LUND UNIVERSITY

WOMEN OF LIBERIA – FIND YOUR VOICES:

ENHANCING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LIBERIAN PARLIAMENT

Author: Julia Boyle

Supervisor: Kristina Jönsson

Presidential Candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf at the Unity Party Election Campaign Launch (Photo by: Julia Boyle)

Abstract

In 2011, Liberia saw a drop in women's representation in Parliament from 14% to 11.65%. In an effort to understand and aid in reversing this declining trend, this thesis aims to highlight the barriers to and strategies for enhancing women's participation in the Liberian Parliament. To accomplish this goal 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed via academic and context-specific documents, and a 3-part theoretical framework. Findings show that women progress through the first two transitions of the legislative recruitment process at a lower rate than men due to supply-led barriers in the first transition which include lack of ambition, education, resources and media access, and demand-led barriers which include lack of political party and constituent support in the second transition. This is largely the result of the lack of presence women and girls have in the public sphere, media agencies, political parties and legislature. As such, strategies to enhance gender representation in Liberian Parliament must reinforce entry-points for women in decision-making positions outside the domestic sphere.

Keywords: gender representation, women in politics, supply-demand model, feminism, private-public divide, legislative recruitment, critical mass, gender quota.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the women and girls of Liberia who have been taught through direct and indirect ways that they are unequal members of society.

I would like to acknowledge the desires, needs, ideas and feelings of women as equally important to the development of Liberia and the world at large.

I would like to acknowledge the institutions, ideologies, actions and individuals that enforce and re-enforce gender inequality, gender injustice and the subordination of women.

I would like to acknowledge local and international actors who work to change the course of history for women in Liberia.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

American Colonization Society (ACS)

Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Liberian Media Center (LMC)

Liberian Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC)

National Democratic Institute (NDI)

National Election Commission (NEC)

National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)

Sex-Desegregated Data (SDD)

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN SCR 1325)

West African Youth Network (WAYN)

Women in Politics (WIP)

Women's Non-Governmental Organization Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

1.0   Introduction

If I might thus speak to girls and women everywhere, I would issue them this simple invitation: My sisters, my daughters, my friends, find your voices!

-Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nobel Lecture 2012

In 2005, after 14 years of civil war, Liberia, a country ravaged by death, displacement and sexual violence elected Africa's first democratically elected female president. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's election, and re-election in 2011, is consistent with new trends on the continent regarding women's leadership. Despite being the poorest region in the world, the average number of women in parliament in Sub-Saharan Africa is 20.3%, above the world average of 19.6%, with Rwanda earning a female majority of 51.9% and South Africa and Uganda not far behind with 38.9% and 35%, respectively (IPU 2011; 2012a). Many attribute these gains in Africa due to its recent history of conflict. Research demonstrates that the period following conflict is not only characterized by enormous challenges, but also significant political opportunities. "Of the 12 African countries with the highest rates of female representation in parliament, 8 have undergone liberation wars or civil conflict in recent years" (Adams 2008:479).

Dissimilarly, Liberia's recent history of conflict and its extensive democratic and political reforms have not supported women's entry into the Liberian Legislature in the same way post-conflict reforms have in other African countries. This is particularly surprising due to the regional and international acclaim for Johnson-Sirleaf's work in empowering women which was honoured by the Women of Excellence Award, The African Gender Award, The Millennium Development Goal 3 Award and the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. Women currently represent 11.65% in the Liberian Parliament which is ranked 114th out of 189 countries in gender representation, down from 92nd in 2005 when women represented 14% of Parliament (IPU 2012a; IPU 2012b; IPU 2012c; UNMIL 2012:8). In an effort to understand and aid in reversing this declining trend, this thesis aims to highlight the factors that affected this drop in representation, as well as the strategies to augment women's representation in future elections.

In most countries throughout the world democratic and human rights values provide the legal right and opportunity for women to run for office; however, these rights are rarely realized due to the significant barriers that limit women's political participation. Most widely accepted are the cultural barriers of patriarchal countries that define the roles and competencies of the sexes, but equally important are the socio-economic obstacles that deny women equal resources, i.e. education, time and finances. The political obstacles that prevent women from gaining party support and structurally deny women through masculine models of politics are of growing interest in the field of gender representation (Shvedova 2005:33-39). Women's representation in political bodies is not only important as an issue of justice, it is also vital in the sense that enhancing the agency of women is linked to other positive developments, such as lower birth rates and greater child survival (Sen 1999:202).

Mechanisms to support women's entry into decision-making bodies take multiple forms, with gender quotas being the most successful, yet controversial. Gender quotas call for a minimum percentage, typically 30%, of gender participation in parliament, via reserved seats, legislated candidate quotas or political party quotas (Dahlerup 2008:78). While quotas have proved a successful mechanism to increasing women's representation in legislatures across the world, they are also controversial for multiple reasons including the belief that quotas encourage tokenism and preserve essentialist views on gender identity (Conner 2008:2011). Due to the complexity of gender representation gender quotas, or any single-mechanism strategy, are not sufficient to counteract the wide spectrum of disadvantages women face. Strategic plans to balance gender in decision-making bodies must include a variety of qualified strategies such as civic education on democracy, advocacy on women's representation, and supporting women's integration into political party leadership (Matland 2005:93-104). Such strategies cannot be applied uniformly across the world, they need to be analyzed within the context of each political system.

Legislatures are responsible for adopting policies and creating laws that effect both men and women and as such, without gender-sensitive individuals playing a weighted and respected role in legislative deliberation, policies, laws and national budgets risk being gender-blind and adversely affecting women. Sen (1999) notes the importance of gender representation and women's agency in correcting the "iniquities that blight the lives and well-being of women vis-à-

vis men" (200). Although gender sensitivity is a trait that both men and women can or not have, Liberian men are seen to be agents preventing the enhancement gender equality, not promoting it. As such, Liberian women need to be amongst the people who are deciding how they should be governed, including how budgets should be allocated.

1.1   Aim of Research

The broader aim of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the lack of women's representation in Liberian Parliament and thus provide academic grounding to the gender equality movement calling for increased women's participation in decision-making positions in Liberia. With reference to President Johnson-Sirleaf's opening quote, this thesis aims to underline not only the need for women to act as agents of change, but also the need for societal and political structures to join in ensuring gender equality principles become a reality.

More specifically, this thesis aims to explicitly identify and describe the barriers that women face in accessing legislative positions and assess the strategies to remove, minimize or overcome these barriers in Liberia. The barriers and strategies for equal gender representation in Liberia are both visible and invisible at the various levels of society and the different stages of the legislative recruitment processes.

This research will address the following questions:

- *What are the factors that limit women's representation in Liberian Parliament?*
- *What are the strategies to enhance women's representation in Liberian Parliament?*

2.0   Theoretical Framework

This thesis applies a theoretical framework comprised of three parts: (1) a feminist critique of democracy and human rights, (2) the supply-demand model of representation and (3) private-public sphere gender division to the case study of Liberia. In doing so, it describes and assesses the barriers preventing the country from achieving a balance in gender representation and the strategies aiming to enhance gender representation in the legislative branch. The theoretical framework links together theories of democracy, human rights and feminism through an analysis of how they apply to gender representation. Moreover, the supply-demand model and private-

public sphere theory of representation classify and ground the forces impacting gender throughout the legislative recruitment process.

