms listed above. These principles are survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

Creativity is an individual’s ability to construct valuable, original, and fundamental ideas in all human activities (Olutayo, 2012). Individuals have the mental capability of constructing personal interpretation through problem-solving and thinking of new meanings while emphasizing the self. Creativity is critical at an individual level in solving real-life problems because it makes people see and do things differently. Glasser posits that everything we do as humans is driven by our obligation to satisfy those needs and reflect our quality world (Olutayo, 2012). Officials of government and the National Housing Authority must be creative in addressing the homeless situation in the country and moving away from the status quo.

Glasser's Choice Theory proposes that every individual is driven by five psychological needs embedded in our genes: the need for survival, the need to belong, the need for power, the need to have fun, and the need for freedom (Olutayo, 2012). The need for survival – the NHA and other relevant government entities should be concerned about providing public housing to address the physical well-being and protection of people without housing despite their low socioeconomic status. The homeless feel abandoned and neglected by their government, creating tension and rendering the environment non-conducive to their well-being. The National Housing Authority and other stakeholders should understand their need for survival and break the yoke of outcasts by offering better alternative living arrangements for them.

Need to belong – Liberia belongs to everyone irrespective of their socioeconomic status. As such, the NHA must prioritize providing shelter and other low-income housing for these youth despite their deviant lifestyles.

Need for power—The National Housing Authority's statutory responsibility is to meet Liberians' housing needs, especially the underserved and most vulnerable. The NHA can allocate or solicit funding from the national government and other partners to provide affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness, just like other low-income families nationwide. The need for power expressed by people without homes should be considered a significant issue at all levels of government, and the National Housing Authority should be interested in listening to these youth by providing them with stable housing.

Need for fun - Fun, a genetic reward for a healthy and happy life, is expressed through joyous play, sports, laughter, games, and recreation. As officials at the NHA, you must ensure that fun is not a luxury but a right for all. While you may enjoy these activities in the comfort of your homes, homeless youth are left to wander the cemeteries and streets, desperately seeking shelter. The lack of fun in their lives starkly contrasts the humor and creativity that should be part of their youth. It is high time for the government, through the NHA, to create an environment that allows people experiencing homelessness to fulfill this basic need for fun.

Need for Freedom - Freedom, the ability to make choices and control one's desires, is a fundamental human characteristic. Without it, we lose our ability to be constructively creative. Freedom of choice releases our confidence to take risks, explore ideas, and handle challenges innovatively. Through the NHA, the government is building subsidized low and middle-income homes across the counties but not homeless shelters for these youth. Due to the government's inability to address their housing needs, they were relegated to the streets, cemeteries, and other informal housing arrangements. The loss of this fundamental human characteristic should invoke a sense of the importance of freedom in our lives. We can indirectly control our feelings and physiology by choosing to act and think (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Liberia was founded in 1847 by freed slaves from America called the American Colonization Society (ACS). Liberia emerged from its intermittent brutal civil war that claimed the lives of more than 250,000 people, with millions displaced and seeking

refuge in other countries and countless traumatized. The war virtually destroyed Liberia's infrastructure, including the electrical grid, sewage systems, and roads, among others. Liberia's resource exports were sanctioned, which led to the financial system's collapse. Gradually, things are improving with investments and concessionaires flooding in to exploit natural resources and other selected industries. The housing sector was seriously impacted by the war and remained a challenge in addressing its increasing homeless population.

In Liberia, all settlements with 2000 or more people are considered urban even though many do not have an urban center's socio-economic characteristics ((Liberia National Population Council, 2005). Monrovia is the most dominant, with more than a million people congested in that capital, overwhelming housing and other sectors. The civil war led scores of people to seek refuge in Monrovia, and most of these people remained in the capital after the war to compete for the mega resources. Schools, employment, healthcare, and other opportunities are limited in other parts of the country, making Monrovia ideal and appealing to Liberians and other nationals residing in the country.

There are thousands of homeless youths living in Liberia. The exact number of homeless people (adults and children) is unknown. Still, local and international organizations work with some of these homeless youth to provide mental health and drug and alcohol treatment. They estimate that thousands of them are in Monrovia and other parts of the country. There are approximately 5,900 Liberian children who lost one or both parents during the Ebola epidemic, leaving them homeless as the only option as

housing became difficult and unaffordable (Hogan, 2020). This does not include those made homeless because of the civil war that ended in 2003. In Monrovia, children often sleep in the tombs in the cemetery as they have nowhere else to go, thus creating their label of “cemetery children or “Zogos” (Hogan, 2020).

Background of the National Housing Authority and the homeless population –

Historical Overview

The idea of housing as an integral part of economic development was overlooked until recently when Liberia's government started to invest more in building low-income housing across the country while neglecting people experiencing homelessness. The National Housing Authority (NHA) is an agency of the Liberian government created by the national legislature's act in 1960 to provide low-income housing. Policymakers saw the need to provide decent and affordable housing to attract expatriate Liberians back from the diaspora or keep educated Liberians in the country as they targeted concession holders expected to house their staff (NHA, 2018). The NHA used this to offer subsidized housing to relatively prosperous households, not concentrating on the poor or homeless. In the late 1970s, the government set up the National Housing and Savings Bank to provide mortgages to working Liberians by building several estates and low-income homes in Monrovia (NHA, 2018).

The National Housing Authority (NHA), established on April 7, 1960, is vested with rights and powers to plan, initiate, implement, and execute a housing development program for Liberia's counties, territories, and provinces (NHA, 2018). The NHA's responsibility is to survey people's socio-economic problems, setting housing project

standards and maintenance regulations. They conduct research into living, dwelling, and housing conditions, and the means and methods of improving such conditions. This includes identifying slum areas and areas with a shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations for low-income individuals (NHA, 2018).

The National Housing Authority's (NHA) mission is to provide affordable housing to Liberia's people as their priority, and its core values are professionalism, teamwork, and innovation. Its vision is to research housing needs by developing standards, policies, and technologies to improve housing by formulating public-private partnerships to access resources for implementing projects (NHA, 2018). They make recommendations based on their findings for the clearing, planning, reconstructing, and renovating areas to facilitate solutions to the problems by providing accommodations for low-income families. The NHA serves as the government's custodian, manager, or supervisor of housing programs where the exigencies demand the NHA to be the implementing organ of government in executing any agreement or regulation that falls within the purview of activities for which it was established.

The NHA has the authority to enter management contracts, agreements, or understandings with any persons, firm, associations, or partnership for the efficient operation of its programs. It has the right to borrow or raise money and contract financial obligations when necessary for its business transactions or to exercise its rights, privileges, or franchise for any lawful purpose of its incorporation (NHA, 2018). With the president's approval, it assumes all obligations the Minister of Finance may have entered into about housing before establishing the National Housing Authority (NHA, 2018). The

NHA also has the power to purchase, lease, hire, obtain by eminent domain through existing laws, and real or personal property or any right to an interest therein which the NHA may deem necessary or convenient for effectuating any of its objectives and subsequently disposing or selling such property as may no longer be needed (NHA, 2018).

Section three of the act that created the NHA outlines its duties with respect to rentals, mortgages, and tenants' selection. In its operations and management of housing projects, the NHA is bound to these responsibilities. It is prohibited from accepting any person or persons as a tenant in any housing project if the person or persons occupying the dwelling accommodations have an aggregate annual income over six times the yearly payment to be made on the quarters furnished (NHA, gov). This condition applies particularly to those where the government is subsidizing the housing program under this subsection. Furthermore, such persons must have occupied unsanitary and overcrowded houses or been displaced by public action when accepted by the NHA. The NHA also enforces a limitation of one house to a family, and acquisition of said dwelling is only allowable if the family lives on the premises.

Housing Estates and Low-Income Housing in Liberia

Through the National Housing Authority, Liberia's Government built estate and low-income houses in 1962 and established the National Housing and Savings Bank to provide mortgages to some Liberians (NHA, 2018). These estates were built to address the growing need to provide suitable and conducive homes for working Liberians who could not afford to construct homes from their mega salary. However, successive

governments have needed help addressing the need to provide affordable housing for ordinary Liberian working due to budgetary constraints and resource allocations (NHA, 2018). Numerous estates and low-income houses were built between 1962 and the present. Below are estates or low-income homes in Liberia:

Old Matadi - The Old Matadi Housing Estate is in Sinkor, Monrovia. It is situated on a peninsula jutting out into the mangrove swamps in the Mesurado River. The estate comprises 191 housing units, of which 129 are two-bedrooms and 62 are three-bedrooms. The Government of Liberia and City Bank constructed it.

New Matadi: This estate was built during the late President Samuel K. Doe's administration in 1984. It is located near the Nancy B. Doe Playground and is about 1.5 miles from Old Matadi Estate. It comprises 72 two-bedroom housing units on 13.5 acres of land. The Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) funded this project.

The West Point Housing Project, a community-driven initiative, is located in West Point, a tract of approximately 3.80 acres owned by Liberia's government. This vibrant community, named after the US military base, is on the northern peninsula north and west of the Mesurado River. It is a slum community where many residents are involved in fishery and petty trading. The project, consisting of 36 units, was made possible through funding from USAID.

Amilcar Cabral - Cabral Estate was built between 1973 and 1974 to help alleviate Liberia's housing needs. It is located on Old Road, Sinkor, Monrovia, and covers 7.23 acres. This estate was named in honor of one of Africa's martyrs and liberators, Amílcar

Cabral of Guinea Bissau. Liberia's government funded this project, which consisted of 72 housing units, during the late President William R Tolbert's administration.

New Kru Town: The New Kru Town Housing Estate is the oldest in Liberia. It was built in 1962 during President William V. S. Tubman's administration. It comprises 25 housing units and covers 3.8 acres of land. The International Trust Company (ITC) funded this project.

New Georgia Estate: The New Georgia Housing Estates is in New Georgia, Gardnerville, Montserrado County, a 4-mile radius of Monrovia and a mile from Monrovia Industrial Park. It was built during the administration of the late President William R. Tolbert and funded by the government of Liberia. It covers 200 acres and contains two—and three-bedroom units.

E. Jonathan Goodridge Memorial Housing Estate: E. Jonathan Goodridge Memorial Housing Estate is the largest housing estate in Liberia and contains 604 housing units. It covers 95.3 acres of land and includes two and three-bedroom units. This project was funded by Liberia and Edelbetone (Norway) between 1978 – 1979. The estate is adjacent to the Monrovia Industrial Park and is 2 miles away from Gardnerville Freeway. It was named in memory of the late Minister of Internal Affairs affectional called E. J. Goodridge, built during President William R. Tolbert's administration.

Stephen Allen Tolbert Memorial Estate: The Stephen A. Tolbert Memorial Estate was named in honor of the late Finance Minister of the Republic of Liberia, a pillar of the Liberian economy. This project is in Gardnerville, Montserrado County, within 7 miles of the capital, Monrovia. It is built along the Gardnerville Freeway and comprises 448

housing units. The government of Norway funded this project during the late President William R. Tolbert, Jr.'s administration.

Liberia's housing market is tiny, targeting the middle class and diaspora Liberians. There are plans for constructing many more low-income housing projects across the country as the National Housing Authority explores the idea of housing being an integral part of economic development in Liberia (NHA, 2018). Their strategy is to attract Liberians living abroad to return home and those who have secured employment and regular salaries to buy or mortgage these homes. However, this strategy fails to address the most vulnerable homeless, lavishing in cemeteries and other informal shelters across the country.

One of the NHA's responsibilities is to research living, dwelling, and housing conditions and methods of improving such conditions by determining where slum areas exist and where there is a shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations for persons of low income (NHA, 2018). From this backdrop, there is an apparent reason to think the homeless population would be the government's top priority. This group does not have decent, safe, sanitary dwellings in Liberia. But instead of building shelters for these homeless youth, the NHA launched a 5000 Affordable Housing Program, Liberia's most significant formal housing supply (NHA, 2018).

These low to middle-income homes will cost between US\$15,000.00 – 20,000.00 or more. Eco-homes in Schiefflin are sold at \$39,000.00 for one bedroom to \$64,000.00 for three bedrooms, while homes in Fendell are being sold for US\$39,00.00 – US \$42,000.00 depending on the land size (NHA, 2018). While these houses are relatively

cheap for people living in developed countries, they are costly and far above what an ordinary Liberian can afford. Many ordinary Liberians (Police, Soldiers, Teachers, Nurses, etc.) earn less than US\$1800.00 per year, between US\$90.00 – US\$150.00 monthly, yet they do not receive pay regularly. While Liberians welcomed the construction of these new housing projects across the country, they continued questioning the selection criteria and the targeted population (FrontPage Africa, 2018). It is essential to focus on how the NHA can provide affordable housing to low-income and people experiencing homelessness in large numbers instead of constructing middle-class aspirational housing for a selected few (Habitat for Humanity, 2018).

The government's *laissez-faire* attitude prompts these youth to wander the streets searching for homes due to inefficiencies in public housing programs (Petruzzi et al., 2018). It makes one wonder why the government is not doing much to address this problem despite the numerous social implications these homeless youth pose for the general populace. These "Zogos" have become a menace to society due to their deviant lifestyles, thereby vandalizing cemeteries searching for shelter.

Selection Criteria and Targeted Population

Targeting middle-income and diaspora Liberians as recipients of low-income homes contradicts the act that created the NHA (National Housing Authority, 2018). The NHA is responsible for researching living, dwelling, and housing conditions and methods of improving such conditions by determining a shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations for persons with low incomes. It did not say for middle-income or diaspora Liberians. These low-income families should not be overlooked

because of the economic opportunities being explored. It is alleged that these newly built homes are being mortgaged by senior government officials' acquaintances, ruling party members, businesspeople, diaspora Liberians, etc., at the detriment of ordinary Liberians living in slum communities, cemeteries, streets, and other informal settings. Many of these individuals can build a decent home for themselves, but they choose to take advantage of the system's loopholes and exploit it.

Section 3a of the act that created the NHA states that people earning more than six times the annual payment to be made should not be accepted (NHA, 2018). Many diaspora Liberians and other government officials do not fit this criterion. Due to the economic benefits, NHA seems more interested in building homes for middle-income families. In that case, they should first prioritize building shelters to house our growing homeless population and low-income homes for other vulnerable Liberians. Why construct low-income homes in the rural counties when Monrovia has more homeless than any other part of the country?

Key Players in the Public Housing Sector in Liberia

Many actors in the public housing sector in Liberia overlap functions at times.

Below is a list of actors and their roles:

National Housing Authority (NHA)

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is the government's primary agency for addressing housing issues in Liberia. An Act of the national legislature created it with a mandate to include:

- Serve as the government's manager or custodian of housing programs.

- Initiate, Plan, implement, and execute housing development programs.
- Purchase, lease, hire, and obtain any real or personal property deemed necessary or convenient for its objectives.
- Research people's socio-economic problems to determine their dwelling, housing, and living conditions and explore ways of improving them.
- To manage and operate housing projects across the country.

The NHA has a rich history of actively meeting Liberians' housing needs between the early 1960s and mid-1980s, demonstrating its capacity and commitment. However, budgetary constraints, corruption, and political competency have posed challenges, particularly due to the war. Despite these obstacles, the NHA, with its vast land reserves across the country, is investing in constructing low-to-middle-income homes. Yet, homelessness remains a severe problem in Liberia, with people squatting in cemeteries and other informal settings, posing significant problems for the general public.

Monrovia is home to the largest group of homeless youth ("Zogos"). Still, the NHA is constructing homes in Bomi, Lofa, Margibi counties, and southeastern Liberia with little or no homeless problems. For example, the housing project constructed in Lofa County remained unoccupied for a while because locals needed help to afford the rent. However, NHA continues to build these housing units outside Monrovia to fulfill campaign promises and personal interests to the detriment of the devastated homeless in Monrovia who are wandering the streets day and night, causing havoc for others (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The NHA should focus on providing homeless shelters and making rent-to-buy homes more affordable or cheap enough for the majority (sea erosion victims,

slum dwellers, etc.) instead of giving the homes intended for people experiencing poverty to their special interest (FrontPage Africa, 2019). The NHA needs to focus on promoting housing and driving its human resources profile towards mortgage issues rather than low-income housing supply promotion (NHA, 2018).

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is another crucial player in the public housing sector in Liberia. Its mandate includes:

- To initiate and organize programs and plan for urban areas' growth by providing projects for adequate housing, accommodation, and other facilities.
- Conduct and improve local government through supervision of activities in the political subdivisions of the country.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs plays a crucial role in the public housing sector in Liberia, particularly in urban planning. Its mandate includes initiating and organizing programs for rural community development, with a focus on housing, to transform rural areas into viable towns. This commitment to urban planning offers hope for the future of housing in Liberia.
- Coordinate plans and programs for self-help projects.

Ministry of Public Works (MPW)

The Ministry of Public Works is one of the principal actors in the housing sector. Its mandate is to design, construct, and maintain all highways, streets, roads, bridges, and sewers directly or by contract nationwide. This includes the construction and maintenance of public buildings, hospitals, and other public works for government

agencies. The ministry also administers zoning, town, and urban planning and enforces private building standards. This comprehensive approach to infrastructure development underscores the ministry's commitment to improving the living conditions of Liberians.

The Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME)

The Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy contains numerous departments that influence the housing sector. These include the Department of Lands, Surveys and Cartography, the Department of Planning and Development, and the Inspectorate Division. These departments are responsible for promulgating all regulations affecting Liberia's lands, mines, and energy. While the ministry's primary focus is the mining sector, it also monitors compliance and enforces laws affecting lands, mines, and energy. This includes regulations related to housing, such as land use and development standards, which are crucial for ensuring the quality and safety of housing in Liberia.

The Ministry of Finance, Development, and Planning

The Ministry of Finance, Development, and Planning, a merger of The Ministry of Finance and The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, views housing as welfare rather than a productive part of the economy. Under the Bureau of Planning and Economic Affairs, the Department of Sectoral and Regional Planning ensures that government programs are prioritized according to their development potential and align with government strategies. This perspective on housing underscores the ministry's focus on social welfare and its commitment to addressing housing issues as a matter of public concern.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry Division of Standards was established to ensure quality control and measurement. They coordinate standards and related activities at all commercial and industrial levels, including housing.

Other players in Liberia's public housing sector include banks and building organizations. The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) oversees all banking activities in the country. Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) was the only bank lending for long-term housing ventures (mortgage financing) in Liberia and negotiated ten-year \$10 million loans from the CBL Mortgage Stimulus Initiative to provide ten-year mortgages (Habitat for Humanity, 2018).

The National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) is responsible for the nation's pension fund and is investing in long-term capital housing development around the country to increase its funding source. Local government (cities and towns) also plays a role in the public housing sector. They are headed by superintendents, district commissioners, and chiefs who manage the land locally.

Non-governmental organizations are also involved in this sector and contribute to addressing some grave needs. USAID and the World Bank have funded urban upgrading programs in Monrovia, but nothing to address Monrovia's homeless situation, especially those in Palm Grove Cemetery. UN-Habitat (Habitat for Humanity) has an urban land inventory project in Bong County and Slum Community Project in Monrovia. The Bong County (Gbarnga) project is a profiling exercise, while the Monrovia project is geared towards addressing the housing needs of slum dwellers, especially those affected by flooding or erosion. Shelter Afrique is another NGO interested in funding the

construction of middle-class housing development to keep educated Liberians in the country or attract expatriates. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted an infrastructure master plan exercise in Monrovia, while the Department for International Development (DFID – UK) was involved in a wash consortium in Liberia.

