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The Policy of Decentralization in the Mano River Region

Naigow Kuyon
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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May, 2018

Abstract

The Policy of Decentralization in the Mano River Region

by

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MBA, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, 2009

BBA, University of Liberia, 2003

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Decentralization policy is advanced in many regions as a collaborative approach to regional stability, economic and political development, and poverty reduction. However, there is not a valid decentralization policy in the Mano River Region (MRR) countries of West Africa despite the presence of multinational institutions and United Nations Peacekeeping forces. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to use the sequential theory of decentralization to investigate why peace and stability in the MRR are still fragile. The primary research question concerned how the policy of decentralization implementation in MRR can significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR. Data were collected from 64 participants, through the use of semi-structured, in-depth interview techniques. A consent authorization of participants allowed the collection of the data. The analysis of data involved, identifying categories of responses and answers to classify them in phases based on responses answers to questions. According to study findings, decentralization policy was perceived to be a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and minimization of corruption; however, there was little knowledge and implementation on decentralization in the MRR or among participants' native countries. An educational program on the successes of decentralization policy implementation is recommended. Outcomes from this research may serve as a point for social change by providing a model understanding of peace and stability in the MRR and similar areas.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife and children and the entire Kuyon's family. I also like to dedicate this dissertation to the unfortunate people of the Mano River Region (MRR) communities affected by failed policies to enhance regional stability, poverty reduction, economic development and minimization of corruption. To my mother, Tamai Mama Sumo-Kuyon, who brought me into this world, whom I promise to build a house, but could not do it due to her early demise. May her soul rest in perfect peace. To my late brother, Francis Kuyon, who left me too soon; I will always remember him as a big brother. To my late father, David Togba-Kollie Kuyon, who education meant a lot to him. And finally, our senior brother, Hon. Bismarck N. Kuyon, who was a mentor for all of his siblings and many others. To you all, I say may God bless you and heal your souls.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Sustaining regional stability and economic development are fundamental values of decentralization policies. Decentralization involves society, with citizens' participation and equal opportunities (United States AID, 2000; World Bank, 2004). Latin America and East Africa have used decentralization as a tool for regional stability and for providing opportunities for citizens' participation in building democratic governance (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). Also, decentralization policies can help minimize corruption and can contribute to the reduction of poverty (Smoke, 2003; USAID, 2000). The adoption of favorable policies of decentralization is vital to the effective and efficient functioning and governance of developing states or regions (World Bank, 2004). These policies are not always effective. However, in the Mano River Region (MRR), implementing effective decentralization policies has been challenging.

The goal of the implementation of decentralization policy is broad; however, the public policy intervention in four categories of person that represents the overall demography of the state within the MRR formed the basis of the study. These groups of people were a population of 64, with a sample size of 16. Participants fell into four categories. The population was made up 16 stakeholders from each MRR country from each class of stakeholders (university students, immigrant community, civil servant, and civil society organizations). I drew participants from four communities in the United States with ties to MRR nations based on the demography and locations of citizens from the MRR. These participants were drawn from the Sierra Leonean community in Baltimore, the Liberian community in Minnesota, the Ivorian community in New York,

and the Guinean community in Philadelphia. These citizens had lived experiences in the MRR and outside of the MRR, with the intention of returning home.

Validating a policy implementation of decentralization in the MRR, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Annan, 2014; Reuters News & VOA, 2013; United Nations Office for West Africa [UNOWA], 2013), is a challenge despite the presence of United Nations peacekeeping forces in the region (Shilue & Fagen, 2014, United Nations Security Council, 2016). The stability of the MRR is needed, as United Nations peacekeeping forces prepare to draw down troops (Cook, 2010; Durch, 2011; UNSC, 2016). There was a need to understand the policy implementation of decentralization and how it affected the MRR region. As part of the approach to maintaining peace and stability in the region, this study included an examination of the means for successful implementation of decentralization policies.

This chapter covers the background of the study, the research problem, the purpose and significance of the study, and the research question. I also describe the theoretical framework, assumptions, nature, and delimitations of the study.

Background

The MRR is fragile after prolonged regional conflicts. Although there are multinational institutions and international peacekeeping forces present, poverty, corruption, poor economic development, and instability are reported within the MRR (Annan, 2014; UNSC, 2016; UNSC Report, 2013). Rehabilitating this unstable society is critical to the peace and development of the area. Decentralization has been advanced as a regional policy in the MRR. Decentralization takes political control from the head government to local leadership (Balagun, 2000; Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006).

The MRR is located in West Africa (Robson, 1982), and it is comprised of the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, with a population of more than 40,000,000 people (Silberfein & Conteh, 2006; UNFPA, 2011). The states in the MRR are interlinked despite their social, political, economic, and geographic boundaries: the breakdown of law and order in one state can affect each MRR state. In 2013 to 2014, the Security Council of United Nations (UNSC, 2014) adopted several resolutions encouraging the Economic Community of West African States to develop a regional strategic plan that addressed the threat of the cross-border movement of armed groups (UNSC, 2013). In 2014, the Ebola virus devastated three MRR states, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicated that the threat that Ebola poses in these three countries extends beyond health care (Ndeffo-Mbah, Parpia, et al., 2016; World Health Organization, 2014).

The MRR may have difficult developing stability due to distrust among central governments (Allouche & Janet, 2014; UNDP, 2014). However, as the 21st century moves toward an era of regional development in collaboration, regional collaboration is the future of development. Decentralization enhances economic development and regional stability, and it reduces corruption and poverty (Khanna & Palepu, 2013). In this study, I sought to understand if implementing decentralization policies in the MRR will be a successful strategy for the region's stability and development.

Problem Statement

Decentralization is one of the most popular policies in the 21st century that includes citizens' involvement (Cuban, 1990; Drucker, 2007; Porter, 2014). Scholars have presented decentralization as a solution for issues ranging from poor service

delivery to the lack of citizen participation in democratic governance. Decentralization has also been proposed as a solution for poor economic development and instability (Ghosh & Kamath, 2012).

Many regions, like East Africa and Latin America, have advanced decentralization as a collaborative approach to regional stability, economic development, and poverty reduction (Brinkerhoff & Johnson, 2009; Dickovick & Eaton, 2003; Khanna & Palepu, 2013; Sharma, 2006; Smoke, 2003; USAID, 2000; World Bank, 2004). However, the advancement of decentralization as a remedy for development in other areas has not benefited the MRR. The MMR has been benefited from the complimented collaborative approach or development agenda for regional stability, economic development, or poverty reduction strategy (Annan, 2014; Ismail, 2008; Jin & Weingast, 2005; Marc & Verjee, 2015; UNSC, 2013). Accordingly, inequality of power and wealth between the rulers and the general populations still occur in the MRR (United Nations Security Council, 2013; UNSC, 2014). Each MRR state (Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) is governed by an executive government with little local government structure or input to support a decentralization policy that enhances citizens' participation and governance.

Decentralization is essential in the stability, reconstruction, and economic development of a state or region (Myerson, 2014). Since the 1970s, the governments of Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have had limited or no decentralization policy for the sustainability of peace and stability. The Ivory Coast's 700-kilometer border with Liberia remains volatile and contributes to insecurity in the region (UNSC, 2012, 2013, 2014). The MRR is too fragile to support economic development and

stability (Ismail, 2008; Oxford Analytical, 2011; UNSC, 2013). Each MRR state has supported subversive activities against the others over the years. Their actions have contributed to the loss of life and property destruction (Edu-Afful & Aning, 2015; Hoffman, 2011). Their activities have not promoted economic development, peace, and stability in the region. Currently, the presence of the United Nations peacekeeping force has kept the peace process on a relative path of stability. However, the overall fragility of the region suggested a need to investigate the advancement of decentralization policy in the MRR as a potential remedy (UNSC, 2012, 2013, 2014). Other regions, including Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and parts of Latin America, are connected or collaborating societies within the context of decentralization and are better off than isolated ones (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013; Khanna & Palepu, 2013; Oxhorn, 2004). In this study, I aimed to fill a gap in the research given the insufficient literature on the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR. As a researcher, it was my quest to examine what impact a decentralization policy in MRR has regarding the improvement the instability, poverty, and corruption in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to investigate why the MRR is still fragile concerning peace and stability after a quarter century of conflicts. I investigated what impact the institution of a decentralization policy in the MRR will have on the social, political, and economic development and stability of the region. More specifically, I examined if the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR will enhance economic development, create regional stability, curb corruption, and reduce poverty. It was essential to understand the phenomenological

views of all stakeholders in the study. Decentralization helps to reduce poverty and prevents conflict (Brinkerhoff & Johnson, 2009; Crawford & Hartmann, 2010). Due to the limited literature on the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR, there was a need to understand different views and perceptions about decentralization policy and its level of acceptance among stakeholders in the region.

Significance of the Study

In this study, I aimed to investigate whether the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR will enhance regional stability and economic activities, reduce poverty, and curb corruption. The results of this study may provide needed information to advance the peace and stability in the MRR and other regions.

Decentralization, to date, is one of the most studied topics in public policy and the social sciences. Decentralization is used to boost regional stability, limit corruption, and eradicate poverty (Crawford & Hartmann, 2010; Dickovick & Eaton, 2013; Ghosh & Kamath, 2012; World Bank, 2004). However, there is a lack of an implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR, which has prevented the enhancement of regional stability and economic development. Decentralization can be used as a tool to create social change, empower residents to enhance their economic development, and instill regional stability. It also enables citizens to decide their own political and social destinies because decentralization has a positive impact on conflict prevention and the capability to reduce poverty (Crawford & Hartmann, 2010).

The territory and demographics of the MRR are strategically significant for social change regarding the sustainability of peace and stability in the greater region. What affects one state in the region has an impact on the others. For instance, from 1989 to

2003, there were several cross-border rebel incursions from Ivory Coast into Liberia. This unrest eventually spread from Liberia to Sierra Leone, and then Guinea and later to Ivory Coast (United Nations Security Council, 2013). These incursions affected the entire MRR. Therefore, the need for social change in the MRR is imperative. It is a region that has a history of conflicts, where the central government controls every aspect of citizens' lives, from revenue collections to political decision making (Ismail, 2008).

Decentralization has the potential to increase subnational government size, empower stakeholders in the stability of the region, and to create accountability for the administration of the region (Wallis & Oates, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the sequential theory of decentralization (Falleti, 2005). This theory includes three components of decentralization. The sequential theory of decentralization includes all stakeholders and integrates their desires into a policy frame that works for them (Falleti, 2005). This theoretical concept was vital to this study because of the diversity of interests among the stakeholders concerning policy implementation. For instance, in a society or region that is dominated by few, implementation of a policy of decentralization tends to eliminate the gap between the haves and have-nots (Ansaldi, 1992). Among emerging nations, decentralization creates an environment for equal competition and investment. In a competitive society, decentralization enhances the local authority and minimizes central governments' influence (Gonzalez, 2014). For instance, in Argentina, the policy interest was identified by studies based on the national benefit of the interested parties in the implementation of decentralization (Smith & Revell, 2016). Accordingly, the national

government developed a policy of decentralization based on not just the country needs, but the needs of its citizens (Smith & Revell, 2016). The regional interest took into consideration the peace and stability of the citizens (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). These different ideas of decentralization are the basis for the use of the sequential theory of decentralization in this research. The theoretical frame in this study aligned with the use of the qualitative phenomenological case study method of research.

In an approach to test the conceptual framework of this study, the sequence implementation of decentralization was based on what the interviewees' choices over the different aspect of the sequential theory of decentralization. For instance, interviewee preference on political decentralization, administrative, or fiscal decentralization depended on details and knowledge available to them in the questionnaires available in Appendix E on the different aspect of the sequential theory of decentralization. Interviewees living outside the region (MRR) like the United States had an understanding of how different societies work in the MRR and outside of the MRR.

Research Questions

The primary question in the study was the following: How can the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR?

Definitions of Terms

These definitions of terms came from different sources, including psychology, economics, and other areas of the social sciences relating to the study.

Central government: This refers to the body of governance that extends beyond the cities, villages, territorial, and or areas of control. The power of a central government can impact the nation trade, taxation policy, or international or trade agreements (Herman Finer, 2018).

Corruption: Rose-Ackerman, & Palifka, (2016) defined corruption as “the misuse or the abuse of public office for private gain. It can either be bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, graft, speed money, pilferage, theft, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, influence peddling”.

Democracy: Democracy is a political decision by the people and of the people. In a democratic society or nation, citizens are allowed to choose their leaders or their government freely. Democracy is a system where the selection of leaders is by a majority of the population (Schumpeter, 2013).

Developing countries: The Collins English Dictionary (2015) defined developing countries as “non-industrialized poor countries seeking to develop their resources by industrialization”. By concept, developing nations struggle to provide essential social services to their citizens. In countries in this category, governments are continuously finding means of improving the social and economic wellbeing of the state and its citizens (Olken & Pande, 2011).

Fragile states: This refers to weak states or low-income states. In this case, the state does not have the maximal capacity to provide for or protects its territory. The citizens are vulnerable to different actives that can affect the state and its citizens (Barakat & Larson, 2014).

Local government: Dictionary.com (2016) defined local government as administering of the civic authority through the local authority. Dictionary.com further stated that local government is also a body of governance in a small locality that control only their region or towns. However, their limitation includes lack of local authority to extend beyond their territorial control.

Poverty reduction: Barder (2009) defined poverty reduction as “encouraging economic development that boosts individual above the poverty line” (p. 170).

Regional development: This refers to the creation of an environment where there is an improved quality of essential social services or framework in place for every citizen or group of people (Gherman, Dincu, Gherman, & Brad, 2015).

Regional stability: Refers to maintaining peace and stability in a region (Acharya, 2014). In the case of the MRR, it is about calming civil wars or avoiding conflict and promoting peace and harmony, which will lead to economic development.

Stakeholder participation: This involves citizens or groups of people that policy can affect directly or indirectly. It involved processes or ways in which opportunity is given to all as part of decision making at the initial and end (Petkova et al., 2002). This is essential in keeping the peace and stability of the state or the region (MRR). For instance, the stakeholders identified in the study are crucial in achieving the implementation of decentralization in the area.

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that there was a need to understand what impact the implementation of decentralization policy in the MRR will have on the stability and economic development of the region. I also assumed that the necessity for regional

stability, economic development, corruption minimization, and poverty reduction remained high on the agenda of all stakeholders in the MRR, including the international community. Because United Nations resources are exhausted to keep the peace in the MRR, international partners want the MRR to adopt strategies that will keep the peace and allow everyone to participate in the democratic engineering of the region (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2013; Piccolino & Minou, 2014). One such strategy is the institution of a decentralization policy that will incorporate all stakeholders. However, what is not known is if the system of decentralization policy is a workable solution in the MRR that will enhance economic development, promote regional stability, and reduce poverty.

In addition to the above, the following assumptions were put forth with the notion that the research questions will uncover the understandings of all stakeholders on the subject.

1. Data collected from interviewees were credible and truthful. Those referred to as interviewees were the four different stakeholders and sample population identified in the study and Appendix A.
2. All sources, documents, and literature that were a part of this research were free of biases and were objective and accurate.
3. The study was not interrupted by other external forces that will impact the effectiveness of the study.

Although these assumptions underlie the study, I also recognized that different stakeholders' views, opinions, or ideas could change during the data collection based on the social, political, and economic environments.

Scope and Delimitations

Undertaking a study in the MRR concerning decentralization policy was challenging. There are difficult situations in the MRR arising from instability, poor economic development, poverty, corruption, and other factors. Credible literature and scholarly documents support this study. The limitations of existing research about decentralization policy implementation in the MRR created a gap that I aimed to fill. The MRR is in West Africa, comprised of four nations (Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) that are bound geographically (Silberfein & Conteh, 2006).

For this study, 64 participants were recruited, with a sample size of 16. The participants represented four groups: university students, the immigrant community, civil servants, and civil society organizations. The population and sample size make up include a particular group of stakeholders who understood life in the MRR and life outside of the MRR. Therefore, interviewees were aged 18 to 70 years and must have lived in MRR for at least 10 years. Appendixes A and B explain details.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative, with a phenomenological, case study approach. I chose this study design because of the goal of the research, and the way data were collected. Interview techniques were used to gather data in this study. A phenomenological, case study approach was used because I focused on the lived experiences of participants and their expression of reality (Smith, 2015). In Creswell's (2013) view, a phenomenological, case study describes the everyday experience of an individual or groups who shared a similar experience of a particular situation or event. This method of data collection is unique in obtaining information and facts from

participants' lived experience. The phenomenological research design generates more significant details of the research (Merriam, 2014). Using the phenomenological case study model enabled me to collect data from different stakeholders who were identified in the study based on their experience of the MRR and who lived outside of the MRR. The participants interviewed were from the Sierra Leonean community in Baltimore, the Liberian community in Minnesota, the Ivorian community in New York, and the Guinean community in Philadelphia.

Possible Analytical Strategies

One-on-one and online interviews were sources for data collection in this study. The data were gathered from students (students who came to the United States on students' visa and those on students' exchange programs), the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees), civil servants, and civil society organizations (CSOs). The participants included four representations from each cluster. The population was 64, with a sample population of 16 from each MRR's community, with four participants from each subgroup in the study, as detailed in Appendix A.

Open-ended questions formed the foundation for the interviews. This format allowed participants to answer questions in a more efficient manner and revealed additional information that the researcher may not have anticipated (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This process did involve providing leadership for the study to eliminate biases and setting an ethical standard to establish the validity and credibility of data.

Other Information or Barriers

Some barriers or obstacles in this study were the data collection process, scheduling participants for interview, finding literature to support the research, and

funding for this study. However, these obstacles were overcome through research and hard work.

Chapter 1 Summary

Decentralization is one public policy tool for the advancement of human development in the 21st century. Decentralization is needed as a collaborative, social, political, and economic instrument of development for regional bodies and their citizens. This concept has created advancements in many regions, as a collaborative approach to regional stability, economic development, and poverty reduction. This phenomenology, case study was used to investigate how the policy of decentralization implementation in MRR can contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR using the sequential theory of decentralization. Chapter 1 covered the study needs, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research framework. The research questions, possible analytical strategies, and other barriers in the study are highlighted.

Chapter 2 includes the literature review and other supporting documents applicable to this topic of the policy of decentralization in the MMR. The literature review includes literature pertinent to the policy of decentralization in the MRR and other regions, with the concept of decentralization use as a model for regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction strategy, and corruption minimization approach.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are policy issues to consider regarding the stabilization of the MRR. Stabilization must entail strategies to enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption. There is the need to seek an answer to the central question of this study: How can the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR?

In Chapter 2, I review literature on different concepts of decentralization, including the sequential theory of decentralization and its implications in the MRR. The advancement of decentralization as a collaborative approach to regional stability, economic development, and poverty reduction in another part of the world has not been a comparative advantage or practice as a form of governance in the MRR states. This advancement has not complimented a collaborative approach or development agenda for regional stability, economic development, or poverty reduction (Allouche, Benson, & McCormack, 2016; [Annan, 2014, p.2-9](#);UNSC, 2013). Annan (2014) and substantial literature indicated that “despite efforts made to prevent and end violent conflicts in West Africa, the region continues to experience sporadic violence and volatile security challenges”.

There is inequality between central governments’ officials and their populations, with many challenges in the region (Annan, 2014; United Nations Security Council, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to understand the effectiveness and applicability of decentralization policy in the MRR. I investigated what impact the institution of a decentralization policy in the MRR have on the stability

and social, political, and economic development. Decentralization is not the only workable solution, but it may prove as one practical approach, given decentralization helps reduce poverty and prevents conflict (Schulz, 2016; Crawford & Hartmann, 2010; Prada, 2012).

The approach of this study involved interviewing four groups of participants who have lived in and outside of the MRR as a means to validate their lived experiences and the credibility of the study. The civil war that started in Liberia extended to every MRR state. It affected every sector of the society, including the four groups of participants identified as the source of data collection in the study. There was a need to understand perceptions about decentralization policy and its level of acceptance among the stakeholders identified in this study. Many of these stakeholders were an integral part of their respective nation and had direct contact with their native country and planned to return to the MRR.

Literature Search Strategy

Decentralization underscored the theoretical framework that grounded this study. I included literature that discussed challenges, drawbacks, and benefits of decentralization, as well as studies on the policy of decentralization in the MRR. This review contains literature from the period of 2008 to 2018. Documents and record-taking in this study derived from sources, such as university libraries, newspapers, online news magazines, and scholarly literature on the concept of decentralization in the MRR.

The critical examination of this research brings credibility and viability to the scholarship of the study (Creswell, 2013). In this review, I examined literature from scholarly sources in public policy, government, economics, and other disciplines relating

to this study. The search involved online electronic scholarly databases from Walden University Library: Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, JSTOR, and public libraries. It also involved other relevant sources, such as the United Nations and other government and institution websites. I used the following keywords and terms while conducting the literature review: *decentralization, fiscal decentralization, political decentralization, administrative decentralization, collaboration, governance, corruption, poverty reduction, MRR, regional stability, and economic development.*

The Concept of Decentralization

Decentralization has various meanings depending on the setting. Decentralization starts with reform processes that move responsibility for public policy-making from a central government to local authorities (Common & Flynn et al., 2016). Accordingly, it transfers responsibilities, resources, or authority from higher to lower levels of government (Falleti, 2005). Decentralization also means the transfer of legal and political power to local governments (Dafflon, 2015; Spina, 2014). The World Bank Group indicated that decentralization transfers power and obligation of community roles from central government to local governments or organizations, or to the independent private sector (as cited in Ghuman & Singh, 2013). Decentralization makes it possible for people to have a greater influence on government decisions that affect their lives (Common & Mellon, 2016; Spina, 2014). In principle, decision making at the provincial level gives more responsibility, ownership, and incentives to local agents. Local information can be used to identify cheaper and more appropriate ways of providing public services (Filippetti & Sacchi, 2016; Tollefsen, 2017; Von Braun, 2000). The aim of decentralization is to create equal opportunity for local and urban inhabitants in the provision of essential

social services and to create an independent middle class. In this study, I examined whether the application of the concept of decentralization can eliminate inequality and poverty, enhance economic development, and minimize corruption after decades of conflicts with human displacement and insecurity in the MRR.

Decentralization Policy as a Collaborative Approach

Collaboration has become one of the most useful tools for regional development and integration. It forms part of the strategic agenda for the practical implementation of decentralization. A process of decentralization that does not require collaboration among stakeholders may fail. Decentralization and collaboration are an integral part of regional development (Benner & Pastor,2015). Both concepts center on building trust in the process of achieving goals. Trust is a social scientific concept that applies to the analysis of socioeconomic, political, and environmental phenomena related to collaboration (Benner & Pastor,2015; Murphy & Lawhon 2011).

Decentralization in the last 30 years has become a strategic tool for development agendas. It has been used as a model to integrate all stakeholders in the process of political participation and the democratic engineering of many societies. The implementation of decentralization policy enhances the transfer of central government authority to local authorities and organizations (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013; Benner & Pastor,2015). Latin America, for example, emerged as one of the world's most dynamic regions for decentralization (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). Decentralization is considered one of the policy frameworks for development and the sustainability of liberty and freedom in the region (Spina, 2014;Diamond,1999). It has been used as a medium to

create stability and eliminate conflict, and there is support in the literature for the continued relevance of decentralization.

Decentralization is used to malfunctions of public administration or central government. It creates awareness and exposes lapses in the system in terms of what is required of the core government for its citizens. Anca (2011) indicated that "decentralization addresses inequities of redistribution at the provincial level and determines blockages in the main government decision-making process" (p. 450). In the literature, Anca argued that "decentralization also relates to political crises (ethnic or religious conflicts, difficult post-conflict situations, states of war, etc.), or economic crises, implicitly fiscal, budgetary crises" (pp.450-451). Decentralization policy also represents transitions from authoritarian political systems to democratic regimes, from a system of commanded economy to market economy (Spina, 2014; Anca, 2011, pp.450-451). In Spina (2014) argument, he indicated that "A major justification for bringing government "closer to the people" is that it improves the opportunities for and frequency of citizen participation in the political system" (Spina (2014).

Crawford and Hartmann in (2017) observed that "decentralization can enhance the eradication of poverty and conflict prevention. It has an inherent capacity to reduce poverty if properly executed". However, the implementation of decentralization becomes ineffective if there is limited local autonomy, conflict between politicians and civil servants, intragovernmental policy differences, lack of funds, lack of information, corruption, or patronage. Such impediments frustrate proper implementation of decentralization policies. For example, decentralization has not had a visible impact in Uganda because success is a function of how decentralization is introduced, articulated,

and implemented (Lewis, 2014). However, scholars have shown that decentralization's benefits offset its liabilities.

Awortwi and Walter-Drop (2015) argued that the core of the evolutionary theory of path dependence theory in the research was typical of the evolutionary theory of path dependence; this theory suggests that the longer an institution has been in place, the longer an institution is in place, the less likely it is to change because reinforces itself. In the same study by Awortwi and Walter-Drop (2015), there was an indication that the implementation of decentralization policy by different states in Africa has fundamental motives by the different stakeholders. Be it political, economic, or territorial control, the intent in most cases had always been to keep up its influence, at the same time, supports the concept of decentralization (Awortwi & Walter-Drop, 2015; Awortwi,2011). The study explored decentralization policies in various forms. Accordingly, the path dependency theory and the sequential theory of Falleti were used in the analyses to buttress arguments in the study (Falleti, 2005; Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000, 2004). From the same perspective, Falleti (in 2005) wrote that “the systematic execution of decentralized policies is fundamental to the extent of how enabling the benefits impact locals, municipal or local government” (Falleti, 2005, pp.327-329).

The theorist (Falleti) indicated that “self-government in comparison with the central administration regarding trade and industry enhance the capacity of local authorities to invest in what is appropriate and suitable for them. It institutionalizes the standard instituted of what they can and cannot. It enhances collaborations and efficient output at each level of government (Falleti, 2005, pp. 327-346).” A case in point is the

Uganda's decentralization policy; studies indicated that there was a significant improvement in the locals lives (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000). On the same note, Steffensen and Trollegaard (2000) pointed out that "the 1995 Ugandan Constitution and the 1997 Local Government Act are among the most detailed and comprehensive legislative frameworks in sub-Saharan Africa" (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000, pp.15-65).

A comparative analysis between Ghana and Uganda (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000) showed political decentralization in the two countries had slightly different results. In Uganda, the study indicated that "the vibrancy of political decentralization demonstrates the competitive nature of local council elections" (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000, pp.20-21). Accordingly, "the high turnover of councilors at every election in some areas as much as 80 percent periodically brought new people into the political system (Steffensen & Trollegaard, pp.20-21)." This expanded the pool of local political knowledge and experience. Voter turnout in local government elections was also high and comparable to the turnout in national elections (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000). In Ghana, the same study revealed a different result in the implementation of political decentralization. It discovered that the nature of political decentralization led to the lack of interest at the local level. For example, the first local government election in 1988 and 1989, constituted about 59% of registered, and only 29% turned out to vote, accordingly (Steffensen & Trollegaard, 2000).