2.1   A Feminist Critique of Democracy and Human Rights

Integral to democracy and human rights, and thus the Liberian Constitution (GoL 1986:Article 1), is the concept of political representation denoted in Article 21 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1947): Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Article 21 (1) guarantees political equality as a central tenant of democracy; however, in reflecting on the reduced political participation of women throughout history this guarantee is negated (UN). At this same point of intersection, feminist theories question the functionality and effectiveness of democracy and human rights, which become divergent though aspiring to the same goal of equality.

Of particular theoretical importance to this research is the notion of descriptive representation which describes the compositional similarity between representatives and those represented. Connor explains this concept clearly when asserting, "Women throughout the world should occupy the same proportion of democratically elected seats in legislature as the percentage in which they comprise their respective populations" (2008:223-4), supporting a pragmatic-epistemological position taken by feminists (Anderson 2005:255).

When reflecting on the fact that women constitute only 20.3% of parliaments worldwide and only 11.65% in Liberia (IPU 2011; 2012b; 2012c), despite representing over 50% of the population, the capacity of human rights and democratic theory to ensure political equality comes into question. Sen (1999) notes the value of democracy as a major source of social opportunity, but also identifies the need to examine the ways and means of making it function as an effective practice (159). The Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1997) and United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN SCR 1325) (2000), to which Liberia is a signatory and member, assert that extra measures need to be taken to address this inequality in gender representation, including temporary affirmative action in the form of critical mass quotas (Fourth World Conference on Women 1995; UNIFEM 2004; GoL 2008). A voluntary political party gender quota was included as a guideline in the 2005 and 2011 elections in Liberia, however due to its non-legal basis it was not enforced and had no impact on gender representation in Liberian

Parliament. The Government of Liberia acknowledged the non-adherence to the guideline, but failed to problematize the non-legal basis of the voluntary quota with reference to its above noted commitments (GoL 2008:29).

As noted in the introduction, gender quotas are not a comprehensive measure for gender representation; extra measures need to address the specific barriers operating at the various levels of society to ensure that women's political representation is not only descriptive but also substantive and symbolic. To move beyond addressing women's representation as merely a matter of justice, utilitarian notions that society has deprived itself unnecessarily of a reservoir of talent are important when taken from a constructivist standpoint (Sen 1999:203).

It is important to note that gender is understood and conceptualized differently throughout the world. Feminism itself is a highly contested concept in Africa and in certain forms is viewed as a Western import. In the Liberian context, post-colonial feminism drives for a "creation of a feminist consciousness that transcends Western assumptions of gender equality" (Gouws 2008:539) and transnational feminism argues that "the reconfiguration of the struggles of national women's movements cannot be seen in isolation from women's struggles which take place on a transnational level" (Gouws 2008:557). By integrating both post-colonial and transnational feminism into the theoretical framework, the need for local understandings of gender dynamics is addressed while placing these within broader social movements. This is particularly important in the context of post-conflict Liberia which has been heavily influenced by American culture and the international donor community.

Feminists have long criticized the universal and thus gender-neutral characteristics of democracy and human rights (Arneil 1999:3). This criticism stems from the debate of 'equality of opportunity' versus 'equality of result'. While universal rights and democratic systems provide the legal grounding for the equal opportunity to participate in government, this opportunity does not result in equal gender representation (Maloutas 2006:10). Women face unique political, economic and social barriers because they are unequal in power and always have been (Dahlerup 2008:75). The two concepts of equality are central to the debate over the goals and means of equality policies.

Anne Phillips, author of *Engendering Politics*, asserts that in an ideal world gender would be insignificant and the constructs of humanity more meaningful through our actions and words, as is implied through universal human rights values; however, despite continuing global gains in women's empowerment this ideal world remains out of reach (1991:6-8). Phillips furthers that it is necessary to guarantee voice to the previously subordinated, marginalized or silenced members of society through deliberative democracy to address the imbalance that centuries of oppression have produced (ibid). This will not only support the realization of human rights, but also the process of democratization as "[t]o count as fully democratic, state policies must be constructed from the critical interactions of the local perspectives of citizens from all social positions" (Anderson 2005:254).

2.2   The Supply vs. Demand Model of Representation

By applying the supply-demand theory to the legislative recruitment model, this thesis assesses whether it is the lack of supply of qualified aspirants or the lack of demand by political parties, institutions and voters that leads to the under-representation of women in parliament. As the descriptive composition of legislatures is the topic of interest of this thesis, a sequential model of the legislative recruitment process is outlined in Chart 1. The recruitment process occurs in four stages through three transitions: "(1) the large number of citizens who are eligible to run for political office; to (2) the smaller pool of citizens who aspire to run for political office; to (3) the small group of citizens who are nominated [as candidates] to run for political office; to (4) the smallest band of citizens who are elected to political office" (Norris 1997:6 cited in Krook 2010:156).
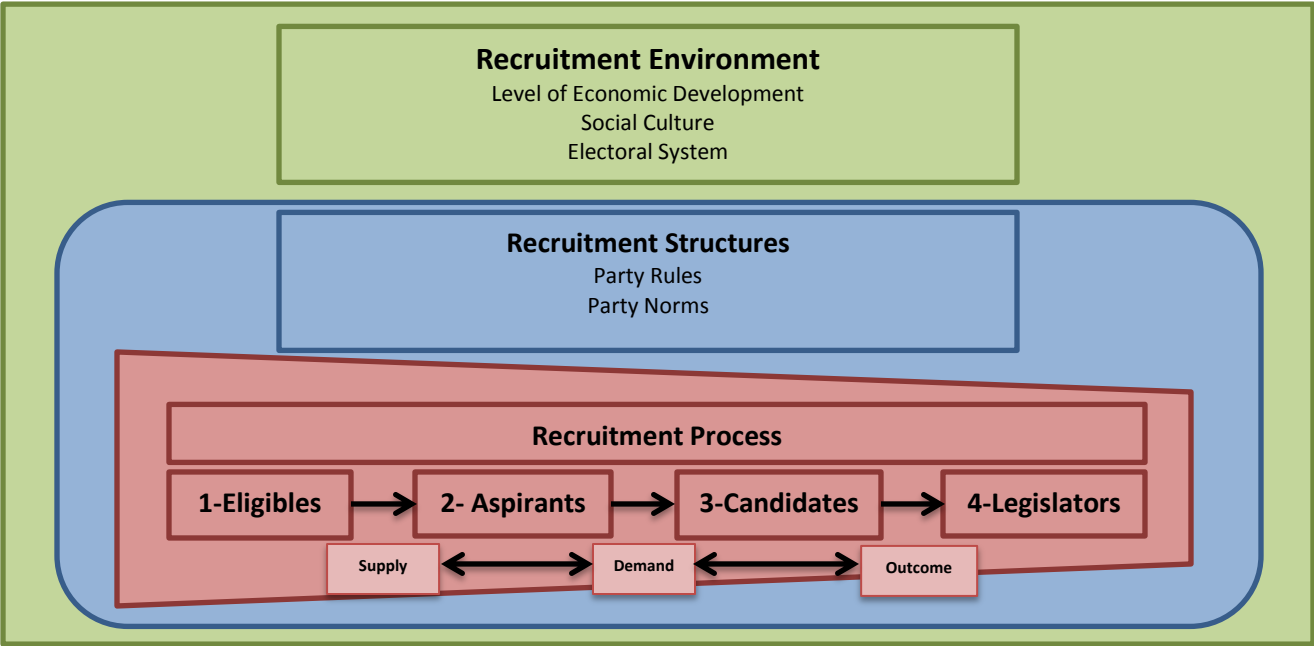
Transition from stage 1 to stage 2 will be categorized as the supply of available aspirants, transition from stage 2 to stage 3 will be categorized as the demand for candidates, and transition from stage 3 to stage 4 will be categorized as the outcome of elections (Krook 2010:157). The one-directional arrows between the stages demonstrate the one-way movement through the legislative recruitment process and the two-directional arrows between supply, demand and outcome denote the interrelated nature of the factors at play in the transition periods. This interrelation means that supply, demand and outcome-led factors can be influential at all stages and can directly and indirectly affect all transitions. As such, the supply-demand model is not a strict dichotomy, but a spectrum of recruitment factors.