Other international non-governmental organizations providing housing-related assistance in Liberia include UNDP, UNICEF, EC, OXFAM, Concern Worldwide, YMCA, and GTZ. These organizations fund housing-related programs such as solid waste management, water, sanitation, garbage and drainage cleaning, and management. However, none of these organizations provide low-income housing for impoverished Liberia despite the looming homelessness situation, especially in Monrovia.

Other local organizations (NGOs) are actively involved in the public housing sector in Liberia. One such organization is the Slum Dwellers' Association of Liberia (SLUMDAL). They have advocated for better housing for its members in informal housing areas and impoverished people. The organization is mainly based in Monrovia but has members in other counties, many of whom are women. Many SLUMDAL members are squatters and renters, so their advocacy establishes rent control and negotiates land rights on squatted lands. They have been invited by government agencies, including the Land Commission, National Housing Authority, and Ministry of Internal Affairs, to discuss land dispute resolution and sit in meetings with the Land Administrative Taskforce regarding their plight, but have yet to be successful.

With the number of government agencies, International Non-governmental Organizations, Non-governmental organizations, and other players, one would think that

Liberia's homeless situation would be adequately addressed. Still, on the contrary, it only increases the overlapping of functions and ambiguity amongst government agencies (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). As a result, government ministries and other stakeholders are confused about these government agencies' mandates and roles for housing-related issues. There is a need to reorganize the planning components for housing to enhance a more cohesive voice in government and more straightforward implementation of its objectives (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The National Housing Authority and Land Commission must provide a solution, or the government must strengthen existing agencies to minimize the ambiguity. Coordination between institutional entities is challenging, as there is prevarication at high levels regarding data collection, and their responsibilities need to be more straightforward.

Challenges and Resource Utilization at NHA

There is an urgent need to collaborate with all stakeholders to provide housing assistance for these youth and solicit funding from the government and partners to address this problem effectively. The institutional framework in place could be more efficient. The NHA cannot continue business as usual in the public housing sector if it is to address the country's homeless situation, especially for the "Zogos" that make life unbearable for ordinary Liberians in Monrovia and other parts of the country. It requires capacity building and resource allocation inputs to provide the skills needed to improve housing instead of focusing primarily on revenue generation. At the same time, hundreds of youths sleep in cemeteries, open markets, unfinished buildings, and the streets of Monrovia. Notwithstanding, through the National Housing Authority (NHA), the

government continues to focus on constructing middle-income homes to the detriment of these homeless youth.

Constructing homeless shelters and affordable low-income housing could help elevate Monrovia's homeless situation. Even the construction of rooming houses would be ideal as many homeless people are without children. Due to numerous risk factors, those with children would happily accept living in a single room rather than sleeping in the cemetery, streets, markets, and other informal housing.

Liberia emerged from a bloody civil war in 2003 that claimed the lives of over 250,000 people, displaced thousands, and left many traumatized. Properties were destroyed, breadwinners were killed or died, and mass displacement ensued, especially among youths and young adults. While recovering from the devastating impact of the war, the Ebola epidemic struck the country in 2013, causing more scars for an already traumatized population. These two catastrophic events lead to increased homelessness for many reasons. Many of the internally displaced refused to return to the rural areas because they may have gotten used to city life, limited opportunities in rural areas, loss of their adult caregivers, and opportunities for a better standard of living, among other things.

However, many of these people need help to cover the cost of living in the city. Landlords expect tenants to pay six months to a year's rent before moving in. Many Liberians need help to afford to meet these unrealistic demands with very high unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy rates (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). Even though a room may cost between USD 15.00 and \$40.00, an apartment and house cost more

depending on the location and quality; income could be more manageable, making it easier for the ordinary Liberian. The average income or monthly pay for government employees (teachers, janitors, police, soldiers, and others) is around USD 125.00. A family of 5 will need a two-bedroom apartment or a house to live on such a mega wage. Once the rent is paid, they are left with little or nothing to provide other essential needs for their family. It must be noted that government salaries are often delayed for months, causing undue hardship. That and many other reasons compelled these people to seek shelter in informal settings.

According to the World Bank, Liberia is rich in natural resources, yet it was listed among the world's ten poorest nations. During the administration of former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 66 concession agreements were signed, with only four meeting international standards (FrontPage Africa, 2018). The budget increased from 80 million to nearly \$800 million during the same period. Civil servant salary was increased from \$15.00 monthly to \$120.00 plus allowances. However, the budget decreased to approximately \$600 million in 2019/2020 due to declining revenue collection, lack of donor confidence in the current administration, and systemic corruption (Lee-Jones, 2019).

Notwithstanding, recurrent expenditure accounts for over 80 percent of the budget, making it challenging to fund capital projects such as homeless shelters, electricity, water supply, healthcare, education, etc. Yet, senior government officials live luxuriously while most Liberians live in poverty. The government continues to signal concerns to move the country forward through rebuilding critical infrastructures, reviving

the resource sectors, and establishing a competitive business environment. Still, the lack of will to fight corruption, poor resource allocation, and political incompetency hamper these plans. These also affect the housing supply for the homeless and low-income families across the country. Fourteen years of brutal civil war, the Ebola epidemic, and poor governance have made Liberia one of the world's poorest countries. That is why the government, through the National Housing Authority, needs to prioritize housing solutions for Monrovia's homeless and low-income families.

The importance of Monrovia, its reception of many homeless, and the poverty of people and institutions in the cities make housing issues very difficult to tackle. The informal sector is vital to most urban Liberians, providing economic opportunities and homes despite low income (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The World Bank estimated that about 87.3 percent (over 3 million) live on less than \$1/25 daily. While there has been some uptake in Liberia's economy, the National Housing Authority reports a rising feeling of economic injustice, especially among youth (aged 30 and below), who comprise about 61 percent of the population (NHA, 2019). The above information signifies why political incompetency and resource utilization are significant challenges in addressing Liberia's homeless crisis. Minimizing wasteful spending, holding corrupt government officials accountable, and appointing competent people to positions regardless of their political affiliation could dramatically improve the situation. The government cannot continue to recycle corrupt, greedy, incompetent, and selfish politicians because of their close ties to the ruling elite and expect the situation to change.

Past and present governments still need to adequately address the need for affordable housing and make substantial budgetary allocations for the housing project. Most of the National Housing Authority's budgetary allotment covers salaries and transportation, with little for projects and research & development (NHA, 2019). Policymakers have focused on housing for all instead of the most impoverished population segment. The idea of housing is an integral part of economic development. The setting up of enabling strategies to allow housing supply to flourish appears to have been bypassed by these Liberian policymakers, which is detrimental to these "Zogos." It is about time that the NHA changed its strategy from the project-based practice of providing high-quality housing at subsidized prices to a fortunate few with regular salaries and employment to low-income families and people experiencing homelessness desperately in need of this assistance.

Leadership, Resource Utilization, and Political competency

Leadership and political competency are two keywords used throughout this study. It is prudent to define what they are in the context of this study. Leadership is a process of exerting social influence, which maximizes others' efforts towards achieving a goal (Kruse, 2013). It is the ability to empower others and translate vision into reality. It is not about the title or personal attributes but the management style, influence, making things happen, motivating others, goal-oriented, and visionary. A simple definition of Resource utilization is the process of making the most of the available resources or effectively using the resources at one's disposal to maximize productivity. It is about time

management, eliminating waste, and adequate accountability for human and material resources to implement projects.

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is facing significant challenges in resource utilization, as highlighted by the above definitions. Despite being underfunded in the national budget, the NHA is not effectively utilizing the resources it receives to address the country's public housing and homeless situation (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). This mismanagement of the abundant material and human resources in Liberia is detrimental to low-income families and the increasing homeless youth "Zogos" in Palm Grove Cemetery, Monrovia. Despite the Act that created the NHA and numerous policy measures, resource utilization continues to be a challenge. The nation continues to experience a downward trend of poverty (Ola, 2019), emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

Political competence is understanding what one can do versus one's limitations, when to take appropriate actions, anticipating any possible resistance, and aligning with whom an individual needs on their side to push forth their agenda (Kruse, 2013). One must be fully aware of the political terrain to gain control and get others on their side to lead a coalition. Political competence may be good or bad, depending on the situation. Presidential appointees, regardless of poor track records, inexperience, lack of adequate education, lack of integrity, and others, are placed in positions of trust only because of their alliance with the powers that be detrimental to the masses (Transparency International, 2020). Corruption permeates Liberian politics and public service, with

allegations of patronage, nepotism, and cronyism plaguing politics. Corruption is rife, and judiciary independence is weak (Lee-Jones, 2019).

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is constructing numerous housing projects nationwide to fulfill the president's campaign promise (NHA 2018). Notable among them is the construction of 5000 homes in Margibi County, dubbed "14 Military City," as it is located in the vicinity of the newly constructed 14 Military Hospital. The NHA completed housing projects in Grand Kru, Lofa, and other counties with little homeless problems (NHA.gov). However, there is no public homeless shelter in the country despite the many homeless youths parading Monrovia's streets that have become a menace for many Liberians.

Duplicate and overlapping government agencies' functions between the National Housing Authority, Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, Social Development and Children, Ministry of Health, and others, continue to be a challenge (Harmon, 2018). Despite all of these agencies having statutory responsibilities to address housing and child welfare needs, these children continue to linger on the streets of Monrovia in their quest to secure shelter. Budgetary constraints, corruption, poor resource utilization, and political competence posed a significant challenge (Jackson, 2018). Many government officials are appointed to positions to help carry on the president's agenda, with the NHA no exception. Top officials of the NHA were embroiled in alleged corruption in 2018 that led to their dismissal, but the court found them not guilty (Dodoo, 2018). Many government officials need to gain the requisite skills, experience, and

qualifications, but they are still appointed and confirmed, leading to political competency. Most appointments are based on personal ties to the president or inner circle and not character, integrity, or competence to the extent that officials being dismissed for unethical acts are recycled in government and reappointed to another government post (Lee-Jones, 2019).

In April 2020, the National Housing Authority (NHA) signed an agreement with AXHIS Liberia, a Burkinabe company, to construct 50,000 low-cost housing units (NHA.gov). According to FrontPage Africa, the investors who formed GELPAZ are the same ones who returned and registered AXHIS due to their alleged involvement in the 2018 corruption saga (All Things Africa, 2020). Political competency and poor resource utilization continue to be massive challenges at the National Housing Authority and many other government agencies.

The “Zogos” – Disadvantaged Youth

The “Zogos” is one of the 14 years of civil war, and the Ebola epidemic results as many of them were either child soldiers or victims of the war (Petrucci et al., 2018). Some of them lost their parents in the war and had to fend for themselves due to hardship, lack of proper education or skill training, and engaging in deviant living. The war and Ebola led to increased mental health amongst these youth due to horrific experiences as victims, perpetrators, or both. Because of little government attention, people who are mentally disabled are often seen as cast out, neglected, abandoned, and looked down upon by the greater population (Knight, 2013). Substance abuse became a coping mechanism for many of these “Zogos” living in the cemetery as they struggled to adapt to

their new life. Marijuana, cocaine, and heroin are common drugs they use (Petruzzi et al., 2018). These young adults, youth, and children engaged in criminal activities and prostitution to support their habits (Africa News Service, 2012). As a result, family and friends did not feel comfortable being around them, and they moved into the cemetery to live. The grave has become their dwelling place; some refer to themselves as “Friends of the Dead.”

A qualitative study was conducted to explore factors impacting resilience among youth in post-conflict Liberia and examined trauma and loss that Liberian children experienced due to the civil war (Levey et al., 2016). Seventy-five youths (ages 13 – 17) were recruited in Monrovia for this study in 2012. They used semi-structured interviews, and demographic data were collected. The results show that forty-six participants were enrolled in school, and twenty-nine were not. These youth in school demonstrated higher adaptive functioning, particularly for boys in any school setting and girls attending private school. Youth not enrolled in school were more likely to have lost family members or become estranged from them, while many were also engaging in substance abuse (Levey et al., 2016). The study concluded that Cognitive flexibility, agency, emotion regulation, social intelligence, and, in some cases, meaning making were found in participants who showed resilient outcomes. At the same time, caregiver relationships coordinate the development of psychological capacities that impact resilience. Everyone living or visiting Monrovia is impacted by the “Zogos” directly or indirectly.

The Palm Grove Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Monrovia and home to many past leaders, but the “Zogos” have decimated and vandalized many tombs and live among

the dead (FrontPage Africa, 2019). Like Memorial Day in the US, Decoration Day is a national holiday to pay respect to loved ones. Still, due to the “Zogos” illegal occupation of the Palm Grove Cemetery, this is nearly impossible for families. People cannot see the remains of loved ones as they are thrown away; neither do people have access to their lost ones because the grave is now a place for criminals, prostitutes, drug addicts, and alcoholics (FrontPage Africa, 2019). Families are losing their children and relatives to drugs, alcohol, crimes, and prostitution, resulting in numerous social problems. Monrovia residents and visitors are being terrorized by the “Zogos,” many of whom are car loaders and pickpockets - stealing valuable properties (cell phones, laptops, jewelry, and others) from these people and, at times, assaulting them. The female “Zogos” engage in prostitution, increasing the risk of STDs/STI transmission in Monrovia (AllAfrica.com, 2019).

The government is responsible to the people and is not doing much to address homelessness, substance abuse, crime, prostitution, and other social problems posed by this population to the general public. Amonoo-Lartson examined post-conflict mental health policy and substance abuse among Liberian adults (2021). This qualitative phenomenological study used the face-to-face semi-structured interview to collect data from 10 - 15 participants regarding their experiences of substance use in Liberia. Many of the participants live with untreated mental health due to their trauma from the war and Ebola.

The study also assessed the sociocultural and historical factors impacting the assessment and treatment of mental health and substance abuse issues in Liberia. It

explored the potential causes and consequences of these problems and the challenges the country is faced with in assessing, diagnosing, and treating people with mental health and substance abuse. Findings from the study revealed that mental health services utilized by substance users were instrumental in their rehabilitation and recovery despite the need for improvements (Amonoo-Lartson, 2021).

A quantitative study was used to examine the impact of the civil war and post-war events on 171 Liberian youths ages 5 – 22, especially on mental health issues derived from the war (Dominguez et al., 2013). Some of the children, now adults, witnessed some of the most gruesome incidents during the civil war, traumatizing them. However, many of them have not been rehabilitated or received mental health treatment to reintegrate them into society. Results from this study show that youth in Liberia continue to endure harsh social, economic, and material conditions of everyday life in a protracted post-conflict state and have significant mental health needs. Their observed functional impairment due to mental health issues further limited their access to protective factors such as education, employment, and positive social relationships (Dominguez et al., 2013). They affirmed that exposure to conflict and war, witnessing atrocities, and extreme fear had severe negative impacts on the emotional health of Liberian youth during the civil war.

This qualitative study explores the risk factors associated with substance use among Liberian youth from the perspective of public school students, many of whom are from slum communities (Petruzzi et al., 2018). The authors conducted nine focus groups with 72 Liberian public school students (37 boys and 35 girls). Findings from this study

show that multiple risk factors for substance use among Liberian youth were identified through qualitative analysis, including emotional instability, gender, fear of academic failure, accessibility to substances within the school and community, poverty, and unintentional drug use (Petruzzi et al., 2018). There are many risks associated with these children's illegal use of a substance, making them engage in crimes, prostitution, and other survival mechanisms to navigate their daily lives. Former Gender Minister Julia Duncan-Cassell attributed the increase in prostitution in Liberia to poverty (Africa News Service, 2012). However, the government did not address these issues while she served as minister. Many of these females' "Zogos" give birth to children in the cemetery and streets, increasing the likelihood of them being sex workers as they grow up. Children of sex workers are at risk of being prostituted, homeless, runaway, or abandoned, and they are often pushed into prostitution (All Africa, 2019).

The increase in prostitution, especially among teenage and school-going girls, some of whom are homeless, is directly linked to the rise in poverty, inequitable distribution of national income, high unemployment, bad governance, and unequal access to justice and self-actualization opportunities (All Africa, 2019). Scores of government officials have voiced concerns about the alarming rate of prostitution among children and youth caused by endemic poverty. It claimed the attention of Rep. Moimah Briggs Mensah, at which time she called for the criminalization of prostitution to help mitigate the situation and keep the children off the streets (All Africa, 2019). Still, not much has been done to remedy the situation. From all indications, the onus is on the government to create an enabling environment to foster self-reliance and growth among women to

discourage young girls from seeing prostitution as the easiest means of generating money to take care of themselves and their families. The Ministry of Gender and Children Welfare, Justice (Police), Youth and Sports, Health, and other stakeholders with statutory responsibilities of meeting the needs of children, youth, and women need to collaborate with the National Housing Authority to institute public policy reforms and strategies. It will help address these problems tied to homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health among these youths.

Criminal activities such as street theft, pick-pocketing, and armed robbery are on Monrovia's increase due to these homeless youth ("Zogos"). Areas surrounding the Palm Grove Cemetery have become a "no-go zone" or "den for thieves," especially at night, as these youth will rob anyone around that vicinity of valuables and even hurt the person in the process. Residential areas such as Paynesville, Virginia, Johnsonville, Garnerville, and others are the main target for armed robbery perpetrated by these substance-abusing criminals (All Africa, 2019). The "Zogos" continue to terrorize Monrovia residents and its environs daily, with little or nothing being done by the government to remedy the situation. The Ministry of Gender/Children & Youth, Ministry of Health & Social Welfare, Ministry of Youth & Sport, Ministry of Justice, and NHA have no immediate or clear plan to address this situation.

Homelessness in Other African Countries

Public housing and homelessness are not unique to Liberia. Many countries, including developed countries, still need to solve these problems. Still, they are entangled in a web of problems: substance abuse, mental health, poverty, crimes, unemployment,

prostitution, and others. However, some countries have developed effective policies, frameworks, and strategies to transition homeless people into public housing through legislation and other actions public policymakers take (Arku, 2009). For this study, Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya's approaches were reviewed to examine their strategies for homelessness that could be used in Liberia to make public housing more affordable for our targeted population.

These countries were selected because they once experienced civil unrest and instability that led to numerous social, political, and economic problems, including housing. South Africa has a significant housing shortage, high unemployment, and urbanization, resulting in people living on the streets (Margaretten, 2015). Overcrowding, high unemployment, and housing deficit are some causes of homelessness in Ghana (Arku, 2009). Nigeria and Kenya are experiencing significant urban migration, leading to major cities being overcrowded in search of better opportunities (employment, school, healthcare, threats from terrorists, among others). As a result, homelessness has become a severe problem for these countries. These are similar problems that are responsible for the homeless situation in Liberia. This study examined African countries' strategies to address homelessness and other countries' approaches.

Ghana's Approach to Homelessness

Ghana's theoretical proposition points to fundamental changes in addressing public housing by shifting away from direct state provision to the private sector's active participation in addressing the country's housing needs. The Ghanaian government instituted reforms by making adequate housing a right for citizens, and it was incumbent

upon the government to provide it (Arku, 2009). These measures are still in place even though implementation remains challenging depending on the government in power. The assumption that these “Zogos” do not deserve adequate housing in Liberia is a myth. The National Housing Authority (NHA) must prioritize providing housing for them just as they are doing across the country for low and medium-income families.