These statistics illustrate two high points from the literature. First, they indicate that decentralization policy narrows social, political and economic gaps between the have

and have-nots. It required the sequential introduction of this concept where all stakeholders will have interest. Increasing the level of interest, as demonstrated in the case of Uganda, did not work overnight but took time. However, a sequential approach will eventually lead to the full capacity to test the strength of decentralization policy. For instance, the literature indicates that Chile and Colombia's success originated from conditions and specifics incorporated in their strategic policy introduced (Bossert & Thomas, 2014).

A study by Bossert and Thomas (2014) on Decentralization and equity of resource allocation using evidence from Colombia and Chile argued that maintaining "equal distribution of resources among all stakeholders was somehow effective, despite disparities in wages or standard of living" (Bossert & Thomas, 2014). The study explored how those in the business of healthcare reform became advocates of decentralization as a medium of promoting equality among the different players in the state and community. Two Latin American nations (Chile and Colombia) with significant decentralization policies were analyzed comparatively in this case and were found to enjoy a reasonable level of decisions, on funding than more of their competitors in the region. The data from Colombia shows that a population-based formula for national allocations is an efficient mechanism for achieving equity of expenditures (Bossert & Thomas, 2014). The study shows the practical results that decentralization policy had in the region, but the lesson learned should be the reality that decentralization policy differs among states or regions, depending on the demography and stakeholders involved.

Administrative, Political, and Fiscal Decentralization

In the present study, I discuss decentralization from three perspectives; administrative decentralization (AD), political decentralization (PD) and fiscal decentralization (FD) as present in the literature.

Administrative Decentralization

Administrative decentralization (AD) is the application of policy in delegating central government authority to locals for the management or administration of services to the public. The literature on decentralization indicates that fair, competitive, and regular elections compel local politicians to exercise power in a way that allows decentralized institutions to provide efficiently and equitable outcomes (Filippetti & Sacchi, 2016; Spina, 2014). AD supports the work of local administrators in the execution of their different policies. The implementation involves the allocation of budgets to local authorities, more administrative authority, more economic responsibility, and more political autonomy (Cohen & Peterson, 1996).

Under AD, the service providers are mostly citizens at the bottom level of government. The goal is to ensure that the central government limits its involvement with locals' affairs. However, AD application and success depends on the regional interest of stakeholders. Accordingly, AD ensures that major responsibilities of central governments are assigned to local councils or administrations, creating some degree of a balance of power (Litvack, 2001, World Bank, 2001). Studies indicate that the process of civil service reform is a supporting strategy for instituting decentralization in government

activities and providing for citizens. Under a decentralized system, civil servants are considered fundamental to an efficient execution of public policy (World Bank, 2001).

Political Decentralization

Political decentralization (PD) limits power from corruption and enhances equal political participation for all, thereby increasing political accountability and strengthening local governance (Jean-Paul Faguet , 2014; World Development Report, 2004). In a study by Fan & Treisman (2009), indicated that “Political decentralization aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making.” These are some reasons behind the philosophy of political decentralization. PD entails citizens electing local authorities such as city mayors, governors, and other local positions. This process empowers citizens by way of giving them input in local decision-making processes and holding local decision-makers accountable for their actions (Heller, 2001, p. 131; Khemani, 2006).

PD avoids political corruption stemming from the abuse of power, instead of supporting a system of political accountability. It introduces a political system that creates a political environment that compels the central government to deliver essential social services. Accordingly, many central government authorities are face increasing pressures for PD for better performance and accountability from subnational governments (Ahmad & Khemani, 2005; Faguet , 2014).

Fiscal Decentralization

Fiscal decentralization (FD) is public policy that determines the management of revenue and expenditures by the local government and the central government (Filippetti,

& Sacchi, 2016; Davoodi & Zou, 1998). Huther and Shah (1998) wrote that FD is about the enhancement of the quality of leadership that can be determined by all stakeholders' participation in the governance of the state or locality (Huther & Shah, 1998). It is also a measure of social justice and the improvement of stability and economic development.

The World Bank in 2004 submitted that a balance of power among central governance and local authorities maximized the wealth of government to the detriment of citizens and did not narrow the gap between political control and wealth between citizens or stakeholders (Faguet, 2004). And based on cross-country data, De Mello and Barenstein (2001) concluded that tax decentralization improved the quality of governance. FD supports the local authority in the execution of major projects like those in the health industry, education, and overall development (Davoodi & Zou, 1998, p. 244). The greater responsibilities assumed by the subnational government with a limited revenue source highlights the importance of the design of the economic dimension of an intergovernmental system of fiscal decentralization. (Ahmad, & Bird, 1998; Bird & Vaillancourt, 2006; Musgrave, 1959; Weingast, 2014, pp.14-15).

Many studies indicate that FD provides a competitive advantage in the availability of essential social services, because of its ability to minimize costs associated to provide these services (World Bank 1997; Tanzi 1999). Under FD, local governments feel the difference of success and self-control in budgetary execution versus managing their expenditures and different taxation policy. It signifies that there is a revenue sharing system that is supportive of FD.

In other literature, it is argued that FD is an essential mechanism to curb corruption. For instance, Weingast & Montinola et al. (1995) demonstrated that fiscal decentralization is the provision of economic activities that leverage the reduction of corruption in a local society or at the regional level and enhance the ability to govern. (De Mello, 2000, pp. 365-380; Inman & Rubinfeld, 1997, pp. 4-35), these authors argued that FD supports municipal capital and assures the political involvement of all stakeholders in the democratic engineering of the state. Similarly, Fisman and Gatti (2002) found that decentralization reduces crime and minimizes corruption in government, and enhances stability and economic development. And a report by Enikolopov and Zhuravskaya (2007) indicated that the process of governing under fiscal decentralization improves in terms of accountability and development. In the same context, the literature suggests that “nations with adequate fiscal revenues policy and expenditure located at the level of locals’ level appear to be less corrupt. And results indicate it seems to reduce corruption even in countries in which there is a high degree of political representation” (Altunbaş & Thornton, 2012, pp. 66-67). FD policies help in the elimination of poverty and corruption and the enhancement of economic development.

Decentralization and Public Policy

The literature defined public policy as laws, regulation, or guidelines by which society is governed (Birkland, 2015; Kilpatrick, 2000). The institution of law and order enables the government to make decisions on behalf of its citizens that are enshrined in the primary legislation of the land. In so doing, our limited or abundant resources must be managed (Lin, 2001). Citizens must have the freedom to make a decision as to who

represents them and who does not. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant all argued from different perspectives that for a political order to be legitimate, it had to be decided by or justified for each person. Though these theorists have different views, they share some level of political legitimacy in the political accommodation process. Vallier and Kevin et al. (2013) stated that the scope of the public determines which characters are idealized. However, it is not how the idealization should proceed, but how public justification theorists consider the public to include all members of the society. It is due to a large part extend to simplify what needs to conceptualize.

Citizens' public policy must be able to address these issues, and decentralization must form part of the agenda to enhance this discourse. Decentralization and Public policy manifest the common sense and common conscience of citizens as a whole as it extends throughout the state and applies to matters of public health, safety, and welfare. It is general, well-settled public opinion relating to the duties of citizens to their fellow citizens (The Guide to American Law, 1984, p.355). Its importance sometimes fluctuates with the changing economic needs, social customs, moral values, and determinations.

Proponents of decentralization claim that it transfers power to local governments and institutions. It is also the belief that it may result in higher productivity and efficiency in the market and strengthen local decision-making authority (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). This enhances the discourse of executing effective public policy. Participation of the public can lead to the legitimacy of the government, a better informed public, improved decision making, and altered patterns of political power and confidence

among stakeholders (Wang & Wan Wart, 2007, p. 265). The institutionalization of public trust is maximized by an ethical approach to governance.

Decentralization as a Medium for Regional Stability

Decentralization as a means to regional stability derives from the fact that it has the potential to minimize inequality among regions and stakeholders. A variety of literature indicates that decentralization brings people together and encourages equality (Dafflon, 2015; Common and Flynn et al., 2016). Accordingly, decentralization is also relevant for developing countries, since the World Bank and other international agencies consider decentralization as an essential element of development strategy (Gopal, 2008; Litvack & Ahmad, 1998, pp. 6-7; World Bank, 1997). When decentralization enables citizens to have access to social services and development, it leads to regional stability and equality among stakeholders (Litvack & Ahmad, 1998, pp. 6-7). Regional differences also matter as they might derive from ethnic discrimination or market failures due to things such as excessive migration (Mills & Ferranti, 1971; Boadway & Flatters 1982). In general, societies connected regionally with policies of decentralization are better off today than isolated countries, like in the case of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. These regional states formed the East African Community to coordinate everything from customs to investment for the promotion of peacekeeping, regional stability, and economic development (Khanna & Palepu, 2013).

Decentralization as a Medium for Economic Development and Poverty Reduction

Economic Development (ED) is one advantage that comes with decentralization, which enhances the capability of all stakeholders in the administration of the state. With

economic development, essential social services are provided for the people, which leads to peace and harmony. Decentralization improves revenue and spending (Neyapti, 2010). Jin & Zou (2002) wrote that ED offers “local governments, private and not-for-profit sectors, and local communities the opportunity to improve the economy. “ It focuses on the enhancement of competitiveness, increasing sustainable growth, and ensuring that growth is inclusive (Jin & Zou, 2002, p.272; World Bank, 2011).”

In the context of ED, decentralization can yield competitive social advantages in the sustainability of individual growth and the ability of citizens to become productive. Decentralization allows local governments to respond better to local needs than national governments (Faguet & Sánchez, 2013, p. 227). Under a decentralized policy, ED creates room for the modernization of the different sectors of the society for equal participation (Green, 2013).

A growing volume of literature indicates that decentralization advances poverty reduction. It has many advocates as a development agenda for the eradication of poverty in many regions. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are one medium used to execute this strategy. For instance, the advocacy by nongovernmental organizations for decentralization elevated the discussion about decentralization between the 1980s and the 1990s. Nongovernmental institutions were used by many donor institutions to propagate the idea of citizens’ participations in the governance of the state (the concept of decentralization; Alan, 2000; Mark, 2001; World Bank, 2002). Decentralization, in addition to its use as an instrument for the eradication of deficiency in governance by NGOs, creates an environment for services to reach local communities that enhance their

capacity for poverty alleviation. It is also a means for widespread participation by the weak and powerless (Townsend et al., 2002). Poverty reduction, including the ability to afford medical care and one meal per day, requires a larger participation of citizens in the employment sector, which is facilitated by decentralization.

Decentralization as a Medium for Minimizing Corruption

Corruption is defined as a system in which higher level officials collect a fixed amount of bribe income from each of the bureaucrats (Michael Johnston, 2017; Waller & Verdier et al., 2002). Scott (1969) defined corruption as "conduct that digresses from the regular duties of a public responsibility; second, corruption is related to the economic concept of exchange" (Scott, 1969, p.315). Corruption is one of the greatest challenges that many developing societies encounter. Studies show that corruption is one of the major root causes of conflict and regional instability (Michael Johnston, 2014; World Bank, 2004). Most people in developing countries, especially Africa, see corruption in practical terms (Alam, 1989, pp.441-442). For instance, studies indicate that crime or corruption is related to the performance of the various duties associated with a public office.

A decentralized state that requires accountability leads to a minimally corrupt system, where public officials must account for maximal output since corruption is considered as a deviation from the norms or practices of modern bureaucracy. When a political environment or local society decentralizes, it discourages monopoly and encourages accountability at all sectors of the state. It creates checks and balances for the government that helps to minimize corruption (Mbaku, 2008). Fisman & Gatti (2002)

found out “that revenue and expenditure decentralization reduce crime.” Enikolopov and Zhuravskaya (2007) reported that governance indicators improve when fiscal decentralization combined with high national priorities. Fiscal decentralization has a positive impact on the quality of government in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. These effects encourage the presence of regional elections and multilevel government (Kyria & Roca-Sagale, 2011). In the MRR, corruption has been one fundamental issue related to instability and poverty. MRR borders have been used for different corrupt transactions, from arms trades to cross-border incursions (UNDP, 2013, CIA World Fact, 2012), instead of cross-border collaboration, regional stability, and economic development.

Pitfalls of Decentralization

While it is true that decentralization provides a strategic competitive advantage, it also has limitations. For instance, it increases the social, political, and economic liabilities for local governments and reduces central government responsibility and control (Afonso & Hauptmeier, 2009; Yushkov, 2015). Under fiscal decentralization, the revenue sides of local governments are sometimes unable to mobilize resources in their jurisdictions to finance an increasing volume of expenditures (De Mello, 2001, p. 108). When this happens, there are sometimes budgetary constraints at the local administrative level (De Mello 2001). Another argument against decentralization is that it affects the average return lender’s demands when financing local government budget imbalances (De Mello, 2001, p.109). Rodden (2002) indicated that revenue decentralization deteriorates the general government balance.

Administrative decentralization can be ineffective if local governments are decentralized without funding or the transfer of authority from the central government. Decentralization policy that incorporates fiscal decentralization as an enhancement to local governments' participation must bear the liability that comes with the delegation of tax administration to local authorities. However, lack of capacity on the part of government can create local budgetary issues. It also increases dependency syndrome from central authority, the center and the locals (Silverman, 1992, p.188). Political decentralization could reduce the power of governors and mayors, and enhances local government such as city councils. However, it has the tendency of division in the local administration if it is not managed well. In this case, local political activities have the tendency to undermine those in leadership, both at the administrative and governing levels. However, despite these pitfalls of decentralization, the overall benefits provide a competitive advantage in building a stronger collaboration to govern and enhance regional stability, according to the literature.

Theoretical Model

The theoretical framework for this study is the sequential theory of decentralization. This theory supports the public choice theory about the purpose and significance of this study. The sequential theory of decentralization (STD) has three key features (Falleti, 2005). These features include: Political Decentralization (PD), Administrative Decentralization (AD), and Fiscal Decentralization (FD). It is vital to this study because of the different interests of stakeholders in the policy implementation. The origin of the sequential theory of decentralization (STD) begins a focus mostly from the

Latin Americas' application (Falleti, 2005, Falleti, 2010) Latin Americas (Argentina, Brazil).

Public choice theory is supportive of the sequential theory of decentralization. This theory suggests that residents are comparable to consumers making decisions; in other words, locals make choices about where is suitable for them base on cities, locality. As such, Public choice theory creates competition and enhances economic activity, and strengthens communities or localities (Tiebout, 1956).

Public choice promotes the sequential theory implementation of decentralization with the political approach to decentralization, administrative involvement, and a fiscal implementation of decentralization. Both theories support democratic governance and choices. In Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia, I proposed the sequential theory of decentralization. Its implementation is still challenging because MRR governments are governed by mostly the executive branch (CIA World Fact, 2014, UNOWA, 2009, p.38).

How does the Sequential Theory of Decentralization Fits into the Governance of the MRR States?

Table 1

The Sequential Theory of Decentralization in the Governance of the MRR States.

Country	System of government	Branch of government	Appointed posts	Elected posts
Sierra-Leone	Constitutional Democracy	Executive Judiciary Legislator	Judiciary/judges All cabinets posts	President National Legislature Some Commission City mayors Some Commission City mayors City mayors

Country	System of government	Branch of government	Appointed posts	Elected posts
Liberia	Republican	Executive Judiciary Legislature	Judiciary/Judges Superintendent All cabinet posts City mayors Commissioners	President Legislature
Country	System of government	Branch of government	Appointed posts	Elected posts
Guinea	Republican	Executive Judiciary Legislature	Judiciary/Judges All Cabinet posts Prime Minister	President Legislature
Country	System of government	Branch of government	Appointed posts	Elected posts
Ivory Coast	Republican	Executive Judiciary Legislator	Judiciary/judges All cabinet posts Prime Minister	President Legislature
Source: (CIA World Facts, 2014)				

The data illustrated in Table 1 represents the system of governments and control of power in the MRR states. It demonstrates the dominant control of power by the executive branch of government in each MRR state. Accordingly, MRR governments have a dominant executive power that dictates political, administrative, and fiscal decisions (CIA World Facts, 2014). The question then is how does the sequential theory of decentralization fit in the governance of MRR States to enhance regional stability and economic development, and minimize corruption and poverty, given the dominance of executive power? Within Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast, more appointments are made by the executive branch of government (CIA World Fact, 2014).

In the implementation phase of decentralization, be it administrative, political, or fiscal decentralization, one must assume an expert grouping of power and formed a strategic mechanism; a system where stakeholders involve with one another in a collaborative approach to govern (Schleifer, 1994). For example, using the sequential theory in the implementation of decentralization, three different situations are looked at

in Table 2. It highlights changes that can affect the local, regional, and national levels of governance.

Table 2

The Sequential theory of decentralization diagram

Prevailing interests in first case	1st type of Decentralization Reform	Feedback	2nd type of Decentralization Reform	3rd type of Decentralization Reform	Degree of change intergovernmental Balance of power
Subnational	Political	Self-reinforce policy	Fiscal	Administrative	High
National	Administrative	self-reinforce policy, Power or control	Fiscal	Political	High
Regional (MRR)	(Regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and corruption minimize. High)				
	Sources: SSE: for Argentina, IMF (1985; 2001); Mexico, IMF (1985, 2001); Brazil, Samuels (2002); Colombia, IMF (1985) and Dillinger and Webb (1999, 32). National Constitution and INDEC (1997); Mexico, Lujambio (2000, 35, 73–76) and INEGI (1995); Brazil, data provided by David Samuels; Colombia,				

Regionally, an efficient execution of decentralization policies that foster collaboration and cooperation between regional governments can enhance regional stability, economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption. Accordingly, the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) report (2013) placed emphasis on collaboration between national, subregional, and regional bodies to help eliminate conflicts and create stability within their respective countries, regions, and sub-regions (United Security Council, 2013; Khanna & Palepu, 2013).

Table 3

The Sequential theory and Citizens' Participants

Figure 3: Sequential theory of decentralization					
Case-I	Government Control	Citizens Participation Increases	Citizens satisfaction maximize	National Benefits	Regional Benefits
Political	yes	No	No	No	No
Administrative	yes	No	No	No	No
Fiscal	yes	No	No	No	No
Case-II	Government Control	Citizens Participation Increases	Citizens satisfaction maximize	National Benefits	Regional Benefits
Political	No	yes	yes	yes	yes
Administrative	No	yes	yes	yes	yes
Fiscal	No	yes	yes	yes	yes

Sources: (Falleti, 2005).

In Table 3, two cases are compared in the implementation of decentralization policy as argued by Falleti (Falleti, 2005). In Case I, for instance, the central government makes political, administrative, and fiscal decisions as is MRR governments, as demonstrated in Table 1. By contrast, in Case II, the government does not control political, financial and administrative decisions, but rather the citizens do. The ultimate results in Case II will maximize people's satisfaction and increase economic development, enhance regional stability, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption.

In the same manner, as in other path dependent processes, earlier events matter much more than later ones (Pierson 2000, p. 253). However, when things happen within a sequence, it affects how they happen (Tilly 1984, p.14). As the literature describes, two opposing decentralization sequences unfolded in two Latin American countries (Argentina and Colombia). Unlike the case of Colombia, Argentina's path of

decentralization conformed to the preferences of the national executive (Pierson 2000, p.253; Tilly 1984, p. 14).

Public Choice Theory: Proponent of the Sequential Theory of Decentralization

The public choice theory and the sequential theory of decentralization formed a balanced approach to the examining the concept of decentralization. The public choice theory provides an avenue for the presentation and analysis of decentralization (Dennis Rondinelli, 1989). According to this approach, the efficiency and the quality of public services, including education are improved when providers involve in the provisional mechanism rather than having a monopoly in which a vendor such as the central government dominates the market (Ostrum & Ostrum, 1977). It entails that decentralization provides citizens with more opportunities to choose various options, according to their preferences and needs. Thus enhancing the quality of public services increases consumer satisfaction (McGinn & Welsh, 1999; Levin & Belfield, 2002).

The Game Theory and the Sequential Theory of Decentralization

Another theoretical approach to understanding decentralization is the game theory model. The game theory approach to decentralization is to understand the interaction between the locals and central government with different political and economic interest. Accordingly, the theoretical framework helps to navigate the engineering of decentralization and the democratization of locals to increase the level of collaboration that prevents conflict and enhances development and stability (Treisman, 1999).

For instance, Alan Carter (1999) wrote that the game theory provides considerable support for the decentralization case. The theory supports the rationality of decision that comes along in the sequential implementation of decentralization. The decision can be

base in the logical sequence that the policy can implement for the independent mind of the stakeholders.

However, according to the literature, the phases of implementation of decentralization matters as in the case of the sequential theory of decentralization. The application of the sequential theory of decentralization mostly preferences political decentralization, administrative decentralization, and fiscal decentralization. The sequence of execution is fundamental by either one as a means of achieving a genuine participations of all stakeholders for the sustainability of peace, tranquility and the stability of the MRR's states.

Guinea: Decentralization and the Colonial Era

Guinea is one of the Mano River Region (MRR) states that has transitioned through different social, economic and political stages in West Africa. Studies revealed that "the country is a socioeconomically impoverished but mineral-rich state, which is about the size of Oregon and has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil" (Arieff & Cook, 2010, pp.2-3)." On the northwest are Guinea Bissau and Senegal, and the southeast, Ivory Coast situated. Liberia and Sierra Leone are on the southern border and to the west is the Atlantic Ocean. It has an area of 245,860 square kilometers (94,930 square miles), including 140 square kilometers (50 square miles) of inland water (Statesman Yearbook, 2009, CIA World Fact, 2013). In 1888, Guinea became a French protectorate, in 1893 a colony, and in 1904 a constituent territory of the French. Guinea became an independent nation on October 2, 1958 (Statesman Yearbook, 2009, George, 1997). Instead of a decentralized policy during these periods, the Guineans' government had a form of representation that it implemented in 1946 with forced labor and other

colonial policies. After the French colonial rule, Guinea became a single party state (Statesman Yearbook, 2009, Encyclopedia of Nations, 2010).

Despite the economic potential of the Guineans' economy, political and economic decision-making are concentrated at the helm of the executive branch of government, or the central administration level, where the central government appointed local authorities. Guinea remains a constitutional republic with power concentrated in a strong presidency (US Department of State, 2001; US Department of State, 2016). Some view Guinea as a nation with potential for healthy economic growth, although it has not implemented decentralization policies, and the literature indicates the state is still far from achieving that dream. The state has a long history of military regimes and poor governance with a lack of equal opportunity. This has been one of the causes for regional conflict and development problems (Annan, 2014; Central Intelligence Agency, 2009; Freedom House, 2008; International Crisis Group, 2009; The World Bank, 2008a; USAID, 2006).

Political Decentralization (Colonial Era)

Political decentralization during the colonial period of Guinea was in the form of colonial governance. Existing literature indicates that the colonial governors formulated the operations of the government to govern the locals (CIA World Fact, 2009). The country lived through an extended period of centralized government in a one-party system. The regime embodied Marxist ideological choices (Frederick Cooper, 1994, CIA World Fact, 2009). The central government appointed rural and urban leaders. It makes the process of governance a representation of the people (World Bank, 2013). This definition was not applicable to the Guinean political system during the colonial era.

During the colonial era, major policies and decisions were concentrated at the level of the colonial regime and provincial level (US Department of State, 2001). The idea of political decentralization during this era often was nothing of decentralization, unlike the constitution of the state. In the absent of this, the colonial era and the era following the Independence of Guinea in 1958, communism was the central policy of the government. The state lacked a multi-party political system and broad participation in the political governance of the country. The colonial leaders made all the strategic decisions (Delavignette, 1970; Goerg, 1997).

Administrative Decentralization (Colonial Era)

Before Guinea's independence from France, the French formed the territory of Guinea as a French protectorate to administer all state activities in the West African region. In fact, a governor general governed the country from a residence in Dakar, Senegal. According to Boahen's (1971) account, the colonial administration was intended for the direct leadership and governance of the French (Delavignette, 1970). However, on October 2, 1958, this became limited with the declaration of Guinea as an independent state under the administration of Sékou Touré as president. During this period, the country shifted some of its policy and political decisions toward the Soviet Union and adopted most of their socialist policies. The relation with the Soviet Union's ideology moved toward the Chinese model of socialism. However, Guinea still benefited from other countries with a different system of governments, like the US and UK (*The Economist*, 1980).

Fiscal Decentralization (Colonial Era)

The Guinean economy is rich in natural resources, with one of the world's largest reserves of bauxite and other natural minerals like gold and diamonds. It also has the prospect of creating hydroelectric power. However, having a decentralized fiscal policy that benefitted all during the colonial era was not feasible (Statesman Yearbook, 2009). Rather, the economic policy of the government during the colonial regime was marked by decisions originating from the lieutenant governors that govern colony (Delavignette, 1970, Boahen, 1971; Statesman Yearbook, 2009).

Guinea: Decentralization in the Military Era

Policies and laws were dictated by series of military regimes characterized the Guinean military age. In 1984, the country experienced its first modern military coup with Lansana Conte becoming the military leader of Guinea (*International Herald Tribune*, 1984). At this time, the Constitution was dissolved, and the military ran the government. The government was extended to the length and breadth of the nation, but under the supervision and authority of military control, not as a participatory or decentralized policy that benefitted all stakeholders. In 1994, the country transitioned from a military rule to an elected regime, led by Lansana Conte. He had ruled as a military leader from 1984 to 1994, and in 1993, he became a civilian elected president, taking office as such in 1994 (US Department of State, 2001). The Guinea Armed Forces became the supreme military army of the nation, and the army leader became the commander-in-chief. The military comprises the air force, the navy, the army, and gendarmerie. Their responsibility is to provide security for the state and outside forces (US Department of State, 2010; CIA World Facts, 2013). Since then, leaders have governed the nation through military decrees and the Guinean constitution in parallel.

However, the use of military orders overshadows the law, and their leaders use the constitution merely to legitimize the regime's actions.

According to the literature, the Code of Penal Procedure (CPP) was instituted by the military commanders. The CPP gives the military junta and state presidential guard or the Red Berets arresting power. The police were also clothed with authority to arrest and detained violators of the CPP. Under the CPP, the government could issue a warrant before making an arrest and requires detainees appear before a magistrate within 72 hours. However, the CPP did many arrests and detained citizens for longer periods before charging them. Those arrested or convicted are held until the conclusion of the case, including a period of appeal. Outside of the Code, release on bail was at the discretion of the magistrate who had jurisdiction over the code. During the era of rule by military regimes, citizen participation in government was limited and periods of unrest resulted.