In the ideal world described by Phillips (1991) in the Feminist Critique of Democracy and Human Rights sub-chapter, there are no mechanisms of distortion at work in the recruitment process. "The characteristics of the individuals present at each of these four stages should be roughly the same" (Norris 1997 cited in Krook 2010:156), and the supply-demand model should function on equilibrium. But, in absence of this ideal, legislatures across the world include more men than women, and are also imbalanced on the basis of affluence, age and type of profession (Norris 1997:6 cited in Krook 2010:156). In acknowledgement of this, the legislative recruitment process is placed within the larger political and societal context and the recruitment

structures and environment are integrated into the model. This displays how the broader social and political factors distort the supply-demand equilibrium "through the many formal and informal rules that govern individual and collective behaviour" (North 1990 cited in Krook 2010:162). Krook (2010) explains how the outer levels of the model can distort the recruitment process when she states: "the supply of female candidates is shaped strongly by ideologies of gender, which lead women to have fewer resources of time and money and lower levels of political ambitions and confidence" (162). Similarly Krook notes: "The gendered nature of demand […] causes selectors to overlook female aspirants as less competent or pass them over for selection due to unsubstantiated concerns about voter bias" (ibid). By applying a feminist critique of democracy and human rights to the legislative recruitment process, the norms and practices of gender, and how they operate to lower both the supply and demand of female aspirants are described (ibid).

2.3   Public versus Private Sphere

A key way to understand the marginalization of women is through the dualism of the public and private sphere which associates men with the public sphere and women with the private (domestic) sphere. Explicitly, this dualism closely identifies men with the world of reason, order, culture and public life, and women with the world of nature, emotion, desires and private life. Through this dualism essentialist notions of gender shape cultural and individual worldviews and keep women from becoming involved in politics through heavily defined and reinforced gender roles. Throughout history fathers and husbands have acted on behalf of women in the public sphere and have subsumed the voice and agency of women (Arneil 1999:7-8). The women's suffrage movement and the inclusion of women into the employment sector, along with the promotion of reproductive rights and third-wave feminist critiques of essentialist definitions of femininity have blurred this dualism in many societies. Nevertheless, the public-private dualism continues to have a significant impact on women's inclusion in the political sector, especially in regions where women's emancipation is far less progressed, such as Liberia. The 2011 Human Development Report's Gender Inequality Index (GII) rated Liberia 139 out of 146 countries with a GII value of 0.671 (UNDP 2011:4).

Longwe (2000) notes that gender discrimination is learned at an early age, when "girls are socialized to believe that public decision-making positions should properly be occupied by

men, and boys are socialized into believing that girls may legitimately be excluded" (26). This early instilled discrimination affects the development of girl's knowledge and qualifications in the public sphere. Worldwide women have lower levels of literacy and education, including Liberia where women's literacy (41%) is far lower than men's literacy (70%) (GoL 2008:47). In some contexts, the entry of women into the public sphere has led to a greater balancing of the spheres with men taking on responsibilities in the private sphere such as in Sweden where the government provides incentives for parents who share maternity and paternity leave (Wangnerud in Ballington & Karam 2005:36). Unfortunately, in many regions across the globe, including Africa, the inclusion of women into the public sphere has resulted in women's double burden where women are wholly responsible for domestic duties in addition to their professional responsibilities (Gouws 2008:546).

3.0   Background: Historical Context

Liberia is a small country (approx. 111,370 km2) with a population of approx. 4 million inhabitants located on the coast of West Africa (GoL 2008:6-7). It is best known for iron-ore, West Africa's last expanse of tropical rainforest, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and West Africa's most destructive and violent ruler, Charles Taylor, who was recently found guilty for his leading role in the civil war in Sierra Leone (Corder 2012).

Image 1 and 2: Map of Liberia and Liberia Locator Map (World Atlas 2012).

The history of Liberia is both long and complex, with the events and characteristics that shaped its establishment in 1822 continuing in significance today. Liberia, unlike most African states

was never colonized by Europeans; it was established by approx. 400 freed American slaves with the support of the American Colonization Society (ACS). Although Liberia was the first African state to gain independence in 1847, this independence was largely insignificant. The freed American slaves, commonly known as Americo-Liberians, applied the same slave-owner hierarchical power dynamic they knew in the United States to Liberia, but placed themselves at the top of the hierarchy and indigenous Liberians at the bottom (Badmus 2009:813).

Until 1946, there were "three categories of women in Liberia – the settlers who owned property and were thus qualified to vote; poor settler women who did not have property and were excluded from voting; and the indigenous women who like their male counterparts could not vote until the 1950s" (UN Women Liberia 2011:3). Women had no representation in the National Assembly and played no part in the country's political landscape until the transitional post-war government and the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2005 which marked the first substantiated entry of women into politics (UN Women Liberia 2011:4).

The above noted power dynamics between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians present the background to the political disorder that devastated Liberia from 1989-2003 with Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) leading the country into a journey of self-destruction (Badmus 2009:815). As has been the case worldwide, Liberia's women and children bore the brunt of the conflict. Although some women participated as combatants, more women were victims of gang-rape, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which continues on a massive scale today (GoL 2008:32-37).

Nevertheless, Liberian women have not only gained recognition as the victims of war, they have gained national and international acclaim for their role in bringing an end to the 14 year civil war through the Liberia women's peace movement. During the war they raised awareness about the conflict and its effects on civilians, and lead massive peace protests in Monrovia taking great risks against Charles Taylor's threats. They put pressure on their husbands to advocate for peace by refusing to engage in sexual contact until peace came to Liberia and most notably they put pressure on ruling factions to participate in peace talks. When the Accra peace talks reached a stalemate in 2003, they surrounded the meeting venue in Accra and refused to let participants leave the talks until a Peace Treaty had been written and signed.