Ghana faced a similar situation in the 1990s, and they carried out fundamental changes to mitigate the problems. During the past 20-plus years, the Ghanaian public housing sector has fundamentally changed by instituting reforms that shifted away from direct state provision of public housing and strongly towards active participation by the private sector in housing production, financing, and building materials production (Arku, 2009). They realized the government public housing programs’ failures due to state-owned enterprises’ unimpressive performance and dwindling state resources. They recognized that the government was unable to solve the housing problems alone. They implemented changes rooted in liberalization ideologies that have had mixed effects on people’s housing needs and the national economy. To ensure its success, the Ghanaian government played a supporting role by creating the required regulatory, legal, and economic framework for the private sector to operate with support from the World Bank and other multinational and international organizations with an agreement that public housing services can be more efficiently provided when responsibilities are devolved to the private sector (Arku, 2009).

The Ghanaian government made housing the core of its social policies by declaring that adequate housing was a right and that the government was obligated to

provide it (Arku, 2009). The Liberian government established the National Housing Authority (NHA) in the 1960s to address its people's housing needs. Ghana has over 20 million, while Liberia's population is under 5 million. There was political will on the part of the Ghanaian government to find a lasting solution to the housing crisis in their country, which led to the privatization of that sector with support from a trusted organization (Arku, 2009). In Liberia, the government does not see housing as a right.

There is inadequate budgetary allotment to support the National Housing Authority to address the homeless's housing needs (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). The government has made strides in providing low-income housing for Liberians, especially before the civil war. It is still constructing low and middle-income homes, but not homes for people experiencing homelessness. The Ghanaian government realized its inability to adequately address its people's housing needs. It fostered a partnership with the private sector to address that problem. While in Liberia, the government has not realized its inability and is more interested in building homes for middle-income families to attract expatriates and Liberians to return home abroad, which is detrimental to the most needed homeless.

The Ghanaian government revised its public housing policies and slum clearance to solve their housing problems. However, unlike Ghana, Habitat for Humanity developed a Slum Community Program to improve Liberians' housing needs in those communities. The Ghanaian policy changes were shaped by a growing need for private sector participation, a favorable financial and regulatory environment, institutional reforms, and foreign investment in the housing market (Arku, 2009). These contributed to

reformed policies such as the Open-Door policy, which attracted substantial real estate developers who have invested unprecedented private capital into the sector. Liberia implemented the Open-Door Policy in 1960 during President William V.S. Tubman's administration, but Liberia only achieved a little infrastructure development compared to Ghana.

Liberalizing the housing market in Ghana may be suitable for the country's infrastructure development and addressing the people's housing needs, but it also has drawbacks (Arku, 2009). An increasing number of private property developers are involved in the residential market, which has led to skyrocketing, making life difficult for the ordinary Ghanaian in urban areas. The increase in private developers has produced housing units for a profit with extremely high prices, especially in large urban areas. Depending on the location, a two-bedroom house may cost approximately \$ 90,000, and three- and four-bedroom houses may cost about \$ 190,000 and \$ 300,000, respectively, which many Ghanaians cannot afford (Arku, 2009). That has led to uneven regional development and increased rural-urban migration. Housing in Ghana has shown the inadequacies of the private sector-led approach to providing affordable housing, which has led to recommendations to switch back to social housing due to the cost of privatized housing (Obeng-Odoom, 2011).

In Liberia, public housing is the government's sole responsibility, but the system has many lapses: corruption, biased selection of tenants, budgetary constraints, poor resource utilization, and political incompetence. The National Housing Authority should prioritize making housing accessible to low-income people through systemic reforms. It

is prudent for the government to educate planners on urban issues and revisit international agencies' roles in the housing sector. Obeng-Odoom posits that they should focus on the nature of education programs and training for housing managers, emphasizing managerial framework, discussing the adverse effects of its approach on housing provision and the housing market in general, and recommending additional areas to consider in the context of systemic reform (2011).

South Africa Homelessness

The literature reviewed on South Africa's approach to addressing homelessness shows a robust and comprehensive analysis of people without housing in the City of Tshwane, South Africa, used as a blueprint across the nation. The South African government instituted a legislative framework and intersectoral policy in the housing sector to prioritize preventative measures to mitigate the vulnerability of economic, social, and structural risks of becoming homeless (Naidoo, 2010). These measures are still in place even though implementation remains challenging depending on the government in power. These frameworks and regulations led to better collaboration and coordination of social welfare and the government agencies responsible for housing.

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regulations led to better collaboration and coordination of social welfare and the government agencies responsible for housing.

This study reviewed the South African government's response to homelessness, including legislation and policies to address the problems of street homelessness and how this problem has shaped the circumstances of the larger population with whom these homeless share intimate relationships through economic poverty and social instability. This approach led to an intersectoral policy and legislative framework in the social welfare and housing sectors, prioritizing numerous preventative measures to reduce the vulnerable's social, economic, and structural risks of becoming homeless (Naidoo, V. (2010). The framework encourages effective coordination and collaboration between government agencies with the statutory responsibility of housing and social welfare to mitigate the problem. Like Liberia, South Africa is attributed to high unemployment and inadequate social service networks for underprivileged people, many of whom end up in the streets. Both countries provide subsidized housing for low-income families, but there is no housing alternative for people experiencing homelessness in Liberia.

South Africa is a bigger and wealthier nation than Liberia but has its fair share of homelessness. The level of homelessness on South Africa's streets is regarded as a slow-moving tragedy that encompasses the complexity of these homeless people's lives and the complex and holistic efforts needed to address this issue (Roman, Erasmus, Blaauw & Ryan, 2017). Providing low-income housing is daunting for policymakers, especially in Liberia, where attempts to deliver state-funded affordable housing projects have yielded minimal results.

Nigeria and Kenya Homelessness

Homelessness is also a severe problem in Lagos, Nigeria, with about 24 million people homeless (Adetokonbo & Emeka, 2015). Lagos is a megacity with a population of over 20 million people. High employment, urbanization, forced eviction, poverty, peer influence instability in part of the country due to gangs, kidnapping, terroristic activities (Boko Haram), and natural disasters have forced millions out of their homes (Adetokonbo & Emeka, 2015). Addressing homelessness remains a daunting task for the government amid other national challenges.

An estimated quarter of a million children are homeless in Kenya, and 1.8 million children are orphaned (Goodman et al., 2016). According to this study, many people experiencing homelessness in Kenya are children. The number is expected to increase due to parental alcohol use, parental mental health, poverty, HIV/Aids, and parental death. Children of HIV-infected parents are more likely to migrate into the streets than other children (Goodman et al., 2016). The government is instituting policy reforms and funding local community organizations to coordinate responses to address these homeless children's challenges.

Hence, it is hoped that Liberia's government will use a right-based approach to address the issues of homelessness, just like Ghana and South Africa. They must bring significant stakeholders to the table to propose ways of addressing street homelessness due to this problem's complexities and discern appropriate and diverse alternatives. The researcher used individual interviews to ensure that these homeless ("Zogos") are part of the discussion. From the interviews, the researcher learned about other factors

contributing to them becoming homeless besides the civil war and the Ebola epidemic. The researcher anticipated that cultural, economic, political, and social factors that caused homelessness were considered to develop a shared understanding of the problems and factors using a collaborative framework for national policy implementation and resource allocation. This research provided evidence of post-war Liberia's public policy's impact on people experiencing homelessness, especially in Palm Grove Cemetery in Monrovia, and how to formulate strategic policies to address these issues. Measures of validity ensured that this study accomplished its purpose through results and that results reflected available evidence.

Summary and Conclusions

Homelessness is a severe problem in Liberia, and the government's poor handling of the situation is making things worse for those in need of appropriate public housing. This study aimed to explore post-war Liberia's public housing program policies and the roles that professional competency and human capacity play in effectively mitigating homelessness of youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. The literature reviewed from past studies validates the government's claims through the National Housing Authority's (NHA) laissez-faire approach to homelessness. As documented through this study, the NHA is constructing many low- and middle-income homes across the country, most notably the 5000 housing units constructed in Margibi County. However, it has disregarded addressing the plight of these homeless youth. There is no homeless shelter in Liberia and no plan for one. Some NGOs are running mental health and drug and alcohol programs for these youth, but these youth returned to the

streets after completing the program. This study filled the gaps by revealing the challenges at NHA and public policy changes needed to prioritize homelessness rather than focusing primarily on low and middle-income housing to generate revenue.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to explore the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, especially those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery. In this chapter, I restate the research question and discussed the research design and rationale for selecting this method, which is a qualitative case study, as the most appropriate research method. The research question and problem statement informed my justification for this methodology. This study's central concept or phenomenon is the problem in Liberia's post-war public housing policy and homelessness, specifically, the inadequacy of Liberia's public housing program and the lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness in the country. This chapter is followed by Chapter 4, where details were provided on the methodology used for data collection. Interviews, observation, and field notes were used and detailed in this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions utilized for this case study are as follows: How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The sub-research questions are as follows:

RQ1: In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the "Zogos" housing situation?

RQ2: How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?

The problem statement is Liberia's inadequate public housing program and lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness, which continues to be a problem. Hundreds of youths are sleeping in cemeteries, unfinished buildings, market stalls, and other informal settings due to the inability of the government to provide housing for the homeless. Yet, through the National Housing Authority (NHA), the government continues to build homes for low and middle-income families across the country, but this is not a solution for these homeless youth.

The research design focused on how the study was conducted and served as the blueprint (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). It maximized the possibility of obtaining valid answers to the research questions and methods used to control factors that may interfere with the reliability and validity of the findings. It also describes how data are collected and analyzed to provide answers to specific research questions or hypotheses.

I used a qualitative research design for this study because it focused on generating meaning and understanding through the detailed description of problems. This required developing an understanding of the complex social environments of homeless youth ("Zogos") in Palm Grove Cemetery and the meaning that these youth within those environments (cemetery) bring to their experience (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative design entails observational design, survey research design, etc. Observational design involves field observation, which provides the researcher with a method to collect data about the phenomenon of interest using casual ordering (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The data from this design are descriptive, and the information is used to inform a more controlled design where a researcher can move interchangeably between experiment and

observation. A case study is the most common observational design, which involves an intensive exploration of a single unit of study and multiple sources of evidence to confirm a single observation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

The selection of case study methods in qualitative design addresses problems arising from different philosophical views and seeks to achieve different goals using various methods or designs (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It focuses on the quality of experience by understanding or describing the essence of human experience using measurable factors (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). This method was ideal for the study because of the experiences of these youth living in the graveyard, the environmental impact on their psychological and emotional well-being, and the lack of adequate strategies from the government (National Housing Authority) to address homelessness. Qualitative research integrates more subjective human experience than purely objective external reality and is based on positivism (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

My qualitative research design also identified hunches, themes, and initial models that provided an understanding of the homeless situation in Monrovia by describing the situation behind those walls and in the tombs. This study conveyed information on these "Zogos" in detail and specificity necessary to accurately explain their living experiences in the cemetery and other survival mechanisms being utilized. My goal was to make sense of what is happening in the graveyard and lives of these youth and reach out to relevant authorities to understand or explain their lack of actions to address the plight of these homeless youth. This case study examined why the government of Liberia, through

the National Housing Authority and other relevant agencies, is not addressing the homelessness of these youth (Petruzzi et al., 2018).

The case study can turn the client's observations into usable data by offering verifiable data from direct observations of the participant (Yin, 2014). Other researchers in similar circumstances could use those observations to replicate the result of the study. A case study can also turn an opinion into fact by analyzing data generated in real-time, as there are proven paths of negative or positive development (Yin, 2014). This method is also relevant to all parties involved as the researcher is actively involved in data collection. Participants can further their knowledge because of their interest in the study's outcome. The case study uses numerous research methodologies for data collection. It is inexpensive and can be done remotely.

I used a case study method because it is an investigative approach to individual or group circumstances. It involves collecting in-depth data about these youth through various collection methods such as interviews, observation, and field notes. Case study design addresses problems arising from different philosophical views and seeks to achieve different goals using various methods. It focuses on the quality of experience by understanding or describing the essence of human experience using measurable factors (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). It can combine any number of qualitative traditions to meet the specific needs of the research situation and is regarded as the most flexible methodology that can blend several traditions into a valid research design (Yin, 2014). With this flexibility, I used field notes, observation, and interviews in real-life settings with the homeless, NHA staff, and other relevant stakeholders for this qualitative study.

This research paper used three sources of information to address the situation regarding this qualitative study. First, the case study method is the most common observational design, which involves an intensive exploration of a single unit of study and multiple sources of evidence to confirm a single observation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This case study examined why the government of Liberia's housing strategies fail to address homelessness. The second, the "Survey Method," which is an in-depth individual (IDI) interview process, allows firsthand information to be gathered from the impoverished "Zogos" themselves, who are the prime subject of this study, to understand the reason behind their action for living in the cemetery (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This method makes sense of what is going on in the graveyard and the lives of these youth. It allowed the researcher to reach out to relevant authorities to understand or explain their lack of actions to address the plights of these homeless youth. Third, field notes were used to record or document information gathered from the researcher's interaction with major stakeholders (homeless, government officials, and NGOs) to analyze and discuss the homeless situation in Monrovia to fully understand the factors that gave rise to the problem this study seeks to address. The benefits of triangulation include increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging and integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem (Thurmond, 2001).

A case study examines in some depth persons, decisions, programs, or other entities that have a unique characteristic of interest (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). I selected a case study method because it details how these youth live in the cemetery and why they

chose to live there rather than exploring other housing alternatives. This method allowed me to collect data from multiple sources, such as field notes, observations, and interviews. The data's validity, reliability, and accuracy depend on my research design, interviewing, sampling, and questionnaire construction. Qualitative studies involve extensive fieldwork, requiring the researcher to go where the cases are located and obtain information in their natural setting to avoid manipulating any aspect of the studied situation (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Another reason why I used this method was that I wanted to visit the cemetery to see firsthand what these youths are going through daily and make informed decisions without bias. This allowed me to also interact with officials at the National Housing Authority, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth and Sports, etc., to discuss the plight of these youth and make recommendations.

Qualitative data are often collected from interviews, focus groups, and observation (Laureate Education, 2010b). Despite the method of design used, the findings must be accurate, reliable, and valid to be considered for scholarly use. Validity shows that the study is well-founded and that the results are generalized to a larger group (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This is the extent to which data and its interpretation care are considered credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable. Reliability is concerned with the replicability of the study under similar circumstances by showing consistency (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

The researcher can influence factors within the data as everyone has unconscious bias. The researcher controls the facts collected and can control the result generated. It

also takes a long time to analyze the data collected because one must sift through all the data collected (Laureate Education, 2010b). Lastly, the case study method is labor-intensive for data collection. It requires the researcher to be involved in every aspect of data collection and have high-level language skills.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is responsible for maintaining the credibility and rigor of all aspects of the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this qualitative research, I used standardized methods and measures to validate the information by using reliable instruments in my analysis. This enabled the researcher to apply qualitative standards of credibility, dependability, and transferability of monitoring and reducing bias, collecting and analyzing the data, and presenting the findings.

As a qualitative researcher, I deeply empathized with the thoughts and feelings of my participants, striving to develop an understanding of the meaning they ascribed to themselves. I used observation to study these participants in their environment (cemetery) to gain a profound insight into their life experiences. Face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to engage with participants, delving into the research phenomenon, which, in turn, illuminated the study's problems, situations, or contexts. This process necessitates the researcher to introspect on the process before and during the research, providing an empathetic understanding and context for readers. The researcher should steer clear of their biases and focus on articulating their position (subjectivities) for the reader to comprehend the lens through which questions were asked, data were gathered, analyzed, and findings were reported (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Qualitative research is used to gain insights into participants' thoughts and feelings that could provide a basis for future studies or help researchers develop survey instruments for use in a quantitative or mixed-method study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to gain access to the participant's thoughts and feelings by asking the participants to share information about their personal experiences. The researcher is responsible for safeguarding participants and the data collected. The safeguarding mechanism must be clearly explained to these participants and must meet the approval of the IRB or Walden before the research begins (Laureate Education, 2010b).

In this qualitative research, data collection involves generating a large amount of data through field notes, interviews, observation, etc. (Yin, 2014). There are different ways of recording data during an interview, but I used audio recording (cell phone or recorder) and handwritten notes. I transcribed the audio recording verbatim before data analysis can begin. I also maintained a folder for field notes to complement the audio interview, assessing my impression of participants, their behavior, environmental contexts, and nonverbal gestures that I may not capture in the recording.

An essential aspect of data analysis and management is for the researcher to be true to the participants, which entails tuning into their world and seeing it from their perspective (Yin, 2014). The researcher tries to hear participants' voices to interpret and report for others to learn after reading. Interpreting the data depends on the theoretical standpoint the researcher has taken, as this is one of the foundations of qualitative work.

The researcher needs to be aware of their perspective to prevent you from quickly slipping into interpreting the participant's narrative from your point of view.

Possible ethical problems may arise during this study. My research is "Homeless youths living in Palm Grove Cemetery, Monrovia." There are many ethical problems that I could have encountered while conducting this research due to the subjects being vulnerable and the potential risk and stigmatization they could face because of their participation. As such, I needed to analyze the inherent ethical challenges and their impact on the subjects. As stated, many of my participants are victims of the brutal civil war and the Ebola epidemic. Some of these youths were child soldiers who were neglected, abused, and forced into adult life. They are involved in illegal activities such as prostitution, substance abuse, and crimes. They have mental health issues that might incriminate them or expose them to potential harm from law enforcement or the public. The government has already abandoned them, and they are experiencing resentment from the public. So, the researcher fully implemented informed consent during this process as personal issues could severely distress these vulnerable youths if framed in a judgmental, non-inclusive, dismissive, or insensitive manner (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Some government officials lacked cooperation due to their poor handling of the situation and pushback from the community or the general public. Some youths were reluctant to participate in the study due to repercussions, fear, and other harmful vices.

Many challenges were encountered while conducting this research due to the subjects being vulnerable and the potential risks they could face due to their participation. These youth are considered vulnerable because they are homeless, unable to provide

essential social services, unemployed, and exposed to extreme living conditions such as poverty. These factors, stigmatization and rejection, put them at risk. Potential barriers included possibly recruiting participants for interviews, meeting people living in Monrovia's cemetery and squatter houses, corruption (bribe), availability of NHA staff, and government officials. Some of these people were child soldiers neglected, abused, and forced into adult life (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As such, the researcher needed to analyze the inherent ethical challenges and their impact on the subjects.

I obtained IRB approval to comply with the university's ethical standards and federal regulations during this research (Walden University IRB, 2013). Its approval was required before the researcher collected any data for this study. The IRB identified any "red flags" or ethical issues that might affect the feasibility of the study as they reviewed all research involving human subjects (Walden University, IRB, 2013).

The best way to address these ethical challenges for the IRB is to comply with their requirements and process thoroughly. As a researcher, you must be aware that informed consent is an active process that the participants must fully understand due to the potential risks and benefits of the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The participants needed to know who was conducting the research and why they were selected for the study. The researcher also revealed the duration of the study and the expected benefits and potential risks. Lastly, the researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and explained the purpose of the study. The participants were free to seek clarification and were advised on compensation or incentives. I provided compensation or incentive (\$5 for youth and \$25 for government official/NGO

staff per participant) for this time and participation in this study. My research ensured participants' risks were minimal, the selection of subjects was equitable, and I monitored the data to ensure their safety and informed consent was sought and appropriately documented (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner & Taliaferro, 2017).