Political Decentralization (The Military Era)

Guinea's political decentralization policy during the military regime entailed a dual system of governance, divided between the constitution and the army decrees. For example, the military regime operated the government with different policies along with the law of the state, which is contrary to the philosophical concept of decentralization. Under political decentralization, political powers are inherent to the democratic process, with power inherited from the people. Additionally, under political decentralization, citizens are empowered to choose their representation through public decision making (World Bank Group, 2001). However, this definition or concept was not applicable during the military regimes. The necessary legal and regulatory framework were not

established. Instead, military decrees took precedence over the Constitution (CIA World Facts, 2013).

Administrative Decentralization (The Military Era)

Administrative decentralization under the Guinean military regime did not exist. The government was run by the junta's rule or decrees. According to the literature, the constitution became a secondary tool used to govern the state. The military regime began to supervise the administration of the state and provinces strictly. For example, following the army takeover of the country after the death of its first independent president, Guinea held several general elections. But Democratic gains were limited, and power remained concentrated in the hands of the military's leaders (UNDP, 2009, CRS, 2009). During the military regime of Guinea, administrative control was not a democratic principle. In September 2008, the military denied free demonstration of citizens and came down hard on demonstrators, leaving many protesters dead and imprisoning innocent civilians (UNDP, 2009, CRS, 2009).

Fiscal decentralization (The Military Era)

The financial policy of the military regime was subject to military decrees. It began with tax policy that ran parallel to the constitution when it came to addressing economic issues. For instance, most citizens engaged agriculture activities to enhance their sustainability during the period (US Department of State, 2001). It gives an annual growth in GDP per capital. Accordingly, most of the state income came from the mining sector that includes bauxite, gold, and diamonds (US Department of State, 2001).

The literature reveals that exports included coffee and fruit between 1996 and 1999. However, the financial sector started experiencing a steep decline after that. Collaboration and partnership with the international community, the economy took different trend (US Department of State, 2001). Accordingly, the rampant corruption and lack of accountability in the government discourages financial and monetary reform in the nation (US Department of State, 2014). An effective fiscal decentralization policy that benefited the entire citizenry and the region was not achievable during this period.

Guinea: Post-Military Era

Guinea's post-military era started in 2010 with a presidential election and, subsequently, a parliamentary election. Guinea only recently completed the transition from rule by a military regime to democratic governance (World Bank, 2013). There is insufficient literature about the successful implementation of a decentralization policy in Guinea, due to the long historical of Guinea's colonial and nondemocratic rule.

The idea of decentralization emerged in Guinea in 1985. The intent of the government was to enhance economic development, minimize corruption, and reduce poverty (World Bank, 2005). However, this concept did not materialize in the midst of a powerful central government that formulated almost all decisions in the name of electoral democracy. For instance, mostly NGOs ran locals' level management program. The state operated most development programs and elections, and determined fiscal, political, and administrative policies (Peart, 1995). According to the literature, Guinea failed to manage the mining sector, agricultural sector, and energy sector (Global Finance, 2014, Pasquali & Bedell, 2014). The Guinean economy heavily depends on mining and mineral

production (World Bank, 2013; World Bank, 2014). However, recent policy adoption of the Local Government Act and local electioneering system established a major way forward for an effective governing of the state. In this regard, it is argued that if decentralization policy is implemented effectively, it enhances and creates the necessary sustainability of local government (World Bank 2005, World Bank 2013). Despite a post-military government, the fall in the living standards of Guinea's citizens resulted from the government failure to provide basic social services to its citizens (CIA World The facts book, 2010). The issue of unemployment remains a major challenge for economic development and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2010, World Bank, 2013). Government efforts to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment have not produced the results as anticipated in the remodeling of Guinean society. Neither has it helped to enhance the stability of the region. As a consequence, decentralization has not been a competitive advantage of the MRR, according to the literature.

Political decentralization (Post-Military Era)

From 2010 to 2013, Guinea adopted a new form of governance with presidential and parliamentary elections (UNDP, 2013, CIA world Fact, 2012). However, the democratic process did not enhance the locals' capacity to make a full political decision of their choice in the form of decentralized government (CIA world Fact, 2012). The political arrangement created an opportunity for broader political participation and started opening up the political space, but despite political dialog, local leaders and administrators were still not strengthening for the abilities of local political participation

on the political front (Arandel & Bell, 2015). For instance, the involvement of residents' right to data and involvement in locals' decisions or policy making has been limited.

However, after coming from a steep path that entailed government mostly by military decrees, the transition to a fully democratic environment that enhances the broader participation of the citizens will take time. And the incorporation of all stakeholders seems to be on a rocky footing according to development studies.

Administrative Decentralization (Post-Military Era)

The administrative framework established after Guinea's military regimes entailed the return of the institutionalization of the constitution as the basis of the country's legal system, rather than a military rule. The electoral processes for president and parliament brought about the administration of the state by the central government with provinces administered by presidential appointees. The nation adopted its constitution in 2008 as a prelude to its first multi-party political arrangement (Sidibe, 2012), as a national framework to promote decentralization. UNDP assisted with the elaboration of this initiative, which was preceded by an analysis of constraints to decentralization with stakeholders at different levels (Bossuyt & Gould, 2000). The goal of the program was to serve as a means to revitalize and strengthen the poverty focus of decentralization with more outside support. However, the direct state involvement was assumed that an efficient execution to realize this goal in the absence of a policy that involved all was heading for failure, accordingly (Bossuyt & Gould, 2000) (UNDP, 2010). To date, most administrative agencies in Guinea are still under the direct

administration of appointed officials, according to the literature (Arieff & McGovern, 2013).

Fiscal Decentralization (Post-Military Era)

The focus of the fiscal policy of following Guinea's military era was a system formulated to tax businesses and individuals. According to the literature, Guinea taxes are one of the higher in the MRR (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2014). The state also institutes other taxes that are enshrined in the revenue and finance law of the Department of Income of Guinea, including taxes such as stamp duties and registration fees (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2014). The fiscal policy of the government is limited and insufficient to allow local governments to assume a critical role in regional development (World Bank, 2013). Local finance in Guinea is not sufficient to own source revenues, shared revenues, and grants. No intergovernmental transfer system exists (World Bank, 2013, UNDP, 2010). Despite the Guinean government's fiscal policy and tax regime, the system did not seem to work for the provinces in the nation. Neither did it support regional cooperation between MRR states for regional development and stability, as argued in the literature.

Ivory Coast: The Colonial Era (1904-1999)

Ivory Coast officially became a republic in 1960 with independence from France. The state is one of the MRR states. The country is bordered by Liberia and Guinea on the west. On the northern side are Mali and Burkina Faso. To the east are Ghana and Guinea and to the south is the Atlantic Ocean (CIA world fact, 2014). Ivory Coast is one of the economic empires in the MRR (CIA world fact, 2014). Before 1960, the country was governed by France. During the colonial era, the state was administered under the direct supervision of France's appointed governors or leaders.

There is little literature available about the existence and policy implementation of decentralization during the colonial period in the Ivory Coast. During the colonial regime, the French appointed Gabriel Angoulvant as governor in charge of Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire). Accordingly, he had limited knowledge about the continent (Africa). His leadership approach was effective involvement of the locals (Shank, 1993). He initiated a policy of sending military personnel into the hinterland for the establishment of law and order. It prepared local leadership to work with previous colonial laws that were used to provide labor and essential commodities to the imperial soldiers. This approach helped protect the trade and labor market of the colonial regime (Library of Congress, 1998).

So the broad participations of both the locals and colonial leaders were not familiar ground. Accordingly, the French adopted policies to organize the locals in defined administrative territories under their control (Library of Congress, 1998, US States Department, 2014). The governors appointed from the French led the region with little involvement of the locals. (Statesman's Yearbook, 2009). During this time, Ivory Coast enjoyed fast growth and became an enormous economic empire, until the leadership of Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Statesman's Yearbook, 2009).

Political Decentralization (The Colonial Era-1904-1999)

In 1946, Félix Houphouët-Boigny founded Ivory Coast's first political party (Library of Congress, 1998). He eventually adopted a policy of cooperation with the French authorities (Library of Congress, 1998). By the 1950s, the country had become one of the wealthiest of the French colonies in West Africa, and in 1958 the country became an autonomous republic within the French Community. In the 1960s, Ivory Coast enjoyed some level of political autonomy, which encouraged the establishment of

political parties. The country adopted a judiciary that is a model of the French judiciary system (CIA world fact, 2013). However, these different policy arrangements did not result in the political decentralization, which could have resulted in greater political participation by the residents. On the other hand, political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, and the development of pluralistic political parties, the strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units, and the encouragement of active public interest groups, but its implementation in the Ivory remains challenged (World Bank Group, 2001). Although neither decentralization nor regional collaboration was in place, the Ivory Coast remains one of the most financial empires in the MRR, despite its limited decentralization policy (UNDP, 2013).

Administrative Decentralization (The Colonial Era-1904-1999)

During the colonial era, the Ivorian administration was dominated by colonial rules instituted according to the French government's policies. The French adopted an indirect rule, using indigenous leaders as their representatives. The locals functioned in a leadership position by supervision only. The local leaders took orders from the central government. This system was in place until the independence of Ivory Coast in the 1960s (Library of Congress, 1998).

The concept of administrative decentralization helps to redistribute authority, responsibility, and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. Accordingly, administrative decentralization transfers responsibilities for the administration of public places (World Bank Group, 2001). However, this was not the administrative application of governance by the colonial leaders of Ivory Coast. The colonial leaders organized the nation in political

constituencies, known as a district. The district commander governed each region. The locals were used as instruments in making the different industries work under the supervision of their colonials' leadership (U.S. Library of Congress, 2014).

Fiscal Decentralization (The Colonial Era-1904-1999)

As the French in the Ivory Coast started to expand their governance, the colonial government began to institute a monetary policy. The regime instituted a policy that required a vast labor market. The colonial government divided the state into regions that enhanced development. The labor policy required male citizens to work for a particular time for the fiscal year without salary. It was one strategy adopted for the central government to increase the productive sector of the state through the use of free labor (World Bank, 2001). However, the state's major fiscal policy was based on two primary exports: cocoa, and coffee. Beside this export sector, most of the country's monetary policy were based on the customs border taxation that helped the colonial regime until the state began full operation after the colonial era (Chamley & Ghanem 1991).

Ivory Coast: The Postcolonial and Conflict Eras (2000-2013)

Despite the indirect involvement of French rule, France is still a significant policy player in the sustainability and stability of the Ivorian Government (the World Bank, 2013). The postcolonial period in the Ivory Coast marks the beginning of the Félix Houphouët Boigny's regime and successive governments. Félix Houphouët Boigny was the country first president after independence from France (Alalade, 1979). Since Ivory Coast's independence from France in the 1960s, the country has enjoyed major economic growth. However, the postcolonial era did not experience a prolonged period of economic growth during the Félix Houphouët Boigny regime (Business Monitor International,

2013, Statesman's Yearbook, 2009). From the period of 1962 to 1981, there were attempted military coups that undermined the regime (Library of Congress, 1998).

Political Decentralization (Postcolonial and Conflict Eras-2000-2013)

The postcolonial political era of Ivory Coast marks the beginning of a different form of political arrangement and formation of the political party. By 1946, the state's first political party was founded under the leadership of Félix Houphouët Boigny (CIA world fact, 2013). He eventually adopted a policy of cooperation with the French authorities and finally created room for political participation (CIA world fact, 2013). However, the question of political participation did not equate to decentralization as was administered. In southern Côte d'Ivoire, according to the literature, political decentralization in the 1990s not match up or form part of the mainstream political arrangement established in the 1960-1980s. The decentralization initiatives of the 1990s were reform in name only (Bakary, 1986; Diahou, 1990; Fauré, 1993; Crook & Manor, 1998). Accordingly, they observed that for virtually nothing by way of resources or administrative prerogative and has been devolved to the newly created municipal governments and the councils elected to run them. These institutions created the lack of connection, or communication with, local constituencies (Bone, 2003, p. 355). After different stages of political activities, the resumption in the political dialog between the opposition and the Government helped shaped the political front and discourse, thereby easing tensions by allowing political inclusion in the nation's capital. These different political arrangements up to the present have not fulfilled the democratic tenets that come with political decentralization as indicated in the literature. For instance, instability was reported from 2010 to 2013, and subsequent breakdown in implementation of any policy

agenda of administrative or fiscal decentralization (Freedom House, 2014; UCLG, 2008b).

Administrative Decentralization (Postcolonial and Conflict Eras-2000-2013)

The postcolonial administrative policy of the 1960s did not take decentralization into consideration. The policy did not incorporate the significance of the locals' abilities to fill in the labor market (Library of Congress, 1988). However, public policy regarding administrative systems was written with the intent to enhance the state's economic development, but could not be spread over as a nationwide system or local benefit to all stakeholders. But in December 1999, the economic growth of the Ivory Coast was cut short when a military coup took over the leadership of the nation (Daddieh, 2001). According to the literature, the junta leader Robert Guei rigged the presidential election, during this period, different administrations took power, from Robert Guei, to President Gbagbo, to Alassane Dramane Ouattara in 2010 (Freedom House, 2014;UCLA International study, 2014). None of these established a decentralized form of governance.

Fiscal Decentralization (Postcolonial and Conflict Eras-2000-2013)

The postcolonial monetary policy in Ivory Coast indicated that there was economic development in the state. However, the financial system was characterized by wide fluctuations of revenues, expenditures, and deficits (World Bank, 1991). On the other hand, the nation still enjoyed some level of comfort for economic development. For instance, the country's financial system was a prototype of their colonize nation. By 1962, Ivory Coast, and other French-speaking countries became part of the regional West African Monetary Union called Union Monétaire Ouest Africain (UMOA). It created a financial environment for growth in regards to their fiscal policy. However, there is

limited literature on Ivory Coast decentralization policy as part of the MRR development agenda and regional stability plan. The Ivory Coast could be at a strategic advantage in this endeavor since Ivory Coast has a tremendous potential for economic and regional stability. The state fiscal policy helped the country's agriculture sector with growth in all of its farm products (CIA World Fact, 2013; Freedom House, 2014). However, it did not become a policy that benefited all stakeholders or its citizens and the sub-region.

Liberia Decentralization: The Colonial Era (1822 -1980s)

The history of Liberia dates as far back as the 1800s, with the formation of the state by free slaves from the United States. Liberia formally became a state in 1847 (CIA World Fact, 2014). Since then, the governance and the administration of the state have remained focused in the nation's capital, Monrovia, with limited participation of the domestic partnerships in the politics and management of the state up to the 1980s (CIA World Fact, 2014).

Liberia has a democratic and republican system of government, and among the three branches of government, the executive branch is the most powerful branch of the Liberian government. Local authorities and the judiciary branch of government are appointed by the executive branch (Library of Congress, 2013).

The absence of a decentralized policy of governance impedes the widespread participation in the management of the state and the benefits of public goods and services to the majority of its citizens (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004, p. 3). It contributes to the need for greater political participations and more transparency in the state and service provision (Heller, 2001). Accordingly, lack of decentralized policy has created problems

in terms of economic growth and the development of the state and region. These conditions have helped slow down the nation's overall economic growth and its democratic processes, thereby leading to underinvestment in human resources and human well-being throughout the republic. From 1847 to 1980, the country was administered by the settlers (ACS) American Colonization Society from the United States. This control, however, protected what is known as Liberia today from neighboring European or other interests (The Library of Congress, 2014). During this period, there existed a tension between the settlers and the locals for the ownership of the land. Despite the presence of the native population in Liberia, during the colonial era, there was no broad participation of the locals. There was one dominant political party. The issue of governance was solely the responsibility of the Americo-Liberians to decide (Library of Congress, 2012).

But the policies regarding land and revenue, for instance, created conflict between the settlers and the indigenous population that continues in present day Liberia (Pham & Kreutzer 2011). These differences between the indigenous and Americo-Liberians did not lead to a collaborative system. The settlers' (ACS) policy of governance was the order of the day, while the locals were considered as incompetent to govern (Akpan, 1973). A one-party state existed for 133 years. During this period, social and economic development and poverty reduction were negligible. In 1904, for instance, the government of Liberia instituted some administrative guidelines that allowed locals to participate in the indirect political decision-making (Library of Congress, 2012). However, this did not create the necessary political or administrative policy to facilitate the broad participation of all stakeholders.

Political Decentralization (Liberia Colonial Era-1822 -1980s)

The Americo-Liberians administered political activities from 1847-1980s. The political system entails the three branches of government (Legislature, judiciary, and executive) for the purpose of separation of power (CIA World Facts, 2014). During this era, the idea of decentralization was not a policy priority of the regime. Accordingly, there was only one party system of government.

Administrative Decentralization (Liberia Colonial Era-1822 -1980s)

Administratively, the structure of the Liberian government was framed by three branches of government like the United States: the executive, legislature, and the judiciary branch of government (Library of Congress, 2013). In 2003, a study was conducted by the UNDP, GRC, and the UNCDF. This study indicated a lack of clarity of roles and functions of subnational levels of government and prompted exclusion of local governments from national planning and budgeting processes. Local governments experienced a fundamental inability to access locally generated fiscal resources, and their human resource capacities were considered weak, due to the lack of centralized administrative policy. For instance, according to the Liberian constitution, “the National Legislature shall, from time to time, prescribe and establish administrative agencies of local government upon the petition of county governments.” Additionally, “it should be deemed appropriate for good governance and based on the county’s prevailing economic development needs.” However, during these times and up to the present, the decision making of the state was still formulated in the state capital, and the responsibility passed down to the local authorities and rural dwellers.

Administratively, counties and political subdivisions were created by the legislature with defined policies as to how each county or political subdivision would be

governed or administered. However, the executive branch of the government dominated the running of counties and provinces (Freedom House, 2014; UNDP, 2006). For instance, the executive appointed local authorities and heads of administrative agencies.

Fiscal Decentralization (Liberia Colonial Era-1822 -1980s)

Liberia's central government makes all of its monetary policies. The national economy is supported by iron ore, rubber, timber and the list goes on (Library of Congress, 2013). However, the country's financial sector was affected by a reduction in prices of some of its natural resources as well as by a long civil conflict. It created a black market and other underground economic activities that led to illicit mining and trading. The fiscal policy did not take into account locals' involvement. As a result, different rebel groups all fought to participate in the illicit trade and mining, resulting in a total collapse of the national economy (Library of Congress, 2013). Thus, many factors hindered the fiscal decentralization during many regimes in this era. For instance, the hut tax and the state unification policy were introduced during Tubman's regime in the mid-1900s, which were intended to maintain the state's political control and income opportunities. Accordingly, one of these policies, the Open Door Policy (ODP) was created by the Tubman's regime as a framework for foreign direct investment. Under the ODP, American and European investors were encouraged to invest in the agriculture and mining sectors. Interestingly, the regime policy saw an increase in significant production of rubber, wages, and growth in public development (Library of Congress, 2013, CIA World Fact, 2014). However, this was a policy that was concentrated at the level of central government.

Liberia: The Postcolonial Era (1980-2016)

From 1980 to 1985, the Liberian government operated under military decrees with the constitution suspended (Library of Congress, 2012), after a military coup in 1980 (Library of Congress, 2014). Creating a decentralized government was not the policy of the regime. Political instability reigned during the 1980s and the later 14 years civil war (1989-2003). It mostly destroyed Liberia's economy and caused an overall decline in the economic and development and stability of the state and the region (CIA World Facts, 2012; UNSC, 2016). All government operations were initiated from the nation's capital (Monrovia).

Political Decentralization (Liberia Postcolonial Era-1980-2016)

During the periods of the 1980s to 2013, there were many political uprisings. A case in point was the 1980 military coup led by Samuel Doe. The Doe regime ushered in a dictatorial style of leadership (Kieh, 2000). In December 1989, Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against the Samuel Doe government and instituted his authoritarian regime. Until 1997, there was a relatively short period of stability with the election of Charles Taylor as president. The Taylor government did not last long due to rebel incursions from neighboring Guinea (Library of Congress, 2013). In August of 2003, there was a peace agreement signed in Ghana that brought the conflict to an end, with the resignation of former President Charles Taylor and a transitional government coming into power. The deal brought in an interim government in 2003 that led to the first postwar democratic elections in 2005 and subsequently the 2011 presidential legislative and presidential elections (CIA world fact, 2013). According to the literature, the elected

government still runs the same course of political arrangement as in the past. The executive branch of the government controls most of the political decision making

Administrative Decentralization (Liberia Postcolonial Era-1980-2016)

Administratively, from the 1980s to 2013, the Liberian government was made up of three branches of government. The executive has the appointing power of both the executive and the judiciary branches of the state. The president appoints county leadership, excluding the national legislature (CIA world fact, 2013). De-concentrated administrations, through superintendents and commissioners, manage the system of 15 local governments in Liberia. The president appoints these officials. The Ministry of Internal Affairs managed all local government policies and initiated a 10-year decentralization plan (IEG World Bank, 2011). However, despite these initial efforts, policy reforms aimed at administrative decentralization that will enhance economic development and regional stability have not been implemented, as indicated in the literature.

Fiscal Decentralization (Liberia Postcolonial Era-1980-2016)

From the 1980s to 2013, the central government formulated almost all of Liberia's economic policies. There has not been any monetary policy at the local level that requires local involvement or participation. The central government formulates all economic policies. These policies can then be instituted at the local level, with the bulk of the development activities centered in the capital city Monrovia. Studies show that from 1979 to 2003, conflicts from within Liberia spread across the MRR region and have affected the social, political, and economic fabric of the area. (Ismail, 2008) (CIA World

Facts, 2012; CIA World Facts, 2014) (World Bank Report, 2003). However, according to the literature, the financial sectors are beginning to re-engage in Liberia following more than a decade of conflict. Accordingly, “Millions of people perished financially; the per capita GDP contracted from \$890 (1980) to \$190 (2007). With virtually all public infrastructure and services decimated; and the country’s 3.4 million citizens still faced a national debt exceeding \$4.7 billion (DeGroot & Umarov, 2011, p. 12; IEG World Bank, 2011).”

Sierra Leone and Decentralization: The Colonial Era

Sierra Leone is geographically bordered by Guinea on the north, and on the east by Liberia; to the southwest and west are the Atlantic Ocean (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014, US Department of State, 2014). The country gained its independence from Great Britain in 1961 and, since then, the state has adopted a constitutional and parliamentary form of government (US Department of State, 2008). During the colonial era of Sierra Leone, when it was a British territory, all policies of the Sierra Leone government were under the direct supervision of the British authority or leadership. After the independence of Sierra Leone, most local government structures were a photocopy of their colonial empire (British). But after independence, the state leader began abolishing many of the colonial rules and increasing his political authority at the executive level (Fanthorpe et al. 2006). For instance, tax collection and service-providing institutions were all part of the executive branch, according to the literature. Technically, there was no decentralized system to incorporate all stakeholders in the mainstream decision-making.

Political Decentralization (The Colonial Era)

British rule dominated the colonial era in Sierra Leone. Freetown became a significant political capital of British colonial rule by the 19th century (Library of Congress, 2010). From Freetown, the British controlled all of its West African provinces, including Ghana and Gambia, and later it became a major hub for all of its political activities (Library of Congress, 2010). During this period, there was one party political system (US Department of States, 2008) and the locals instituted different policies and approach to deal with their colonial master (British) away (Ginifer, 2006).

Administrative and Fiscal Decentralization (The Colonial Era)

After independence in Sierra Leone, the state adopted a policy to support local government, which was part of its approach during the colonial era (Awareness Time, 2011). However, the administrative aspect of decentralizing Sierra Leone's policies to reflect the reality of locals and the region remains a challenge. A case in point was the suspension of activities involving local elections. However, the 1980s brought a different approach to reinstating election activities that were banned (Awareness Time, Sierra Leone, 2011). This method did incorporate some form of broad citizen's participation, but there was still a lack of decentralization idea or concept.

During the colonial era, the fiscal policy of the Sierra Leone government was taxation-based, intended to support the colonial regime of the time. It created a means by which the population supported the state as part of the state fiscal policy (Africa World Press, 2000).

Sierra Leone: Postcolonial Era

The Postcolonial era of Sierra Leone experienced different political changes, but they did not involve decentralization as compared to fostering or implementing

decentralized policies, locally or regionally. By 1971, Sierra Leone had become a republic with Siaka Stevens as president (Richards, 2001, pp.65-82) The Steven All People's Congress political movement adopted a one-party system in the late 1970s until his retirement in 1985 when he left government. Despite his retirement from government, his political party still had influence (Bangura, 2009). After that, the political leadership of the state was resumed by the Joseph Momoh government in 1985, whose regime was in power until 1992 when the government was overthrown by a military junta. Political leadership was then taken over by Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in 1996 (Bangura, 2009, Allen, 1968). By 2004, local councils were reinstated after a 32-year ban (Bangura, 2009, Allen, 1968). There were second council elections that brought in new leadership in the governing process to enhance the political governance of the state, followed by a presidential election in 2012 (Bangura, 2009). Accordingly, this was one of the first time more stakeholders participated in the democratic process in choosing their leadership. During this same election, the Sierra Leone People's Party's (SLPP) candidate got about 35 percent of the votes. This percentage sent a signal to the pro-democratization community of Sierra Leone and the democratic global society that political integration and collaboration was on its way to Sierra Leone. The election was a victory by Koroma with over 58%, thereby winning on the first ballot and preventing a run-off. In the last 50 years, since independence, the Sierra Leone People's Party dominated the political scene for nearly 17 years. And All People's Congress (APC) ruled for almost 31 years (The World Bank Group, 2014). However, the postcolonial and conflict eras did see some incorporation of the idea of decentralization leading to 2004. Though their decentralization program started gaining support from development partners, it did not

reflect the reality or concept of decentralization. This program has been central to the policy dialog between the government and donors, particularly regarding the state's legal and institutional framework and fiscal decentralization (the Africa-EU partnership, 2007).

Political Decentralization (Postcolonial Era)

Decentralization after the colonial era was justified in the local government policy that was adopted, which introduces the idea of decentralizing Sierra Leone's governing system. It created room for the legislation to set out a comprehensive political framework. It covered elections and the composition of councils, as well as the qualifications of councilors, procedures for the election of mayors and chairpersons, and powers to make and execute bylaws. The act also establishes the terms and references of the committee or council responsible of those to be awarded and ensure that everyone has the responsibility to give accountability of their involvement (Zhou, 2009, p.106; World Bank Country Study, 2009).

The local Government Act of 2004 put in place mechanism to encourage some political decentralization; local elections started becoming successful. For instance, from 2004 to 2008, there were some local elections completed, and the process was harmonious and encourage some political participations of locals (Yongmei Zhou 2009, p.105).

Despite these advances in the political arena, the impact remained insignificant to the development of the state or the MRR. To this date, the administrative agency in charge of local government administration continues to organize nationwide conversations on the significance of decentralization. Accordingly, in the process, there

are attempts to implement decentralization policy in the state, but a sound framework for such remains lacking (Sierra Time Awareness, 2011, UNSC, 2014).