They even threatened to strip naked and expose peace talk participants to the serious cultural taboo of female public nudity (Gbowee & Mithers 2011:157-164). These actions demonstrate the level of agency and leadership held by Liberian women to act as leaders, characteristics that lend to great decision-makers and legislators. Exemplifying this is Leymah Gbowee, leader of the Liberian women's peace movement, who shared the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf due to her role in bringing peace to a war torn nation. Many say that it was the women peace-builders that led voters to elect a woman president in 2005 (Adams 2008:475).

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, commonly known as Ma Ellen, was re-elected in 2011 as the president of Liberia, an American modeled government that adopted a unitary multi-party system rather than a federal two-party system. The legislature, comprised of the House of Representative and the Senate, is one of three separate yet equal branches of government, joining to the Judiciary and the Cabinet. The 72-seat House of Representatives serves 6 year terms by first-past-the-post method in single member districts, and the 30-seat Senate serves staggered 9 year terms via first-past-the-post election method. Along with Madam Johnson-Sirleaf's 2011 election, 72 new Representatives and 15 new Senators were elected to the 53rd Legislature (IPU 2012b; IPU 2012c). Liberia is currently ranked 98 out of 167, 6 years after its democratic transition with a score of 5.07 out of 10 on the 2011 Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index.

While Johnson-Sirleaf has brought a long list of accomplishments that speak to women's interests since 2005, women's representation in parliament declined further below regional averages in 2011. In August 2011, Liberia's Women's Caucus presented a new draft of the Gender Representation Bill to Parliament calling for the adaptation of a legislated gender quota (Liberian Women's Caucus 2011). But, like on previous occasions, the bill was scrutinized by a male dominated legislature and rejected on account of political party alliances and opposing schools of thought on gender quotas. The bill currently lays dormant in committee rooms, but the Women's Caucus has pledged to continue their lobbying and advocacy work, and is confident that it will have greater success with the new legislature.

4.0   Research Design

To address the research questions noted in the Aim of Research sub-chapter, a case study research strategy was utilized to investigate the lack of women's representation in Liberian Parliament, a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context. This method was chosen to deliberately uncover the contextual conditions that impact the lack of gender representation in Liberian Parliament, a case where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are blurred. This thesis relies on multiple sources of evidence with data converging and driving theoretical propositions and research inquiry throughout the data collection process (Yin 2003:13-14).

Lack of women's representation in Liberian Parliament is justified as a case study due to its uniqueness and need. Liberia lost virtually all national and sub-national data during its civil war and there continues to be a lack of academic interest in the small West African state. In addition, Liberia is currently ranked 182 out of 187 with a score of 0.329 on the Human Development Index which means that extremely high illiteracy rates, and low levels of educational and economic development limit the opportunity for local analysis on this topic (UNDP 2011).

Liberia stands as a unique case because it successfully transitioned to a female-headed democracy after 14 years of civil conflict, but despite the election and re-election of a female president, women remain grossly underrepresented in the Liberian Legislature of this government. For these reasons this research aims to not only contribute to the process of enhancing gender representation in Liberia, but also to give voice to women through the process of data collection and the documentation of their underrepresented views and experiences (Gomm *et al* 2009:4). By gaining access to the subjects' 'inside' experiences, and assessing how these experiences interact with other variables, this thesis allows participants to define social reality in their own terms (Bryman 2008:367). This thesis is also sensitive to the various ways social reality can be constructed noting extreme divergences in knowledge, opinion and experience in relation to Liberian elections and politics.

The epistemological position of this thesis is interpretivist because it "requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman 2008:16). The ontological position is constructivist as "social phenomenon and categories are not only produced through

social interaction, but they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman 2008:19). These positions were taken due to the need to collect present-day data on the structures and factors that limit female representation in decision-making positions in Liberia. These positions were actualized through the inductive elements of the thesis which contextualizes the research to the experiences of the participants.

Both inductive and deductive methods were used in this study to relate theory to data (Jupp 2006:146). An initial set of theories: critical mass (Conner 2008), constructivism (Badmus 2009), transnational/postcolonial feminism (Gouws 2008) and democratization (Lindberg 2004), and Ballington & Karam's (Eds.) (2005) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* provided the deductive basis for the research inquiry and the development of the interview guide. Inductive methods were utilized during the preliminary analysis when the theories interacted with the data to become an integrated and coherent theoretical framework.

4.1   Data Collection

The field data was collected in Monrovia, Liberia during the months of January, February and March 2012, immediately following the turnover of parliamentary office to the 53rd Legislature of the Liberian State. The field data is comprised of interviews, both individual and group, and context-specific documents.

Due to the broad and politicized nature of the research questions, research participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences were identified through purposeful and convenience sampling, and the snowball effect (Yin 2003:42). A complete list of the interviewees can be found in Appendix A. Participants were sought out via personal and professional contacts, word of mouth, key informants and through formal invitation. Liberia being a small and centralized country with a close-knit and impersonal (though hierarchical) professional sphere served as a favorable environment to carry out this research.

In total 17 individual and 4 group semi-structured interviews were conducted. The group interviews took place spontaneously when various interviewees of interest were available at the same time and place. This method is described as a group interview and not as a focus group discussion because the interaction between interviewees was of secondary interest to their personal responses (Bryman 2008: 475). Because the collection of data was centralized to

Monrovia, rural women were interviewed when visiting Monrovia or were represented via organization heads.

The interview guide (see Appendix B) followed a semi-structured design to allow interviewees the flexibility to remold the theories and the theoretical framework (Bryman 2008:11). This method was important based on post-colonial feminist research which argues that literature on women's representation, which is generally done in developed countries, may not apply in the same way in developing contexts (Gouws 2008:539). The interview guide was developed, peer reviewed and revised after a pilot interview. Due to the semi-structured nature of interviews, the interview guide served only as a tool to direct interviews and was not followed systemically. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the participant, including his/her profession and political involvement, questions were catered to each participant. More specifically, when participants brought up issues of interest that were not included in the interview guide, new questions were posed, including points of clarification and follow-up questions. All of these techniques resulted in the use of the variety of questions recommended by Bryman when conducting qualitative interviews (2008:446). All interviews took place in a private office where interviewees confirmed they were comfortable, with one exception which took place at a common entertainment center due to time and location constraints. All interviews were conducted by the researcher with a key informant present at 2 interviews to aid with minimal language constraints.

Recording and transcription were the techniques used for data collection. All interviews with the exception of 1 were recorded on a portable audio recorder and transcribed within a week of the interview date. In the case of the exception the interviewee was uncomfortable with the use of a recorder due to concerns that the data would be used for non-academic purposes. In this case, field notes were taken to enhance the participant's level of comfort.

4.2   Data Analysis

The field data was analyzed in three stages: data reduction, data verification, and data display and conclusion drawing (Silverman 2005:177). Although a great level of analysis was completed during the interview and transcription stage by listening, mentally compartmentalizing answers, and applying analytical and theoretical thought. The researcher completed the data reduction stage by following the methodological direction of Dewalt &

Dewalt's *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (2002) to index the collected data (163-194). The indexes were developed based on the Supply vs. Demand Model of Representation, Ballington & Karam's (Eds.) (2005) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers,* and a preliminary analysis of the interview transcripts. To index the data, interview transcripts were read through twice before systematizing.