Norms that should be a guiding principle for all researchers. They are the validity of research, which entails that participants are aware of the consequences or implications of their involvement. Competency of the researcher – if the researcher is incompetent, the research may not produce beneficial results. The beneficence of the study – the participants should maximize the research's benefit due to the risk associated with such a process. Special population – the researcher should avoid taking advantage of vulnerable people by subjecting them to conditions they cannot reject. Informed consent – the researcher must allow the participants to decide whether or not they are willing to tolerate the risk associated with the study or the value associated with the study (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner & Taliaferro, 2017). These are all very important in social change research to ensure the participants complete the study unharmed and with full informed consent.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population being studied for this research is vulnerable youth (“Zogos”) between 18 – 21 years old living in Palm Grove Cemetery in Monrovia. A purposeful sampling technique was utilized to select participants for this study. Participant selection in qualitative research is purposeful in that the researcher selects participants that can best inform the research questions to enhance an understanding of the phenomenon under

study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). That is why it is imperative to identify appropriate participants in the design phase of the study, as decisions regarding selections are based on the research question, evidence information of the study, and theoretical framework. These participants must provide critical facets and perspectives on the phenomenon being studied.

The sample size of this study was 12 - 15 participants, and I interviewed 13 participants (nine “Zogos,” three government officials, and one NGO staff). A formal letter was written to the National Housing Authority (NHA) requesting permission to carry out this study, and the relevant government agency was clothed with the authority to grant said permission once I received approval from the IRB. The letter informed the NHA of the proposed study’s details, the study’s duration, the participants, and the potential benefits to the homeless and the country. I wrote a similar letter to the other agencies (Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, A Lawmaker & NGO staff) that I wanted to participate in the research and requested them to designate staff knowledgeable about the subject to represent them in this research.

The sample size (number of participants) is not generally predetermined in qualitative research, as the number depends on the number required to fully inform all elements of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). The number of participants can be deemed sufficient when additional interviews do not identify new data saturation concepts. Data saturation occurs when data collection and analysis are ideally concurrent in an iterative cycle, allowing the researcher to document new themes and identity perspectives that may have been overlooked (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Instrumentation

My data instrument consisted of interviews, field notes, and audio recordings (smartphone and digital voice recorder) in this study. I applied the proposed guide for conducting quality interviews by Ravitch and Carl (2016) to capture all the information needed to support the research questions. This study utilized responsive interview techniques, which allowed the interviewer and interviewees to establish a trusting relationship. Rubin & Rubin (2012) posit that adequately recognizing and dealing with participants' emotions in data collection through their body language and voice tone is essential to the interview process.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews for this study were audio recorded using my smartphone and digital voice recorder with the consent of all participants. I immediately transcribed the interview information for interpretation and analysis. Our conversation (participant and me) was conducted in a friendly and professional manner to allow all parties to express their views on the research questions freely. This approach led to an informative and interactive conversation process that facilitated the collection of in-depth information about the participants' living experiences. I also used a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to collect data for free-flowing conversation.

Individual interviews must be informal, so participants feel like they are participating in a discussion or conversation rather than a formal question-or-answer process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This process involves thought, preparation, and the

development of the interview schedule. The interview data will be conducted and analyzed with care and consideration.

Individual interviews for this study were audio recorded with the consent of participants. As my data collection method, I developed a questionnaire of 8 open-ended questions for this semi-structured interview. Four were tailored for the youth, and the others for the officials. A digital voice recorder and smartphone were used to record the interview. The recorded interviews were transcribed immediately into Otter Software for interpretation and analysis later to generate codes and themes for this study. I also used the Delve Qualitative Analysis Software package for this study because it helped me better organize, analyze, manage, interpret, and store the data collected. Delve qualitative analysis software is top-rated and robustly capable of video, photo, audio documentation, and coding parts of an image (Saldana, 2016). This software can also be used for visualization, categorization, codes, and themes generation. It helped me organize the codes and themes and develop crosstab matrix tables coded in specific ways. A total of 13 participants were interviewed.

Observation

Qualitative observation is a research method in which researchers collect data using their five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing (Rudestam et al., 2015). Observation fosters a rich and in-depth understanding of the situation, setting, phenomenon, and behavior of the participants in that setting (Rudestam et al., 2015). This method is subjective because it depends on the researcher's sensory organs. Observation involves an intensive exploration of a single unit of study and multiple sources of

evidence to confirm a single observation (Rudestam et al., 2015). This data collection method makes sense of what is happening in the lives of these youth in the graveyard. It allows the researcher to reach out to relevant authorities for an understanding or explanation of their lack of action to address the plights of these homeless youth. This data collection method allowed me to monitor or assess the situation or process and document evidence of what was heard and seen during my interaction with participants.

Observational design involves field observation, which provides the researcher with a method to collect data about the phenomenon of interest using causal ordering. I observed all participants during the recruitment and interview process to document the environment, mood, and other non-verbal gestures. A case study can turn the client's observations into usable data by offering verifiable data from direct observations of the participant. Other researchers in similar circumstances could use those observations to replicate the result of the study (Laureate Education, 2010b). This method is also relevant to all parties involved as the researcher actively engages in the data collection process. Participants can further their knowledge because of their interest in the study's outcome. The aim was to use participants' perceptions, feelings, and opinions through group skills, moderating, listening, observing, and facilitating.

Field Notes

During this process, I also used observation field notes to document participants' non-verbal communication (like body language, non-verbal gestures, etc.). It allowed me to record my daily research progress and document any significant occurrence to prevent the loss of valuable information. This also allowed me to track my research activities and

accurately record information gathered during the individual interviews and observations. The researcher uses written descriptions, video recordings, and photographs to document the information collected (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This enabled me to apply the triangulation of multiple data sources to facilitate the accuracy of my study outcome. I recorded field notes daily to maintain accuracy, keep track of my research progress, and prevent the loss of any vital information.

Data Analysis Plan

Qualitative research data collection approaches involve direct interaction with individuals on a one-to-one basis (interview) or direct interaction with individuals in a group setting such as focus groups (Creswell, 2013). Data management is a vital component of a research process that helps the researcher organize and manage the data collected. As such, I developed a data collection plan to gather vital information from participants, which was secured and stored. The process is time-consuming, so data are usually collected from a smaller sample than a larger size in quantitative research (Creswell, 2013). During this process, I adhered to ethical standards and fully complied with IRB regulations regarding human subjects in this study. Potential participants were treated equally and guaranteed equal participation that protected their rights and welfare. This made the information gathered richer, providing a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. I took the following steps to address potential privacy and safety risks: Data collected were stored in my smartphone and digital voice recorder and placed in my locked drawer. These data were password-protected during the entirety of the study. Also, only the researcher had access to the data collected. All interview

transcripts and data collected will be deleted securely after five years. I applied the triangulation of multiple data sources to facilitate the positive outcome of this study. The data-gathering stage then followed. This process involved data analysis and interpretation. I gathered data in this study from interviews, observation, and field notes that were organized and transcribed immediately into Otter Software for accuracy. Once all the research interviews were transcribed and checked, coding was done. Coding identifies topics, similarities, issues, and differences revealed through participants' narratives and interpreted by the researcher (Saldana, 2016). This allowed the researcher to understand the world of each participant from their perspective. Field notes compiled during interviews were a valuable complementary source of information to facilitate this process to minimize the gap in time between an interview, transcribing, and coding that could result in memory bias regarding nonverbal or environmental context issues, which could have affected the interpretation of the data (Saldana, 2016).

In a qualitative research method, the analysis organizes descriptive information into a story, creates concepts, or identifies themes and patterns (Creswell, 2013). A theme is used as an attribute, element, descriptor, and concept that organizes a group of repeated ideas, enabling the researcher to answer questions about the study (Saldana, 2016).

Themes contain codes with a common point of reference and a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the research topic. These themes have subtitles, and the codes can be categorized to analyze the data. I used theming to establish the category and validate the data to reflect the description of the participants' experience. The revealed

theme was labeled and defined with examples of narratives illustrating each theme. That is why I used theming in my study as they explained repeated words shown in the study.

Theming is the process of putting code together from one or more transcripts to present qualitative research findings meaningfully or coherently (Saldana, 2016). This process makes it possible to present the data from the interview or focus group using quotations from an individual transcript to illustrate the source of the researcher's interpretation. Each theme can become a heading of a section in the presentation, and underneath each will be the codes.

A case study method requires researchers to have a high-level skill set to gather data and detailed information about the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). With the proper skill set, this method could be efficient and accurate. Since the interviews will be audio recorded, they must be transcribed to convert the spoken words to written words to facilitate analysis. Transcribing is an arduous process, so I tried to transcribe one interview at a time in this qualitative research. The researcher transcribed the audio recording verbatim and numbered the lines of text. Once the transcription was completed, the researcher read it while listening to the recording to make corrections, anonymized the transcript to protect the participant's identity, and inserted notations when applicable.

When coding and theming, it is essential to consider what is said and not said during the interview or focus group (Saldana, 2016). The process from data collection to presentation aims to tell the participants' stories using exemplars from their narratives by grounding the research findings in their life experiences. The researcher felt the participant's experience of the phenomenon during this process and anticipated things

that could be pursued in subsequent interviews as one participant's narrative informs the next until the process reaches saturation. The following steps were taken to adequately address participants' safety, privacy, and risks: The collected data were password-protected during the entire study. The data collected was securely stored in a locked drawer. Only the researcher always had access to the collected data to prevent manipulation. I will securely delete the interview transcripts and collected data of the participants after a minimum of five years.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The study's trustworthiness refers to the quality of the data analysis, which includes the roles of participants, timing, sequence, and what was done during the study. It involves how clearly the researcher developed the data code or themes, applied best practices, compared the findings within and among transcripts, and the recording quality (Yin, 2014). This process also looked at the procedure for resolving differences in the findings and among participants and addressing any potential influence the researchers' views or beliefs may have on the analysis.

Internal validity is the validity of causal inference. Validation is evaluating the trustworthiness of things observed, interpreted, and generalized (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Creswell (2013) posits that qualitative researchers use different strategies to ensure the validity of their findings. Prolonged engagement and persistent data gathering ensure that the researcher does not draw conclusions based on isolated experiences with the study. The researcher should use thick, rich descriptions to ensure that sufficient details about the phenomenon being studied are included so that others can derive the

same conclusion. Triangulation is another strategy that uses multiple data sources to build a complete picture of a phenomenon. The researcher can also use member checking to present the study's findings to the original participants for their feedback on their portrayal. Peer debriefing is used to enlist others' views on the findings and to use an external auditor to review the entire study's overall logic, coherence, and consistency (Laureate Education, 2010b).

The researcher addressed the issue of validity and reliability in this study to ensure the information's accuracy, credibility, and dependability. Reliability replicates the study results, while validity addresses the research's trustworthiness, quality, and rigor (Simon, 2011b). In this study, I ensured that participants or stakeholders were allowed to correct fact or interpretation errors. Validity focuses on establishing consistency between the responses of the researcher and those realities presented by the respondents. I did my best to minimize generalization to provide the facts and not manipulate the information gathered from participants about the study.

The data's validity, reliability, and accuracy depend on my expertise in research design, interviewing, sampling, and questionnaire construction (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This enabled me to know the lifestyle of these youth and the challenges they faced, and I obtained such information through interviews and observation. I directly interacted with these youths individually or in a group setting. Interviews were used to understand the government's *laissez-faire* approach or lack of policy to address the homeless situation of these youth. This allowed me to engage in collective discussion with stakeholders to understand the circumstances of these homeless youth.

The reliability of the representation and interpretation of the participant's narrative raises questions in qualitative research as there is no statistical test to check the validity as done in quantitative research (Simon, 2011). However, trustworthiness is a way to establish confidence in the truth of the findings. This entails credibility (confidence in the findings) and dependability (it shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated). Transferability, on the other hand, shows that the findings can be applied in other contexts) while confirmability shows that the findings are shaped by the participants, not the researcher's bias, interest, or motivation).

Ensuring research quality and rigor involves authenticating the data and trusting the data analysis, which is like ensuring validity and reliability (Creswell, 2013). The authenticity of the data entailed that the sampling approach and participant selection enabled the research question to be addressed adequately to reduce the potential for having a biased sample. The trustworthiness of the analysis refers to the quality of the data analysis and processes considering the role of team members, timing, sequence, etc.

The study's ethical issues were minimized based on five ethical norms that should guide all researchers. They are the validity of research, which entails that participants are aware of the consequences or implications of their involvement. Competency of the researcher – if the researcher is incompetent, the research may not produce beneficial results (Creswell, 2013). The beneficence of research – the participants should be able to maximize the benefit of the study due to the risk associated with such a process. Special population – the researcher should avoid taking advantage of vulnerable people by subjecting them to conditions they cannot object to. Informed consent – the researcher

must allow the participants to decide whether or not they are willing to tolerate the risk associated with the study or the value associated with the study (O’Sullivan et al., 2017). These are all very important in social change research to ensure the participants complete the study unharmed and with full informed consent.

Ethical procedures were fully implemented during this study, which involved meeting with the “Zogos.” Meeting with the homeless was very risky, especially with the majority mentally ill and addicted to various kinds of drugs. Going into the cemetery to interview them created skepticism among them due to their lifestyle and may have exposed the researcher to potential harm. Many potential risks are associated with going to the graveyard to meet these youth, such as getting robbed or being resisted if the researcher does not plan this meeting properly. Fortunately, there was no harm to the researcher.

These youth are considered vulnerable because of their life choices and living conditions, making it essential for an early IRB review (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Even though they are going through some form of stigmatization from the general public, their participation in the process could be beneficial in exploring better housing arrangements and proper treatment for their substance abuse and mental health issues. The most important ethical issue was ensuring full compliance with informed consent during this process because personal problems could severely distress these vulnerable youths if framed in a judgmental, non-inclusive, dismissive, or insensitive manner (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The IRB ensures that the researcher complies with the university's ethical standards and federal regulations (Walden University, 2019). Its approval was required before the researcher collected any data for this study. As such, I contacted Walden IRB via email to expedite the review of my research to minimize potential risks to participants and obtain their approval promptly.

My research and contact information were publicized through social media outlets, and outreach to these youths was made through their leadership. All participants had my contact information (phone number and email address) to minimize intermediaries that ensured these children's privacy were protected and for confidentiality purposes. The data collected was stored on my secure server and transcribed accordingly. As the researcher, I was aware that informed consent was an active process that participants must fully understand due to the potential risks and benefits of the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Participants were informed of the entire process, and I worked with the relevant government and non-governmental agencies to ensure the safety of respondents. The identity of these youths was not disclosed, and law enforcement officers were not allowed to visit the cemetery in uniforms. My research ensured that risks to participants were minimized, the selection of subjects was equitable, and data were monitored to ensure their safety. Informed consent was sought and appropriately documented during this study (O'Sullivan et al., 2017).

As the researcher, I ensured full IRB compliance to avoid ethical issues. I revealed the duration of the study, expected benefits, and potential risks. I also ensured that participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to

voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Lastly, I informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and advised them on compensation or incentives and their right to seek clarification.

Summary

Homelessness is a severe problem in Liberia, and the government's handling of the situation appeared to cause a worsening of conditions for those in need of appropriate public housing. The literature reviewed from past studies validates the government's claims through the National Housing Authority's (NHA) laissez-faire approach to homelessness in the country. The purpose of this study was to explore post-war Liberia's public housing policies and consider their role in effectively mitigating homelessness among youth in Monrovia, especially those residing in Palm Grove Cemetery.

The research design for this study is qualitative, and a case study is the research method used. The research design focused on how the study was conducted and served as the blueprint for the study. The qualitative design was chosen because it addressed problems arising from different philosophical points of view and sought to achieve different goals using various methods or techniques. The case study method was selected because it is an investigative approach to individual or group circumstances. It involves collecting in-depth data about these youth through various collection methods such as interviews, observation, and field notes. I worked hard to maintain the researcher's role and the credibility and rigor of all aspects of this research. Participants were selected because they can best inform the research questions to enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study. The data analysis plan and ethical procedures were highlighted

in this chapter. Trustworthiness and IRB were discussed in depth due to the vulnerability of our participants. Chapter Four discussed and expanded data collected through field notes, interviews, and observations. The participants were brought together to discuss the phenomenon being studied. The methodology and instrument used were further detailed throughout the process.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative case study explores the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, specifically for those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery. It focuses on the inadequacy of Liberia's public housing policy after the civil war and the lack of appropriate government strategies through the National Housing Authority to address homelessness in Liberia. The research question utilized for this case study is as follows: How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The sub-research questions are as follows: In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the "Zogos" housing situation? How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?

The study focused on homeless youth, "The Zogos," living in Monrovia, especially those living in the Palm Grove Cemetery, other cemeteries, fishing beaches, and open marketplaces. It entails developing an understanding of the complex social environments of these homeless youth ("Zogos") in Palm Grove Cemetery and the meaning that these youth within those environments (cemetery, abandoned buildings, fishing beaches, open market, and streets) bring to their living experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The perception of critical stakeholders such as "The Zogos," lawmakers, National Housing Authority officials, government officials from other government

ministries, and NGO staff could play a role in formulating post-war Liberia public housing policy on homelessness.

In this chapter, a summary of the findings is presented. The interview sections were audio-recorded and transcribed into Otto Software after each interview to prevent any loss of details. The transcripts, field notes, and observation notes were later processed and analyzed using Delve Qualitative Analysis Software to reduce the collected data into meaningful categories with the relevant themes that ultimately help answer my research questions (Saldana, 2016). This chapter also covered the study setting, participants, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the findings.

Setting

The setting of this study took into consideration organizational or personal conditions that may have influenced participants or participants' experiences during the study that may have influenced the study results. From this backdrop, some data collection occurred at the Carver Christian University campus in Paynesville City, Liberia. A few government officials and homeless youth (*Zogos*) were interviewed in the university's conference room. Data was collected at the Palm Grove Cemetery in Central Monrovia, the ELWA Fishing Beach, and some government offices and conference rooms. The names of the government offices will not be specified for confidentiality purposes.

There were three main categories of settings for this study. The location of Carver Christian University, Palm Grove Cemetery, and ELWA Fishing Beach. Other settings used were government offices and conference rooms. A formal letter was written to the

private university's authority requesting permission to use their conference room to interview potential participants to enhance privacy and confidentiality (see Appendix). Each partner organization received a letter of invitation. On a visit to the University of Liberia Campus, the data collection process was discussed with the IRB representative. All these places are in Monrovia.