Administrative Decentralization (Postcolonial Era)

One of the primary emphases of decentralization is regimes of customary governance and sociality associated with the chiefdom administration (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2012). According to the literature, many international agencies consider these regimes irredeemably oppressive towards the rural poor and a cause of the recent civil war. Even though the idea of decentralization has existed in Sierra Leone since the colonial era, it has not been practically implemented. The current administration of Sierra Leone remains supportive of chieftaincy, while international donors are supporting a fast-track decentralization program (Oxford University Press, 2005), but the results and implementation remain something else.

Fiscal Decentralization (Postcolonial Era)

The fiscal decentralization of Sierra Leone's system provided a framework for local authorities in term of revenue determination by the locals (Commonwealth local government forum, 2012, Inter Press Service, 2011). It promulgated mechanisms that the central government adopted to account for the administration of revenues and expenditures. The process crafted an approach for revenues collected from cities, towns or local communities. Accordingly, the policy identifies reasonable short period. The ordinary income from the government would not benefits everyone or locals. Like that, the system created means that could handle whatever that could not be accomplished. The act provided grants to the local institutions to achieve its goals and mission (Awareness

Times, 2010, Koroma, 2012, UNSC, 2014). Overall, the literature indicated that fiscal decentralization was not achieved after the act was introduced; rather, it only created a bureaucracy in the financial affairs of the system.

Summary of Decentralization in Regional Development

Decentralization is moving faster to fill in developmental gaps. It has become one of the strategic policy agenda for regional stability and economic development, where central and local governments are collaborating for the strategies interests at both state and locals for the greater good of society. Some believe that the norms and values of democracy can be applied within the boundaries of a state only. But over the last 20 years, it has been increasingly argued that democracy can also inform international organizations and global politics. (Archibugi, 2012, pp. 9-10)

The concept of decentralization in any way does not surmises that region cannot fall short of political, administrative, and fiscal responsibility to enhance development and create stability among member states in the implementation of a strategic decentralization program. The literature on the MRR States has not conclusively established facts about decentralization used as a collaborative approach to enhanced regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and as a way to minimize corruption. There are signs that some of the MRR states might welcome the idea of decentralization but, others see it as a threat to central government's ability to maintain control and remain in power. As such, the question remains unanswered if the implementation of a decentralization policy in each MRR state will create regional

stability, enhance economic development, minimize corruption, and reduce poverty. This unanswered question continues as a gap to fulfill with this research.

After reviewing the literature on decentralization policy in the MRR, it is clear that a phenomenological case study with a population of 64 using an interview technique with identified stakeholders will help to fill the gap. The literature further reveals that problems of instability, poverty, corruption, and poor economic development are fundamental challenges facing the MRR.

Chapter 3 follows hereafter. It highlights and details the research methods and data collection techniques.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methods, the instrument, data collection, research framework, and scope and population of the study. I first discuss the phenomenological, case study approach. I then detail why I selected this method. In the third section, I explain the data collection strategy and mechanisms.

In this study, I reviewed the literature on decentralization policy in the MRR and other developing nations. I sought to investigate how the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR can contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR. I investigated whether the institution of a decentralization policy in the MRR will enhance economic development, help with the reduction of poverty, reduce corruption, and create regional stability.

The Research Question

The primary question in the study was the following: How can the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR?

The Phenomenological Case Study Approach

The qualitative, phenomenological, case study approach was chosen for this study. In a qualitative methodology, the researcher has direct contact with all of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Scholars use a phenomenological, case study to investigate existing understandings of the stakeholders (Patton, 2002). Phenomenological case research is based on the experiences and language expression of the subjects' lived

knowledge (Creswell, 2013). Data were collected from the different stakeholders identified in the study. This data were collected through observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents. This approach “allows individual experience, perception, description, feeling, judgment, remembrance and draw a rational understanding” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Phenomenological case research bounds cases and allows the researcher to gather comprehensive data. The theoretical model in this study was adopted to examine the dynamics of decentralization: the sequential theory of decentralization from the political, economic, and social perspectives.

The phenomenological approach is vital to this study because of its suitability for understanding activities based on the experience of the stakeholders (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Stake, 1995). The phenomenological approach created the framework to understand the complex environment of the MRR. To conduct this study, it was necessary to account for the different peoples and cultural identities in the MRR. Although there are differences of opinions about the effectiveness of the phenomenological case study approach, the phenomenological case study has become a widely used research method. It employs various research methods, including interviews, participant observation, and field studies. In the case study approach, the researcher reconstructs and analyzes cases from a sociological perspective (Flyvbjerg, 2007; Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993).

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argued that the phenomenological, case study approach is a benefit in a study where insufficient or no information exists on the situation or environment. Creswell (2007) confirmed that a phenomenological, case study is appropriate for a study of a particular, unique bounded situation. A study such as the

present one is expected to incorporate detailed and intensive analysis of events, situations, organizations, or social units (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In a phenomenological case study involving a context like the MRR, it is necessary to conduct an inquiry from real-life sources because of the region's complexity. That is why a phenomenological case study was essential to this study. Typically, a phenomenological case study includes multiple data sources and is bounded by both space and time. Accordingly, the phenomenology can be used with other research approaches (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An essential element of phenomenological case study research is the questionnaire. A study's questions should be open-ended, few, and straightforward (Merriam, 2002). Creswell (2007) also validated the use of the phenomenological case study approach as appropriate where the researcher conducts an analysis of a problem or an issue (p. 73). In this study, I focused on asking participants what process, organization, or regional system could enhance economic development, minimize corruption, reduce poverty, and create regional stability in the MRR. In this context, I discuss the appropriate protocol for phenomenological case studies, an overview of the phenomenological case study, information sources, the study questions, and outline for the study.

Interviewing Approach and Environment

Interviewing is one effective way of gathering data and conducting qualitative research (Frankfort & Nachmias, 2008; Patton, 2002, p. 341). The qualitative interview originated from the research questions in the study, as required in the interview guide. Details of this guide are in Appendix E. In the interview guide, the questionnaires are detailed. Interview guide provides an environment for the interviewees and the researcher

roles (Patton, 2002). Interviewing in the context of a phenomenological case study allows researchers to access material or events that they cannot observe, such as feelings, thoughts, and intentions that are not externally expressed or that happen over a longer period of time. Interviewing can bring out these implicit realities (Patton, 2002). In this study, I interviewed a sample population of 64, with each individual representing different sectors of the MRR with lived experiences of the phenomena. Interviewing allows the researcher to enter into another a person's perspective (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Patton (2003) argued that, interviewing begins with the assumption that the point of view of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. Scholars use interviews to create a discussion that helps the researcher to understand what is on someone else's mind to gather his or her stories (Creswell, 2007; Panton, 2002).

The interview process was the basis for data collection in this study. The interview process was conducted on a one-on-one basis. I interviewed participants face-to-face using the semistructured approach. The technique involves asking open-ended questions in a face-to-face interview, and this approach was appropriate for this study because it enabled me to gather in-depth material about the study (Boyce & Neale, 2006, pp. 3-7). The semistructured interview technique enables the researcher to elicit the best possible data from the interviewee or primary stakeholders in the study. I used the open-ended questions to encourage participants to answer in a honest manner. Open-ended questions has the potential to reveal additional information that may not have been expected from the originally phrased question (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The interviews were conducted at four community centers in the four cities identified in the study for data collection: the Liberian community center in Minneapolis; the Sierra Leonean

Community Center in Baltimore, Maryland; the Guinean community center in Philadelphia; and the Ivorian community center in Staten Island, New York.

Research Framework

The MRR the demographic setting of this study is in West Africa. For the purposes of this study, the four states of Guinea, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone were considered to make up one social, political, and economic block. The countries share common territorial boundaries and inhabitants trade, marry, and live across each boundary. As in other areas in Africa, instability in the MRR affects most of West Africa. The violent events that occur in this region share the same patterns and are not bound by state borders (Silberfein & Conteh, 2006).

These countries organized themselves into one union as an economic cooperative in 1973, called the Mano River Union. Sierra Leone and Liberia became the first members of the MRU in 1973. Guinea became a member in 1980, and Ivory Coast became a member in 2008 (Silberfein& Conteh (2006). According to development statistics, the region has a population of over 40 million (Interdiagnostix, 2015). The regions are interconnected, and what affects one nation or state affects the others. This is true in the breakdown of law and order, which spreads from one nation or state to another. Proliferation of conflicts from across neighboring states have left the MRR a fragile region (UNSC, 2016). The MRR still experiences challenges that have kept the region unstable with poor economic development; the rate of poverty is high while corruption is on the rise (Annan, 2014; Oxford Analytical, 2011; UNSC, 2016). The connectivity of MRR states and conflicts within the area signal the need for regional collaboration on

policies that create regional stability and enhance economic development (Marc, Verjee et al.,2015).

From a theoretical perspective, in this study, I relied on the sequential theory of decentralization. This theory is used to define decentralization as a process. This theory includes the territorial interests of bargaining actors and incorporates policy feedback effects (Falleti, 2005). The pattern of the sequential theory of decentralization in the study was detailed in the interview process. The interviewees understood what the sequential theory was and how this concept aligned with their lived experiences in the MRR.

In this study, I investigated why the MRR has been unstable for many years and queried whether the institution of decentralization policy could be a potential solution. Interview techniques was the primary approach to collect the data to answer the question within the framework of this study. The lack of essential information on decentralization policy in the MRR in the literature was relevant to the use of the phenomenological case study approach and the collection of supporting data for this study.

Population, Setting, and Scope

In this qualitative, phenomenological, case study, I focused on the MRR. For the purposes of this research, I considered the MRR as one political subdivision. The MRR constitutes Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. I interviewed a population of 64 with a sample size of 16 in the data collection.

The participants were chosen based on their affiliation with four major stakeholder groups. The first group was the student community (defined as students who came to the United States on student visas or through student exchange programs); the

second group was the immigrant community (defined as asylum seekers and refugees); the third group was civil servants; and the fourth was the CSOs. The configuration of participants included four subjects from each cluster (see Appendix D). I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your chapter and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at Chapter 4.

The student community was comprised of university students from the MRR countries in the United States. The MRR student community can be considered to represent the future of the region. Members of the student community interviewed for this study considered themselves future leaders of the MRR. The immigrant community was made up mostly of citizens who fled the MRR as the result of civil wars. Most members of this group understand what it is to live under a system of government that does not represent the majority interest. Many were directly or indirectly affected by the civil wars and remained in constant contact with relatives and other stakeholders back home, and most expressed the intention of returning. The civil servants group was made up of former government employees with lived experience of the MRR, and these people often experienced working for months without pay or base salaries. This group is about the past and the present and may offer advice for the future and also with the intention of going back home. Lastly, the civil society organizations represent different sectors of MRR society, including engineers, teachers, political parties, union organizers, farmers, and lawyers. Accordingly, many expressed their belief that their involvement with their respective nations increases the chances of prosperity in the MRR.

Interviewees were aged 18 to 70 years and older and included both male and female participants. The population and sample size constituted a particular group of

stakeholders who had experienced life in the MRR and life outside of the MRR.

Interviewees were required to have lived in the MRR for at least ten years.

The country data came from communities representing each MRR country in the United States. Given the overall health conditions (i.e., Ebola) in the MRR, I was constrained in terms of time and resources to travel to the different countries in the MRR to conduct interviews. However, people from the MRR who live in the United States might feel freer to voice their opinions on research questions. According to different sources (AFRICOM, 2013; ACS, 2012, 2013; US Census.gov 2012), Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and Minnesota have large populations of MRR expatriates. Thus, I collected data regarding Guinea from the Guinean community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A high percentage of the Guinean nationals living in the United State live in Philadelphia. Because New York has the largest population of Ivorian citizens outside of the Ivory Coast, I focused on the Ivorian community in New York to collect data on the Ivory Coast. I gathered data about Liberia in Minneapolis, Minnesota because Minnesota has a large Liberian community. The Sierra Leone data was collected from the Sierra Leonean community in Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore has the highest number of Sierra Leoneans, according to the research statistics. This demography represents the people who have experienced or are experiencing the impact of the present and previous systems of government in MRR, and who can discuss the potential effects of a decentralization policy in the MRR. I used case sampling strategy to analyze the social, economic, political, and cultural characteristics of participants in the area. Case sampling strategy provides a qualitative summary of a particular case (Patton, 2002).

Role of the Researcher

A researcher has a critical role. A researcher must be credible and willing to follow general ethical considerations that apply to human subject research to eliminate biases in a study (Creswell, 2012). A researcher can mitigate potential bias by using different techniques including journaling, triangulation of data, and member checking (Chawla, 2006; John Lofland et al., 2006; Morse, 2003a; Savage, 2000). In my capacity as researcher, I ensured that the study was guided by the standards of university research. I collected the data, validated it, prepared the report, and provided strategic leadership for the research.

The research questions generated from the review of the literature guided data collection. I conducted in-person interviews with those I identified as participants. Typically, the researcher conducts interviews and observations (Chawla, 2006; Morse, 2003a; Savage, 2000). In quantitative research, the researcher may carry out data collection in a location other than where the object of study is. For example, the researcher does not need to be present to conduct the study. In qualitative research, however, the researcher is not as separated from the object of study. Accordingly, the qualitative researcher must be very careful to avoid bias. He or she can mitigate potential bias by using techniques shared by all qualitative research such as journaling, triangulation of data, and member checking.

Data Collection and Management

In this study, data was first collected through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview technique encourages participants in the study to express themselves in detail about how they see, feel, or understand a situation or event (Newton,

2010). In the scope section of this paper, the primary stakeholders, population, and setting are identified. The stakeholders are the relevant group that has the propensity to either undermine the peace and stability of the region or help in the sustainability of the peace. Accordingly, many believe that their involvement with their respective nations increases the chances of prosperity in the MRR.

In a phenomenological case study such as the present one, the main participating groups are usually the victims or beneficiaries in the event of any policy or state decision or conflict. They are paramount in the information gathering. In the process of collecting data, the interview sites and those participating in the study are important. It involves identifying participants and interview sites and building relationships with subjects to get the best out of them in the data collection process (Creswell, 2007).

Data management was the next stage of collecting data. The data was managed in ways that kept it in its original form. Files were backed up as a strategy for recovery. For instance, audio recording is use during the interview process (Davidson, 1996). The data collection lasted about seven weeks instead of two week to verified and reread interviews, transcripts and recordings. Schelling interviews with participants took lots of time.

Data Analysis, Documentation, and Record-Taking

In a phenomenological case study, analyzing data can be challenging. The difficulty is determining the capacity of data to accomplish the research goals. Data in a phenomenological case study may include interviews, documents, observations, artifacts, surveys, and focus groups. The researcher collects different types of data and obtains

different perspectives from a variety of sources. The researcher also usually maintains a file system for the data and is able to backtrack from the conclusions of the evidence to the research questions (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002). In the present study, a semi-structured, open-ended, in-person interview technique was used to collect the data to be analyzed. Kvale (1996) asserted that there are five ways to analyze data in a study involving a qualitative study. This approach can help sort a massive amount of data into smaller groupings (Kvale, 1996). Using Kvale's method, I put data into different categories according to the differences of opinions of respondents on how the institution of decentralization policy in the MRR could affect the region.

My analysis of the data took into consideration Glatthorn and Joyner's (2005) approach to data analysis. Glatthorn and Joyner argue that the process of data review must include transcribing the interviews and reading the transcripts (Lapadat & Linsay, 1998, p.3). This approach involves identifying categories of responses and categorized answers and classified in phases based on responses answers in the first phase of the interviews. During this process, Microsoft Excel software helped in the data analysis and coding processes. Coding involves finding information that is similar and grouping it together for analysis (Saldana, 2009, p.4). In the coding used for the present study, the data was structurally labeled in terms of the four categories of stakeholders identified: the student community, the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees), civil servants, and the CSOs. Then, this general coding was followed by patterning the more specific coding for each MRR state. Next, responses from the data were collected and grouped by the same responses from the four group as per state. According to Hatch (2002), "we can think of patterns not just as stable regularities, but also as varying forms

and can be characterized by similarity, different ways, frequency, sequence, or correspondence (they happen about other activities or events” (p.155). After patterning, I then used the triangulating process. Triangulating the data provided an opportunity to check the validity and reliability of the research and the data collected from the question(s) asked in the data collection process (Patton, 2002, p. 247). It allowed for the verification of all sources of information obtained from interviewees.

This study was aimed at understanding how residents of the MRR residing in the United States thought about the notion of decentralization and how they thought it could impact the region concerning economic development, regional stability, poverty reduction, and minimization of corruption. The challenge of answering this question effectively arose from the volume of data generated through data collection. As the researcher, I collected data from questionnaires that were available to the interviewees. Accordingly, the researcher should also maintain a file system for the data and to backtrack from the conclusions of the evidence to the research questions (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002).

The records collected were kept securely to protect interviewees’ confidentiality as detailed in Appendix F. After the study, the data will be destroyed so that respondents' information cannot be compromised.

Validity, Reliability, and Observation

Validity and reliability are essential aspects of the data collection process (Donnelly & Trochim, 2006). The validation and reliability of data ensure that the approaches used in the data collection process are credible based on the scholarship and quality enshrined in the study. The validity and reliability must further enhance the

credibility of the study (Nahid Golafshani, 2003). For instance, validity can establish the exact results conducted under the same conditions using the same method. To ensure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study, I made sure the approach was appropriate to prevent bias. To avoid the threat to validity, I checked all sources and verified what was said and written. Then after data collection, I ensured that the study met the core standards that contribute to the validity of any qualitative study such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I used different methods of validity to understand the same condition and input to make sure that results are the same. That is, the data was validated and reliable despite the use of different methods, but the result is the same. It signifies that there is reliability, credibility in the data collected. Reliability and validity balance the argument surrounding the issues of credibility, verifiability, trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, and rigor as argued by Creswell (2007).

Similarly, Joppe (2000) said that the reliability of research depends on the accuracy and demonstration of the constancy of results in the research. By this approach, the quality of reliability must be tested to ensure consistent reliability. In the case of the present study, participants in the study must be aged 18 to 70 years and older and must have lived in the MRR for at least five years. It guarantees that information from interviewees has an actual impact on the data provided.

To maintain the data in its original form, I took detailed notes during the interviews. I further enhanced reliability and viability by using a digital recorder for the interview conversation. Finding literature on the MRR is challenging; however, the use of scholarly resources from different studies on decentralization policy in the MRR was

helpful in the authentication of the data under study. In the data collection process, observation was one of the most common and vital components. Researchers must be observant to understand the tone and message of interviewees and should be able to grasp the concepts and ways of those involved in the study. (Bernard, 1988; Emerson et al., 1995).

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Appendix E contains details of how interviewees' information are kept confidential. Israel and Hay (2006) wrote that researchers must safeguard information about respondents and data. This ensures the researcher's ability to develop the confidence of study participants. I verified and validated all data collected to meet the ethical standards, and the research participants' information remained confidential. As part of the effort to ensure the confidentiality of participants, I guaranteed participants that information or data provided cannot easily be tracked to them.

Summary

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology, the data collection process, the data management approach, and the interview environment. This chapter also explained the documentation and records analysis process and the validity and reliability of the study. I also discuss maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees. Chapter 4 discusses the setting of the study, data collection, analysis, and findings from the study question.

Chapter 4: Study Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological, case study was to understand how useful and applicable decentralization policy is in the MRR. I investigated what impact the institution of a decentralization policy in the MRR could have on the social, political, and economic development and stability of the region, and if the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR could enhance economic development, create regional stability, curb corruption, and reduce poverty. The inquiry was made through in-person interviews. It is essential to understand the phenomenological views of all stakeholders in the study. Crawford and Hartmann (2010) argued that decentralization helps to reduce poverty and prevents conflict. Due to the limited literature on the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR, there was a need to understand different views and perceptions about decentralization policy and its level of acceptance among stakeholders in the region. Accordingly, interview questions were developed to facilitate the collection of these views. The following 12 interview questions were used to collect data in the study.

1) Please select the category of status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) CSOs

_____e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

- 18 to 25 _____
- 26 to 39 _____
- 40 to 60 _____
- 60 to 70 years plus _____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?

7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?

8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?

9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?

10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?

11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participation on corruption?

12) What is your sex? Male_____, Female_____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Pilot Test

The study was conducted according to the research design outlined in Chapter 3. In the pilot test, 12 interview questions were used to collect data. The first three questions of the interview questions were used to determine participants' qualifications for taking part in the study. There were no different views from the interview questions that could alter the study questionnaires or meaning. The data collection and verification took 60 days, instead of the 5 weeks or 35 days that was initially set for data collection and verification of all sources, including participants. Interviews were conducted over 30 minutes, which was deemed sufficient time to conduct the interview. Most interviews lasted for about 12 to 20 minutes, while the longest interview lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. The interview questions were on points that allowed participants to give their phenomenological experience of living both in the MRR and the United States and their opinions on implementation of decentralization policy in the MRR.

Participants' Recruitment

Recruitment of individuals for participation in the study started with visiting the four cities in the United States identified for the data collection. The cities were Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; New York, New York; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Baltimore, Maryland. The data from Guinea were collected from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; the data from Ivory Coast were gathered from New York; the data from Liberia were collected from Minneapolis, Minnesota; and the data from Sierra Leone

were gathered from Baltimore, Maryland. Table 4 below displays the number of participants recruited per city.

Table 4

Participants' Recruitment Per City and Number

Data collection cities & states	Number of participants per state
Baltimore, Maryland (Sierra Leone)	16
Minneapolis, Minnesota (Liberia)	16
New York, New York (Ivory Coast)	16
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Guinea)	16
Total Participants	64

In the first step of recruitment, letters of cooperation were obtained and signed by community leaders in these cities, authorizing me to contact any of their members and use their facilities to conduct research. I then visited the community center sites during regular activities hours. At this time, I explained the purpose of the study. After this, I left my contact information including e-mail, telephone number, and interview questions at the different sites, with an indication that those who met the criteria and were interested in the study or willing to participate in the study may contact me. The purpose was for participants to read the first three questions of the questionnaire (Appendix B) to determine if they met the guidelines of the study, instead of waiting to find out that they did not meet the research guidelines at the date of interview.

This measure helped determine which participant or community member was qualified to participate in the study. Below are Questions 1, 2, and 3 that were used as a preliminary qualification method to participate in the study.

1) Please select the category of your immigration status before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) CSOs

____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

• 40 to 60 _____

• 60 to 70 years or older _____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

Participants' Demographic to the Study

The participants in the study included the student community, immigrant community, civil servants, and members of the CSOs. The students' community was comprised of students from the MRR states at universities or colleges in the United States. They account for the future of the MRR. These are persons of interest in the MRR. Many intended to return home to form part of their nation-building. The second group was the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees). These were mostly citizens who fled from the MRR as the result of the different civil wars. Most members of this group understood what it was to live under a system of government that does not represent the majority interest. Many were directly or indirectly affected and are still in

contact with their respective country; the third group was the civil servants. This group comprised of former government employees. These were people who experienced what it took to work without pay or work for low salaries; the fourth group was members of CSOs. This group represented different sectors of society, including engineers, teachers, political parties, union organization, farmers, and lawyers. These groups were mostly involved with various stakeholders of their country, and they all constituted the appropriate sample determined below.

The sample population was determined by selecting four participants from each category of interviewees group from each state by multiplying the number of four classes of respondents ($4 \times 4 = 16$). The 16-person sample was then multiplied by the four states in the MRR ($4 \times 16 = 64$). Therefore, $16 \times 4 = 64$, which was the population in the study.

The population in the study was 64. The 64 was determined by selecting 16 people from each of the four MRR states ($16 \times 4 = 64$). It equated the population to 64 population or participants. The 64 participants were also determined by multiplying 16 participants from each country in the MMR by four ($16 \times 4 = 64$). I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your chapter and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at Chapter 5.

Setting

The interview was conducted at four community centers in the four cities identified in the study for data collection, the Liberian's community center in Minneapolis, the Sierra Leonean Community Center in Baltimore, Maryland, the Guinean's community center Philadelphia, and the Ivorian community center in Staten

Island, New York. These are the four communities/centers that were identified to conduct the interview.

Interview technique was used as the primary tool to collect the data. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview enables the researcher to elicit the best possible data from the interviewee or primary stakeholders in the study. This technique involves asking open-ended questions. The open questions encourage participants to answer completely. The process has the potential to reveal additional information that may not be expected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Demographics

The source of data came from interviewing participants from four categories of stakeholders identified from the Mano River Region (MRR). These participants included the Student Community (students who came to the United States on students' visa and those on student exchange programs); the Immigrant Community (asylum seekers and refugees); the Civil Servants and the CSOs.

The first category of stakeholder is the Students' Community, representing students from the MRR states in the United States. They account for the future of the MRR. These are persons of interest in the MRR. Many intents to return home to form part of their nation-building.

The Immigrant Community, the second category of participants (asylum seekers and refugees). These are mostly citizens that fled from the MRR as the result of the different civil wars. Most members of this group understand what it is to live under a system of government that does not represent the majority interest. Many were directly or indirectly affected and are still in contact with their respective country.

The third group is the Civil Servants. This group comprises former government, employees. These are people who experienced what it takes to work for months without pay or low salaries. This group is about the past and the present and may offer advice for the future. And the fourth group is the Civil Society Organizations. This group represents different sectors of civil society, including engineers, teachers, political parties, union organization, farmers, and lawyers. These groups are mostly involved with the various stakeholders of their country. The table below highlights the category of participants per MRR State.

Table 5

Category of Participants

Category of Participants	Guinea # of Participants	Ivory Coast # of Participants	Liberia # of Participants	Sierra Leone # of Participants	Total participants per Category
Students Community	4	4	4	4	16
Immigrant Community	4	4	4	4	16
Civil Servant	4	4	4	4	16
Civil Society Organization	4	4	4	4	16
				Total Participants	64

Data Collection

Interview technique was used as the primary tool to collect data. The data collection resume after IBR approval on June 2, 2017, with an approval number of 06-02-17-0186322. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview enables the researcher to elicit the best possible data from the interviewee or primary stakeholders in the study. This technique involves asking open-ended questions. The open questions encourage participants to answer completely. The process has the potential to reveal additional information that may not be expected

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The data collection lasted about 60 days. With the average of 12 days in each state. The remaining 12 days were used to authenticate, verify, and crosscheck any missing information or data.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process started with transcribing the interviews, reading the transcripts and listening to the recordings. This approach involved identifying categories of responses and categorizing answers and classifying in phases based on responses gathered in the first step of the interviews. During this process, Microsoft Excel software was used in the data analysis and coding methods.