The indexed data was then compared to secondary sources of data for verification and elimination. Once the data was reduced, the theoretical framework was applied to the data for analysis. This method of triangulation is understood to improve the validity of the research (Bryman 2008:379&383). Then an in-depth analysis of the barriers and strategies to gender representation was displayed via text and diagrams before conclusions were drawn. Interviews were edited for grammar to aid in reader comprehension due to the contrast between Liberian English and Academic English.

4.3   Data Quality

To assess the quality of the research, both validity (construct and external) and reliability are analyzed here. Internal validity was not addressed as causal relationships between variables are not drawn in this thesis.

Construct validity, which deals with establishing the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied (Yin 2003:34-35) was enhanced with the use of multiple sources of evidence and by maximizing the inherent strengths and minimizing the inherent weaknesses of the data sources. Concerns related to irretrievability, bias and access to documents were quite low due to Liberia's recently passed Freedom of Information Act (2011) and the high level of international and national support to implement and monitor the 2011 elections. This provided the researcher with both a wide array of documentation and explicit access to documents.

Also enhancing the construct validity is the semi-structured nature and the inductive elements of the thesis which provided the flexibility for participants to define the concepts and redirect questions when they felt necessary. Inaccuracies in interview data were eliminated with the use of a high quality voice recorder, however bias and reflexivity must be acknowledged in 2 interviews in relation to validity. While transcribing data it was identified that neutrality was lost when questions were rephrased for the respondents. In addition, it must be said that the

researcher's identity as a Western Master's student placed her in a position of superiority, which thus impacted the reflexivity of the research. Participants who were aware of the researcher's connections to UN Women Liberia may have responded in a way to support future donor partnerships. It is also likely that some participants were nervous to appear unsupportive of gender equality.

External validity deals with establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized (Yin 2003:34-35). It is important to emphasize that the aim of this research is not necessarily to achieve a high level of generalizability. Instead, this thesis is intended to be used by Liberians for Liberia. In certain contexts similar to Liberia, such as the countries of the Mano River Region, this research could be used with an understanding of the generalizability constraints (Gomm *et al* 2009:7).

Reliability scores demonstrate to what degree the operations of a study, such as the data collection procedures, can be repeated with the same results (Yin 2003:34-35). This is often problematic in qualitative, semi-structured research methods due to the variability and flexibility of interviews. To improve upon the reliability of the research, interview guides and audio recording were used and a list of research participants is available in Appendix A.

Ethical considerations are extremely relevant to this research due to the fact that barriers to women's representation in parliament are heavily controlled and influenced by individual, cultural and political forces. Politics in Liberia have been quite volatile in nature, with 2011 seeing opposition party election boycotts and illegal protests that led to the shooting of a still unconfirmed number of victims. For these reasons specifically, measures were taken to prevent the research from harming the relationships and reputations of those involved. This aim was operationalized through a participant information sheet (see Appendix C) which was developed, distributed and discussed with all research participants for the purpose of making explicit participant rights and the ethical observances of the research. All interviewees approved of the use of their names in this thesis, despite being provided the option of using a pseudonym. The participant information sheet was developed after Scheyvens & Storey's *Development Fieldwork* ethical guidelines (2003:7-8).

Only in one case did an interviewee express concern about the use of the research. This interviewee was apprehensive that their personal experiences might be used for the financial gain of the researcher with no benefit to research participants. This interviewee's concerns were calmed with the presentation of the participant information sheet and further explanation that the research was an academic exercise and would be made available to all participants upon completion.

5.0   Presentation of Data

This section of the paper presents the data collected in response to the research questions:

- *What are the factors that limit women's representation in Liberian Parliament?*
- *What are the strategies to enhance women's representation in Liberian Parliament?*

The data will be presented through the four stages of the legislative recruitment process discussed in The Supply vs. Demand Model of Representation. Each stage will discuss the barriers that limit and the strategies that can potentially enhance women's progression through the legislative recruitment process, and how the recruitment environment and structures distort the recruitment system on the basis of gender.

When reflecting on the topic of intersectionality in feminist theory "which refers to the assessment of different forms of inequality in conjunction" (Kerner 2012: 203) this thesis recognizes the problematic nature of treating the women of Liberia as a homogenous grouping and delineating Liberians by class. Although, using broad and undifferentiating categorical terms such "men", "women", "elite", "grassroots", "rural" and "indigenous" risks blurring the spectrum and intersectionality of social inequality that exists in Liberia, this thesis uses the above noted terms as they reflect local understandings of social diversity and inequality (Bryman 2008:367). Nevertheless, these terms and concepts are problematized in the analysis section.

5.1   Stage 1 to 2– Eligible to Aspirant (Supply)

The progression of an eligible to the aspirant stage of the legislative recruitment process involves self-selection whereby a woman who meets the legal qualifications to run for legislature chooses to run in an election as an aspirant. The particular and interrelated issues that limit women's

representation in Liberian Parliament at this stage are lack of ambition and lack of resources. Due to the fact that progressing from stage 1 to 2 has to do with self-selection, recruitment structures do not significantly interact with this transition period. Conversely, the recruitment environment, including the social culture and level of economic development, plays an extensive role in shaping the supply of female aspirants.
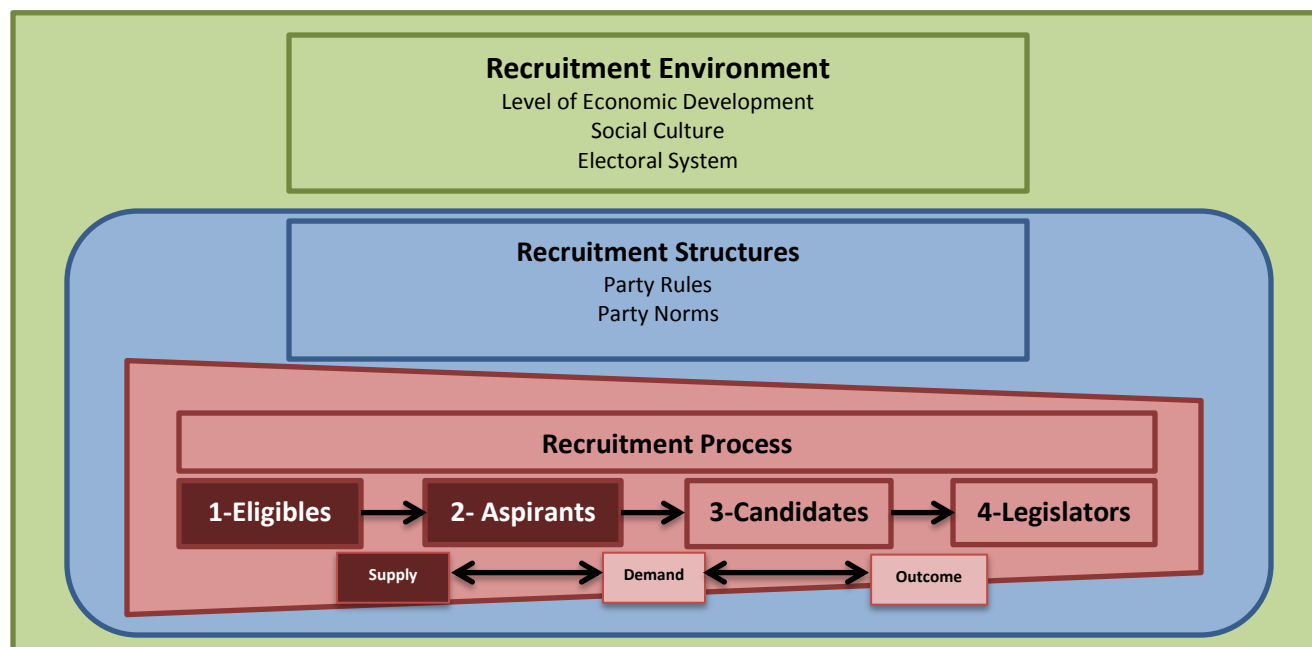