Demographics

There were 13 participants (P1-P13), consisting of nine homeless youth "Zogos" who have been impacted by the lack of post-war Liberia's housing policy on homelessness, three government officials with statutory responsibilities to address homelessness, and one NGO staff member who works with youth and emergencies in Liberia. This study utilizes a purposeful sampling method that involves choosing participants and sites for the study, which contributes to answering the research questions (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). The criterion-based case selection sampling strategy was used in this study because it allowed me to select participants, the research setting, and activities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Two significant criteria had to be met to participate in this study. The youth must be homeless and sleep in the cemeteries (Palm Grove Cemetery specifically), open markets, or streets of Monrovia. These youth must have slept or are still sleeping in these informal localities, including unfinished/abandoned buildings in Monrovia. They must meet the minimum education requirement of being a high school graduate to understand the interview questions and respond accordingly. Despite that, I clarified any question as needed without any leading answers. Government agencies/officials must

have statutory responsibility for public housing, youth, children, gender, and social welfare. The NGO staff must have responsibility for providing emergency assistance to less fortunate people or people affected by disasters, war, pandemics, and other unforeseen circumstances. The following sections describe each participant group.

Three government officials, two males and one female, were selected for this study. Two officials have master's degrees, and the other has a bachelor's degree. All officials have worked in the government for more than five years. The lone NGO staff was a female with a master's degree. She also has numerous professional certificates locally and internationally. Of the nine youths selected to participate in this study, three were females, and six were males. One is a college grad (undergrad), one is a college dropout, and the other seven are high school graduates. Table 1 indicates the demographic information of the 13 participants selected for the study located in Monrovia, Liberia.

Table 1

Participants' Characteristics: Case Classification Sheet

Participants	Gender	Education	Employment
P1 – Youth	Female	College Credits	Unemployed
P2 – Youth	Male	Undergrad Degree	Unemployed
P3 – Youth	Female	High School Grad	Unemployed
P4 – Youth	Female	High School Grad	Unemployed
P5 – Youth	Male	High School Grad	Unemployed
P6 – Youth	Male	High School Grad	Unemployed
P7 – Youth	Male	High School Grad	Unemployed
P8 – Youth	Male	High School Grad	Unemployed
P9 – Youth	Male	High School Grad	Unemployed
P10 – Government Official	Female	Master's Degree	Employed: House of Representatives
P11 – Government Official	Male	Master's Degree	Employed: Ministry of Youth and Sports
P12 – Government Official	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Employed: National Housing Authority
P13 – NGO Staff	Female	Master's Degree	Employed: International Rescue Committee

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the 13 participants in this study, the researcher identified them in the above table as “P,” P1-9 represents the youth, P10-12

represents government officials, and P13 represents NGO staff. Knowing the background of the participants in this interview enabled me to better understand their responses. The interviews were conducted with knowledgeable individuals who helped to avoid inadequately answering the interview questions.

This study critically examined the adequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy and the government's strategies, or lack thereof, to address homelessness, particularly among youth. The data analysis process, a cornerstone of this study, was instrumental in enhancing the credibility and transparency of the findings. Eight interview questions were used, four tailored to elicit the youth perspective on sub-research question one, and the other four to gather the official perspective on sub-research question two. All participants responded to the eight interview questions and were probed further based on their initial responses.

The central research question relates to the Liberian government policy and actions through the National Housing Authority to effectively implement strategies to reduce homelessness. The first sub-research question addressed the youth's ("Zogos") view on the government's post-war public housing policy implementation to reduce homelessness. The view of the key stakeholders (Government officials and NGO staff) was captured in the second sub-research question, which was concerned with how human capacity and political competency impacted the implementation of the post-war Liberia public housing policy. Participants' responses to the sub-research questions were coded into themes and categories with the help of Delve Qualitative Analysis Software.

Data Collection

This study explored the inadequacy of Liberia's post-war public housing policy on homelessness, specifically, the lack of effective strategies to reduce homelessness in the country, especially among youth living in the Palm Grove Cemetery and other informal housing settings. This data analysis process was essential to facilitate the credibility and transparency of findings in the study. Data were collected at the Carver Christian University campus in Paynesville City, Liberia. A few government officials and homeless youth (Zogos) were interviewed in the university's conference room. Data was collected at the Palm Grove Cemetery in Central Monrovia, the ELWA Fishing Beach, and some government offices and conference rooms. All these places are located in Monrovia. All the interviews were audio recorded using a smartphone and Otter Software and later transcribed. The 13 participants were asked eight interview and follow-up questions depending on their responses. P10 (government official) was interviewed on the first day, P11 and 12 (government officials) were interviewed the next day, and P13 (the NGO staff) was interviewed on separate days. The youth ("Zogos") were interviewed over two days, five on the first day and the remaining four on the second day.

The central research question was how governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) can be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia. The first sub-research question addressed the youth ("Zogos") view on implementing the government's post-war public housing policy to reduce homelessness. The views of the key stakeholders (Government officials and NGO staff) were captured in the second sub-research question, which concerned how human

capacity and political competency impacted the implementation of the post-war Liberia public housing policy. Participants' responses to the sub-research questions were coded into themes and categories with the help of Delve Qualitative Analysis Software.

Each participant was asked the four interview questions tailored to the sub-research question and follow-up questions depending on their responses. The nine youths were interviewed for 45-55 minutes. Five youths were interviewed on the same day at the Palm Grove Cemetery and ELWA Fishing Beach. Three were interviewed at the cemetery, and the other two on the beach. The last four were interviewed in the conference room at Carver Christian University. The four interview questions were tailored to get the youth's perspective on sub-research question one, which concerns how implementing government public housing policy has impacted their (the "Zogos") housing situation.

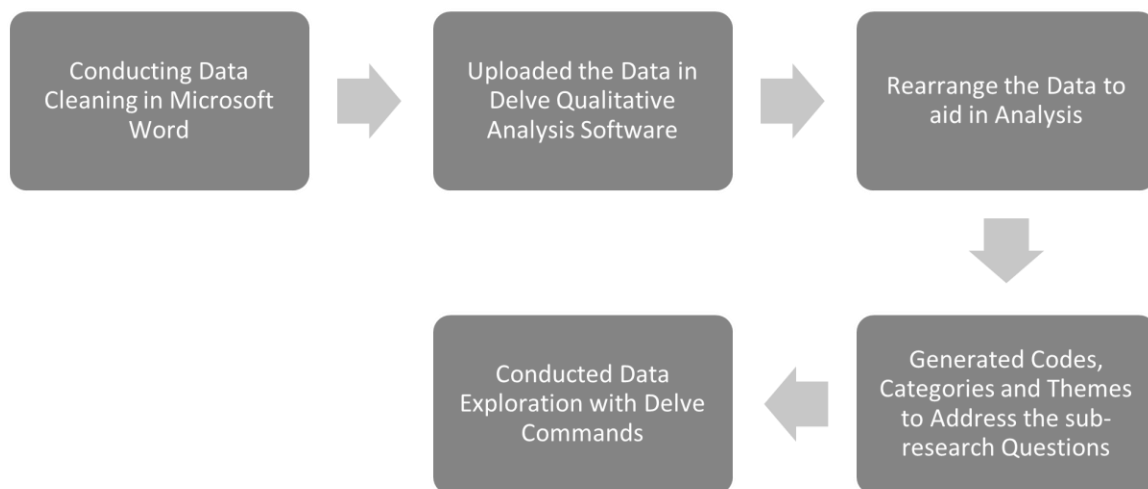
The four stakeholders (three government officials and one NGO staff) were interviewed for 45 – 60 minutes. They were asked four interview questions tailored to enhance their responses to help the researcher answer sub-research question two. It allowed them to give their professional perspective using their knowledge and experience on the subject matter. One of these stakeholders was interviewed in the conference room at Carver Christian University, and the other three were interviewed at their respective offices. The plan was to interview all the participants at Carver Christian University, but the researcher had to be flexible and considerate to accommodate these participants due to various reasons. The three stakeholders interviewed at their offices had problems with traffic, especially in the afternoon. As such, the researcher agreed to meet with them at

their offices behind closed doors to ensure confidentiality and privacy. For the five youths interviewed at the cemetery and beach, they did not feel comfortable going on the university campus. Again, the researcher agreed to meet them in their comfort zone. All the interviews were audio recorded using a smartphone and Otter software and later transcribed.

Data Analysis

Figure 1

Data Analysis Process



Coding with Delve Qualitative Analysis

The researcher transcribed all the over 400 minutes of audio-recorded interviews for the 13 participants. These transcripts were organized in a Microsoft Word document before being imported into the Delve Software. The researcher organized and labeled the collected interview data and transcripts into the appropriate Delve headings. Afterward, the

researcher organized the participants' responses to the interview questions using the proper sub-research question for each participant and imported them into Microsoft Word. These transcripts were formatted in paragraph style in MS Word. The interview questions were formatted as standard headings in MS Word. At the same time, participants' demographic information, such as gender, education, and employment, was created utilizing the case classification presented in Table 1 above.

Theming Process

Theming combines code from one or more transcripts to present qualitative research findings meaningfully or coherently (Saldana, 2016). This process makes it possible to present the data from the interview using quotations from an individual transcript to illustrate the source of the researcher's interpretation. The purpose of this coding method is data interpretation and data analysis. Each theme can become a heading of a section in the presentation, and underneath each will be the codes. The coding and theming processes were used in this research to enhance the credibility and transparency of the findings.

The researcher employed the Delve software program to generate categories by thoroughly examining all participants' responses to the sub-research questions. This involved looking for similarities in words and phrases across responses, which were then used for pattern coding. These patterns were condensed into first-cycle codes, which were both explanatory and meaningful (Saldana, 2016). The researcher then used these codes and patterns to present and interpret the themes. The formatted transcripts were imported into the Delve Qualitative Analysis Software, and the researcher manually grouped them

according to the sub-research questions, a process that was instrumental in the data analysis phase.

When coding and theming, it is essential to consider what is said and not said during the interview (Saldana, 2016). It enables the researcher to rearrange the transcripts to analyze the data and use word frequency to determine the keywords or phrases to generate codes into categories. That is the first cycle of coding. The researcher generates more than 300 codes using this coding method or activity. These codes were organized, and relevant information that addressed the sub-research questions was grouped. The second cycle involved sorting and categorizing the generated codes. The sorting and categorization of these codes involved regrouping codes with similar meaning, significance, and frequency of the codes to the sub-research question. The over 300 codes generated in the first coding cycle were regrouped under 60 categories. These newly generated categories were named based on their content. Anchor codes were then assigned to each sub-research question in Delve to represent the sub-research question with their description. Of the 59 categories, nine themes were generated through pattern identification that examined and reflected the categories. The nine themes of this research presented the participant's significant views that answered the sub-research questions. Below are the themes that emerged (pattern codes):

1. Government efforts are in place but show limited impact on youth.
2. Lack of public housing policy leading to abandonment of youth.
3. Nonexistence of criteria for the qualification of public housing unit distribution.
4. Lack of coordination between government agencies to address homelessness.

5. Nonexistence of public housing policy and policy recommendations.
6. Policy voids and traditional influences.
7. Lack of defined selection criteria.
8. Lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals.
9. Inadequate human capacity to deal with the public housing situation.

The above themes, with their corresponding sub-research questions, are presented in the theme summary of this chapter (see Table 2).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The study's trustworthiness refers to the quality of the data analysis, which includes the roles of participants, timing, sequence, and what was done during the study. It involves how the researcher developed the data code or themes, applied best practices, compared the findings within and among transcripts, and the recording quality (Yin, 2014). This process also looked at the procedure for resolving differences in the findings and among participants. It addressed any potential influence the researchers' views or beliefs may have on the analysis. The triangulation strategy was applied in this research to ensure confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The data analysis process was well documented to ensure the transparency and credibility of the research findings. Credibility was established in this study because the findings represented the participants' views. The researcher performed member checks with each participant to ensure that the interview data collected represented the participants' intent and actual statements. Transferability is the degree to which this

study's findings can be used in other respondent contexts and research settings. The researcher used transferability in this research by thoroughly describing the steps utilized in this study.

Dependability is the stability of the study or findings results over time. The findings in this research involved the evaluation of the participants' interpretation, responses, and recommendations supported by the data collected from the participants in this research study. Confirmability is the process by which other researchers can confirm the results of the study findings. The confirmability of this research was established in that the data used for analysis and interpretation was directly from the participants. The reliability of the representation and interpretation of the participant's narrative raises questions in qualitative research as there is no statistical test to check the validity as done in quantitative research (Simon, 2011). In short, trustworthiness is a way to establish confidence in the truth of the findings. It entails credibility (confidence in the findings) and dependability (it shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated). Transferability, on the other hand, shows that the findings can be applied in other contexts) while confirmability shows that the findings are shaped by the participants, not the researcher's bias, interest, or motivation).

Triangulation is another strategy that uses multiple data sources to build a complete picture of a phenomenon. The researcher used triangulation of three sources in this study. They are the interview transcripts, field notes, and observation notes. He also used Microsoft Word, Otto Software, and Delve Qualitative Analysis Software to analyze his findings. The study's findings were explained in subsequent sections of this study in

line with a theoretical framework. The interview question was guided and structured to ensure research quality and rigor for the authenticity of the data and trustworthiness of the data analysis, which is like ensuring validity and reliability (Creswell, 2013). The result of this study was presented according to each sub-research question and ensured that relevant themes were used to address each. The authenticity of the data entails that the sampling approach and participant selection enable the research question to be addressed adequately to reduce the potential of having a biased result.

Results

This section reveals how the themes generated addressed the sub-research questions. The themes generated for the first sub-research question are: “Government efforts in place but show limited impact on youth,” “Lack of public housing policy leading to the abandonment of youth,” “Nonexistence of criteria for the qualification of public housing unit distribution,” “Lack of coordination between government agencies to address homelessness,” and “Nonexistence of public housing policy and policy recommendations.” The themes generated for the second sub-research question are: “Policy voids and traditional influences,” “Lack of defined selection criteria,” “Lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals,” and “Inadequate human capacity to deal with the public housing situation.” The data reviewed shows that there are inadequacies in post-war Liberia public housing policy and a lack of national strategies to address homelessness, especially for youth living in the Palm Grove Cemetery. In Table 2 below are the sub-research questions and their corresponding themes.

Table 2*Sub Research Questions with Corresponding Themes*

Sub Research Questions	Themes
In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the “Zogos” housing situation?	“Government efforts are in place but show limited impact on youth.” “Lack of public housing policy leading to abandonment of youth.” “Nonexistence of criteria for the qualification of public housing unit distribution.” “Lack of coordination between government agencies to address homelessness.” “Nonexistence of public housing policy and policy recommendations.”
How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?	“Policy voids and traditional influences.” “Lack of defined selection criteria.” “Lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals.” “Inadequate human capacity to deal with public housing situation.”

Theme 1: Government efforts in place but show limited impact on youth

The participants were asked for their perception of the impact of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy on homelessness; all of them indicated a lack of national strategies and inadequate public housing policy to address the housing situation of the “zogos” living in the cemeteries, streets, markets, and other informal sleeping arrangements. The participants recommended the government housing program to address their housing situation. The four officials (three government officials and one NGO staff) reported that there are some government efforts in place, but they are not having much impact on the core issue of homelessness among the youth (“Zogos”).

Five youths (P1, 2, 5, 6 and 9) reported being excluded from the government low-income housing program and stated that the “Houses built are for political purposes.” Two youths noted that the “homes being built are for partisans.” According to P2 and P3, “the homes being built are in the government stronghold for partisans that lost their homes due to flooding.” Three youths (P1, 2 and 5) stated, “Houses built in the counties are in fulfillment of campaign promises and are politically motivated.” All the youth

expressed their feelings of being neglected by the government in housing distribution. They spoke about biases in housing allocation and disparities in the government housing programs.

The participants further narrated that the government housing program is not benefiting them. P1 – P9 disclosed that “not a single home or shelter has been built for them.” They questioned the government’s selection criteria that the National Housing Authority uses to give individuals homes. Three youths spoke about the limited availability of affordable housing or the nonexistence of shelters. The lone NGO staff reported “misplaced priorities in addressing homelessness and lack of prioritization in government housing projects towards the homeless.” All the government officials reported numerous challenges regarding the homeless youth and recommended considerations in providing housing for them.

Low-income housing construction remains challenging for the government due to a lack of policy focus and national strategies. It is important to note that the government is building low-income housing units across the country, but none has benefited the homeless youth. One of the officials recommended that the NHA revise its housing policy and selection criteria to include the homeless youth as the one in use requires applicants to have an income to qualify for these government-built homes. Government efforts are in place, but they have limited impact on mitigating the “Zogos” homeless situation.

Theme 2: Lack of Public Housing Policy Leading to Abandonment of Youth

All the participants in the study emphasized the inadequacy of Liberia's public housing policy's impact on homelessness after the war. P10-13 stated the "lack of public housing policy leading to the abandonment of youth." This opinion was supported by all the youth who blamed the government for not addressing the country's homeless situation. All the youth (P1-9) stated that "they feel abandoned by the government," which is contributing to their homelessness. They blamed the official government for not prioritizing them and considering them to be "less important than other citizens due to their homeless situation." They feel rejected, devalued, and saddened by the government that is supposed to provide for them. The youth expressed their discontent with exclusion from the government housing program and blamed this exclusion on systemic bias in the selection criteria implemented by the National Housing Authority.

As a result of the lack of public housing policy leading to these youths' abandonment, they all expressed sadness, disappointment, and frustration with their elected officials. According to them (P1-9), "they are only considered important during elections as officials chase after them for votes, but they forget about them once elected." The officials corroborated the youth claims and stressed the need for collaboration among government agencies and other stakeholders on policy development to address the homeless situation in the country. Three of the officials attributed the youth's abandonment to the lack of policies and strategies for homeless people and the lack of coordination between government agencies for the growing homeless population in the country. P10 stated, "historical focus on low-income people has been ineffective over the

years, and the need for revisiting this cannot be overemphasized.” Addressing the expectations of homeless youth and the lack of support from the government is damaging the future generation of the country, according to another official.

Theme 3: Nonexistence of Criteria for the Qualification of Public Housing Unit

Distribution

All nine youths responded negatively to this question regarding the selection criteria being used by the National Housing Authority. According to the youth, there are no criteria for the public housing unit distribution qualification. P2 indicated that even if selection criteria are in place at the National Housing Authority (NHA), “they are only intended to generate funding, but selection is based on who you know” at the NHA or in government. Two officials (P11 and 13) agreed with this youth and reported that the “selection of low-income people for housing distribution is based on closed family ties, partisanship, and political motivation.” One official (P11) disclosed that he wasn’t aware of any selection criteria in place as his ministry is not responsible for that. Still, even if there are, “they will only be good on paper, but the application and implementation are far from reality or nonexistent.”

All the youth provided emotional responses to their exclusion from the government housing program due to perceived political bias, nepotism, and corruption in the allocation of public housing. They expressed disappointment and frustration with the government’s housing selection criteria and voiced their dissatisfaction and skepticism about the government’s response to mitigating the country’s homeless situation.

Additionally, they compared themselves with selected recipients and frowned on the government for being unrecognized in the housing distribution.

P12 stated that there's a selection criterion to vet potential housing recipients, but "you must have an income to qualify for public housing through the NHA." He also disclosed that the "selection criteria the NHA uses were developed in the early 1960s and revised in the 1980s." According to him, "it did not consider the homeless youth because those conditions did not exist at that time." He emphasized the need to revise the selection criteria to address the present homeless situation in the country. All the officials disclosed "a lack of transparency concerning the NHA's selection criteria." At the same time, the youth were suspicious of nepotism and corruption in the distribution of public housing and would appreciate external attention to their plight.