The coding involved finding information that was similar and grouping them for analysis. In the coding, the data were structurally labeled regarding the four categories of stakeholders identified in the study. The group of stakeholders included the student community, the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees), civil servants, and the CSOs. After coding the data, next was patterning the coding per each MRR state and later general patterning and coding. At this point, responses from data collected were grouped by the same responses from the four group as per state. According to Hatch (2002), "we can think of patterns not just as stable regularities, but also as varying forms and can be characterized by similarity, different ways, frequency, sequence, or correspondence (they happen about other activities or events" (p. 155). After patterning, the triangulating process follows. Triangulating the data provides an opportunity to check the validity and reliability of the research and the data collected from the question(s) or asked in the data collection process.

The process of triangulating the data allows the verification of all sources of information obtained from interviewees. These approaches involve the qualitative phenomenological case study. The rationale is that phenomenological case study has the capacity of investigating existing understandings of all stakeholders.

Volunteered participants that met the guidelines in the study as requested in step 3 asked for their availability, timing, and venue of their choice, preferably at a public place.

At this point, the meaning or purpose of the study was reiterated. To further authenticate that participants met the guideline of the study, research questions 1, 2, and 3 in Appendix C were asked at the beginning of the interview process to further determine their eligibility for the study. After volunteers reported that they met the study's guideline and expected number of participants, then interview time and venue were set for the data collection purpose. Before the commencement of the interview, a voluntary consent form detailing respondents' rights, voluntary departure or exit from the interview and how their identity will be kept private was provided, participants of 16 were recruited from the four categories of stakeholders from each MRR state, totaling of 64 population.

(16x4)=64 population. Those of age 18 to 70 years and older were interviewed, including male and female participants. Participants were assigned a code to avoid their personal information being displaced in the study. For instance, participants from Guinea were coded as MRR-GU-001 to MRR-GU-016, Ivory Coast was: MRR-IV-001 to MRR-016, Liberia codes were: MRR-LIB-001 to MRR-LIB-016, and Sierra Leone participants were coded as MRR-SL-001 to MRR-SL-016. In the study MRR-001 to 016, represents participant number one to Participant number 16, as can be seen in Table 13 below.

Table 6

Coded participants for Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone

Guinea				Ivory Coast			
Interviewee	Sex	Age range	Number of years in the United States	Interviewee	Sex	Age range	Number of years in the United States
MRR-GU-001	Male	40-60	7	MRR-IV-001	Male	60-70	3
MRR-GU-002	Male	40-60	10	MRR-IV-002	Male	40-60	5
MRR-GU-003	Male	40-60	17	MRR-IV-003	Male	40-60	14
MRR-GU-004	Male	40-60	19	MRR-IV-004	Female	40-60	16
MRR-GU-005	Male	40-60	12	MRR-IV-005	Male	40-60	7
MRR-GU-006	Male	40-60	18	MRR-IV-006	Male	40-60	15
MRR-GU-007	Male	40-60	19	MRR-IV-007	Male	40-60	17
MRR-GU-008	Male	40-60	17	MRR-IV-008	Male	26-39	11
MRR-GU-009	Male	40-60	18	MRR-IV-009	Male	18-25	15
MRR-GU-010	Male	40-60	17	MRR-IV-010	Male	40-60	13
MRR-GU-011	Male	26-39	18	MRR-IV-011	Male	26-39	15
MRR-GU-012	Male	40-60	18	MRR-IV-012	Male	40-60	15
MRR-GU-013	Male	26-39	21	MRR-IV-013	Male	40-60	19
MRR-GU-014	Male	40-60	2	MRR-IV-014	Male	40-60	2
MRR-GU-015	Male	60-70	17	MRR-IV-015	Male	40-60	12
MRR-GU-016	Male	40-60	19	MRR-IV-016	Male	26-39	16
Liberia				Sierra Leone			
Interviewee	Sex	Age range	Number of years in the United States	Interviewee	Sex	Age range	Number of years in the United States
MRR-LIB-001	Male	40-60	2	MRR-SL-001	Male	40-60	20
MRR-LIB-002	Male	40-60	2	MRR-SL-002	Male	40-60	13
MRR-LIB-003	Female	26-39	2	MRR-SL-003	Male	40-60	36
MRR-LIB-004	Male	40-60	2	MRR-SL-004	Male	40-60	20
MRR-LIB-005	Male	40-60	6	MRR-SL-005	Male	26-39	13
MRR-LIB-006	Female	26-39	6	MRR-SL-006	Male	40-60	2
MRR-LIB-007	Male	40-60	6	MRR-SL-007	Male	40-60	20
MRR-LIB-008	Male	40-60	7	MRR-SL-008	Male	40-60	17
MRR-LIB-009	Male	26-39	8	MRR-SL-009	Female	40-60	3
MRR-LIB-010	Male	26-39	10	MRR-SL-010	Male	40-60	6
MRR-LIB-011	Male	26-39	11	MRR-SL-011	Female	40-60	3
MRR-LIB-012	Male	40-60	14	MRR-SL-012	Male	40-60	16
MRR-LIB-013	Male	26-39	15	MRR-SL-013	Female	26-39	18
MRR-LIB-014	Male	26-39	17	MRR-SL-014	Male	26-39	8
MRR-LIB-015	Male	26-39	17	MRR-SL-015	Male	40-60	8
MRR-LIB-016	Male	26-39	35	MRR-SL-016	Male	40-60	17

Below are interview questions, responses and data analyses from the MRR states of Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Guinea: Interview Questions

1) Please select the category of status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

___ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

___ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

___ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

___ d) CSOs

___ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

• 40 to 60 _____

• 60 to 70 years plus _____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?

- 7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?
- 8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?
- 9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?
- 10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?
- 11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participation on corruption?
- 12) What is your sex? Male _____, Female _____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Guinea: Interview responses

Interviewee -MRR-GU-001

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a civil society.

Response #2: age range: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 12 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is a delegation of authority to spread out in the country with equal participation.

Response #4: There are opposite idea of decentralization

Response #5: Citizens value leadership more.

Response #6: If everyone has a stake, then protection is necessary.

Response #7: Citizens can help with the increase in revenue.

Response #8: leaders are chosen in my native country through the election.

Response #9: I have a plan in the next five years.

Response #10: My going back will make a difference.

Response #11: It reduces corruption if people have a stake in the decision and governing of the state.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-002

Response #1: My immigration status at the time of arrival was visitor and member of the Civil Society Organization.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 18 years.

Response #3a: Every area generates their revenue, and has their authority.

Response #4: The idea of decentralization is not known back home.

Response #5: It is important because it is means by which citizens elect their leaders and they can vote against them in elections.

Response #6: Citizens' participation in choosing their leaders can help with conflict and stabilization.

Response #7: Revenue of subnational government can increase when citizens participate in a decentralization environment.

Response #8: leaders are chosen in my native country mostly through appointment.

Response #9: I am on my way to my native country as soon as possible.

Response #10: My going back will help to share the knowledge acquired from here.

Response #11: It is critical because the people decide their leaders.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-003

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival: was a civil servant (Former Government employee).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 18 years.

Response #3a: Moving out services away from urban to rural areas of the state.

Response #4: It is important if citizens see and agreed.

Response #5: Citizens electing their leaders makes citizens voices heard.

Response #6: It empowers citizens to minimize conflict when expanded residents participate.

Response #7: It depends on integrated policies when citizens share revenue, then it becomes necessary.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointment through the executive branch of government.

Response #9: Everyone has a plan, and so I planned to return home someday.

Response #10: It is hard if locals are not impacted, through my going back. But going back will impact as a way of transferring power.

Response #11: It benefits citizens

Response # 12: Male

Interviewee MRR-GU-004

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival: Refugee

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is about keeping the welfare of the people.

Response #4: My opinion of decentralization is better than the African setting.

The Africa setting has a limited idea of decentralization.

Response #5: It is important, as far as I am a concern.

Response #6: It makes the people Citizens decide who represent them.

Response #7: Not much is known, but those in government are serious, and that is causing serious underdevelopment.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by those who have the means to buy their way through leadership.

Response #9: I have a plan to go back to do business.

Response #10: Not a particular one, however, I respect human being. Therefore my going back will be to work with the fellow man and respect them.

Response #11: The effect is not evident.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-005

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was immigrant (DV)

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 10 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is taking power from one central to other parts.

Response #4: It is different because, in my native country, not much is known about decentralization.

Response #5: Citizens elect their leaders to represent their representation.

Response #6: yes, it does reduce conflict because citizens form part of the decision-making process.

Response #7: If local citizens are part of what they do, it increases revenue.

Response #8: Local leaders decide who gets elected.

Response #9: I would like to return to my native country someday.

Response #10: My going back will contribute to the community and the larger society.

Response #11: It is hard to define.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-006

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival: Civil Servant

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 2 years.

Response #3a: It is where people descent from top to bottom.

Response #4: My understanding of decentralization is far better here than those in my native county.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leader is that it creates transparency in government.

Response #6: Expanded locals and citizens participation helps in intern of representation.

Response #7: It helps to generate revenue for local government.

Response #8: Leaders are mostly chosen through appointment.

Response #9: My plan to return is to enlighten citizens about development and how to manage the minimal resources available.

Response #10: My going back will pinpoint those civilization lacking in Africa.

Response #11: Local elections on corruption failed because of lack of opportunities.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee -MRR-GU-007

Response #1: migration status at the time of arrival: CSO

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 18 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is where assets to power and resources are not limited to central government, but to rural citizens as well.

Response #4: Not much is understood about decentralization in my native country.

Response #5: The important is that it creates demand for accountability.

Response #6: It moves away from deliberate advice.

Response # 7: It creates the basis for creativity for self-decision making.

Response #8: Leaders are both appointed and elected.

Response #9: My plan to return is in two years.

Response #10: In some way, my going back will involve organization.

Response #11: It affects corruption by electing.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee-MRR-GU-008

Response #1: migration status at the time of arrival was immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 7 years.

Response #3a: It is the full participation of everyone in the country.

Response #4: More people Citizens agreement with decentralization, but differences in methodology

Response # 5: It gives citizens responsibility to elect their leaders.

Response #6: This happened because the causes of conflict or instability come from inequality of participations of citizens; therefore citizens' participation in decision-making can help in the reduction of conflict.

Response #7: a policy implementation of decentralization is possible if institutions are decentralized.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointment, but back in the days they were elected.

Response #9: I hope to return home someday to help improve the system.

Response #10: My going back will have more impact than staying.

Response #11: The effect is that leaders are held accountable and can help eliminate corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-009

Response #1: migration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 19 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is that it distributes power to the people.

Response #4: The analysis about decentralization is poor in my native country.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because everyone has a right.

Response #6: If citizens educated then, decisions can be made that can prevent conflict or instability.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization can increase revenue if citizens are opportune to elect their leaders and manage their policy.

Response #8: The way leaders are chosen in my native country is by who know you.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home one of these days.

Response #10: With the knowledge acquired, my performance will contribute to the development of the state.

Response #11: Do not know.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-010

Response #1: migration status at time of arrival was immigrant (DV)

Response #2: age: 26-39

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is the allocation of government separately.

Response #4: Not much known about decentralization in my native as compared to the US.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because it brings empowerment to the people.

Response #6: Citizens participation in expanded decision-making is vital because, when citizens participate, it brings about collaboration between all stakeholders.

Response #7: Decentralization policy is complicated because of central government influence.

Response #8: Most leaders are chosen at the local government level by appointment.

Response #9: After retirement.

Response #10: My going back will not make a difference, because I do not support decentralization.

Response #11: I do not election impacting corruption because those citizens with big pocket/money will always win.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-011

Response #1: migration status at time of arrival: Civil Society

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is when the country is run the right ways, no corruption, and straightforwardness in the distribution of resources.

Response #4: Decentralization is not working because of the system of government.

Response #5: It is essential because citizens know the person to lead them.

Response #6: It helps because their participation is necessary for the democratic process.

Response #7: It happens if everyone paid taxes.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen through appointment, and corruption plays a vital role in that too.

Response #9: I have the plan to return home someday.

Response #10: My going back will impact more than when I stay here.

Response #11: Not much information is available.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-GU-012

Response #1: migration status at the time of arrival was a civil servant

Response #2: age: 26-39

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is where political power is not concentrated in one region. It leads to sub-government.

Response #4: I do not know citizens' opinion on decentralization in the country of birth, in my mind, there is a significant difference.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because it gives citizens a voice and power to decide their well-being.

Response #6: It gives power to the people.

Response #7: It happens in ways that locals will identify their powers and strengths.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointment by the president.

Response #9: I have the plan to return home someday.

Response #10: My going back will be to get involved with older folks and contribute the knowledge learned.

Response #11: The impact of the local election on corruption is that it empowers locals to decide who represents them.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-013

Response #1: migration status at time of arrival was civil servant

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 21 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is to spread out things around.

Response #4: Not much is known about decentralization in my native country.

Response #5: Is it essential for any real democracy.

Response #6: The expansion of locals or citizens participation depends on the enlargement of ideas to ensure everyone is empowered.

Response #7: It depends on the development of revenue and people.

Response #8: Through election and appointment.

Response #9: I go home every year. I am preparing to go back soon.

Response #10: My going back do not impact.

Response #11: The impact of the local election on corruption is not possible except, citizens are educated.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-014

Response #1: migration status at time of arrival was civil society

Response #2: age: 60-70

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 18 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is to share development to all of the countries.

Response #4: The same view decentralization is shared.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leaders is that they will have a voice.

Response #6: Expanded locals and citizens participations in government decision-making provide a solution to conflict or instability.

Response #7: It helps when there is a decentralization where people take responsibility for their decision-making.

Response #8: Voting, tradition, appointment.

Response #9: I have the plan to return in the distance future.

Response #10: My going back the ideas acquired here in the United States.

Response #11: Because local's election is the way the local elects who they want

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-GU-015

Response #1: migration status at the time of arrival was a civil servant; Response #2: age: 60-70; Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 19 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is to be able to give local authority to implement certain policies without a central government.

Response #4: There are different need back home and here on decentralization.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leaders is that it gives them the power to determine their social, political and economic destination.

Response #6: Citizens participation helps reduce conflict and instability because they all formed part of the decision-making process.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization increase revenue by giving back system to locals' authority to enhance revenue collection.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointments by the central government.

Response #9: I have a plan to go home as soon as possible.

Response #10: My going back reinforces the need to decentralize.

Response #11: Local elections affect corruption, because, it ensures accountability and leads to discouraging crime.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-GU-016

Response #1: my immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV)

Response #2: age: 40-60;

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 19 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is that the functions of government should be localized.

Response #4: I agreed with the idea of decentralization, but an exception to my native country.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leaders, their leaders become accountable to them.

Response #6: Citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduces conflict and instability.

Response #7: When local community revenue paid is not taken away, but used for their general welfare.

Response #8: Leaders are sometimes chosen through appointment or election.

Response #9: I plan to go back home one of these days.

Response #10: My working ideas and taking it back home will help change the society.

Response #11: Local election can affect corruption based on accountability.

Response #12: Male

Table 7

Guinea: Themes & Coding

Primary Themes	Coding Analysis
1) A delegation of authority	In the study, interviewees considered delegation of powers as decentralization of government, where the functions of government are localized, and political power is not concentrated in one region. It leads to sub-government and distribution of political, administrative, fiscal power.
2) Citizens elect their leaders	The transcript indicated that it is important for citizens to choose their leaders. Accordingly, it empowers them and gives them a voice in the

	running of the state. The process makes leaders accountable to citizens.
3) Citizens' voices heard	It was observed that interviewees indicated that when they have the opportunity to elect their leaders and participate in governmental decision-making, it reduces conflict and instability.
4) Appointment through the executive	The transcript indicated that leaders in native country (Guinea) at the local levels are chosen by appointments by the central government headed by the president or prime minister.
5) Planned to return home	Most participants reported that they had the plan to go home as soon as possible and believed that their going back will reinforce the need to decentralize, they are already used to the ideas.
6) Fight corruption	Many said that minimization of corruption could be achievable through local elections based on accountability to the citizens; the effect on corruption is that leaders are held accountable and can help eliminate corrupt practices and it reduces corruption if people have a stake in the decision and governing of the state.
7) Citizens' agreement with decentralization	More residents agreed with decentralization, but differences in methodology, its application is better than in my native country not much is understood about decentralization in my native country. The transcript also indicated interviewees agreed that there must be sufficient education on the whole idea of decentralization.
8) The concept of who know you	Citizens decided that more appointments are made through the idea of who knows you. It is an idea based on favoritism or nepotism. It sometimes leads to corruption, conflict and so the ability for citizens to elect their leaders, change the view of conflict or instability to stability.

Guinea Data Analysis

Those interviewed for the Guinean data were mostly between the ages 40 and 60 in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There were eight primary themes that developed from the interviewees and data analysis from the Guinea data collection. There were collective agreements on decentralization. The opinion was enthusiastic. There was a general theme on the perception of decentralization as giving local authority to implement certain policies without the central government interfering in policy areas like the election of leaders, resource management, and forming part of the developmental

team of their constituency. However, transcripts and recordings indicated that it was essential for citizens to understand the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization.

On questions 5 and 6 about the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders, and how expanded locals and citizens' participation in governmental decision-making reduces conflict and instability. Most of those interviewed indicated that, when citizens choose their leaders, their leaders become accountable to them, and their participation in governmental decision-making reduces conflict or instability. It gives people the power to determine their social, political, and economic destination because they all formed part of the decision-making process and are responsible for their actions.

On question 7, about how implementation of a policy of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state, most of those interviewed indicated that policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues by giving back system to local authority to enhance revenue collection. This happens in ways that locals will identify their powers and strengths, take responsibility for their decision-making and creates the basis for creativity for self-decision making; when local community revenue paid is not taken away, but used for their general welfare and intended purpose.

Question 8 and 9 asked about how leaders are chosen at the level of the local constituency or local government in the interviewees' native country. It also asks about interviewees' plans to return to the country of their birth? Most of the respondents indicated that most leaders at the local constituent level were appointed. Many stated on question 9 that they planned to go back to their native land to contribute to the nation-building process. And on question 11, more indicated that local elections affect

corruption, because it ensures accountability from leaders. It compared leaders to be accountable to them else; they cannot be re-elected.

Discrepancy

The discrepancy in the data collection was about the idea of decentralization has not reached majority of localities in Guinea provinces or counties including the capital Conakry. Even though, more of the interviewees welcome the concept of decentralization as a way of incorporating all stakeholders.

During the interview, each interviewer from Guinea was assigned an identification number for the concealment of identification. The codes were assigned from interviewee one to sixteen (MRR-GU-001 to MRR-GU-016). The coding was completed through the identification of common main words that emerged as themes from the interviewees' responses to interview questions.

Ivory Coast: Interview Questions

1) Please select the category of IMMIGRATION status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) CSOs

____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

- 40 to 60_____
 - 60 to 70 years plus ____
- 3) How long have you lived in the United States?
 - 3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?
 - 4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?
 - 5) What is the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?
 - 6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?
 - 7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?
 - 8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?
 - 9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?
 - 10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?
 - 11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participation on corruption?
 - 12) What is your sex? Male_____, Female_____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Ivory Coast Interview responses

Interviewee MRR-IV-001

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was a refugee.

Response #2: age: 60-70.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 15 years.

Response #3a: Decentralization makes people or a region to select their people or leaders.

Response # 4: My opinion on decentralization is the world is moving forward, but not much is known back home about decentralization.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leaders is that it enables them to trust people and the leadership was chosen.

Response #6: Citizens' participation helps residents to feel comfortable.

Response #7: Revenue is an important part of development, but policy should be flexible.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen based on the role they play in the community.

Response #9: My plan to return is to contribute to the nation-building process.

Response #10: My staying will affect the process of decentralization because I will not contribute to the implementation of the process.

Response #11: The effect of the local election on corruption is to enable citizens decides for themselves.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-IV-002

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was an immigrant (Diversity Visa lottery).

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 15 years.

Response #3a: Decentralization is where government should be inclusive.

Response #4: It is contrary because of a different location.

Response #5: It is essential because citizens make their own decisions.

Response #6: It creates room for everyone to participate in the decision-making process.

Response #7: Decentralization policy implementation increases revenues if it is properly implemented.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by the executive branch of government.

Response #9: I have a plan to return shortly.

Response #10: My going back will positively impact my native country.

Response #11: Local election on corruption is terrible.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-IV-003

Response #1: My immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 12 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is that it speaks on government functions, not in one place.

Response #4: There is a different view on decentralization, but much is not done back home as it works in the US.

Response #5: The importance of citizens electing their leaders is that it allows citizens voices to be heard.

Response #6: Expanded local citizens' participation in governmental decision making helps in many ways, such as if people are engaged, there can be some elimination of conflict.

Response #7: Decentralization policy implementation helps in revenue by the extension of leadership to the citizens at the local level of government.

Response #8: In most cases, leaders are chosen by consensus, election or appointment.

Response #9: I have the plan to return home soon.

Response #10: My going back will impact the society with the knowledge acquired.

Response #11: There are lots of effect on corruption when there is opportunity for locals to have an election because it discourages corruptions.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-004

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a member of the civil society organization.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 16 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is getting people involved.

Response #4: My opinion of decentralization is that it is appropriate for our society back home. But it requires special education on decentralization on the concept in my native country.

Response #5: It is good for citizens to elect their leaders because citizens will have interest in their leaders.

Response #6: Expanded locals and citizens participation in government decision-making work because of the choices they make.

Response #7: It is possible if citizens identified projects, there would be benefits regarding revenue.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointment, who they know, voted upon.

Response #9: My plan is to go back as soon as possible.

Response #10: My going back will impact the society with the knowledge acquired

Response #11: The effect of the local election on corruption is high.

Response #12: Female

Interviewee MRR-IV-005

Response #1: My immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigration (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 2 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is about having a say or voice in government or the state.

Response # 4: My opinion on decentralization is welcome and agreed upon because of it significant in enhancing citizens.

Response # 5: The importance of the people electing their leaders is that it helps to resolve a conflict.

Response #6: It helps because the views of citizens will be heard.

Response #7: Revenue will increase if people understand what they are doing or involved.

Response #8: The executive chose the leaders for the people through appointment.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home in the next five years.

Response #10: My going back will serve as a signal of movement.

Response #11: It minimizes corruption to a larger extent.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-IV-006

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigration (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 5 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is about local citizens as part of the government.

Response #4: My opinion on decentralization is high as compared to citizen back home.

Response #5: It is important because citizens will have a voice in the decision-making process.

Response #6: It reduces conflict at the highest level because citizens have to say in the decision-making process.

Response #7: Decentralization for the locals will enhance their economic development.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by popular participation and total involvement.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home to impact my native country positively.

Response #10: My going back will impact the lives of my people positively.

Response #11: If the right people are chosen, then, local elections will change the dynamic of corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-007

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 7 years.

Response #3a: The idea of decentralization is opening up society government for the trade movement.

Response #4: My opinion on decentralization is a bit different, however, is good for the MRR's states.

Response #5: It is imperative for citizens to choose who their leaders become. It creates confidence in those chosen.

Response #6: Expanded locals and citizens participations can reduce conflict and instability if residents are given the opportunity or chance.

Response #7: A policy implementation of decentralization can increase local government if there is sincerity on the part of the stakeholders.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen through elections.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home one of these days.

Response #10: My going back will impact my country because of the knowledge acquired.

Response #11: There is no effect in a positive direction.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-008

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival: Immigration status at time of arrival: Civil Society Organizations

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 16 years

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is when the government is distributed.

Response #4: There are different opinions on decentralization between my native country and here.

Response #5: When citizens elect their leaders, it makes them accountable to the citizens.

Response #6: conflict or instability got minimize when everyone involved in the political process.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization increases revenue when citizens are allowed to participate equally.

Response #8: leaders are chosen through appointment.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home as soon as possible when I complete my study.

Response #10: It will help in the society.

Response #11: when local participate in free and fair election citizens are free to act on corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-009

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival: Immigration status at the date of arrival: Student.

Response #2: age: 18-25.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 14 years

Response #3a: Not much is known about decentralization, and I do not think the idea is workable.

Response #4: Not much is known about decentralization.

Response #5: It is critical because citizens have rights to voice out their opinions.

Response #6: Not much is known about decentralization.

Response #7: Not much is known about decentralization.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen through voting.

Response #9: I have to plan to return home someday.

Response #10: Not much is known about decentralization

Response #11: Not much is known about decentralization.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-010

Response #1: My immigration status at the time of arrival was a member of civil society organization.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 13 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is the government is for provinces or regions.

Response #4 I cannot compare because of my absence from my native country:

Response #5: When citizens elect their leaders, they have power and voice.

Response #6: It reduces conflict and instability when citizens are empowered.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization do not increase revenue.

Response #8: Through appointment.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home one of these days.

Response #10: I can only impact the idea of decentralization when I return with skills.

Response #11: It discourages corruption by who to elect.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-011

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a Civil Servant.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 11 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is that it helps people from all walk of life.

Response #4: My opinion on decentralization before was hard to understand but, not much is known about decentralization in my native country.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because it creates trust, who they know.

Response #6: Expanded local citizens' participation in government decision-making reduce conflict because citizens are involved.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization help to increase revenue if different ideas to generate revenue in instituted.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by being known, who know you to be considered as an elected officers.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home as soon as possible.

Response #10: My going back will impact with the knowledge learned.

Response #11: Local elections do not have an impact on corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-012

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was student.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is giving the government to the people.

Response #4: My idea is based on education, because of the high illiterate rate in my country.

Response #5: It is important because in the process citizens voices are heard.

Response #6: Expanded citizen's participation in government helps to reduce conflict and instability because they elect someone that they trust and seek their interest.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization increase revenue only if there is little poverty level.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen on deeds, not words.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home some days.

Response #10: By going back home benefit the change I will take home.

Response #11: Local government election does not help with corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-013

Response #1: My immigration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 15 years.

Response #3a: Much is not known about decentralization from my perspective.

Response #4: My opinion on decentralization is not high.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because it is their right as part of the democracy practice.

Response #6: Expanded local and citizens participation in government decision-making creates the need for self-govern.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization is necessary for everyone to be used to the idea and processes.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen from what they do; their records and etc.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home to invest.

Response #10: My going back will enhance the society with development.

Response #11: Local election affection corruption if it is done rights in the interest of the citizens.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-IV-014

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 15 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is that the concept should be shared among citizens.

Response #4: My opinion decentralization compare to my native country is based on a balanced view.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders because residents saying or voice in government is essential for the democratization of the nation.

Response #6: Participation of citizens boost more involvement that minimizes that has the potential of conflict minimization.

Response #7: If citizens or local government are allowed to collect their own revenue, it has the potential of revenue increase with accountability.

Response #8: Most leaders are chosen through elections.

Response #9: I have a goal and plan to return home.

Response #10: My going back will share the knowledge learned from the United States.

Response #11: The effect of the local election on corruption is achievable through voting leaders in and out based on the performance.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-015

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a Civil servant.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 3 years.

Response #3a: My understanding about decentralization is that every province or county should have a voice in the distribution of the states.

Response #4: My opinion on decentralization is that funds that are collected should be distributed equally.