Chart 1b: The Legislative Recruitment Process (Modeled from Matland & Montgomery 2003:21; Krook 2010:157)

5.1.1 Ambition

Ambition is an extremely important element in the self-selection of a political aspirant. Although sex-desegregated data (SDD) is not available to statistically prove that Liberian women experience a lower level of political ambition than men, this phenomenon is widely confirmed by interviewees. Acknowledgement of this phenomenon begs the question: Why do Liberian women have seemingly less political ambition than Liberian men? Interviewees frequently quantified female lack of political ambition with low self-esteem, fear and shyness, marking the decision to not participate as a political aspirant as stemming from a position of disempowerment; opting-out due to lack of confidence, instead of not opting-in based on lack of desire. With reference to Liberian women's lack of self-esteem in the realm of politics, the colloquial saying "the fear was in them" was used frequently by men and women when

discussing women's political ambition and competence, with particular reference to public speaking and rural women.

The perception that many Liberian women experience a strong sense of fear in the political sphere can be analyzed on a deeper level by investigating why women suffer from lower self-esteem in relation to politics than men. Honorable Julia Duncan-Cassell, Minister of Gender and Development answers this question when she notes:

> Men feel that women should give up their hopes and dreams. You are a mother, a child bearer, a child rearer, and that is your place, you should be in the home and not in political offices. The further you go away from Montserrado County, the worse it becomes.

Described here is the strong division of the private and public spheres in Liberia as enforced by male spouses and relatives. Dr. Izeduwa Derex-Briggs, Country Representative of UN Women similarly commented: "People see women as having to stay at home, not arguing with men in parliament." Evident here is the strong impact of traditional gender roles and social culture. The exclusion of women to the domestic sphere has limited the development of the skills, knowledge and confidence of women in the public sphere, which has in turn limited their political ambition.

Mayor Etewedae Cooper brought up an important female perception when she stated, "women still tend to shy away from politics because they think it is dirty." She further explained that many Liberian women choose not to participate in politics because of its association with slander, hypocrisy and corruption. A representative from the Liberian Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC) noted: "Women are really afraid not to get their reputation damaged, men are less careful about that." This belief mirrors the gender-specific socialization patterns in Liberia which mark women's actions as representative of the private sphere, and thus holds her responsible for preserving her family's image. As a result of this socialization process, society learns to criticize the actions of women more severely than men, and women fear engaging in activities which will put their family's reputation at stake. As such, women weigh the costs and benefits of running for political office differently than men; women are more likely to perceive the "dirty" characteristics of Liberian politics as a cost outweighing the potential benefits of political success, for themselves and their families (Krook 2010:158).

Also linked to ambition is education, a key factor in the self-selection of a political aspirant. There are no legal education requirements for political aspirants in Liberia; nevertheless, a person's education has a significant impact on their decision to run for political office. Demonstrating this point is Aspirant Korto Jallah Socree, who noted that her ambition to continue as an aspirant in the face of substantial political barriers was because of her Master's level education, an educational background many of her competitors did not have. She specifically noted: "Sometimes they [her supporters] ask me, 'What was really giving you that strength?' I would tell them it was my educational experience". Here, the interviewee noted the direct link her education had to her self-confidence and ambition.

However historically, the vast majority of female eligibles have benefitted less from formal education than men due to lower enrollment and attendance, and higher dropout rates. In Liberia, "42% of women and 18% of men have never attended school, and while 19% of men have completed secondary school or higher, only 8% of women have accomplished the same" (GoL 2008:43). As such, this lack of education stands as a more prominent barrier for women than men in transition from stage 1 to 2, particularly rural and Muslim women as women.

Marietta Williams, Executive Director of the Muslim Women's Association exemplified why women have benefitted less from education than men when she described how the recruitment environment, through social culture, has created and re-enforced gender biases in Liberia's education system. She corrected the common belief that it is the Korean and Muslim religion that subordinates women when she noted:

> The Koran promotes education, but because of man's greed for power, they never educate their girl children. Maybe this will change in the next 5 to 10 years, the woman's generation is coming up, and most of them are in university now. Maybe we will see that they want to go into politics, they want to be visionaries, but for the time being, its zero.

Noted here is the undervaluing of education for Muslim girls by men and how that affects gender representation long term. Nevertheless, the undervaluing of education for girls affects more than just the Muslim community, and more than just school enrollment. Even when girls are enrolled in school, their success is still limited by other factors such as the burden of completing time-intensive domestic chores. Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor exhibited the dual burden that girls

experience when she posed the question: "What are the responsibilities of girls and boys at the homes? It's expected that the girls do all the cleaning and housework and take care of the younger siblings. By the time they do all of this, they are tired, when do they sit to study?" Here, Senator Taylor noted that the public-private sector divide limits not only girls' access to education, but also creates an environment which impedes study and knowledge uptake. In turn, this affects women's income, and personal and professional development in later years. In addition, early marriage, pregnancy, SEA, and extreme poverty are both a cause and effect of girls' poorer access to and benefit from education in Liberia.

Linking girls and women's lower education levels back to their decision to become political aspirants on the basis of ambition and self-esteem, Roseline Toweh, Country Director of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) commented that women believe they must have a higher standard of education than their male counterparts. She noted that this perception is based on demand-led factors by political parties, who require stronger qualifications from women due to the fact that women are generally perceived to perform weaker in the political realm. As such, women believe they must compensate by being more educated than male competitors. Country Director Toweh explains that if a woman perceives that her level of education is not above standard, she will believe she cannot gain political party nomination, and thus she will shy away from aspiring for political office. Due to the fact that women have benefitted less from education in Liberia than men, and therefore typically do not have a higher standard of education than their male counterparts, fewer women progress through to stage 2 of the legislative recruitment process. Exhibited here the interrelation between the supply and demand-led factors and how the perceptions and actions of political parties can affect female political ambition and thus supply-led factors.

5.1.2 Resources

Due to the need to be present and visible in one's constituency, financial resources contribute to an eligible's self-selection as a political aspirant. If a woman does not feel she has access to a strong source of financial support, it is likely she will choose not to self-select as a legislative aspirant. This is based on the cash-based characteristics of constituent support, which is needed to progress through the later stages of the legislative recruitment system.