Theme 4: Lack of Coordination between Government Agencies to Address Homelessness

The participants' responses that led to the "lack of coordination between Government Agencies to Address Homelessness" theme were vital because they all indicated the lack of public policies and strategies to make public housing more accessible and affordable for people experiencing homelessness. All the youth reported the need for coordination between government agencies to provide vocational and skill training that will enable them to earn income and qualify for these low-income homes. They stated that the "government needs to provide rehabilitation programs to address their mental health and substance addiction and build shelters" to facilitate their transition away from homelessness. Three youths emphasized the need for the government to focus

on providing access to medical care and economic opportunities to uplift them out of deprivation and poverty.

According to P13, “government must implement a specific action-oriented plan to address homelessness by coordinating with all relevant agencies and stakeholders responsible for children, youth, and social welfare.” Collaboration between these stakeholders will enhance government efforts to address homelessness and provide hope for disadvantaged youth in the country. All officials are calling on the government to have a stakeholder meeting between the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture, National Housing Authority, and the NGO community (local and international) gear towards developing a national policy action plan and strategy to address the homelessness situation in the country.

Theme 5: Nonexistence of Public Housing Policy and Policy Recommendations

All nine of these youths emphasized the nonexistence of public housing policy and recommended policies to make public housing more accessible and affordable for people experiencing homelessness throughout the country. For instance, P1, P2, P4, P7, and P9 were critical of what they referred to as the “government’s lack of strategies and public policies to address their housing needs.” They all expressed feelings of neglect by the government and criticized law enforcement’s approach towards them. P2 described the law enforcement approach as “hostile and demeaning.” They are all demanding the government and policymakers focus on advocating for policy change to address their housing needs and wish for a “community-driven approach.” This approach will consider

the lack of skill training, limited job opportunities, and the role of the government in the skill development of these youth that will qualify them for public housing. All the youth expressed their willingness to seek help due to societal devaluation.

One of the officials (P13) requested the “call for organized efforts to address the issue of homelessness through government and private sector collaboration.” The three government officials (P10 - 12) spoke highly of government efforts to tackle the youth situation. However, they stated that “government efforts are focused on substance addiction, crimes, and rehabilitation rather than addressing the most pressing issue of homelessness.” However, P2 noted that the “government tried to dislodge them from the Palm Grove Cemetery. However, due to their inability to provide alternate housing, they returned to the cemetery days after the raid.” P12 stated, “The government, through the NHA, needs to revise its public housing approach to incorporate the homeless youth as the ones in use do not reflect present-day reality.” So, in a nutshell, there is a nonexistence of government public housing policy to address homelessness in the country, and all participants recommend adopting public housing policies to address homelessness.

Theme 6: Policy Void and Traditional Influences

The “Policy Void and Traditional Influences” theme focused mainly on the country’s lack of post-war Liberia public housing policy on homelessness. All four officials stated that “there is no public housing policy to address homelessness in Liberia” and emphasized the need for the development or adoption of a new housing policy that will be inclusive of these homeless youth and other vulnerable people. According to P10,

“the absence of formal homelessness policies and the tendency of government officials to overlook the issue of homelessness is causing severe social, economic, and political problems in the country.” This, according to all the officials interviewed, has led to increased crimes, prostitution, substance abuse, mental health issues, desecration of cemeteries, and other deviant societal menaces in the country. So, the need for an inclusive public housing policy must be emphasized.

There is growing frustration among the youth and officials alike about government accountability and policy critique regarding homelessness. P13 said, “We are frustrated with the government’s misplaced priorities and challenges the NGO community is facing in holding the government accountable.” P10, on the other hand, stated: “the need for lawmakers to review homeless policies from other West African countries that could be used to develop a national homeless or public housing policy for Liberia.” All officials acknowledged the policy void on homelessness and expressed dissatisfaction with the government’s approach. All the officials reported that “traditional beliefs and perceptions have led to family rejection and society’s devaluation of these youth, as many viewed them negatively.”

Theme 7: Lack of defined selection criteria

Participants’ responses to the “Lack of Defined Selection Criteria” theme focused mainly on the lack of information on the selection criteria and the National Housing Authority’s application process to distribute homes to low-income families. All officials except P12 requested clarity of the selection process and the influence nepotism and bidding in housing allocations have on the process. P12 provided information on the

application and allocation process but admitted that “the process excluded these homeless youth because they do not have an income.” According to P12, “the NHA has a mortgage system that serves as a pathway to homeownership for low-income families.” Two officials (P11 &13) reported that “low-income people are selected for housing distribution based on closed family ties, partisanship, and political motivation.” P11 stated that “he was not aware of any selection criteria in place as his ministry is not responsible for that, but even if there are, they will only be good on paper, but the application and implementation are far from reality or nonexistent.”

All the youth provided emotional responses for being excluded from the government housing program due to perceived political bias, nepotism, and corruption in allocating public housing. Notwithstanding, P12 stated that “a selection criterion is used to vet potential recipients, but they must have an income to qualify for these low-income homes through the NHA.” He disclosed that “the selection criteria used were developed in the early 1960s and revised in the 1980s.” He said it did not consider the homeless youth because those conditions did not exist then. He emphasized the need to revisit the selection criteria to address the present homeless situation in the country. All the officials disclosed a lack of transparency concerning the NHA’s selection criteria.

Theme 8: Lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals

All the officials reported the “lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals” to address the homeless situation in the country. According to them, “in the absence of a national homeless strategy, homelessness will remain a

significant problem that will continue to affect the fabric of society.” Many Liberians have a negative societal perception of these youth and resent them. P10 stated, “There is no government-built shelter in the country for the homeless or public housing that is allocated for them.” As a result, these youth continue to desecrate the cemeteries in search of shelter. This has become their sanctuary.

P13 inferred that “the lack of a national strategy on homelessness is a misplaced priority by the government.” Similarly, P10 said, “Neglecting the youth, who are the future leaders of the country, means surrendering them to drugs and other deviant social behavior.” All the officials called for a robust government strategy in addressing homelessness and recruiting trained professionals at government agencies with the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications to mitigate this problem. The officials emphasized the need for collaboration between government agencies and the NGO community to develop a national strategy and policy towards homelessness in the country.

Theme 9: Inadequate human capacity to deal with public housing situations

The “Inadequate Human Capacity to Deal with Public Housing Situations” theme emphasized the need for human capacity development and shed light on the need for political competence of presidential appointees at the National Housing Authority. According to P11 and 13, “these appointees must possess the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications to be appointed in leadership and technical positions at the housing authority.” Similarly, P12 stated that “appointees must have some education in civil engineering or urban planning to be appointed at the NHA to enhance smooth

communication and efficiency, as they would understand the jargon used during discussions.”

According to P12, “human capacity development has been ongoing for years at the NHA, but once a new government takes office, many technocrats are replaced by new presidential appointees who do not have the requisite skills and knowledge of the NHA, resulting in new training and professional development.” P13 also stated that “the president needs to appoint individuals in areas of their specialty rather than appointing loyalists to positions to appease them even though they were not knowledgeable in that area.” All the officials shared similar views on the need for skills training development of NHA staff to address the homelessness situation in the country adequately.

According to the nine youths, “many of the people appointed to positions in government are loyal partisans, family members, or friends to the president or close associates, and their appointment is often not based on qualification but as a reward for their support.” P2 and P13, stated, “that some of those appointed lack basic knowledge of their jobs and stay away from their offices while collecting their paychecks.” The need for political competence and human capacity development cannot be overemphasized in adequately addressing the looming homeless situation in the country. All participants’ responses suggest solutions through training and focusing on technical knowledge for NHA staff.

Emerging Themes from Interviews

Figure 2 displays the emergence of themes in the findings of this study after the coding and triangulation of the process. These themes serve as the basis of the

participants' responses to the sub-research questions they were asked. The research question was related to the perceived impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, especially for youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery, Monrovia.

Figure 2

Key Themes after Triangulation of Data



Summary

This research study was conducted to analyze the perspectives of major stakeholders on the overall research question: How can governmental policy and actions

from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? Two sub-research questions arose from the overarching research question: In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the “Zogos” housing situation? How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?

I started chapter 4 with an introduction that restated the purpose of this study and what I hoped to achieve at the end. My interview transcripts were cleaned using Microsoft Word, and the data was then analyzed using Delve Qualitative Analysis Software. In the remaining sections of Chapter 4, I presented the background, data analysis process, evidence of trustworthiness, findings/results, and summary.

The sub-research questions in this research aim to discover an understanding of the impact post-war Liberia’s housing policy has on homelessness. Sub-research question 1 was asked to understand the perspectives of the youth on how the implementation of the government public housing policy is impacting their housing situation in the country. All nine of the youth who are significant stakeholders in this study agreed that the government lacks appropriate action plans, strategies, and policies to address the issue of homelessness in Liberia.

The second sub-research question sought to discover the perspectives of government officials and NGO staff responsible for youth, children, and social services (drugs and alcohol abuse, mental health, homelessness, etc.) on how human capacity and political competence impact the implementation of post-war Liberia housing policy. Both

sub-research questions analyze the NHA's selection criteria for distributing public housing units, the political competence of presidential appointees at the NHA, and staff development at the housing authority. All participants agreed on the need for robust public policy changes, transparency in the selection process, appointment of skilled professionals, and staff development to adequately address the homelessness situation in Liberia. They all reported that there are limited government efforts in place, but they are not impacting the most vulnerable, the "Zogos." Better collaboration and coordination between government agencies and the NGO community is needed to help mitigate this problem.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the results and interpretation of the findings in the research study and the emerging problems of homeless youth. I will also discuss the way forward, recommendations, and implications of positive social change with this current study in the country.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This unique case study delves into the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, with a specific focus on the youth residing in the Palm Grove Cemetery. The study meticulously reviewed and analyzed resource utilization, the implementation of public housing infrastructure, professional competency, and the support of the National Housing Authority's policy towards homelessness in the country. It also explored the perceptions of the "Zogos" and critically analyzed the government's responses to homelessness in a condensed context.

This study employed a rigorous qualitative methodology using a case study design. It aimed to understand the experiences, lifestyles, challenges, and complex social environments of homelessness and the inadequacy of post-conflict Liberia's public housing policies on low-income families. The design focused on generating meaning and comprehension through a detailed description of problems that require understanding complex social environments and the experiences of these families struggling to be awarded public housing. The investigative process involved comparing, contrasting, classifying, cataloging, and replicating the social and environmental conditions of impoverished families in the cemeteries and streets of Liberia. Through ongoing interactions, I transitioned into these families' worlds and analyzed their perspectives to give meaning to their choice to live in Monrovia's cemeteries, open markets, and abandoned houses. This method was ideal for this study because of the experiences

of people living in desperation and the impact the environment is having on their psychological and emotional well-being.

The results of interviews presented in Chapter 4 are explained, and recommendations for future studies and implications of social change are also discussed in this chapter. When implemented, this study's findings could lead to developing an intersectoral public policy and legislative framework shaped by housing and social welfare that will prioritize preventative and sustainability measures to minimize social, structural, and economic vulnerability and risks of becoming homeless in Liberia. The literature reviewed showed that there is a gap in post-war Liberia's public housing policy in addressing homelessness, especially among youth residing in Palm Grove Cemetery. Thus, there is a need to understand the fundamental role the stakeholders' perception played in the inadequacies and lack of strategies for implementing Liberia's post-war public housing policy towards homelessness.

The research question guiding this study was as follows: How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The findings in this study indicated an inadequacy in post-war Liberia's public housing policy towards homelessness due to a lack of defined strategies and implementations in making low-income public housing more affordable and accessible for the "Zogos." All the participants in this study agreed that the government lacks appropriate action plans, strategies, and policies to address the issue of homelessness in Liberia. They all agreed on the need for robust public policy changes, transparency in the selection criteria for

housing distribution, appointment of skilled professionals, and staff development to adequately address the homelessness situation in Liberia. The participants reported that limited government efforts are in place, but they are not impacting the most vulnerable, the “Zogos.” They recommended better collaboration and coordination between government agencies and the NGO community to help mitigate this problem.

Interpretation of the Findings

The 13 participants associated the inadequacy of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy towards homelessness with the lack of appropriate government action plans, strategies, and policies to address the homeless situation in Liberia. Lack of coordination between government agencies and the NGO community contributed to lapses in implementing appropriate government strategies and policies to address homelessness. The literature reviewed indicated that the National Housing Authority-Slum Upgrading Unit needs 512,000 new dwellings by 2030 to address the country’s housing needs, especially in greater Monrovia (Worzi, 2017).

All participants agreed on the need for robust public policy changes, transparency in the selection process, appointment of skilled professionals, and staff development to adequately address the homelessness situation in Liberia. The literature reviewed indicated that there are approximately 5,900 Liberian children who have lost one or both parents during the Ebola epidemic, leaving them homeless as the only option as housing became difficult and unaffordable (Hogan, 2020). However, this does not include those made homeless because of the civil war that ended in 2003.

In Monrovia, children often sleep in the tombs in the cemetery as they have nowhere else to go, thus creating their label of “cemetery children” or “Zogos” (Hogan, 2020). The participants reported that limited government efforts are in place, but they are not impacting the most vulnerable, the “Zogos.” The Slum Upgrading unit at the NHA was established in 2017 to ensure that low-income families and vulnerable communities’ access safe, adequate, and affordable housing through effective mobilization and allocation of public resources, subsidies, and grants (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). However, this does not benefit the “Zogos” as they are excluded from this program. As such, all the participants would like better collaboration and coordination between government agencies and the NGO community to help mitigate this problem.

Government Efforts are in Place but Show Limited Impact on Youth

When the participants were asked what their perception of the impact of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy on homelessness, all the participants indicated a lack of national strategies and inadequate public housing policy to address the housing situation of the “Zogos” living in the cemeteries, streets, markets, and other informal sleeping areas. Habitat for Humanity (2018) concluded that access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing through effective mobilization and allocation of public resources to low-income families and vulnerable communities was significant to addressing post-war Liberia’s housing situation. For Instance, P2 and P3 indicated that “the homes being built are in the government stronghold for partisans that lost their homes due to flooding.” Also, three youths asserted, “The houses built in the counties are in fulfillment of campaign promises and are politically motivated.”

Similarly, Lee-Jones (2019) noted that corruption continues to permeate Liberian politics and public service, with allegations of patronage, nepotism, and cronyism plaguing politics. Corruption is rife, and the judiciary independence is weak, which has contributed to limited government impact in mitigating the homeless situation in the country. Five youths supported this assertion, stating, “houses built are for political purposes,” while two said that the “homes being built are for partisans.” P2 and P3 described a similar experience; they stated, “The homes being built are in the government stronghold for partisans that lost their homes due to flooding.” They spoke about biases in housing allocation and disparities in the government housing programs.

Harmon (2018) discovered similar results where he stated duplicate and overlapping government agencies’ functions between the National Housing Authority, Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, Social Development and Children, Ministry of Health, and others continue to be a challenge to address homelessness in Liberia. The participants further narrated that the government housing program is not benefiting them because of these overlaps and confusion among government agencies. Supporting this assertion was P1-P9, who said, “Not a single home or shelter has been built for them.”

Lee-Jones (2018) stated that most appointments in government are based on personal ties to the president or inner circle and not character, integrity, or competence to the extent that officials being dismissed for unethical acts are recycled in government and reappointed to another government post thereby impacting prioritizing the housing needs of these youth. The lone NGO staff agreed with this assertion and attributed that to

“misplaced priorities in addressing homelessness and lack of prioritization in government housing projects towards the ‘Zogos.’” Three youths spoke about the limited availability of affordable housing or the nonexistence of shelters. All the government officials reported numerous challenges regarding the homeless youth and recommended considerations in providing housing for them. Low-income housing construction remains challenging for the government due to a lack of policy focus and national strategies.

Lack of Public Housing Policy Leading to Abandonment of Youth

Participants were asked for their perspective on the lack of public housing leading to the abandonment of youth. All the participants responded by emphasizing the inadequacy of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy impact on homelessness. P10-13 stated the “lack of public housing policy leading to the abandonment of youth.” Habitat for Humanity (2018) worked with the government to establish a Slum Upgrading unit at the NHA in 2017 to ensure that low-income families and vulnerable communities can access safe, adequate, and affordable housing through effective mobilization and allocation of public resources, subsidies, and grants. However, findings from this study show that “Zogos” did not benefit from this program, leading to abandonment. This view was supported by all the youth who blamed the government for not addressing the country’s homeless situation. P1-9 stated that “they feel abandoned by the government,” which is contributing to their homelessness.

Similarly, Arku (2009) disclosed that the government of Ghana instituted reforms by making adequate housing a right for citizens, and it was incumbent upon the government to provide housing for its citizens. The youth expressed sadness,

disappointment, and frustration with their elected officials for the lack of public housing policy that has led to their abandonment. According to P1-9, “they are only considered important during elections as officials chase after them for votes, but they forget about them once elected.” The officials corroborated the youth claims and stressed the need for collaboration among government agencies and other stakeholders on policy development to address the homeless situation in the country. In this context, the government of Liberia needs to consider Ghana’s approach if they are to adequately address the homelessness situation in the country rather than leaving these youth to fend for themselves in the cemeteries and streets of Monrovia.

Naidoo (2010) cited South Africa’s approach to addressing homelessness, which shows that the government instituted a legislative framework and intersectoral policy in the housing sector to prioritize preventative measures to mitigate economic, social, and structural risks vulnerability and the risks of becoming homeless, something that the Government of Liberia could also consider. Testimonies from three of the officials aligned with the above statement as they attributed the youth’s abandonment to the lack of policies and strategies for homeless people and the lack of coordination between government agencies for the growing homeless population in the country. Additionally, P10 asserted that “historical focus on low-income people has been ineffective over the years, and the need for revisiting this cannot be overemphasized.”

Hogan (2020) revealed that there are approximately 5,900 Liberian children who lost one or both parents during the Ebola epidemic, which leaves them with no option but to be homeless as housing becomes difficult and unaffordable. However, this doesn’t

include those made homeless because of the civil war that ended in 2003. As such, the “Zogos” blamed the government for not prioritizing them and considering them to be less important than other citizens due to their homeless situation. They expressed feeling rejected, devalued, and saddened by the government that is supposed to provide for them. Hogan (2020) summed this up by disclosing that children often sleep in the tombs in the cemetery as they have nowhere else to go, thus creating their label of “cemetery children” or “Zogos.” The government’s responsibility is to provide affordable housing for low-income people, including these children.

Nonexistence of Criteria for the Qualification of Public Housing Unit Distribution

The National Housing Authority (NHA) was created on April 7, 1960, with rights and powers, such as planning, initiating, implementing, and executing a housing development program for Liberia’s counties, territories, and provinces (NHA, 2018). They were clothed with the responsibility of surveying people’s socio-economic problems to facilitate setting standards upon which to base plans for the erection of housing projects and regulations for their maintenance. However, the youth reported needing to be informed of the NHA’s criteria to qualify for public housing unit distribution. Likewise, P2 indicated that even if selection criteria are in place at the National Housing Authority (NHA), “they are only intended to generate funding, but selection is based on who you know.”

NHA (2018) disclosed that they research the living, dwelling, and housing conditions and the means and methods of improving such conditions by determining where slum areas exist and where there is a shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary

dwelling accommodations for persons of low income. However, findings from this study show that they have yet to include these youth in low-income housing distribution even though living conditions are not safe, decent, or sanitary. Two officials agreed with this youth and reported that the “selection of low-income people for housing distribution is based on closed family ties, partisanship, and political motivation.”