Response #5: It is important because citizens decide who represent them.

Response #6: I feel that expanded civic participation in government decision-making makes citizens involve and express how they feel.

Response #7: Policy implementation of decentralization fosters an increase in revenue if tax collection is honestly done.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen through elections.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home one of these days.

Response #10: My return will have a positive impact on the society.

Response #11: The effect change from lack of opportunity to other possibilities.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-IV-016

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was

Response #2: age: 26-39

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 19 years

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is giving power to provinces or region to manage their affairs.

Response #4: People in the native land welcome the idea of decentralization.

Response #5: It is profound for citizens to elect their leaders.

Response #6: It happened once the voices of the people are involved, it helps to reduce conflicts.

Response #7: It makes local government actions, and citizens are allowed participation, it creates revenue.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by appointment.

Response #9: I have to return home soon.

Response #10: My being here has not changed my likeness for my country.

Response #11: If corrupt leaders are chosen, corruptions will not be minimized.

Response #12: Male.

Table 8

Ivory Coast themes & coding

Primary Theme	Coding Analysis
1)Decentralization popularity:	In the transcripts and recordings, many interviewees indicated that insufficient information is available on decentralization policy in their native country.
2) Plan to return home:	Most of those interviewed expressed the desire to go back to their native land and contribute to the social, economic development of the state. Only few could specify that they were returning to their native countries in the next one to two years, but the majority of the interviewees have planned on as soon as possible.
3)Expanded locals' citizens' participation:	In the study, their dominant views that an expanded citizens participations in local government boost more involvement that minimizes potential conflict in the state or region, creates the need

	for self-govern, and helps to reduce conflict and instability because they elect someone that they trust and seek their interest.
4)Accountable to the citizens	In the data collection, it was acknowledged by the interviewees, that when citizens have the decision-making power to elect their leaders and participate in the governing of the state, it compared leaders to be accountable to their citizens.
5)The executive branch of government	In the data, the executive branch of government, many agreed that locals' leaders and authority were mostly appointed by the executive branch of government which is headed by the president and prime minister in the Ivory Coast.
6) Citizens' election	Citizens electing their leaders indicates from the data that, it gives citizens a voice and power to decide for themselves. It also creates the need and accountability for leaders to residents and citizens saying or voice in government is necessary for the democratization of the nation.
7) Citizens are engaged	The data revealed that when citizens are involved their voices are heard, empowered, and have the right to elect their leaders.
8) Knowledge acquired	Many interviewed indicated that their return to their native land would be a competitive advantage to apply knowledge gained from the United States. It will serve the country in other capacities such as investment, education and other developmental affairs.
9) Voice in government	It was recorded in the transcript that it is important for participants to have a voice. It formed part of the decision process of the state and enhanced the peacebuilding process and stability of the region.
10) Their economic development	The transcript indicated that economic development of the nation is paramount in the peace and stability of the country and such interviewees agreed it was important for citizens to have their economic development.
11) Decentralization policy:	The transcript indicated participants understanding of decentralization. It shows that decentralization makes people or a region to select their individuals or leaders and gives power to provinces or region to manage their affairs and voices and empowerment in electing their leaders, manage resources distribution of the state.

Ivory Coast: Data analysis

In the analysis of the Ivorian data, 11 themes emerged. It was discovered that 13 of the 16 (81%) of interviewees, had positive views on the concept of decentralization, while three (19%) had disagreements on decentralization. However, the overall consensus

was positive. The majority of participants were between the ages of 40 and 60 years. In the answers from question 3a, interviewees indicated that their understanding of decentralization was giving power to provinces or regions to manage their affairs and enabling citizens to form part of the decision-making process of the government.

On questions 5 and 6, about what is important to citizens electing or choosing their leaders and how expanding local does and citizen participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability, the transcripts indicated that it is important for citizens to elect their leaders. In the process of election, citizens decide who represents them, and elections become their voice and power in the decision-making process of the states. Many feel that expanded citizen participation in government decision-making makes citizens involved and enables them to express how they feel. Their participation in government helps to reduce conflict and instability because they elect someone that they trust and seek their interest.

On questions 7, 8 and 9, about how the implementation of a policy of decentralization increases the revenue of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state

Question 8, which asked how leaders are chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country? Question 9, asked, what is your plan to return to your country of birth?

The transcripts and recordings indicated that implementation of a policy of decentralization fosters an increase in revenue if tax collection is honestly done and citizens are allowed to participate equally and for decentralization, locals indicated that it enhanced their economic development. The data also indicated that most leaders at the

local level of government are appointed. Many interviewees stated that they have plans to return home. Many agreed that local election on corruption is achievable through voting leaders in and out based on their performance. Similarly, local elections affect corruption if they are done right and are in the interest of the citizens.

Liberia: Interview Questions

1) Please select the category of status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) CSOs

____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

• 40 to 60 _____

• 60 to 70 years plus ____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

- 6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?
- 7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?
- 8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?
- 9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?
- 10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?
- 11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participations on corruption?
- 12) What is your sex? Male _____, Female _____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Liberia: Interview Responses

Interviewee MRR-LIB-015:

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a refugee.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 11.

Response #3a: decentralization is the election of local leaders and resources distribution to local citizens or authority.

Response#4: My opinion is contrary to those in Liberia. Not much knowledge of those in Liberia on decentralization. That decentralization may not work in the MRR, because of the system and leadership of the government.

Response #5: Leaders will be accountability to the locals.

Response #6: Everyone participates in the process and build confidence in the leadership.

Response #7: Manage their budget, self-undertaking of the project, independent.

Response #8: Appointment by the president, no election system in place for the local election.

Response #9: planned to return home in 5 years.

Response #10: Going back will influence policies.

Response #11: Provides greater scrutiny of their leaders.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-002

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival: Immigrant-DV

Response #2: age: 40-60: Number of years in the USA is 14.

Response q#3a: Is limiting central government power; sharing power with residents.

Response q#4: Empowers people, decision-making, and people elect their leaders, provides opportunity.

Response q#5: Leadership opportunity, makes a political decision, elect their leaders.

Response q#6: Everyone gets involved in decision making, reduce conflict, and improves economic development.

Response q#7: It increases revenue and economic development.

Response q#8: Through election.

Response q#9: Something to think about, not now.

Response q#10: Going with fresh ideas; helping people to be empowered

Response q#11: It depends on who is elected. Leaders need monitoring.

Response q#12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-003

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a refugee.

Response #2: Age: 26-39

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 14.

Response q#3a: Not much

Response q#4: Not comparable

Response q#5: Citizens are the one, whose leaders are working for the general.

Response q#6: Violent if voters do not elect their representatives. It creates stability.

Response q#7: encourages them to pay taxes and creates development.

Response q#8: leaders are elected through voting.

Response q#9: I have plans to visit. I have property there. I am always going in and out.

Response q#10: It will impact significantly if I implement the knowledge gained from here.

Response q#11: It provides an opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations.

Response q#12: Female.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-004

Response # 1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response # 2: Age: 40-60, Number of years in the USA: 17:

Response q#3a: my understanding is that decentralization is paramount to resources utilization.

Response q#4: I understand that most of the people back in my native land do. If they are educated about decentralization, it will be for implementation.

Response q#5: It gives citizens their constitutional rights.

Response q#6: it helps citizens to have a voice, and by that understanding is of peoples and conflict can be eliminated.

Response q#7: Education of citizens may help, but the high rate of illiteracy might not work.

Response q#8: Appointed, selected by the people in the town, but high-profile positions are elected.

Response q#9: soon, but preparation requires.

Response q#10: my going back will take the better ideas I have acquired here from the USA.

Response q#11: Local government must freely be operated, free flow of ideas.

Response q#12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-005

Response # 1: Immigration status at the time of arrival: Student.

Response # 2: Age: 40-60.

Response # 3: Number of years in the USA is 35.

Response #3a: It is moving goods and services to local government. It is also democracy.

Response #4: Decentralization is not a broad practice in Liberia. It is more complicated than one may think.

Response #5: It is important for the people.

Response #6: It helps for citizens voices to be heard.

Response #7: It depends on the state tax structure if taxes are collected and evenly use for the intended reason.

Response #8: They are appointed.

Response #9: Has plan to return home, preparation is important.

Response #10: If decentralization is properly executed.

Response #11: It will help to eliminate corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-006

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was refugee

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA was 17.

Response #3a: Decentralization is allowing everyone to take part equally.

Response #4: My opinion differs from the people back in my native land.

Response #5: very important, because it represents a qualified individual that represent them.

Response #6: It helps them to know what they go through.

Response #7: It helps to increase local citizen owns revenue and development.

Response #8: Through vote and appoints of local leaders.

Response #9: no sooner plan yet.

Response #10: Staying here do not help, but going back and sharing the education acquired from here in the USA.

Response #11: Local election helps minimize corruptions.

Response #12: Female.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-007

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a refugee.

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response q#3: Number of years in the USA: 15:

Response #3a: It is about releasing governing power to local authority from the central government.

Response #4: There is not much understanding of decentralization in my native land.

Response #5: Is to know the person, or candidate and make sure that candidate is qualified. It gives positive results.

Response #6: Participation enhances collaboration and peace.

Response #7: It formed part of decision-making and increased revenue.

Response #8: through the election and head counts.

Response #9: I have a plan shortly, but not now.

Response #10: My going will help to promote decentralization.

Response #11: Helps to minimize corruption.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-008

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was immigrant (Diversity Visa).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 2 years.

Response 3a: It is about empowering citizen participation at the local level.

Response #4: Decentralization is not working. The government has a problem to function with decentralization.

Response #5: Citizens become part of the decision-making body.

Response #6: It reduces conflict, feel part of decision-making.

Response #7: It spreads quickly. It brings about proper freedom.

Response #8: Through election. Some are through appointment.

Response #9: Nowhere like home. I will return home soon.

Response #10: My staying here will impact through revenue remittance and our going home will change the society with the knowledge learned.

Response #11: It helps to reduce corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-LIB-009

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was immigrant (Diversity Visa).

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 6 years.

Response #3a: Are citizens at the local level of government empowerment policy.

Response q#4: Back home, there is not much information on decentralization. By living here in the USA, I have got to realize that decentralization is about allowing everyone to participate.

Response #5: Decentralization country and region together. It promotes economic development.

Response #6: There has to be consultation between local traditional leaders and coordination.

Response #7: It allows customs exchanges

Response #8: some are done through the election and presidential appointments.

Response #9: I will return after I am done with school.

Response #10: Exchange of skills.

Response #11: It affects corruption in positive ways.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-010

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a member of the CSO.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 2 years.

Response #3a: Effectiveness of government; Share responsibility.

Response #4: Most uneducated citizens do not understand decentralization.

Response #5: It becomes the voice of the people.

Response #6: their participations allow them to express themselves.

Response #7: Training, accountability to revenue.

Response #8: Appointed and subsequently lead to corruptions.

Response #9: I have a plan to return home but in the future.

Response #10: My going is a form of transformation for change.

Response #11: It helps local government for political participation. And enhanced accountability and discourage corruption.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-011

Response #1: Immigration status at time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 10 years.

Response #3a: Taking government to the people

Response #4: People want to have better of government.

Response #5: It gives them power in the decision-making.

Response #6: It helps every voice heard.

Response #7: It opens the possibility for the government to generate revenue.

Response #8: Democratic means; wisdom concentration.

Response #9: I always home go back to my native land.

Response #10: My staying mobilize resources, and my going home contributes

Response #11: It makes people more accountable

Response #12: male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-012

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 7 years.

Response #3a: It is about providing an opportunity to rural dwellers or communities and taking the government to the people.

Response #4: Decentralization process is in demand. It creates participation.

Response #5: It allows them to make their decisions of their choice.

Response #6: It helps narrow the disagreement.

Response #7: It increases revenue and empowers residents.

Response #8: Appointment for now. It should be through the ballot box or elections.

Response #9: Not now.

Response #10: My staying will help, but going back home will contribute to the social, economic development.

Response #11: It brings about change, and eliminate corruption.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-013

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 6 years.

Response #3a: Government function from a different locality.

Response #4: It is helpful because the government should be able to serve its people.

Response #5: It empowers citizens to have saying/voice.

Response #6: Citizens have a voice.

Response #7: in many ways. It shows citizens much information about revenue collected.

Response #8: Some are elected, but many are appointed by the president.

Response #9: long-term plan

Response #10: Do think there is any impact.

Response #11: Yes, it creates accountability.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-014

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a member of the civil society.

Response #2: age: 26-39

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 6 years.

Response #3a: It is the distribution of functions, power, and wealth.

Response #4: Decentralization is not understood in my native land.

Response #5: It helps decision making a participation.

Response #6: It ensures peaceful demonstration

Response #7: It increases budget and funding and grows revenue.

Response #8: In the past, they were appointed, but presently they are appointed.

Response #9: I have to plan to go back home shortly.

Response #10: My going back is taking knowledge back to the people, while I will not impact.

Response #11: Our democracy is poor.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-015

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was Civil Servant (CS).

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 8 years.

Response #3a: Is a process where everyone controls their resources.

Response #4: There is no agreement. Not much is known about decentralization in my native land.

Response #5: It is imperative in decision-making.

Response #6: It helps to reduce conflict because citizens make their own choices in electing or choosing their leaders.

Response #7: It helps, if local control their revenue.

Response #8: leaders are appointed by the president or executive government.

Response #9: Always there.

Response #10: My going back creates knowledge share, business contribution as a business man.

Response #11: It helps to have a positive impact on corruption.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-LIB-016

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 2 years.

Response #3a: My understanding of decentralization is that it is good for growth.

Response #4: Back home does not agree with decentralization.

Response #5: It is important because it creates trust.

Response #6: It creates shared understanding.

Response #7: Do not know much about decentralization.

Response #8: Through voting.

Response #9: I have a great plan soon.

Response #10: My going back home will invest knowledge acquired.

Response #11: It increases poverty and marginalizes other citizens.

Response #12: Male

Table 9

Themes & Coding Analysis of Liberia

Primary Themes	Coding Analysis
1) Selection of leaders	Most interviewees indicated that, most of the local leaders like city mayors, superintendents are appointed by the central government. But prior to the 1980s, local leaders were like paramount chief, mayors were elected.
2) Understanding of decentralization	The data revealed that there were limited understanding of decentralization of government in Liberia. But welcomes the idea of welcome decentralization policy.
3) View on corruption	Voting leaders bring about change, and minimization of corruption. It makes people more accountable. It helps local government for political participation. And enhanced accountability and discourage corruption
4) Revenue Management	Decentralization allows citizens manage their own budget, self under taking of project, independently.
5) Peace and stability of the MRR	Peace and stability in the Liberia or the MRR depends on every citizen's involvement.
6) Decentralized government	Interviewees were on questions numbers 3a, there were majority opinion about limiting central government's power; sharing power with local residents.
7) Citizens' participation	It gives citizens their constitutional rights. Citizens are the one, whose leaders work for. Leadership opportunity, makes political

	decision, elect their own leaders. Very important, because it represents qualified individual that represent them.
8) Ability to return to native country	Plan to return home, but depends on their economy and stability of their native country.
9)Participant age range	Most participants in the study were between the age ranges of 40 to 60 years, and mostly male participants. The majority of the female indicated their busy schedules.
10)Voting	It provides opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations. Leadership opportunity, makes political decision, elect their own leaders.
11) Citizens' awareness on Decentralization	It was realized in the interview that, much is not known about decentralization in Liberia. However, the few that grasp the concept, understands as the distribution of functions, power, wealth. Providing opportunities to rural dwellers or communities and taking government to the people.
12) Economic opportunity	It depends on the state tax structure, if taxes are collected and evenly use for the intended reason. It opens possibility for government to generate revenue. Training, accountability to revenue. It formed part of decision making and increase revenue.
13)Age	Most of the interviewees were between the ages of 40 to 60 years, though the age requirement was between 18 to 70 plus years or older.

Liberia data analysis

There were 13 themes that emerged from the analysis. Respondents agreed and shared slightly different views in their responses to the 12 questions. It was discovered that 16 respondents interviewed from the Liberian Community in Minnesota had agreed on the significance of decentralization policy implementation in the MRR. With the knowledge that there is little information on decentralization in their country of origin, respondents also agreed that citizens must be taught about decentralization policy and how it improves or affects them.

Of the 16 interviewees, the transcripts and interviews indicated that decentralization is about the voice of the people; transferring some central government power to local leadership and accounting for their revenue; motivating harmony and stability; and discouraging conflict.

The majority stated that they planned to return to their native land. Responses indicated that few participants had been home and actively involved with projects or with providing knowledge gained from living in the America. However, consensus on how local leaders are selected in the country, it was discovered, since, the country is not a decentralized nation, more local leaders like county superintendents, county attorney, the paramount chiefs are appointed by the president since 1997. But before the Liberian's civil war, local leaders like paramount chiefs, commissioners were elected, and some nominated by the president or the executive branch of government according to the data collection.

Discrepancy in the Data Collection

The assumption that decentralization was a widely known phenomenon in Liberia turned out to be false. According to the interview data, the idea of decentralization is welcome, but not much is known about it. Out of 16 interviewees from the Liberian community, 25% (4) had an understanding of decentralization, and 75% (12) said that there is not much understanding of decentralization in Liberia.

Sierra Leone: Interview Questions

1) Please select the category of status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

_____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

_____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

_____ d) CSOs

_____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

- 18 to 25 _____
- 26 to 39 _____
- 40 to 60 _____
- 60 to 70 years plus _____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the important of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?

7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?

8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?

9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?

10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?

11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participations on corruption?

12) What is your sex? Male _____, Female _____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Sierra Leone: Interview Responses

Interviewee MRR-SL-001

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was Civil Servant (SV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 3 years.

Response #3a: Transformation to developmental environment.

Response #4: Decentralization agreed with me, but citizens do not have transformation development in my native land.

Response #5: It is very essentials because citizens elect their leaders.

Response #6: Expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making helps for someone to make their own decision.

Response #7: It goes into policy-making.

Response #8: Leaders are selected through the ballot box.

Response #9: My plan is to see the transformation.

Response #10: My going back will be significant.

Response #11: It is challenging.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-002

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 16 years.

Response #3a: Is to ensure government reach everywhere to the people.

Response #4: Most of the people are not literate or cannot read or write.

Response #5: the importance of citizens electing their leaders gives power and voices to the people.

Response #6: If citizens choose their government, it is easy for conflict resolution.

Response #7: It helps in many ways; it takes healthcare, development, schools to the people.

Response #8: Now a day some leaders are chosen through election; some are appointed in the difference provinces or municipals

Response #9: After completing some personal business; shortly.

Response #10: If I return, I will be taking knowledge learned as part of the development.

Response #11: It gives every citizen the power and voice to recall their leaders, by that corruption, can be affected positively.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-003

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of my arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 8 years.

Response #3a: Separation of people.

Response #4: My opinion different with separation of power.

Response #5: It creates trust and empowered stakeholders.

Response #6: It creates trust and stability.

Response #7: It creates avenue for jobs, investment opportunity

Response #8: Appointment

Response #9: I hope to return home soon.

Response #10: Going back will impact knowledge acquired.

Response #11: No effect

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-004

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a refugee

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 years.

Response #3a: Is where people are elected; services, government agencies are taken from the capital to locally.

Response #4: Citizens will prefer decentralization, but the government will not agree.

Response #5: It reduces conflict.

Response #6: When a citizen is involved it reduces conflicts.

Response #7: If resources are generated, it enhances decentralization.

Response #8: Appointed from the central government.

Response #9: I have to return as the situation gets better in my native country.

Response #10: I more I stay here, the more I understand the importance of decentralization.

Response #11: Local's elections play crucial role in corruptions elimination.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-005

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was refugee.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 8 years.

Response #3a: It is the idea of expanding structure flow of power for fair distribution.

Response #4: It is critical to the MRR. However, it has not been embraced.

Response #5: It is imperative to decide their future and elect their leader.

#6: Citizens participations helps to reduce suspicions and conflict.

Response #7: It helps with everyone and increases revenue and productive capacity.

Response #8: Electoral procedures

Response #9: My plan is to have the right education.

Response #10: It impacts the society and learns lesson from the process.

Response #11: It is tied to our culture and social value, therefore it is critical for corruption.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-006

Response # 1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a Civil servant.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA is 13 years.

Response #3a: It is opening up the government for other to function.

Response #4: People are left behind; people are not entirely aware.

Response #5: It shows and enables citizens their rights to choose their leaders.

Response #6: MRR is interrelated, so participation is reduced conflict.

Response #7: It increases revenue if local citizens are allowed to manage their government

Response #8: They are appointed, which is one of the problems of rural areas.

Response #9: I dream of it every day; soon.

Response #10: Going back will have an impact than staying.

Response #11: There is no election for the local authority.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-007

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 13 years.

Response #3a: It is ways government spread the wealth in particular regions.

Response #4: Majority in my native country are illiterate on the idea of decentralization.

Response #5: It is important because it brings about the inclusion of citizens participations of democracy sustainable.

Response #6: It reduces conflict because they have to be called in the society.

Response #7: It increases revenues if it is implemented the right ways to compete.

Response #8: It always is done through a fair and unfair ways; either through appointment or election.

Response #9: I do not have a plan now to return home.

Response #10: My going back is to preach or practice the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Response #11: It does not affect corruptions.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-008

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 20
Years.

Response #3a: Is about the leadership change.

Response #4: Many different areas; those in the native land, lack the requisite education.

Response #5: It determines values in the person chosen.

Response #6: It helps for citizens to decide their leadership.

Response #7: citizens play a significant role in their decision making as well as their leadership.

Response #8: based on who knows you; friendship.

Response #9: My plan is to educate my children before going back to my native land.

Response #10: My going back, takes the lessons learned from here.

Response #11: local election reduces corruption.

Response #12: male.

Interviewee MRR-SL-009

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was an immigrant (DV).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 36

Years.

Response #3a: Means that government is not concentrated in one location.

Decentralization is alien to citizens back in my native country.

Response #4: Decentralization is alien to citizens back in my native country.

Response #5: It is important because citizens lived in the community.

Response #6: It makes citizens feel validated about themselves.

Response #7: It increases revenue by bringing development to the community.

Response 8: Through appointment.

Response #9: In the next 5-10years.

Response #10: My ideal will impact the decentralization process back home.

Response #11: If the election is fair, corruption will decrease.

Response #12: Female.

Interviewee MRR-SL-010

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was Civil Servant.

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 6

Years.

Response #3a: It regards policy making of the structure of government and local authority.

Response #4: Have the same ground, but with a different understanding of the locals.

Response #5: It stresses down their decisions.

Response #6: it has to do with the exception, in that if locals agreed, there is no conflict.

Response #7: It helps increase with development at the local level of the state.

Response #8: By election

Response #9: I have plans to return home someday.

Response #10: My going back will allow me to speak about decentralization.

Response #11: Household is responsible, so it helps reduce corruption.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-SL-011

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a student as international Volunteer.

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 17 Years.

Response #3a: Decentralization is about local government empowerments.

Response #4: No knowledge about decentralization.

Response #5: It is a government that democratic citizens are involved.

Response #6: If citizens are participating in the decision-making process, brings about trust.

Response #7: If leadership is decentralized.

Response #8: Through the electoral process.

Response #9: I have a plan to return to take part in the building process.

Response #10: I been in the country for 17 years, my going back will transferred knowledge.

Response #11: If you know your leaders, they can be held accountable

Response #12: Female.

Interviewee MRR-SL-012

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a member of the civil society.

Response #2: age: 40-60

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 20 years.

Response #3a: it is for government to soften out and play on a level playing field.

Response #4: Most people agreed with decentralization.

Response #5: It is important for citizens to elect their leaders.

Response #6: It allows citizens to have input for and allow citizens to have a voice.

Response #7: It helps out and increases revenue flows.

Response #8: Sometimes through appointment or election.

Response #9: I have plan to return as private citizens.

Response #10: Some impact will take place.

Response #11: It helps to bring about the real effect and sometimes an ineffective one.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-SL-013

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was immigration.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 2 years.

Response #3a: Do not know.

Response #4: Not much knowledge.

Response #5: The important is that it makes citizens build confidence in the person elected.

Response #6: It helps in ways that, leaders will be asked to resolve the conflict.

Response #7: By paying taxes.

Response # 8: Through voting.

Response #9: I have a plan to go back home, but not now.

Response #10: My going back home to impact the country is by seeking higher education.

Response #11: It helps reduce corruption because citizens have the power to determine political consciousness.

Response #12: Female

Interviewee MRR-SL-014

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a student.

Response #2: age: 26-39.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 3 years.

Response #3a: It is about taking the government to the people.

Response #4: Not much information.

Response #5: It is important because citizens choose someone of their choice.

Response #6: By creating a town meeting.

Response #7: It plays a significant role in the central government, and helps citizens with revenue capacity.

Response #8: Through election and sometimes through appointment by the executive president.

Response # 9: I have a plan to return home as a business man.

Response #10: By staying here and going back will impact with knowledge acquired.

Response #11: It helps, but it is based on the individual elected.

Response #12: Male.

Interviewee MRR-SL-015

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival a member of the civil society; Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 20 years.

Response #3a: Giving the individual a government that is autonomous.

Response # 4: I do not know

Response # 5: It is important because it gives citizens the right to choose those who lead them.

Response #6: Citizens participation does not reduce conflict.

Response #7: It increases in two ways if citizens are educated or aware of the idea of the policy involved.

Response #8: Leaders are chosen by the central government.

Response #9: I have a big plan to return home.

Response #10: Personally, it is doable but difficult.

Response #11: It reduces corruption if citizens are allowed to participate in the political decision making.

Response #12: Male

Interviewee MRR-SL-016

Response #1: Immigration status at the time of arrival was a civil servant (Former Government employee).

Response #2: age: 40-60.

Response #3: Number of years in the USA: 18 years.

Response #3a: Not to forged government efforts in direction, but rather an extension of government from urban to rural.

Response #4: The opinion on decentralization is familiar, but the way forward is lacking.

Response # 5: It is important because it represents citizens' collective interest.

Response # 6: It is important because collective decision helps to make a decision.

Response # 7: It involves more stakeholders and resources will be adequately managed.

Response #8: Presidential appointment

Response #9: I hope to relocate soon

Response #10: It will impact it 100% because of the goodness of decentralization.

Response #11: Local election can reduce popularity contest.

Response #12: Male.