The first financial qualification for aspirants comes from Liberian Law under which it is a legal requirement for all Legislators to be a tax payer (GoL 1986:Article 30). The clause requiring eligibles to be tax payers has implications for women specifically. When discussing the financial barriers that limit progression through the legislative recruitment process, a member of the Rural Woman's Association noted: "You have to register with the National Election Commission (NEC), some of the women are not working. You have to declare your assets and pay taxes. How many women are paying taxes?"

Although being a tax payer is a universal tenant of the Liberian electoral system, it has different consequences for Liberian women and men. The feminization of poverty, the economic dependence of women and the marginalization of women from the labour force has had a major impact on women's financial capacity, and thus a woman's ability to both pay taxes, and finance her political campaign and constituency work. The new foundations of democracy, the severe poverty and the lack of civic education in Liberia means that in relation to the economic development of the country, political campaigning is an extreme expense. It is common practice for aspirants to give money and staple foods, and pay the school fees of constituents' children during campaign periods. A representative from LIWOMAC stated: "Traditionally, our politics have been cash based," and Korto Jallah Socree also noted: "Liberians are very hungry. Even if they don't want you, if you can give them, they will take it, they will take you", providing examples of the cash-based constituency building practice in Liberia.

However, the issue of financing goes beyond the economic status of women, it is also impacted by the economic dependence of Liberian women on men. As is noted in the private-public sphere theory, women have been traditionally bound to non-income generating activities and thus have been dependent on men for financial security. Although some women have broken the divide and entered the public sphere as paid employees, this notion of dependence remains ingrained in both men and women in Liberia. Political aspirant Korto Jallah Socree notes:

 In Africa we [women] have this dependence syndrome; women must always depend on their husband for everything. In my case I didn't have the support from my husband, I still continued, but my campaign greatly suffered. Many times if the man cannot support

the woman, she has to drop out; I've seen the case in which women have to drop out of school and their jobs because of that.

This quote exemplifies that economic dependence presents as a barrier even for women from elite families. Due to the financial dependence of women on men, men are in a position to exert control over women's choices, expenses and investments. This control is often based on a mindset rooted in a social culture built on traditional gender roles. In some cases this power dynamic has even resulted in the misogynistic destruction of female political careers. The control of males over the economic lives of women limits women's capacity to make independent career choices. Senator Jewel Howard Taylor alleged:

Most of the time a woman who is married has to go and get permission from her husband, or her father or her brothers, and because you don't have the economic power to go out independently and campaign you depend on the male support people in your family or friends. Once they see another man running, they say, oh leave that thing, let the men do it, because it's perceived as a male dominated sphere.

Similarly, John Langley of the NEC noted:

Women did not have the capital and the funding. The strategies to mobilize resources were another major problem for women. Now women are working and earning their own funding, but they rely on their husbands, they rely on the men, so when it came to the competition, they were vulnerable.

At this point in juncture women are often caught in a Catch-22, if they decide to run against the wishes of their male family members, they stand to lose their financing, but without this financing, many women feel they cannot self-select as an aspirant.

Conversely, some research participants noted that finances should not be considered a barrier for women. Instead they emphasized that desire and willpower should propel candidates to overcome financial limitations. Emmett Crayton, a politically active employee at the Ministry of Gender and Development noted:

I've always had the belief that women can get anything they want. Because I have a wife, and when my wife demands to get certain things, I make sure she gets it, unless I will not be in peace. I always believe that economically women can always cross that barrier.

However, hidden in this statement is again the issue of financial dependence which ultimately leaves women vulnerable to the will of men to support their political or personal ambitions.

5.1.3   Strategies to enhance female transition from stage 1 to 2 (Supply)

The focus of this section is problematizing and conceptualizing strategies for further analysis at the programme design and implementation level in Liberia. This is done by matching the barriers (lack of ambition and lack of resources) with strategies using the ideas and perceptions of interviewees.

With reference to ambition, the strategies identified to enhance women's transition from stage 1 to 2 relate to enhancing the self-esteem of women and girls in the public and political spheres, and enhancing women and girls' education. Ma Kebbeh Monger noted that a woman's education aids her in overcoming the fear of political competition and public speaking, with particular reference to literacy. She pledged: "When you know how to read and write no fear can be in you. You will be bold to even talk". Therefore, by building the English language skills of girls and women, they gain confidence in self-expression, a skill central to success in politics. Due to the oral and isolated nature of traditional languages in Liberia, rural women feel more competitively advantageous when they have strong English skills, which can be used for personal development by reading national and international texts in English, and for professional development by participating in national and international level debates. Literacy and English language skills were emphasized for women above other educational strategies due to their link to enhancing the political self-esteem of women.

Nonetheless, general education strategies must also be addressed due the fact that women believe they must have an exceptionally high level of education to gain political party nomination and eventual political success. Interviewees noted the pronounced weaknesses of the Liberian education system, both in terms of quality and quantity, and the need for innumerable reforms and improvements. However, the extreme disadvantage of rural girls and women, particularly if Muslim, was emphasized. Senator Taylor advocated for one particular strategy:

the construction of girl's boarding schools. Boarding schools would provide a safe and quiet learning environment for girls where the pressure of domestic chores and boys can be better regulated, and an atmosphere of leadership and self-development could be instilled. In addition, these boarding schools do not need to be proximate to a girl's family residence. This means girls country-wide, including rural dwellers, and girls from disadvantaged communities could attend.

However, it is important to note that even in countries where girls are given equal access to education, such as Canada where women are overrepresented in the universities, the majority of legislative positions are still occupied by men (Stats Canada 2010; IPU 2012d; IPU 2012e). This is currently an issue of interest in academic spheres. Interviewees emphasized that strategies to enhance female formal education in Liberia is a necessity for gender representation, however such factors need to be complemented with other strategies such as advocacy for better results.

Several interviewees noted that the 2011 election advocacy strategies were weak due to the fact that they commenced several months or weeks before the election and ended immediately after voters casted their ballots. Public discourse on gender representation in Liberia tends to only occur during the electoral season, but respondents noted that influencing the minds and decisions of Liberians to accept and promote gender equality is a long term process and cannot be accomplished in this short period of time. James Mugo Muriithi, Gender Advisor for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) noted that by framing gender representation as a human rights issue and not only drawing on the utility of women as decision-makers can help to confirm the need and benefits of gender representation. Furthermore, including advocacy on the related gender conventions to which Liberia is a signatory can help the women of Liberia hold the government accountable to these commitments. UNMIL also noted the strength of the Women's Manifesto, an advocacy tool that was utilized during the 2005 election period, which was not engaged during the 2011 election period (UNMIL 2012:6).

Drawing on the theoretical framework, advocacy efforts can also aid in challenging the public-private sphere divide. In turn this will promote the acceptance and inclusion of girls and women in the public sphere, which as noted before feeds into experience and self-confidence building in this realm. This does not only mean creating pathways for women to participate in the private sphere, but also drawing men into domestic chores and family care. As noted by Dr.