According to the NHA (2018), targeting middle-income and diaspora Liberians as recipients of low-income homes contradicts the act that created the National Housing Authority. However, findings from this study revealed that’s precisely what the NHA is doing, even though they should target low-income families. P12 asserted that there’s a selection criterion to vet potential housing recipients, but “you must have an income to qualify for public housing through the NHA.” He also disclosed that the “selection criteria the NHA uses were developed in the early 1960s and revised in the 1980s.” According to him, “it did not consider the homeless youth because those conditions did not exist at that time.”

Contrary to P12’s assertion, P11 disclosed that he wasn’t aware of any selection criteria in place as his ministry is not responsible for that. However, even if there are, “they will only be good on paper, but the application and implementation are far from reality or nonexistent.” All the officials disclosed “a lack of transparency concerning the NHA’s selection criteria.” At the same time, the youth were suspicious of nepotism and corruption in the distribution of public housing and would appreciate external attention to their plight. The NHA has diverted attention from housing low-income families to

driving its human resources profile towards mortgage issues rather than low-income housing supply promotion (NHA, 2018).

All the youth provided emotional responses to being excluded from the government housing program due to perceived political bias, nepotism, and corruption in the allocation of public housing. They expressed disappointment and frustration with the government's housing selection criteria and voiced their dissatisfaction and skepticism about the government's response to mitigating the homeless situation in the country. The NHA should focus on providing homeless shelters and making rent-to-buy homes more affordable or cheap enough for the majority (sea erosion victims, slum dwellers, etc.) instead of giving the homes intended for people experiencing poverty to their particular interest (FrontPage Africa, 2019).

Lack of Coordination between Government Agencies to Address Homelessness

The participants in this study provided their perception of the lack of coordination between government agencies to address homelessness in Liberia. All the participants indicated the lack of public policies and coordinated strategies to make public housing more accessible and affordable for people experiencing homelessness. Harmon (2018) stated duplicate and overlapping government agencies' functions between the National Housing Authority and the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment. Obeng-Odoom (2011) asserted that the government should focus on the nature of education programs and training for housing managers, emphasizing managerial framework, discussing the adverse effects of its approach on housing provision and the housing market in general, and recommending additional areas to consider in the context of

systemic reform. Similarly, P13 disclosed that the “government must implement a specific action-oriented plan to address homelessness by coordinating with all relevant agencies and stakeholders responsible for children, youth, and social welfare.”

Collaboration between these stakeholders will enhance government efforts to address homelessness and provide hope for disadvantaged youth in the country.

Obeng-Odoom (2011) asserted that the government should focus on the nature of education programs and training for housing managers, emphasizing managerial framework, discussing the adverse effects of its approach on housing provision and the housing market in general, and recommending additional areas to consider in the context of systemic reform. Similarly, P13 disclosed that the “government must implement a specific action-oriented plan to address homelessness by coordinating with all relevant agencies and stakeholders responsible for children, youth, and social welfare.”

Collaboration between these stakeholders will enhance government efforts to address homelessness and provide hope for disadvantaged youth in the country.

The South African government instituted a legislative framework and intersectoral policy in the housing sector to prioritize preventative measures to mitigate economic, social, and structural risks, as well as vulnerability and homelessness risks (Naidoo, 2010). These frameworks and regulations led to better collaboration and coordination of social welfare and the government agencies responsible for housing in South Africa, something Liberia can learn from and implement. All officials are calling on the government to have a stakeholder meeting between the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of

Agriculture, National Housing Authority, and the NGO community (local and international) gear towards developing a national policy action plan and strategy to address the homelessness situation in the country. P13 called for “organized efforts to address the issue of homelessness through government and private sector collaboration.”

Nonexistence of Public Housing Policy and Policy Recommendations

The researcher asked the participants for their perception of the nonexistence of public housing policy and policy recommendations, and the nine youths emphasized the nonexistence of public housing policy and recommended policies to make public housing more accessible and affordable for people experiencing homelessness throughout the country. A study done by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) underscored the need for engagement with the NHA as part of a five-year Liberia Country Program (LCP) for the NHA to shift its policy towards supporting slum upgrading and the housing needs for low-income and vulnerable communities (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). All participants stated that there is no public policy on homelessness, or they were unaware of such a policy. For instance, P1, P2, P4, P7, and P9 were critical of what they referred to as the “government’s lack of strategies and public policies to address their housing needs.” They all expressed feelings of neglect by the government and criticized law enforcement’s approach towards them.

Naidoo (2010) noted that South Africa’s approach to addressing homelessness shows that the government instituted a legislative framework and intersectoral policy in the housing sector to prioritize preventative measures to mitigate economic, social, and structural risks of vulnerability and becoming homeless. They put in place a public policy

to address homelessness, which Liberia needs to implement to mitigate the homeless situation in the country. The affirmation also came from P12, who stated, “The government through the NHA needs to revise their public housing approach to incorporate the homeless youth as the one in use does not reflect present-day reality.”

In the late 1970s, the government set up the National Housing and Savings Bank to provide mortgages to working Liberians by building several estates and low-income homes in Monrovia (NHA, 2018). If this was possible in the early 1970s due to the prevailing situation, the government could implement similar policy reforms to address the homeless problem that is becoming a society menace today. Because of a lack of defined strategies, P2 stated that the “government tried to dislodge them from the Palm Grove Cemetery.” However, due to their inability to provide alternate housing, “the youth returned to the cemetery days after the raid.” Similarly, P2 described the law enforcement approach as “hostile and demeaning” due to the nonexistence of public policy to address their housing needs.

Policy Void and Traditional Influences

Participants in this study provided their perception of policy void and traditional influences, and the four officials (P10-13) admitted that “there is no public housing policy to address homelessness in Liberia.” They emphasized the need to develop or adopt a new housing policy that will include these homeless youth and other vulnerable people. Habitat for Humanity (2018) noted that focusing on how the NHA can provide affordable housing to low-income families and people experiencing homelessness in large numbers instead of constructing middle-class aspirational housing for a selected

few is essential. That is what has been going on and continues to this day, and it has become a tradition at the NHA.

The government's laissez-faire attitude prompts these youth to wander the streets searching for homes due to inefficiencies in public housing programs (Petruzzi et al., 2018). P10 indicated that "the absence of formal homelessness policies and the tendency of government officials to overlook the issue of homelessness is causing severe social, economic, and political problems in the country." According to all the officials interviewed, this has led to increased crimes, prostitution, substance abuse, mental health issues, desecration of cemeteries, and other deviant societal menaces in the country. So, the need for an inclusive public housing policy must be emphasized.

The NHA should focus on providing homeless shelters and making rent-to-buy homes more affordable or cheap enough for the majority (sea erosion victims, slum dwellers, etc.) instead of giving the homes intended for impoverished people to their particular interest (FrontPage Africa, 2019). P13 asserted that they are frustrated with "the government's misplaced priorities and challenges the NGO community is facing in holding the government accountable." Similarly, P10 stated "the need for lawmakers to review homeless policies from other West African countries that could be used to develop a national homeless or public housing policy for Liberia." All officials acknowledged the policy void on homelessness and expressed dissatisfaction with the government's approach. All the officials reported that "traditional beliefs and perceptions have led to family rejection and society's devaluation of these youth, as many viewed them negatively."

Lack of defined selection criteria

The Participants provided their opinion on the NHA's lack of defined selection criteria during the interview. Most of them need more information on the selection criteria and the National Housing Authority's application process to distribute homes to low-income families, except P12. They requested clarity on the selection process and the influence nepotism and bidding in housing allocations have on the process. Section 3a of the act that created the NHA states that people earning more than six times the annual payment to be made should not be accepted (NHA, 2018). However, this is not the case, as the most vulnerable are excluded from the selection process because the NHA targets middle-income and diaspora Liberians as recipients of low-income homes, which runs contrary to the act that created the agency (National Housing Authority, 2018). P12 provided information on the application and allocation process but admitted that "the process excluded these homeless youth because they do not have an income."

According to P12, "the NHA has a mortgage system that serves as a pathway to homeownership for low-income families." The NHA has a responsibility to research living, dwelling, and housing conditions and methods of improving such conditions by determining a shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations for persons of low income (NHA, 2018). Officials P11 &13 reported that "low-income people are selected for housing distribution based on closed family ties, partisanship, and political motivation." Similarly, P11 stated that "he wasn't aware of any selection criteria in place as his ministry is not responsible for that, but even if there are, they will only be

good on paper, but the application and implementation are far from reality.” All the officials disclosed a lack of transparency concerning the NHA’s selection criteria.

Front Page Africa (2019) reported that the NHA should focus on providing homeless shelters and making rent-to-buy homes more affordable or cheap enough for the majority (sea erosion victims, slum dwellers, etc.) instead of giving the homes intended for the poor to their special interest. All the youth provided emotional responses for being excluded from the government housing program due to perceived political bias, nepotism, and corruption in allocating public housing. However, P12 insisted that “a selection criterion is used to vet potential recipients, but they must have an income to qualify for these low-income homes through the NHA.” He disclosed that “the selection criteria in use were developed in the early 1960s and revised in the 1980s.” All the participants expressed their reservations about the NHA’s selection criteria and would like it to be revised to include people experiencing homelessness.

Lack of national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals

During the interview, all the officials reported the lack of a national strategy on homelessness and skilled/trained professionals to address the homeless situation in the country. However, the NHA is blaming the situation on budgetary constraints to address the problem. According to the NHA, most of their budgetary allotment covers salaries and transportation, with little available for projects and research & development (NHA, 2019). According to official P10 - 13, “in the absence of a national homeless strategy, homelessness will remain a significant problem that will continue to affect the fabric of

society.” As a result, these youth continue to desecrate the cemeteries in search of shelter. This has become their sanctuary.

Habitat for Humanity (2018) asserted that the NHA is indeed underfunded in the national budget, but the little being allocated and generated from donors is not adequately utilized to address the country’s public housing and homeless situation. P10 disclosed that “there is no government-built shelter in the country for the homeless or public housing that is allocated for them.” Similarly, P13 stated, “the lack of a national strategy on homelessness is a misplaced priority by the government.” All the officials called for a robust government strategy in addressing homelessness and recruiting trained professionals at government agencies with the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications to mitigate this problem.

Presidential appointees, regardless of poor track records, inexperience, lack of adequate education, lack of integrity, etc., are placed in positions of trust only because of their alliance with the powers that be detrimental to the masses (Transparency International, 2020). The youth called on the government to implement proper mechanisms by recruiting skilled professionals to address their plight. Likewise, P10 stated that “neglecting the youth, who are the future leaders of the country, means surrendering them to drugs and other deviant social behavior.” All the officials emphasized the need for collaboration between government agencies and the NGO community to develop a national strategy and policy towards homelessness in the country.

Inadequate human capacity to deal with public housing situations

The need for adequate human capacity development must be addressed.

According to P11 and 13, “these appointees must possess the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications to be appointed in leadership and technical positions at the housing authority.” Lee-Jones (2019) indicated that corruption continues to permeate Liberian politics and public service, with allegations of patronage, nepotism, and cronyism plaguing politics. Corruption is rife, and judiciary independence is weak. P12 stated that “presidential appointees must have some education in civil engineering or urban planning to be appointed at the NHA to enhance smooth communication and efficiency, as they would understand the jargon used during discussions.”

Lee-Jones (2019) further disclosed that most appointments are based on personal ties to the president or inner circle and not character, integrity, or competence to the extent that officials being dismissed for unethical acts are recycled in government and reappointed to another government post. Official P12 tends to agree with this assertion. According to P12, “human capacity development has been ongoing for years at the NHA, but once a new government takes office, many technocrats are replaced by new presidential appointees who don’t have the requisite skills and knowledge required at the NHA, resulting in new training and professional development.”

P13 provided her perspective on this and said, “the president needs to appoint individuals in areas of their specialty rather than appointing loyalists to positions to appease them even though they were not knowledgeable in that area.” All the officials shared similar views on the need for skills training development of NHA staff to address

the homelessness situation in the country adequately. Similarly, P1-9 disclosed that “many of the people appointed to positions in government are loyal partisans, family members, or friends to the president or close associates, and their appointment is often not based on qualification but as a reward for their support.” Additionally, P2 and 13, stated, “that some of those appointed lack basic knowledge of their jobs and stay away from their offices while collecting their paychecks.” The need for political competence and human capacity development cannot be overemphasized in adequately addressing the looming homeless situation in the country. All participants’ responses suggest solutions through training and focusing on technical knowledge for NHA staff.

Theoretical Framework Application

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Glasser’s Choice Theory (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser’s theory assesses basic human needs, the quality world, the perceived world, the comparing place, and the total behavior system (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser’s Choice Theory states that humans’ behavior is chosen as they continually attempt to meet one or more of their five basic needs that are part of the human genetic structure (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). Glasser’s Choice Theory offers a framework to assess, evaluate, and examine the inadequacy of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy, the incompetence of personnel at the NHA, the eligibility criteria used to select low-income families for housing, and ineffective strategies used by the NHA to address homelessness.

Glasser’s Choice Theory, with its emphasis on addressing long-lasting human problems and satisfying basic needs, holds significant potential for inspiring change in

our approach to homelessness in Monrovia. This can be achieved through collaborative efforts with various government agencies, such as the Ministry of Public Works, Land, Mines & Energy, Justice, Finance & Planning, Gender & Children, Health & Social Welfare, Youth & Sports, Development Partners, and NGOs. By fostering connectedness as a requisite for meeting the needs of these individuals in the quality world, we can effectively apply Glasser's theoretical work, which has been extensively used in studies relating to social change and challenges associated with human behavior.

Glasser's Choice Theory also aligns with the Inclusive Market System of Development Theoretical Framework used at the National Housing Authority. This system allows the NHA to take a significant step toward a pro-poor urban housing policy with the establishment of a Slum Upgrading Unit in September 2017, which aims to ensure that low-income housing and vulnerable communities have access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing by effectively mobilizing and allocating public resources, subsidies, and grants (Habitat for Humanity, 2018). That was a significant step taken by the National Housing Authority. Still, as seen, the emphasis continues to be on low income and not homelessness, which is of more concern at this time due to the civil war and Ebola epidemic impact on all sectors of Liberia.

Glasser's Choice Theory provides an assessment that applies to disadvantaged people, people fighting for survival, those unhappy, people with sexualized behavior, alcoholics, and the homeless, all of which describe these "Zogos." The theory reveals that human relationships or behavior problems are the most difficult to solve, but surprisingly, they are easy to understand. That is why Glasser's Choice Theory was used in this study

to understand the government's responses to homelessness during Liberia's rebuilding process.

Glasser's Choice Theory states that our chosen behavior (choices) is central to our existence as they are driven by these five genetic needs: survival, love and belonging, freedom, fun, and power. Survival needs include food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, breathing, security, sex, and having children. The other four are fundamental psychological needs: connecting, belonging, love, power, significance, competence, freedom, and autonomy; and the last, fun and learning. These formed the basis of Glasser's concept of a quality world. However, the quality world is distinguishable from an individual perspective. A quality world for these homeless youth could be having affordable housing, food, good healthcare, employment, and a loving support system, while it could be quite different for others (Olutayo, 2012).

Starting from birth and continuing throughout our lives, each person places significant role models, significant possessions, and significant systems of belief, such as religion, cultural values, and morals, into a primarily unconscious framework Glasser called our "Quality World" (Olutayo, 2012, pp. 22 - 27). However, little attention is given to stereotypes and negative role models in Glasser's Choice Theory, especially in developing countries like Liberia. Glasser posits that a "comparing place" where people compare and contrast our perception of others, places, and things immediately before us against our ideal images (archetypes) of these in our quality world framework leads to subconsciousness that pushes us towards calibrating as best as we can into our real-world experience with our quality world (Olutayo, 2012, pp. 22 - 27).

Glasser posits that we have considerable choice or control over acting and thinking but little ability over feeling and physiology due to their unconscious and subconscious nature (Olutayo, 2012). Concerning this study, these homeless youth chose to live in the cemetery and other informal settings. They thought about it and acted out due to their feelings and physiology of being neglected by the government and other stakeholders. The National Housing Authority, for its part, has overlooked or downplayed the importance of providing adequate shelter for these “Zogos” through their actions and lackadaisical behavior in addressing the homeless situation in Monrovia. According to Glasser, behavior consists of four components: thinking, feeling, acting, and physiology (Olutayo, 2012). It is important to note that these four behaviors are intertwined as our choices in our thoughts and acts affect our feelings and physiology, as seen by these vulnerable youth in this study.

Glasser states that behavior is not separate from choice as we choose how to behave at any time given the situation, and people can only control their behaviors and not others (Olutayo, 2012). After interviewing the participants in this study, the researcher has deemed it appropriate for this research as it creates awareness and proposes remedies to address the homeless situation in Monrovia. Glasser believed in the validity of meetings to improve outcomes and solve problems for quality existence (Olutayo, 2012). As such, a humanistic approach between the “Zogos” and authorities at the National Housing Authority was the crux of this study as they provided their respective perspectives on mitigating the country’s homeless situation.

The Choice Theory provides valuable insights into the choices of individuals (“Zogos”) and groups (NHA). Glasser postulates that the behavior and activities of these underprivileged youth result from an individual’s brain creativity expressing unhappiness and the National Housing Authority’s approach to homelessness in Liberia (Olutayo, 2012). The profile of these disadvantaged youth and the government demonstrated more substantial needs for survival, belonging, freedom, and power. These differences indicated more self-reflection and insensitivity on the part of the National Housing Authority (NHA) as they should be aware of their behavior choices and the impact of their choices on these “Zogos.”

Glasser’s Choice Theory expanded on these “Zogos” theoretical perspectives through their experiences, inadequate strategies to curb homelessness, and the formulation of public policies to address homelessness in Monrovia. The goal of using Glasser’s Choice Theory was to examine the NHA, the attitudes of people experiencing homelessness, and life choices perceived to be a crucial influence in enhancing the provision of affordable formal public housing to remedy the homeless situation in Palm Grove Cemetery and Monrovia.

Glasser’s 10 Axioms in this Study

Glasser’s ten axioms listed in Chapter 2 can be applied across many disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, criminology, and others because they help understand individuals and collective behavior (Olutayo, 2012). For this study, the researcher focused on the five basic human needs principles of Glasser Choice’s Theory

embedded in the ten axioms listed above. These principles are survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

Creativity is an individual's ability to construct valuable, original, and fundamental ideas in all human activities (Olutayo, 2012). Individuals have the mental capability of constructing personal interpretations through problem-solving and thinking of new meanings while emphasizing themselves. Creativity is critical at an individual level in solving real-life problems because it makes people see and do things differently. Glasser posits that everything we do as humans is driven by our obligation to satisfy those needs and reflect our quality world (Olutayo, 2012). Officials of the government and the National Housing Authority must be creative in addressing the homeless situation in the country and moving away from the status quo.