Themes & Coding Analysis of Sierra Leone

Table 10

Themes and Analysis of Sierra Leone Data

Themes	Coding Analysis
1) Agreement on decentralization	The interviewees were asked about their understanding of decentralization. More understand that decentralization is where people are elected; services, government agencies are taken from the capital to local level of government.
2) Urban to rural	The transcripts from the interviewees indicated that more agreed that it is important for the government to not only concentrate on urban areas but to rural areas as well. By this, citizens benefit and become stakeholders in the political affairs of the state.
3) Collective decision	It is important because mutual decision helps to make a decision. It involves more stakeholders and resources are adequately managed.
4) Extension of government	The extension of government was highlighted from the interviewees. Many of them agreed that when the government is involved with local communities, instead of only the public can enhanced partnership with all stakeholders and minimize conflict.
5) Have voice	Expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making helps for them to make their own decision. It allows citizens to have input and allow citizens to have a voice in the decision making of who leads them.
6) Empowers citizens	It makes citizens feel validated about themselves make them decides their destiny.
7) Citizens build confidence	The importance of electing leaders by citizens is that it builds trust in the person elected, and decide when to recall or de-elect that person.
8) Ability to return to native country	Most of the interviewees agreed that they have the intention to return to their native country to impact the knowledge acquired or learned from the United States.
9) Citizens' participations	It is important because it brings about the inclusion of citizens participations in the sustainability of the democracy.

10) Through election	From the transcript and data indicated that many provinces in the rural part of the country, leaders are elected, and some are appointed by the executive branch of government.
11) Election reduces corruption	Represents citizens' collective interest and accountable the electorates. Accordingly, election contribute to reducing corruption, because citizens have the power to determine political consciousness.
12) Increase revenue	The transcript and the recording indicated that if local citizens are allowed to manage their government can help in the incensement of income of rural authority, therefore, respondent agreed that policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state.
13)Age	Most of the interviewees were between the ages of 40 to 60 years, though the age requirement was between 18 to 70 plus years or older.

The Sierra Leone Data Analysis

In the Sierra Leone data analysis, 13 themes emerged. Most interviewees that agreed to participate in the study were between the ages of 40 and 60 years, though the age requirement for the study was 18 to 70 years and older. The transcripts and recordings of interviewees indicated that there was a general agreement on interview question 5. The interviewees heightened the importance of citizens electing their leaders. The interviewees stated that it gave residents or citizens their voice and empowered their ability to decide who their leader becomes.

On interview question 6, most interviewees agreed that expanded locals and citizens' participation in governmental decision-making reduced conflict and instability because collective decision helps to build consensus or agreement that benefits all stakeholders. Meanwhile, the transcripts also indicated that interviewees believed that when more stakeholders were involved, accountability and resources were properly managed.

More of the interviewees indicated their plans to return home to share the knowledge acquired in the United States as a contribution to the nation-building process.

Discrepancy in Data Collection

The idea of decentralization was sometimes introduced in the different provinces, or municipal. However, not much was done by the central government to accomplish the plan, and the assumption that decentralization was a widely known concept in Sierra Leone turned out to be that the idea is welcome, but much is not known about it in the provinces or counties nor the rural part of the country.

For the interview, each interviewee from the four MRR states was assigned an identification number: For Sierra Leone, I assigned a code to interviewee one to sixteen (1–16) as MRR-SL-001 to MRR-SL-016. The coding was done initially manually with the use of Microsoft Excel with the identification of the main words originating from the interviewees and the study as themes.

Secondary Themes and Coding

After coding for each state's themes, I coded for secondary themes that emerged from transcripts, recordings, and interviews with each study participant.

Table 11

Secondary Themes and Coding

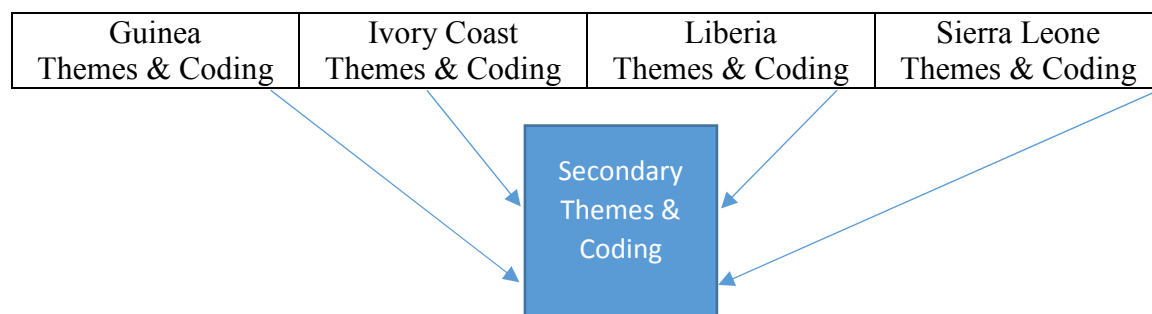


Table 12

Secondary Themes & Coding from Primary Data Analysis

Secondary Themes	Coding Analysis
1) Citizens' perspective on decentralization	<p>Interviewees were asked about their understanding of decentralization. The transcripts and recordings indicated that citizens agreed that decentralization is where leaders are elected and services provided for everyone. It was also reported that it is where government agencies are taken from the urban to the rural part of the state and the distribution of functions, power, and wealth at the same time provides opportunities to rural dwellers or communities and takes the government to the people.</p> <p>In the interviewees' views, decentralization policy is a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and minimization of corruption.</p> <p>In the study, there were dominant views that an expanded citizen's participation in local communities or rural societies increased involvement, which then minimizes potential conflict in the state or region, creates the need for self-government, and helps to reduce conflict and instability because someone has been elected who is trusted and seek the locals' interest.</p> <p>Also, respondents indicated that there was limited understanding of decentralization of government in their respective MRR state, but welcomes the idea of decentralization policy as an active concept.</p>
2) Citizens' participation in government decision	<p>The data analysis indicated that citizens' participation in government decision-making gives them their constitutional rights unsettled to the fact that leaders work for them.</p> <p>Citizens' participation provides leadership opportunity, enables political decisions to be made, and helps elect leaders. Interviewees considered their involvement very important because it represents a qualified individual that serve them. It brings about the inclusion of citizens participation in the sustainability of a democracy.</p>
3) Citizens' voices heard	<p>Expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making helps citizens to make their own decisions. It allows citizens to have input and voices in the decision-making of who leads them.</p> <p>It was discovered in the data analysis that it is important for participants to have a voice. It formed part of the decision-making process and enhanced the peacebuilding process and stability of the region of the state. Respondents also indicated that when they have the opportunity to elect their leaders and participate in governmental decision-making, it reduces conflict and instability and enables citizens a voice in the decision-making of how they are governed. They have voice and power to decide for themselves. It also creates accountability from leaders to residents and citizens saying or voice in government is necessary for the democratization of the nation.</p>
4) View on corruption	<p>Data analysis from transcripts and recordings indicated that minimization of corruption could be achievable through local elections or election of leaders. It establishes accountability. And voting for leaders brings about change and minimizes corruption. It makes people more responsible. It helps local government for political participation and discourages corruption.</p>

5) Selection or election of leaders	<p>From the transcripts and data analysis, participants said that in many provinces in the rural part of the country, leaders are appointed by the executive branch of government either by the president or prime minister.</p> <p>The transcripts and analysis also indicated that more appointments are made through the idea of favoritism or nepotism. Sometimes this leads to corruption, conflict. Therefore, the ability for citizens to elect their leaders, changes the view of conflict or instability to stability.</p> <p>The analysis also pointed out the importance of people choosing their leaders and having an opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations. Leadership opportunity makes a political decision, elect their leaders. The data further revealed that when citizens are involved their voices are heard, empowered, and they have the right to elect their leaders.</p> <p>The importance of choosing leaders by citizens is that it builds trust in the person elected, and decide when to recall or de-elect that person.</p>
6) Ability to return to native country	<p>All of the interviewees said that have plans to return home or to their native country. Some indicated that their intention to return to their native country was to impact the knowledge they acquired or learned from the United States to their mother country.</p> <p>Many believed that their return to their native land would be a competitive advantage to apply knowledge gained from the United States and to serve their country in other capacities such as investment, education, and other developmental affairs.</p> <p>And going back will reinforce the need to decentralize, they are already used to the ideas</p>
7) Economic development	<p>In the data analysis, many respondents indicated that a decentralization policy that creates economic development is possible depending on the state tax structure. They argued that taxes should be collected and evenly used for the intended reason.</p> <p>The institution of decentralization opens the possibility for the government to generate revenue. Training, accountability to income.</p> <p>The transcripts and recordings indicated that if local citizens are allowed to manage the income of provincial authority, policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments or citizens will eventually lead to the economic development level of the state.</p> <p>The transcripts and recordings also indicated that economic development of the nation is paramount for the peace and stability of the country and interviewees agreed it was important for citizens to have their economic development.</p>
8) Decentralized government	<p>Respondents were asked questions numbers 3a; there were majority opinions about limiting central government's power; sharing power with residents is essential for democracy.</p>
9) Voting	<p>In the data analysis, the transcripts and recording indicated that voting provides an opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations. Leadership opportunity makes a political decision, elect their leaders.</p>
10) Public institutions	<p>Respondents indicated that the extension of administrative agency, from public institutions to local institutions, was paramount in the economic development, peace, and stability of state.</p>

From the primary themes, data analyses and coding of Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone, 10 themes emerged to form the secondary themes and coding.

These themes emerged from interviews with participants, review of transcripts, recordings, and analyses of themes and coding from primary themes, coding and data analysis.

The findings established that decentralization policy is a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and minimization of corruption, with the understanding from respondents that there is little knowledge on decentralization in their respective native country. The study also discovered that awareness has to be created on decentralization policy and its implementation including education on the different aspects of decentralization that includes fiscal, political and administrative policies of decentralization.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The first step I ensured in establishing evidence of trustworthiness was to keep the data confidential, secure, and detach personal information about participants from their interviews to avoid the vulnerability of participants. Details of this procedure are specified in the proposal and on the IRB form. Participants were guaranteed that reports from the study would not be shared and identities of individual participating members were masked through coding. Details that might identify members, such as the location of the study, will not be shared and no information will be disclosed to anyone. The name or particulars will be managed to avoid any of respondent identity linking to them.

Moreover, all devices, papers, files used in this study are kept in a lock position, which are assessable only by me. These documents or equipment utilized in the research will be destroyed after a period as satisfied by the university and purpose of this study. Data will be kept for at least five years, as required by the university.

To avoid the threat to validity and create trustworthiness, I verified all sources in the data collection, what was said, written and recorded during the interview process. After the data was collected, I ensured that the study met the core standards that contribute to the validity of any qualitative study such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I used different methods of validity to understand the same condition and input to make sure that results were the same. That is, if the data was validated and reliable despite the use of different methods but the result was the same, it signifies that there is reliability and credibility in the data collected. Accordingly, reliability and validity balance the argument surrounding the issues of credibility, verifiability, trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, and rigor as argued by Creswell (2007).

Credibility

The credibility of the study was paramount. Israel and Hay (2006) wrote that as a researcher, the information about respondents and the data must be safeguarded. Which is why as the researcher, I ensured that appropriate strategies and mechanism were employed to eliminate biases, provide an ethical standard in the study, I verified and validated all data collected to meet the ethical standards, and to safeguard that research participants' information remain confidential. As part of the effort to ensure confidentiality of participants, I guaranteed participants that information or data provided cannot easily be tracked to them. I verified all sources in the data collection, what was said, written and recorded during the interview process. Moreover, as the researcher, I assured interviewees that no one including myself would compromise their identities or information.

Validation

In the validation process, I considered external and internal factors in the study. Those earmarked as an external element of the finding were confirmation of all sources and transferability. The internal aspect was considered as for how dependable and credible is the data and sources. For the externality or confirmation and transferability of the finding, I did a following up questions to verified sources of information provided by all participants; went over recordings, and transcripts to confirm the data validation and credibility. The internal aspect was done carefully with participants or respondents. I ensure that what the interviewee said was factual and accurate to the standard of the study.

Dependability

The dependability of the study was an approach to guarantee that all necessary measures were executed to make the data collection and research credible. There were sufficient comparisons to ensure that the demographic and setting were appropriate for the conduct of the interview and study. As the one doing the research, my role and all stakeholders in the study including terms of reference of the IRB and the University guidelines regarding the study were articulated. I ensured that each participant rights were adhered to and set the standard as a guarantee that can be dependable to reliability. In the literature, it is argued that the more consistent the researcher has been in the research process, the more dependable are the results (Williams, 2011). Accordingly, checking the dependability of a qualitative study, one looks to see if the researcher has been careless or made mistakes in conceptualizing the study, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results. Therefore, I was cautious to avoid any

misrepresentation of data, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results.

Transferability

The demographic and setting created and defined the study environment. It enhances transferability of the study from the category of participants that included students, immigrants, civil society organization, refugee, and civil servants communities from the MRR states. These verification and surety from data collection and analyses were the basis that established that the result from the study applies to other theories or concepts. Also, the current literature on the need for peace and stability of the MRR

Confirmability

The confirmation of data in this phenomenological case study was vital. Data was audited to ensure accuracy and confirmability. On confirmation, William Trochim (2006) wrote that qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study; confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. And in the process, I ensure that data collected was not influenced by my involvement or my role as the one undertaking the study nor control by participants. I adhered to all ethical standards and laws including NIH policy on research involving human subjects. Accordingly, the NIH applies to all research involving human subjects conducted, supported or otherwise subject to regulation by any federal department or agency, which takes appropriate administrative action to make the policy applicable to such research. These applications and concepts enable me transformed transcripts and recordings to findings that eliminated any biases in the study.

Validity, Reliability, and Observation

Validity and reliability are essential aspects of the data collection process (James Donnelly & William Trochim, 2006). The validation and reliability of data ensure that the approaches used in the data collection process are credible based on the scholarship and quality of work enshrined in the study. The validity and reliability must further enhance the credibility of the study (Nahid Golafshani, 2003). For instance, validity can establish the exact result conducted under the same conditions using the same method. As such, to ensure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study, I guarantee ethical standard to prevent bias. Bias could create the possibility that the interview process or observation may not represent the reality of the interview responses. To avoid the threat to validity, and create trustworthiness, I checked all sources and verified what was said and written. Then after the data collection, I make sure that the study met the core standards that contribute to the validity of any qualitative study such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I used different methods of validity to understand the same condition and input to make sure that results are the same. That is, the data was validated and reliable despite the use of different methods, but the result was the same. It signifies that there is reliability, credibility in the data collected. Accordingly, reliability and validity balance the argument surrounding the issues of credibility, verifiability, trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, and rigor as argued by Creswell (2007).

Similarly, Joppe (2000) said that the reliability of research depends on the accuracy and demonstration of the constancy of results in the research. By this approach, the quality of reliability will be tested to ensure consistent reliability. For instance, participants in the study must be aged 18 to 70 years and older and must have live in the

MRR for at least five years. It guarantees that information from interviewees has an actual impact on the data provided. The age of 18 to 70 plus years is legal age and mature ages to have significant input in the interview.

Meanwhile, to maintain the data in its original form, I took detailed notes during the interview time. I further enhance the reliability and viability by using a digital recorder to keep track of the interview conversation. Finding literature on the MRR was challenging; however, the use of scholarly resources from different studies on decentralization policy in the MRR was helpful in the authentication of the data under study. In the data collection process, observation is one of the most shared and vital components.

Researchers must be observant to understand the tone and message of interviewees and should be able to grasp the concepts and ways of those involved in the study. As well as establish precise details of the studies, and preserve a situation in acquainted surroundings for the nature of the study (Bernard, 1988; Emerson et al., 1995). And the process of observation was carefully followed. I observed all participants and made sure that the environment and data collection process conformed to the university and standard of the research.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Appendix B contains details of how interviewees' information is kept confidentially. Israel and Hay (2006) wrote that as a researcher, the information about respondents and the data must be safeguarded. It ensures the researcher's ability to develop the confidence of the participants in the study. I verified and validated all data collected to meet the ethical standards, and the research participants' information remains confidential. As part of the effort to ensure confidentiality of participants, I guarantee

participants that information or data provided cannot easily be tracked to them. Moreover, the researcher must assure interviewees that no one including myself will compromise their identities or information.

Results

Interviews with participants, reviews of transcripts, recordings, and analyses of both primary and secondary themes and coding brought forth 10 primary themes. The findings from the study established the results that decentralization policy is perceived to be a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and minimization of corruption. However, findings also indicated that there is little knowledge on decentralization in the interviewees' native countries. The findings indicated that the success of decentralization policy implementation in the MRR depends on creating awareness that educates citizens or stakeholders on the different aspects of decentralization, including fiscal, political, and administrative policies.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In Chapter 4, the study's findings were presented along with the data collection processes and analyses. The data were collected using open-ended interview questions. Sixteen participants from each MRR state were interviewed. In the results from the study, I addressed the primary research question that asked how the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR can significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR.

The transcripts, records, and data analysis led to secondary coding and themes for each MRR state. The analysis of the subcoding resulted in the secondary themes that determined the final results of the study. There were no predetermined code or themes. In the data analysis, 10 primary themes emerged. In the interviews and responses, I discovered that interviewees believed that their perception of decentralization policy in the MRR was different from natives or citizens of the MRR. The interviewees indicated that much is not known about decentralization in the MRR. However, some understood decentralization as the distribution of functions, power, wealth, and providing opportunities to rural dwellers or communities and taking the government to the people. In the findings in the study, I found that decentralization policy is a positive concept that is thought to promote good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and minimization of corruption. The respondents believed that there is little knowledge about decentralization in their respective native countries. According to the findings, there is a need for awareness on the concept of decentralization policy and its implementation, including education on the fiscal, political, and administrative policies of decentralization.

In Chapter 5, I cover the purpose of the study, interpretation of the findings, theoretical analysis, limitations of the study, recommendations, public policy recommendations, and social change implications.

The purpose of the study was to understand how effective and applicable decentralization policy is in the MRR. I investigated what impact the institution of a decentralization policy in the MRR could have on the social, political, and economic development and stability of the region. I examined if the implementation of a decentralization policy in the MRR will enhance economic development, create regional stability, curb corruption, and reduce poverty. It was essential to understand the phenomenological views of all stakeholders in the study. Crawford and Hartmann (2010) argued that decentralization helps to reduce poverty and prevents conflict. There was a need to understand different views and perceptions about decentralization policy and its level of acceptance among stakeholders in the region.

The primary research question below supported the goal of the study. The primary research question was the following: How can the policy of decentralization implementation in the MRR significantly contribute to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR?

Results of Study

The study findings were based on interviews with participants, review of transcripts, recordings, and analysis of data. I used themes and coding to establish that decentralization policy is a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and minimization of corruption. However, the respondents had little knowledge on decentralization in their respective

native country. I also discovered that awareness is necessary about decentralization policy and its implementation, including education on the different aspects of decentralization that includes fiscal, political, and administrative policies of decentralization.

Results: Secondary Themes and Coding

Ten themes derived from the Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

Table 13

Secondary Themes and Coding Analysis

<p>1) Citizens' perspective on decentralization</p>	<p>Interviewees were asked about their understanding of decentralization. The transcripts and recordings indicated citizens agreed that decentralization is where leaders are elected and services provided for everyone. It also reported that it is where government agencies are taken from the urban to the rural part of the state and the distribution of functions, power, and wealth at the same time provides opportunities to rural dwellers or communities and takes the government to the people.</p> <p>Decentralization policy is a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and minimization of corruption.</p> <p>In the study, there were dominant views that an expanded citizen's participation in local control increases involvement, minimizes potential conflict in the state or region, creates the need for self-government, and helps to reduce conflict and instability because they elected someone that they trust and who seeks their interest.</p> <p>Also, respondents agreed that there was limited understanding of decentralization of government in their respective MRR state but welcomed the idea of decentralization policy as an active concept.</p>
<p>2) Citizens' participation in government decision</p>	<p>The data analysis indicated that citizens' participation in government decision-making gives them their constitutional rights unsettled to the fact that leaders work for them. Citizen participation provides leadership opportunities, enables political decision-making and the election of leaders. They considered their involvement very important because it represents a qualified individual that serves them. It brings about the inclusion of citizen participation in the sustainability of the democracy.</p>

3) Citizens' voices heard	<p>Expanded local and citizen participation in governmental decision-making helps citizens to make their own decisions. It allows citizens to have input and voices in the decision-making of who leads them.</p> <p>It was discovered in the data analysis that it is important for participants to have a voice. It formed part of the decision-making process and enhanced the peacebuilding process and stability of the region of the state. Respondents also indicated that when they have the opportunity to elect their leaders and participate in governmental decision-making, it reduces conflict and instability and enables citizens having a voice in the decision-making of how they are governed. They have voice and power to decide for themselves. It also creates the need and for accountability from leaders to residents and citizens saying or voice in government is necessary for the democratization of the nation.</p>
4) View on corruption	<p>Data analysis from transcripts and recordings indicated that interviewees believed that the minimization of corruption could be achievable through local elections or election of their leaders. It establishes accountability to citizens. It makes leaders accountable to citizens. And voting leaders bring about change and minimization of corruption. It makes people more responsible. It helps local government for political participation and enhances accountability and discourages corruption.</p>
5) Selection or election of leaders	<p>From the transcripts and data analysis, participants said that many provinces in the rural part of the country, leaders are appointed by the executive branch of government either by the president or prime minister.</p> <p>The transcripts and analysis also indicated that more appointments are made through the idea of favoritism or nepotism. Sometimes leads to corruption, conflict. Therefore, accordingly, the ability for citizens to elect their leaders, change the view of conflict or instability to stability.</p> <p>The analysis also pointed that the importance of people choosing their leaders provides an opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations. Leadership opportunity makes a political decision, elect their leaders. The data further revealed that when citizens are involved their voices are heard, empowered, and have the right to elect their leaders.</p> <p>The importance of choosing leaders by citizens is that it builds trust in the person elected, and decide when to recall or de-elect that person.</p>
6) Ability to return to native country	<p>All of the interviewees said that have plans to return home or to their native country. Some indicated that the intention to return to their native country to impact the knowledge acquired or learned from the United States to their mother country.</p> <p>Many believed that their return to their native land would be a competitive advantage to apply knowledge gained from the United States and willing to serve their country in other capacities such as investment, education and other developmental affairs.</p> <p>And going back will reinforce the need to decentralize, they are already used to the ideas</p>

7) Economic development	<p>In the data analysis, many respondents indicated that a decentralization policy that creates economic development is possible depending on the state tax structure. They argued that if taxes are collected and evenly use for the intended reason.</p> <p>The institution of decentralization opens the possibility for the government to generate revenue. Training, accountability to income.</p> <p>The transcripts and recordings indicated that if local citizens are allowed to manage income of provincial authority policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments or citizens will eventually lead to the economic development level of the state.</p> <p>The transcripts and recording also indicated that economic development of the nation is paramount in the peace and stability of the country and such interviewees agreed it was important for citizens to have their economic development.</p>
8) Decentralized government	<p>Respondents were asked questions numbers 3a; there were majority opinions about limiting central government's power; sharing power with residents is essential for democracy.</p>
9) Voting	<p>In the data analysis, the transcripts and recording indicated that voting provides an opportunity to select the right leader and eliminate violent situations. Leadership opportunity makes a political decision, elect their leaders.</p>
10) Public institutions	<p>Respondents indicated that the extension of administrative agency, public institutions to local was paramount in the economic development, peace and stability of state.</p>

Interpretation of the Findings

Questions 1, 2, and 3 were used as a basis to determine participants' eligibility. In the recordings, transcripts, coding, and data analyses, I found that four participants were identified each from the students' community, immigrant or refugee, member of the civil society organization and public servant, making members' 16 from each MRR state.

In Question 2, I determined the age range of participants in the study. I found that the majority of participants (73%) were between the ages of 40 to 60 years, while those between 26 and 39 made up 14%, those between 60 and 70 years and older constituted 3% of the interview participants, and participants aged 18 to 25 years constituted 1% of the study.

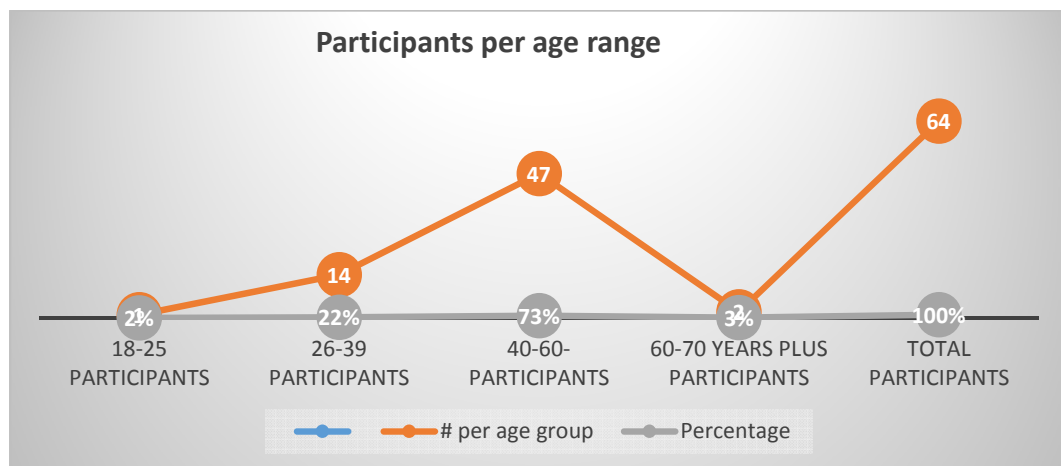


Figure 1 Questions 1, 2 and 3 graphical analysis.

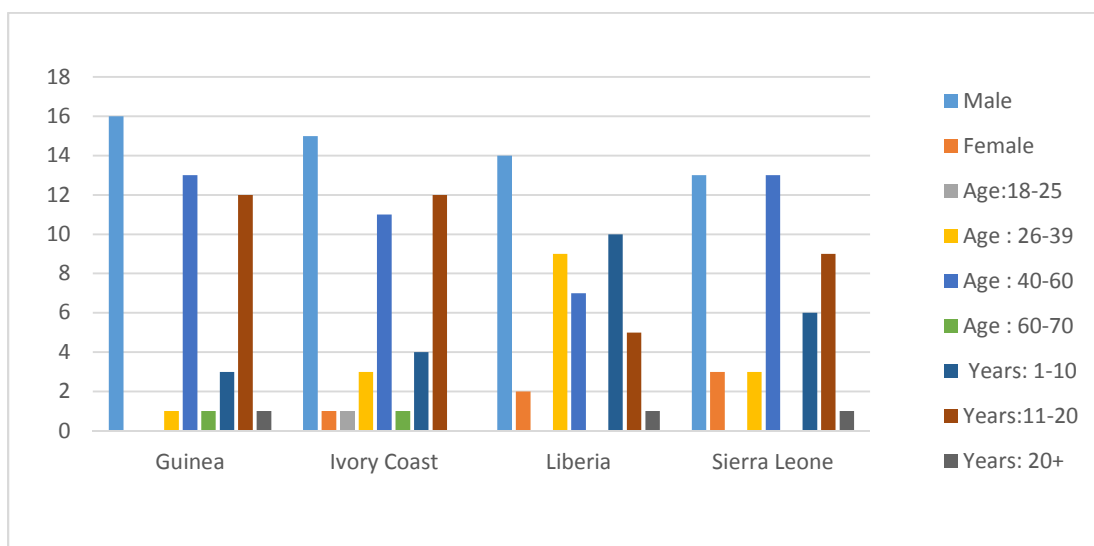


Figure 2 Participants per gender, age range, and number of years in the USA

Table 14

Participants Per Gender, Age Range, and Number of Years in the USA

Country	Male	Female	Age:18-25	Age : 26-39	Age : 40-60	Age : 60-70	Years: 1-10	Years:11-20	Years: 20+
Guinea	16	0	0	1	13	1	3	12	1
Ivory Coast	15	1	1	3	11	1	4	12	0
Liberia	14	2	0	9	7	0	10	5	1
Sierra Leone	13	3	0	3	13	0	6	9	1
Grand Total	58	6	1	16	44	2	23	38	3

Table 15

Percentage Summary of Participants Per Age Range

Participants per Age Range	Number	Percentage
18–25 years	1	2%
26–39 years	14	22%
40–60 years	47	73%
60–70 years	2	3%
Total Participants	64	100%

Question 3a asked participations about their understanding of the decentralization of government. The transcripts, recording, and analysis indicated that citizens agreed that decentralization is where leaders are elected and services are provided for everyone. It was considered a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and minimization of corruption.