Glasser's Choice Theory proposes that every individual is driven by five psychological needs embedded in our genes: the need for survival, the need to belong, the need for power, the need to have fun, and the need for freedom (Olutayo, 2012). The need for survival – the NHA and other relevant government entities should be concerned about providing public housing to address the homeless' physical wellbeing and protection despite their low socioeconomic status. The homeless feel abandoned and neglected by their government, creating tension and rendering the environment non-conducive to their wellbeing. The National Housing Authority and other stakeholders should understand their need for survival and break the yoke of outcasts by offering better alternative living arrangements for them.

Need to belong – Liberia belongs to everyone irrespective of their socioeconomic status. As such, the NHA must prioritize providing shelter and other low-income housing for these youth despite their deviant lifestyles.

Need for power – the National Housing Authority’s statutory responsibility is to meet Liberians’ housing needs, especially the underserved and most vulnerable. The NHA must allocate or solicit funding from the national government and other partners to provide affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness, just like other low-income families across the country. The need for power being expressed by the homeless should be considered a significant issue at all levels of government, and the National Housing Authority should be interested in giving listening ears to these youth by providing stable housing for them.

Need for fun – fun is the genetic reward for living a healthy and happy life. Fun is expressed through joyous play, sports, laughter, games, and recreation. Officials at the NHA may have fun in the comfort of their homes while these homeless wander the cemeteries and streets searching for shelter. There is a close relationship between humor and creativity, but there seems to be no fun for these desperate youth. It is incumbent upon the government, through the NHA, to create an environment that will enable people experiencing homelessness to experience this need for fun.

Need for freedom – freedom is the ability to make choices and control one’s desire. Without freedom, we lose our human characteristic: our ability to be constructively creative. Freedom of choice releases our confidence to take risks, explore ideas, and handle challenges innovatively. Through the NHA, the government is building

subsidized low and middle-income homes across the country but not homeless shelters for these youth. Due to the government's inability to address their housing needs, they were relegated to the streets, cemeteries, and other informal housing arrangements. We can indirectly control our feelings and physiology by acting and thinking (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

This research's limitation was the inability to generalize the findings beyond Monrovia since a qualitative case study approach was used. This approach was used to investigate the phenomenon of interest in this study. It was essential to select the study participants before choosing the data collection method (Laureate Education, 2010b). Participants for this study are based in Monrovia, considered the epicenter of the "Zogos" and the location of the National Housing Authority's (NHA's) head office. This present study is a case study that will not be used in other parts of the country.

Another limitation of this study was the inability to generalize this research's findings beyond this age group (18 – 21) since a qualitative case study approach was used. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that researchers using qualitative methods should have more experience ensuring accuracy in data collection, entering, and assigning values, as these are vital to the study's outcome.

The last limitation was that the researcher could not fully apply a purposive sampling method of the participants limited to Monrovia due to the timeframe, limited funding for the study, and unavailability of targeted participants. For example, UNICEF, USAID, and UNDP declined to participate because they said they did not participate in

such a study. According to officials at the UN office in Monrovia, Habitat for Humanity is no longer in Liberia. The Ministry of Gender, after early positive signs of cooperation, continued to give the researcher the run around until he left Liberia. The two senators of Montserrado County could not be reached despite numerous visits to their offices and their staff signing for the invitation letter. As such, convenience sampling was used due to respondents' availability and willingness to participate in this study. This research finding will potentially help significant stakeholders, especially policymakers, to make informed decisions to address homelessness in the country.

Recommendations

This study focused on the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing on homelessness and the inadequacy of defined strategies to address the homeless situation. It assessed the challenges the government, through the National Housing Authority (NHA), is facing in addressing homelessness in the country effectively. The scope of the research findings was limited to Monrovia, specifically the Palm Grove Cemetery and other homeless sites (beaches, open market, streets, unfinished buildings) in the capital. The researcher recommends extending future studies to other geopolitical regions in Liberia and considering different age groups for a comprehensive national data collection. Other studies could focus on pregnant homeless teens, the elderly, single parents experiencing homelessness, and people with disabilities in Monrovia and other parts of the country. Furthermore, he recommends applying a more collaborative approach between stakeholders in the public and private sectors to enhance the

effectiveness and adequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy implementation to make informed decisions to address homelessness in the country.

Implications

This study focused on the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing on homelessness and the inadequacy of defined strategies to address the homeless situation. As such, the researcher would like to be the voice for the voiceless. Being the voice of the voiceless in society is cardinal in understanding and championing positive social change. Findings from this study will help develop and implement post-war Liberia's public housing policy that will address the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness. It could lead to legislation and public policy making affordable housing a right for every Liberian.

Social change is the ability of someone or a group to impact the lives of others or society for the better (Laureate Education, 2016). Society is a moral order constituted by institutionalized values, norms, and beliefs (Mucha & Leszczyńska, 2010). These conditions lead to numerous deviant behaviors in society, such as crime, drug addiction, suicide, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution, among others, which are the lifestyles of these homeless youth ("Zogos"). The government or authority must intervene to recreate social harmony because social problems are different conditions and aberrant behaviors manifested in social disorganization, as portrayed in this study (Mucha & Leszczyńska, 2010). This study seeks to address these undesirable conditions that need to be corrected through social planning, public policy measures or formulation, and resource allocation. Many social problems derive from social change, as a changing

society inevitably creates social issues. The transition period may bring about disequilibrium in the formal functioning of society, and social problems are the price the community pays for social change.

The outcome of this study could contribute to social change by formulating a public policy for the government of Liberia and other significant stakeholders. They can apply this to prioritize improving the lives of these homeless youth in the cemeteries and other parts of the country by providing appropriate housing. Major stakeholders' understanding of social change is crucial to a positive transformation of Liberian society. This transformation can occur through a change in belief, norms, compliance, and conformity to certain core principles.

This study might help strengthen a more holistic approach towards adequately providing low-income affordable public housing, making these homes more accessible, making the selection process more transparent for housing unit distribution, and ensuring political appointees possess the requisite skills and training to discharge their duties effectively. Doing so may facilitate the establishment of an inclusive public housing policy, which is essential for mitigating the current homeless situation in Liberia. These research findings will be helpful to significant stakeholders such as government ministries, agencies, NGOs, and every other policymaker to make informed decisions to address the homeless situation in other parts of the country.

An agent of change is often regarded as a leader who works collaboratively with others with shared values to effectuate positive social change (Laureate Education, 2016). As an agent of social change leading this study, one of the goals is to make significant

stakeholders responsible for addressing the homeless situation in Liberia buy into the researcher's vision using his influence and leadership qualities. Lastly, this study adds to the body of literature for research on the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, as the findings in this study create measurable opportunities to make public housing more inclusive, affordable, and accessible for all low-income Liberians, irrespective of their social, political, economic, or religious background.

Conclusion

This study's focus was to understand how the inadequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy affected the homeless youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery and other parts of Monrovia regarding low-income housing distribution. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Glasser's Choice Theory (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007). The researcher found that the perception of all participants in this study agreed that there is an inadequacy of post-war Liberia's public housing policy towards homelessness and the lack of appropriate government action plans, strategies, and policies to address the homeless situation in the country, which aligned with the literature reviewed.

Furthermore, the researcher reaffirmed that the National Housing Authority's selection criteria for housing distribution excluded the youth ("Zogos") from the selection process because they did not have an income. A lack of coordination between government agencies and the NGO community has also contributed to lapses in implementing appropriate government strategies and policies to address homelessness.

Participants in this study agreed that the issue of homelessness is being overlooked in Liberia due to the public perception of these homeless youth.

The application of Glasser's Choice Theory was relevant to this study in that it captured the need to address long-lasting human problems and satisfy these youth's ("Zogos") basic needs of survival, love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Onedera & Greenwalt, 2007, pp. 30 - 41). This study's results aligned with components of Glasser's Choice Theory proposition in this public policy analysis. The study findings confirmed that public policy reforms are needed to address Liberia's homeless situation effectively.

To tackle this issue head-on, policymakers and key stakeholders must utilize a holistic approach by addressing all root causes of homelessness, its components, and its symptoms. From this study, participants recommended a triangular approach to address the issue of homelessness in Liberia effectively. The triangle consists of homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health. They are interconnected, and one cannot be effectively addressed without addressing the other two. That was essential for reorganizing government strategies to facilitate an effective public policy implementation toward mitigating homelessness in Liberia. Some of the mind-blowing revelations that emerged from the interview sections were government efforts in place but showed limited impact on youth, policy void, Lack of defined selection criteria, Inadequate human capacity to deal with public housing situations, and Lack of coordination between government agencies to address homelessness.

The results and findings from this study, which provide insights on how governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) can be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia, are not just for academic discussion. These results can be generalized in other African countries facing similar challenges. However, a change in leadership could impact the process, underscoring the need for a united front. The collaboration and active participation of all major stakeholders, such as the relevant government agencies, NGO community, policymakers, and other interest groups, are crucial. Your involvement can help facilitate a robust action plan and nationally coordinated strategy, contributing to positive social change within the communities and the country at large.

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Appendix A: List of Acronyms in the Study

ACS	American Colonization Society
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
DFID – UK	Department for International Development – United Kingdom
D&A	Drugs and Alcohol
ELWA	Eternal Love Winning Africa
EC	European Commission
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HFHI	Habitat for Humanity International
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	In-Depth Individual
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ITC	International Trust Company
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LBDI	Liberia Bank for Development and Investment
LCP	Liberia Country Program
LPRC	Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASSCROP	National Social Security and Welfare Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHA	National Housing Authority
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
SLUMDAL	Slum Dwellers' Association of Liberia
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Project: The Impact of Liberia’s Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

Pre-interview activities include introduction, welcome, overview of the topic and ground rules.

Note: follow-up questions will be asked depending on participant’s response.

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

This interview is intended to discover what experiences participants can share regarding how the impact of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy on homelessness affects them.

Questions:

The research questions utilized for this case study are as follows: How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The sub-research questions are:

1. In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the “Zogos” housing situation?
2. How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?

Individual Interview Questions

Research Question. How can governmental policy and actions from the National Housing Authority (NHA) be more effectively implemented to reduce homelessness in post-war Liberia? The sub-research questions are:

Questions for the Homeless (“Zogos”)

- In what ways has the implementation of government public housing policy impacted the “Zogos” housing situation?
1. The government is constructing many homes across the country for low-income families; how do you feel being left out?
 2. How do you feel about the selection criteria the NHA is using to give housing to low-income families?
 3. How did you become homeless and end up living in the cemetery/streets of Monrovia?
 4. What is it like living in the cemetery and streets of Monrovia?
 5. Why can’t you return home to their parents/guardians/relatives?

6. Thinking back to when you were living with your parents/guardians, what are your feelings and experience now?

Questions for the decision makers (government officials and NGO staff)

- How is human capacity and professional competency impacting the implementation of post-war Liberia public housing policy?
7. How do you feel about the implementation of the government public housing policy towards the homeless?
 8. The government is constructing many homes across the country for low-income families; how do you feel being left out?
 9. How do you feel about the selection criteria the NHA is using to give housing to low-income families?
 10. How can the government mitigate the homeless situation especially for those living in cemeteries?

Thanks for volunteering your time to participate in this interview and focus group. I want to assure you that confidentiality is paramount to this research. Please may I solicit your continued support in advance, should there be any reason to do a follow-up interview to help project your perspective accurately?

Appendix C: Request to use the University as Study Site

The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

The President
Carver Christian University
Paynesville, Liberia

Re: Request to use your university for my dissertation individual interview
Topic: The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

Dear Sir,

My name is XXX. I am a student at Walden University, in the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA). The purpose of writing this letter is to humbly request your permission to use your institute as a study site for my dissertation project and would like for you to please provide free counseling for any youth that may be stressed due to the interview questions.

The study will explore the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, especially those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery. It will review, assess, and analyze resource utilization, implementation of public housing infrastructure, professional competency, and support of the National Housing Authority's policy towards homelessness in the country. The data collection process will include individual interviews, observation, and field notes. I will interview about 12 participants, 6 youth for this study between the age 18 – 21 years old and 6 government officials and NGO staff (one from each agency). The research will be conducted with a qualitative case study approach and will not exceed one week.

If my request is granted, I assure you to observe all the rules and regulations that are stipulated regarding the use of the school's facility. Furthermore, I promise to abide by the ethical processes concerning privacy and confidentiality of all the participants in the study. I want to reiterate that at any point during the study, any of the participants can withdraw from the study without any explanation as the participation is fully voluntary. For further inquiries or questions, you may have regarding this project, please feel free to call me at XXX-XXXXXXX. Alternatively, you may reach me at XXXX@XXX. Thank you in advance, and I look forward to your reply.

Respectfully,
XXX
SPPA, Walden University

Appendix D: CONSENT FORM for Youth

You are invited to take part in a research study about “The Impact of Liberia’s Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness.” This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

- This study seeks to explore the impact of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy on homelessness, especially those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery. Volunteers who are: the “Zogos” homeless youth will participate in this study.
- The proposed sample size for qualitative this study will be 13 participants.
- Inclusion criteria of participants are youth 18 – 21 years old that’s residing in Palm Grove Cemetery (male and females).

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Bofor Rahim Toh, II, who is a student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:

- The purpose of this study is to - The purpose of this qualitative research case study is to explore the impact of post-war Liberia’s public housing policy on homelessness especially those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery.

Procedures:

This study will involve you completing the following steps:

- Data collection – I will use individual interviews, observation, and field notes.
- Instrument Used - Digital voice recorder and smartphone will be used for recording the interview.
- The recorded interviews will be transcribed immediately into an Excel Spreadsheet for interpretation and analysis later to generate codes and themes for this study.
- Recruiting Techniques - The population being studied for this research is vulnerable youth (“Zogos”) between the ages of 18 – 21 years old living in Palm Grove Cemetery in Monrovia (in-person contact/face-to-face).

Sample questions:

Questions for the Homeless

- How did you become homeless and end up living in the cemetery/streets of Monrovia?
- What is it like living in the cemetery and streets of Monrovia?
- Why can’t you return home to their parents/guardians/relatives?
- Thinking back to when you were living with your parents/guardians, what are your feelings and experience now?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.

If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing.

- This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by Findings from this study will help develop and implement post-war Liberia's public housing policy that will address the housing needs of the homeless. This could lead to legislation and public policy that will make affordable housing a right for every Liberian.
- Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by emailing a summary of the findings/data collected to participants to ensure accuracy.

Payment:

The researcher will give each participant \$5 at the end of the interview.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher will use numbers or codes to identify you through this study to protect your identity. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. I will explain the time commitment to my participants and entertain questions from them before their voluntary participation. Data will be kept secure by taking the following steps to adequately address participants' safety, privacy, and risks: The collected data will be password protected during the entire study. The data collected will be securely stored in a fireproof safe. Only the researcher will always have access to the collected data to prevent any manipulation. The data for this study will not be used for any purposes other than this research. I will securely delete the interview transcripts and collected data of the participants after a minimum of five years. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions of the researcher by email XXXXXX@waldenu.edu or my local Liberia's number that will be obtained once I arrive in Liberia. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. You can also email this address IRB@mail.waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is 09-13-22-0240473. It expires on 09/12/2023.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. I will keep a copy of the consent form for my records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix E: Informed Content Form for Officials

The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

You are invited to participate in the research titled "The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness." This invitation to participate has been extended to officials at the National Housing Authority, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Habitat for Humanity staff, UNICEF staff, the "Zogos" and other stakeholders who this policy has impacted. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to take part in the study.

This study is conducted by Bofor Rahim Toh, II, a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative research case study is to explore the impact of post-war Liberia's public housing policy on homelessness, especially among those youth living in Palm Grove Cemetery.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in a face-to-face interview session for a maximum of 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will take place on the Carver Christian University campus and will be audiotaped to help the researcher reflect on your account as accurately as possible. After the development of the transcript by the researcher, you will be given the opportunity to review it to ascertain that it reflects your perception. The review of the transcript could take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect you in any adverse manner. If you initially decide to participate, you can still withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. If your participation makes you feel uncomfortable during the study, you reserve the right to terminate your involvement. There is no personal benefit to the participants. The potential benefit of participating in this study is that your shared experience may help to facilitate the effectiveness of post-war Liberia public housing policy implementation to address homelessness in the country adequately. Additionally, those in the position of formulating public housing policy may incorporate the study's outcome as part of the overall policy review to address the identified issues.

Compensation:

There will be \$15 - \$25 compensation for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The audio recordings of this study will be kept private and secure. I will keep the research records in a locked file, and only the researcher will have access to the data. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Bofor Rahim Toh, II and can be reached on XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX or by email at XXXXXXX@waldenu.edu. The researcher's faculty advisor at Walden University is Dr. Victoria Landu-Adams, and her email address is XXXXXXX@mail.waldenu.edu. You may contact her at Walden if you have questions about your involvement in this study.

You will receive a copy of this form from the researcher.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Participant:

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Letter of Application

The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness

University of Liberia
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Capitol Hill
Monrovia, Liberia

Dear Sir:

My name is XXX, a doctoral candidate in the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) at Walden University. I wish to conduct research in Liberia on "The Impact of Liberia's Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness" and is requesting your permission.

I will be conducting interviews to explore your experience regarding how this Liberia's post-war public housing policy has impacted you. The interview will last a maximum of one hour. Your participation will help the homeless, policy makers and other stakeholders have a better understanding of how the policy impacts these youth and society in general. The Findings from this study will help develop and implement post-war Liberia's public housing policy that will address the housing needs of the homeless. This could lead to legislation and public policy that will make affordable housing a right for every Liberian. This study, when completed, will form part of a doctoral dissertation project as required by Walden University.

Let me reiterate that your willingness to participate is highly appreciated. I want you to understand that at any time you wish to withdraw from participating, you can do so without any obligation to my school or me. I also want to assure you that there is absolute confidentiality of your person and participation in this study. I wish to convey to you that I will be flexible, and ready to adjust to your schedule, to complete the project. I am also available to respond to any of your questions or concerns. Please feel free to reach me at XXX-XXXXXXX. Alternatively, you may reach me at XXXX@XXX.

Sincerely,
XXX
SPPA, Walden University

Appendix G: Invitation/Recruitment Letter to the Participant

House of Representative
Capitol Hill
Monrovia, Liberia

February 3, 2023

My name is XXX XXXX, a doctoral candidate in the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) at Walden University. I wish to invite you to participate in a study on “The Impact of Liberia’s Post-War Public Housing Policy on Homelessness.” I will be conducting interviews to explore your experience regarding how this Liberia’s post-war public housing policy has impacted you. The interview will be conducted between April 17 – 30, 2023, and will last a maximum of one hour. Please select a date that suits your schedule. Your participation will help the homeless, policymakers and other stakeholders better understand how the policy impacts these youth and society in general. The Findings from this study will help develop and implement post-war Liberia’s public housing policy to address the housing needs of the homeless. This could lead to legislation and public policy that will make affordable housing a right for every Liberian. When completed, this study will form part of a doctoral dissertation project, as Walden University requires.

Let me reiterate that your willingness to participate is highly appreciated. I want you to understand that at any time you wish to withdraw from participating, you can do so without any obligation to my school or me. I also want to assure you that there is absolute confidentiality of your person and participation in this study. Please let me know your availability through any of the below contacts or my research assistant. I will be flexible and ready to adjust to your schedule to complete the project. I am also available to respond to any of your questions or concerns. Please feel free to reach me on XXX-XXX-XXXX. Alternatively, you may contact me at XXXXXX@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,
XXX XXXX
SPPA, Walden University