On question 4, about how long participants have lived in the United States, 27% of the participants indicated that they have lived in the United States for fewer than ten years, while 73% have lived in the United States for more than ten years.

Questions 5 and 6 asked about the importance of citizens electing or choosing their leaders and how expanded local and citizen participation in governmental decision-making could reduce conflict and instability. The transcripts and data analysis from these questions indicated that respondents believed that it is important for citizens to elect their leaders. In the process of election, voters decide who represents them, and elections become voters' voice and power in the decision-making of the state. Many felt that expanded citizens' participation in government decision-making involves citizens and lets them express how they feel, and that citizens' participation in government could help to reduce conflict and instability because they had elected someone that they trust and who seeks their interest. Also on these questions, participants indicated when citizens choose their leaders, their leaders become accountable to them, and their participation in governmental decision-making reduces conflict or instability and gives them the power to determine their social, political, and economic destinies. Also, it enabled citizens to form part of the decision-making process, and everyone becomes responsible for their actions.

On question 7, about how policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state, respondents indicated that a decentralization policy that creates economic development is possible depending on the state tax structure. They argued that if taxes are collected and evenly use for the intended reason. They further agreed that institution of decentralization policy opens the possibility for the government to generate revenue and allows citizens to manage income of provincial authority, policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments or citizens will eventually lead to the economic development level of the state. It happens that in another case, it creates ways

that locals will identify their powers, strengths and the capacity to, take responsibility for their decision-making and creates the basis for creativity in self-decision making; when revenue is paid or collected by the local community, it empowered them for their general welfare and intended purpose.

Question 8 asked participants about how leaders are chosen at local constituency level or local government level in their native country. The findings indicate that in many provinces in the rural part of a country, leaders are appointed by the executive branch of government either by the president or prime minister, and more appointments are made through the idea of favoritism or nepotism. Respondents believed that this sometimes leads to corruption and conflict.

Question 9 asked participants about their plans to return to their country of birth. The analysis indicated that many interviewees said that they have plans to go home or to their native country. Some expressed their intention to return to their native country to impact it with the knowledge they acquired or learned in the United States. Many believed that their return to their native land would be a competitive advantage to apply knowledge gained from the United States and many were willing to serve their country in other capacities such as investment, education and other developmental affairs and going back will reinforce the need to decentralize, they are already used to the ideas

Question 10 asked participants how going back to their native country or staying in the United States impacts their lives or the idea of decentralization in your native country. Many respondents indicated that they have plans to return home or to their native country. Some stated that the intention to go back to their mother country would impact the society with the knowledge acquired or learned from the United States to their

native country. Many believed that their return to their native land would be a competitive advantage to apply knowledge gained from the United States and willing to serve their country in other capacities such as investment, education and other developmental affairs.

Question 11 asked participants about the effects of local elections and broader locals' political participation on corruption. Respondents indicated that minimization of corruption could be achievable through local elections or election of their leaders because they establish citizen and leader accountability. Voting leaders was thought by respondents to bring about change and minimize corruption, making people more responsible and helping local governments through political participation.

Question 12 asked participants about their sex or gender. The majority of participants (91%) were male, while females constituted 9% of the study.

Table 16

Data Summary Per Gender and Age Range

Data Summary			
Participants per gender		# of participants	percentage
Number of female participants		6	9%
Number of male participants		58	91%
Total Participants		64	100%
Participants per Age Range		# per age group	Percentage
18-25 Participants		1	2%
26-39 participants		14	22%
40-60-participants		47	73%
60-70 years plus participants		2	3%
Total Participants		64	100%

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the sequential theory of decentralization (Falleti, 2005). This theory addresses three components of decentralization. The sequential theory of decentralization takes into consideration all stakeholders and integrates their desires into a policy frame that works for them (Falleti, 2005). This theoretical concept was vital to this study because of it prioritizes the diversity of interests among the stakeholders concerning policy implementation. For instance, in a society or region that is dominated by few, implementation of a policy of decentralization tends to eliminate the gap between the haves and have-nots (Ansaldi, 1992). Among emerging nations, decentralization creates an environment for equal competition and investment. In a competitive society, the idea of decentralization and its application enhances the local authority and minimizes central governments' influence (Gonzalez, 1990, p. 75). For instance, in Argentina, the policy interest was identified by studies based on the national benefit of the interested parties in the implementation of decentralization. Accordingly, the national government developed a policy of decentralization based on not just the country needs, but the needs of its citizens. The regional interest took into consideration peace and stability of the citizens. (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). These different ideas of decentralization were the essential basis for the use of the sequential theory of decentralization in this research. The theoretical frame in this study aligns with the utilization of the qualitative phenomenological case study method of research.

In an approach to test the conceptual framework of this study, the sequence implementation of decentralization was based on what interviewees' choices over the

different aspect of the sequential theory of decentralization. Citizens' preference was based on the ability to make a political decision; elect leaders without central government imposing leadership on them. Recordings, transcripts and data analysis put forth the ideas of citizens independent of decision-making. It led to residents making sequential decisions that considered political decentralization as the first option. Accordingly, it empowered their ability to make political and leadership decision of their choice. It follows by fiscal and administrative decentralization. Participants believed that political decision set the pace for sequential implementation of fiscal policy and administrative policy. In the absence of having a voice or political will or forming part of the ruling of the state, it leads to government imposing policies that benefit higher up in government. The sequence of the theoretical concept of the study was based on preferences of stakeholders or participants preferences in the data collected. From different analyses and interpretation of the study, the sequence of implementation of decentralization accepted Political Decentralization (PD) and in sequence fiscal decentralization and administrative decentralization as a third option.

In the case of PD, it limits corrupt power and enhances equal political participation for all, thereby increasing political accountability and strengthening local governance (World Development Report, 2004). A study by Fan and Treisman (2009) indicated that "Political decentralization aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making." PD entails citizens choosing local authorities such as city mayors, governors, and other local positions. This process empowers citizens by way of giving them input in local decision-making processes and holding local decision-makers accountable for their actions (Heller, 2001, p. 131;

Khemani, 2006). Political Decentralization avoids political corruption stemming from the abuse of power instead of supporting a system of political accountability. It introduces a political system that creates a political environment that compels the central government to deliver essential social services. Accordingly, many central government authorities are facing increasing pressure for PD for better performance and accountability from subnational governments (Ahmad & Khemani, 2005; Eskeland & Litvack, 2003). PD aligns with citizens' views on political decentralization. Residents' responses to interview questions 5 and 6 indicated that it is important for citizens to elect their leaders. In the process of election, voters decide who represent them, and elections become their voice and power in the decision-making process of the states. Many feel that expanded citizens' participation in government decision-making makes citizens involve and express how they feel, and their participation in government help to reduce conflict and instability because they elect someone that they trust and seek their interest. Also when citizens choose their leaders, their leaders become accountable to them, and their participation in governmental decision-making reduces conflict or instability and gives them the power to determine their social, political and economic destination.

Under Fiscal Decentralization (FD), public policy or fiscal policy determines the management of revenue and expenditures by the local government and the central government (Davoodi & Zou, 1998). Huther and Shah (1998) wrote that FD is about the enhancement of the quality of leadership that can be determined by all stakeholders' participation in the governance of the state or locality (Huther & Shah, 1998). It is also a measure of social justice and the improvement of stability and economic development. On question 7, regarding how a policy implementation of decentralization increases

revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state, many respondents indicated that a decentralization policy that creates economic development is possible depending on the state tax structure (i.e., if taxes are collected and evenly used for the intended reason). They further agreed that institution of decentralization policy opens the possibility for the government to generate revenue and allows citizens to manage the income of provincial authority. Policy implementation of decentralization increases revenues of subnational governments, or citizens will eventually lead to the economic development level of the state. It happens that in another event, it creates ways that locals will identify their powers, strengths, and their capacity to take responsibility for their decision-making and creates the basis for creativity in self-decision making; when revenue is paid or collected by the local community, it empowered them for their general welfare and intended purpose. The sequence by which fiscal decentralization was based on respondents to considered it as second options.

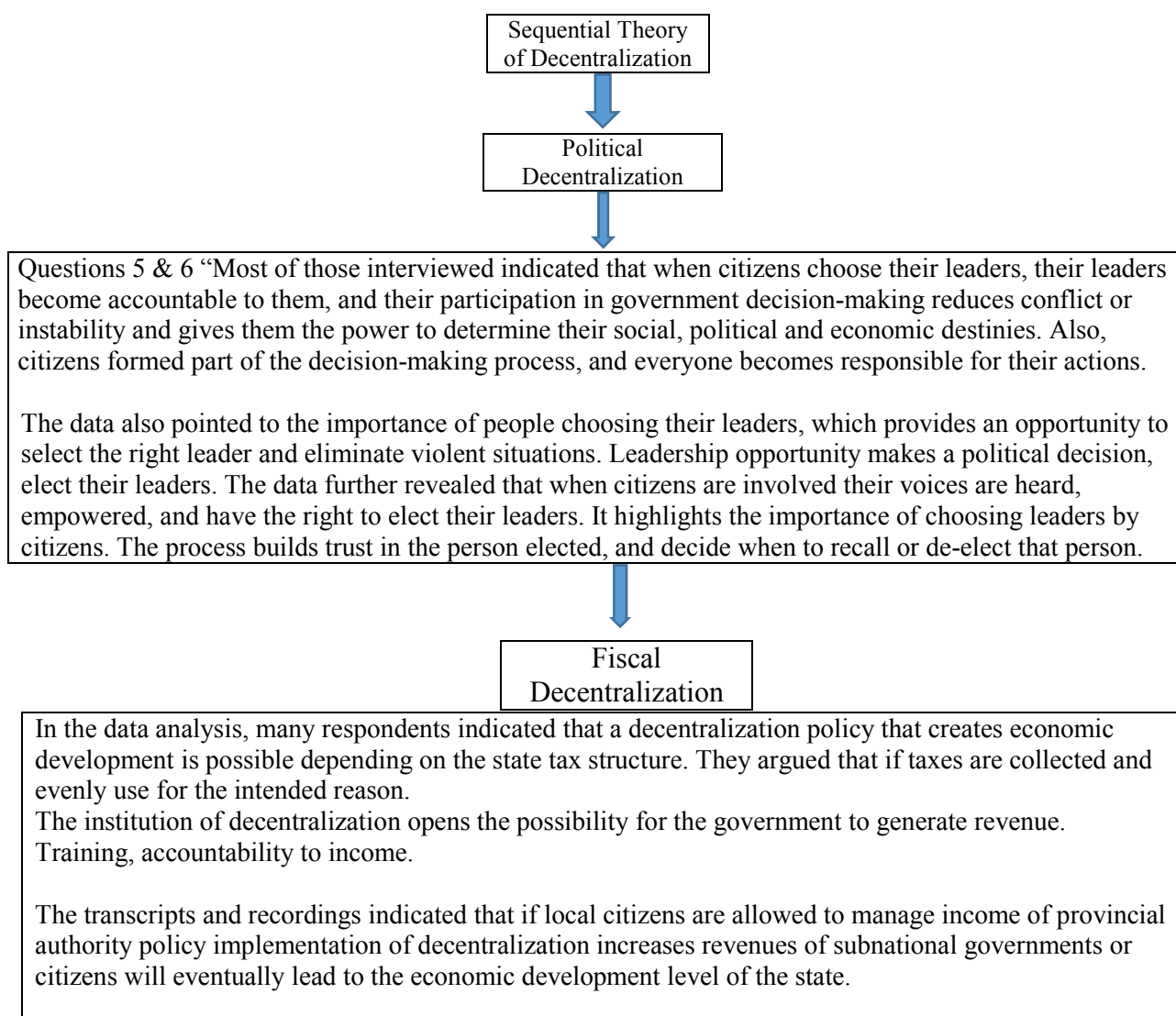
On the choice of administrative decentralization (AD) in the sequential theory of decentralization, service providers are mostly citizens at the bottom level of government. The goal is to ensure that the central government limits its involvement with locals' affairs. Accordingly, respondents in the study indicated that the extension of an administrative agency, public institutions locally was paramount in the economic development, peace, and stability of the state. However, AD application and successes depend on the regional interest of stakeholders. Accordingly, AD ensures that major responsibilities of central governments are assigned to local councils or administrations, creating some degree of a balance of power (Litvack, 2001, World Bank, 2001). Studies indicate that the process of civil service reform is a supporting strategy for instituting

decentralization in government activities and providing for citizens. Under a decentralized system, employees are considered fundamental to an efficient execution of public policy (World Bank, 2001).

The rationalization of the different aspects of the sequential theory of decentralization in the data analysis from respondents' views is structure below.

Table 17

Political, Fiscal and Administrative Decentralization Application to Study Findings



The transcripts and recording also indicated that economic development of the nation is paramount in the peace and stability of the country and such interviewees agreed it was important for citizens to have their economic development.

Administrative
Decentralization



Respondents indicated that the extension of an administrative agency, public institutions locally was paramount in the economic development, peace, and stability of the state.

Of course, interviewees' opinions on political, administrative, or fiscal decentralization depended on details and knowledge available to them in the questionnaires about the whole idea of decentralization. In Appendix C, for instance, different aspect of the sequential theory of decentralization are detailed. Interviewees living outside the MRR like the United States have the understanding of how different society works both in the MRR and outside of the MRR. The stakeholders identified in this study indicated that participants must at least aged 18 years to 70 age and older and must have been born in the MRR and fall within either of the group established in the study as a stakeholder.

In the study, there was direct contact with participants to investigate why people in the MRR behave the way they do. It is one reason John Creswell wrote that it is important to have substantial contact with participants who have lived experience with the demography or terrain (Creswell, 2007). It justifies the reason I choose the qualitative research design, using the phenomenological case study approach. Accordingly, phenomenological case enables the researcher to collect detailed information on the lived experience of respondents (Creswell, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

The study started with the identification and recruitment of participants from four MRR communities in the United States. These communities were the Guinean Community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Ivorian Community in Staten Island, New York, the Liberian Community in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Sierra Leone Community in Baltimore, Maryland. There were four participants chosen from each category of stakeholders identified in the study that was recruited from the students' community, the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees, civil servants and civil society organizations. These categories of stakeholders account for the future of the MRR. These are persons of interest in the MRR. Many intents to return home to form part of their nation-building.

The limitation of the study included lack of gender balance: there were few women participants and more men participants. More women participants could have different views that could probably affect themes and result of the study. Most participants were between ages of 40 to 60 years. Beyond 60 to 70 years and older, there were only two persons. More members of this age group could have shared important phenomenological idea on the study and probably could have altered the result of the study. Another limitation of the study is the number of respondents versus the population of the MRR. The sample population of 64 is less than that of the population of the MRR, and the study did not take place in the MRR or included all the people of the MRR. Limited literature and statistics on the MRR were also some of the limitations of the research.

Recommendations

The concept of decentralization policy implementation in the MRR is essential for the social, political and development of the region. The study findings established the rationale that decentralization policy is perceived by MRR natives living in the United States to be a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction and minimization of corruption, with respondents' recognition that there is little knowledge on decentralization in their respective native country. These are some reasons why this phenomenological case study was used to investigate this concept if it has to be a workable and acceptable idea of the MRR using the theoretical concept of the sequential theory of decentralization. Future study should consider ensuring a gender balance and participation with older participants in the age range of 60 years and older. If conditions in the MRR are favorable, a study of this nature should be conducted in the MRR to determine participants' views on the implementation of decentralization policy.

Public Policy Recommendations

Decentralization and public policy are a manifestation of common sense and common conscience of citizens throughout the state and applies to matters of public health, safety, and welfare. It is general, well-settled public opinion relating to the duties of citizens to their fellow citizens (The Guide to American Law, 1984, p.355).

From a public policy perspective, there must be law and policy that are not selective, biased, or unhealthy for the growth, stability and economic development of the state. It is prudent to recommend citizens' participation in government decision-making at all levels of the state. It gives them their constitutional rights and protects their democracy, rights

that leaders work for them and their participation provide leadership opportunity, to make political decisions, elect their leaders. Public policy and law must be able to address these issues, and decentralization must form part of this agendas and discourse to contribute significantly to regional stability, enhance economic development, reduce poverty, and minimize corruption in the MRR. Proponents of decentralization claim that it transfers power to local governments and institutions. It is also believed that it may result in higher productivity and efficiency in the market and strengthen local decision-making authority (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013).

Social Change Implications

Outcomes from this research serve as one of the starting points for social change, by providing a model understanding of peace and stability in the Mano River Region and similar areas (though there are no personal benefits for participants in this study, either in cash, gift or kind). However, participation in the study may benefit the Mano River Region (MRR) through social change. The study intended to investigate and understand what is needed for the stability of the region. It will also form part of the body of knowledge in the area and another part of the world.

Conclusion

Sustaining regional stability and economic development are fundamental values of decentralization and the peace and stability of the state. Decentralization is an integral part of sustainability and economic development of a region. It involves a society built on citizens' participation and equal opportunities (USAID, 2000; World Bank, 2004). Many regions such as Latin America and East Africa have validated decentralization regarding regional stability and opportunities for citizens' participation in building democratic

governance (Dickovick & Eaton, 2013). In the application of decentralization policy, corruption is set to minimize, and poverty reduction becomes eminent (Rodden, 2004; Sharma, 2006; Smoke, 2003; USAID, 2000). Accordingly, adoption of successful policies implementation of decentralization is vital to the effective and efficient functioning and governance of developing states or regions (World Bank, 2004).

This study's findings indicated that decentralization policy is perceived by interviewees to be a positive concept that promotes good governance, regional stability, economic development, poverty reduction, and the minimization of corruption. As a means to fulfill this goal, the findings also indicated that awareness is necessary for decentralization policy and its implementation, including education on the different aspects of decentralization, including fiscal, political, and administrative decentralization policies.

The literature on policy implementation on decentralization in the MRR established significant outcomes from various studies that align with findings from the study. However, application of decentralization policy implementation in the MRR must not be implemented without education on the significance of decentralization policy. Though the concept has a positive impact in different regions and countries, the literature indicates that its actual realization and implementation is limited in the MRR. In an attempt to realize the goal of social change, adequate education on the implementation of decentralization policy would be an added advantage.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

Hello dear,

You are invited to take part in a research study that I am currently conducting on the Mano River Region (MRR), entitled “The policy of Decentralization in the Mano River Region (MRR): A Phenomenological Case Study.” Your selection is based on your lived experience as someone who has lived in either of the Mano River Region State (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea) have experience living in the United States and the MRR. Your participation in the study will greatly be significant.

To participate in this study, the study requires participants to have live in the MRR for at least ten years, and be 18 years old and above. Also, please be prepared to let us know how long you live in the United States and the status that you came on to the US on.

Either as a student, refugee or an asylum beneficiary, former civil servant or member of the civil society organization or others. 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 is conducted by Naigow Kuyon, a doctoral candidate at Walden University, School of Public Policy and Administration. With specialization in Law and Public Policy. This research is part of the fulfillment process for the degree under study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate why the Mano River Region (MRR) is still fragile.

The study investigates the policy implementation of decentralization in the Mano River Region (MRR) on economic development, poverty reduction, minimization of corruption and regional stability.

Procedures:

If you agreed to your participation in this study, you will be asked to attend an interview, and you will be receiving a follow-up communication either by phone or email to review the copy of your interview.

Interview

The interview will be one on one, and it is expected to last for 25 minutes and not more than 35 minutes. The follow up interview would be approximately five to ten (5-10) minutes. The interview may take place at a public place or place of participant’s choice. During the interview, recording and note taking will be allowed.

Please find below questions to expect during the interview.

1) Please select the category before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

• 40 to 60 _____

• 60 to 70 years plus ____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the important of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?

7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?

8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?

9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?

10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?

11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participations on corruption?

12) What is your sex? Male _____, Female _____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time or withdraw at any time of your choice. Also, if there is any situation that will make you feel that you cannot continue with the interview process, you may decide to leave anytime. Moreover, you are also at liberty to answer or not to any question.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as family issues, upset or inconveniences that might cause discomfort or other circumstance beyond your continue participation in the study. Being in this study will not pose a risk to your safety or well-being in the study.

Your participation in the study will benefit Mano River Region (MRR). It helps investigate and understand what is needed for the stability of the region. It will also form part of the body of knowledge in the region and another part of the world.

In the case of risks, unforeseeable circumstances or discomforts, the necessary legal approach will be taken to protect the participant or their identity, as well as their safety

under the law. For instance, contacting legal authorities that will provide safety for participants, the environment and researcher will be a priority.

Payment

Please note that there is no compensation or payment for your participation in this study.

Privacy

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants.

Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared.

Also, all information provided will not be disclosed to anyone. It will be kept very confidential and be used only and only for the purpose of this research, not outside of this study. Your name or particulars will be managed to avoid any of your identity linking to you. Moreover, please also note that all devices, papers, files use in this study will be kept in a lock position, which will be only assessable by me. The disposal of these documents or equipment utilized in the study will be destroyed after a period as satisfied by the university and purpose of this research. Data will be kept for at least five years, as required by the university.

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

As the one undertaking this research or study, my involvement or connection with anyone or entity in this study does not change, altered the meaning or purpose of this research.

This study is separated from all my connections, association, entities, family, friends or relatives and is governed by all laws or regulations that enhance ethical standard and eliminate any potential conflict of interest. The approval number for this study is 06-02-17-0186322 and it expires on June 1st, 2018.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by printing your name, date and affix your signature below. By email consent by using the word CONSENT affixed on the document. Meanwhile, as a participant, you can keep a copy of this communication as a Consent to participate in this study.

Printing your name as Participant: _____

Date of Consent: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Appendix B: The Population

The population in the study is 64. The 64 is determined by selecting 16 people from the four MRR states ($16 \times 4 = 64$). Which is equal to 64 population. The 64 is also determined by multiplying 16 participants from each country in the MMR by four ($16 \times 4 = 64$).

Sample population

The sample population was determined by selecting four participants from each category of interviewees group from each state multiply by the number of the four classes of respondents ($4 \times 4 = 16$). The 16 sample is then multiply by the four state in the MRR ($4 \times 16 = 64$). Therefore, $16 \times 4 = 64$, which is the population in the study.

Appendix C: Stakeholders Identification

- The first group is the student community. This group comprises of university students. They represent the students' community from the MRR states in the United States. They account for the future of the MRR. These are person of interest in the MRR. Many intent to return home to form part of their nation building.
- The second group will be the immigrant community (asylum seekers and refugees). These are mostly citizens that fled from the MRR as the result of the different civil wars. Most members of this group understand what it is to live under a system of government that does not represent the majority interest. Many were directly or indirectly affected and are still in contact with their respective country.
- The third group is civil servants. This group comprises former government, employees. These are people who experienced what it takes to work for months without pay or low salaries. This group is about the past and the present, and may offer advice for the future.
And
- The fourth group is the civil society organizations. This group represents different sectors of civil society, including engineers, teachers, political parties, union organization, farmers, and lawyers. These groups are mostly involved with different stakeholders of their country.

Those of age 18 to 70 years and older will be interview, including male and female participants. However, sex will not be a factor in the selection process of participants. But, the gender of participants will be noted to identify the participant sex. Additional, the aged 18 to 70 is considered, because of the live experience or phenomenological experiences of these stakeholders with the MRR. Moreover, between

18 to 70 years of age and older are people who will not be US citizens or maybe through naturalization. They are individuals who were born in the MRR and had an experience of living in the MRR and the United States, which has a different way of governance. In the US for example, each state has their state government that is independent and at the same time, parallel with the federal government. And many of them intent to go back home form part of the nation's building process.

Appendix D: Interview Questions

1) Please select the category of status you find yourself, before or after coming to the United States.

____ a) Student (students who came to the USA on students' visa or exchange programs)

____ b) immigrant community (asylum seekers or refugees)

____ c) Civil servants (Former Government Employee)

____ d) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

____ e) other. Please indicate, if you know: _____

2) What is your age range? Please check your age range.

• 18 to 25 _____

• 26 to 39 _____

• 40 to 60 _____

• 60 to 70 years plus ____

3) How long have you lived in the United States?

3a) what is your understanding of decentralization of government?

4) How does your opinion on decentralization agree with those citizens back in your native country?

5) What is the important of citizens electing or choosing their leaders?

6) How does expanded locals and citizens participation in governmental decision-making reduce conflict and instability?

7) How does a policy implementation of decentralization increase revenues of subnational governments or citizens at the local level of the state?

- 8) How are leaders chosen at local constituency level or local government level in your native country?
- 9) What is your plan to return to your country of birth?
- 10) How does your going back or staying in the United States impact the lives or idea of decentralization in your native country?
- 11) What are the effect of local elections and broader locals' political participations on corruption?
- 12) What is your sex? Male _____, Female _____. Please mark X on your sex or gender.

Appendix E: Different Aspect of the Sequential Theory of Decentralization

Political Decentralization: Political Decentralization (PD) limits power from corrupting and enhances equal political participation for all. PD increases political accountability and strengthens local governance (John-Mary Kauzya, 2007; World Bank, 2004). Kauzya (2007) defined political decentralization as “Transferring the power of selecting political leadership and representatives from central governments to local governments or transferring the power and authority for making socio-politico-economic decisions from central governments to local governments and communities Kauzya, 2007, p.80”.

Administrative decentralization: Administrative Decentralization (AD) is the application of policy in the delegation of responsibility for the management of resources and provision of services by locals between the central government and the locals’ population (Cohen & Peterson, 1999).

Fiscal decentralization: Fiscal Decentralization (FD) is a policy that determines the management of revenue and expenditure by the local government and the central government. It enhances the standard of living of the people (Bird & Vaillancourt, 2008).