Izeduwa Derex-Briggs, men need to be part of the gender equality movement to understand the roles they play in holding women back from fulfilling their true potential.

The next strategy to discuss in the enhancement of female self-confidence in the political sphere is the development of 5 to 10-year political work plans by women. Many interviewees noted that during the 2011 election, many women proclaimed their ambition to run for office just months before the election, with little previous political work experience. Women need to develop long term political work plans and commit to doing development work in their constituencies well ahead of election periods by engaging with political parties, speaking at town hall meetings, and doing community development work, etc. This is particularly important in Liberia because of the traumatization citizens witnessed and experienced at the hands of previous leaders, making trust a major factor in earning constituent support. It was noted by many interviewees that unless community members have heard of or seen an aspirant's work, heard their voice on the radio and "know what is in their heart", it is likely that they will support another aspirant they know, this is exemplified by the high incumbent re-election rate in Liberia. This makes long term planning important on two levels, to gain political skills and experience and thus self-confidence, and to gain the trust and support of constituents.

A specific strategy recommended by Women in Politics (WIP) members in relation to long term work plans was the identification of young women with political ambition, and the development of a mentorship program. A mentorship program would enable young girls and women to build the knowledge, skills and experience they need as aspirants and provide a venue for experienced women to share their experiences and knowledge with the next generation. Such a programme is also important to build collaboration between female aspirants and ensure that female votes are not split by supporting too many women in one district as was seen in the 2011 election (UNMIL 2012:5).

Finally are the strategies to enhance women's access to resources and finances for the purposes of campaigning and political process. Addressing financial barriers for political aspirants has been a complicated task in Liberia; during the 2011 local organizations and donor agencies contributed gender sensitivity training for media representatives and media access for female aspirants (UNMIL 2012:25), but this approach was heavily criticized. Many aspirants noted that training and media provided little advantage without campaign financing. It was also

acknowledged the Liberian Media Center (LMC) through their election media monitoring project that strategies utilized for the 2011 election period were ineffective (LMC 2011:7-8&24-25). UNMIL recommends the establishment of a Fund to support female political aspirants (2012:36), nevertheless, creating dialogue between donors, government agencies and female political aspirants in advance of the next electoral period is needed to identify appropriate strategies for female aspirant financing. Rural and disadvantaged women also need to be engaged in this process.

5.2 Stage 2 to 3 – Aspirant to Candidate (Demand)

Continuing on to the next transition of the legislative recruitment process involves the selection of an aspirant by a political party to run as a candidate on their party emblem. Some aspirants will progress to stage 3 as an independent candidate; however it was noted by interviewees that such decisions are most often taken when an aspirant has been unsuccessful in gaining the support of a political party. Similarly, no independent female candidates were successful in the 2011 elections (UNMIL 2012:7).

In transition from stage 2 to 3 the recruitment environment plays a significant role; social and economic factors influence party norms and rules, and the electoral system becomes more regulated and thus more influential. Recruitment structures also play a significant role in shaping the demand for candidates and the candidate selection process known in Liberia as primary elections, which take place 2 weeks before the scheduled election. The two key barriers that limit women's progression to stage 3 of the legislative recruitment process are lack of political party support and lack of constituent support.
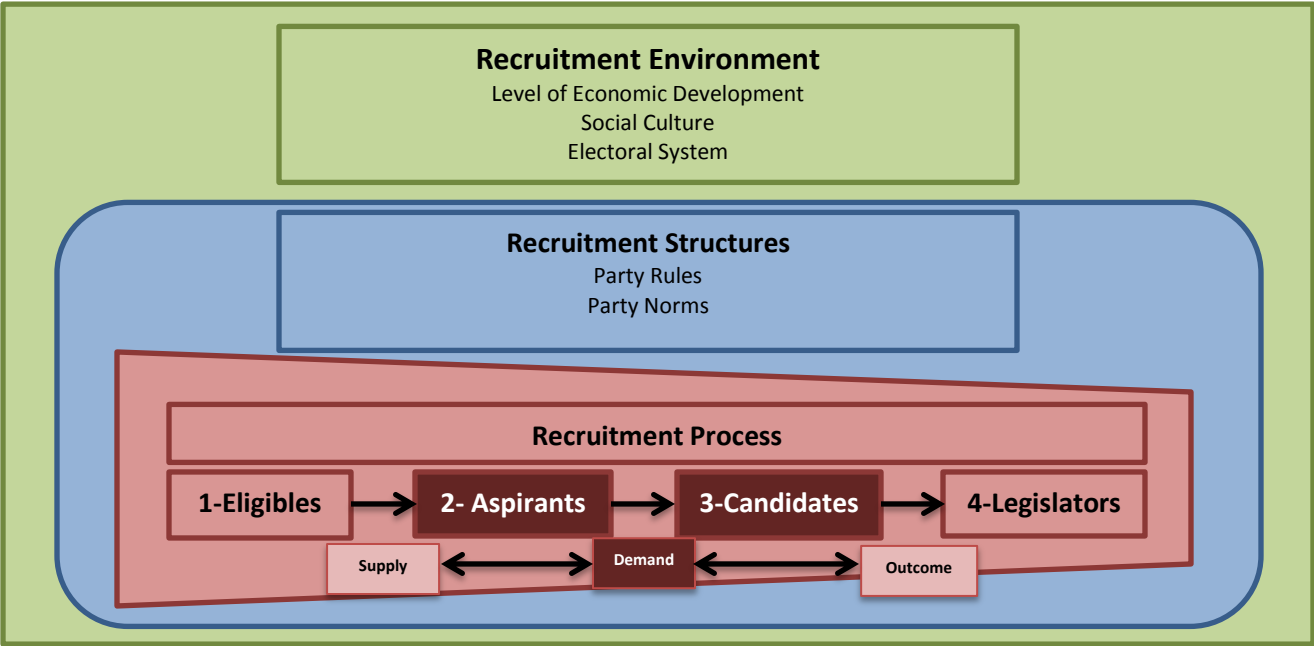
Chart 1c: The Legislative Recruitment Process (Modeled from Matland & Montgomery 2003:21; Krook 2010:157)

5.2.1 Lack of Party Support

Because it is the role of political parties to nominate legislative candidates, a major contributor to women's underrepresentation in parliament in Liberia is lack of political party support. The dynamics that limit female representation in political parties are very similar to those that affect female representation in parliament. Women do not play an equal role in decision making within parties and thus have little capacity to mainstream gender into political systems and structures. While outsiders can lobby with political parties to meet quota regulations, it was argued by interviewees that greater change to demand-led factors will come from within.

Many parties claim that because they have a women's wing they have addressed the issue of gender, but as Dr. Izeduwa Derex-Briggs of UN Women Liberia notes:

> By the time any institution has a wing it means the members of the wing are left out of the mainstream. Therefore, women are not in leadership in political parties, they are only in leadership when they are the women's chairlady, which doesn't mean anything, it means they are heading a group of people that is already excluded.

This quote illustrates the sidelining of women from active participation in political parties in Liberia which is further exemplified by the occurrence of midnight meetings. A representative from LIWOMAC noted:

> The major decisions are not taken when everyone is around. I'm not talking about operations and what not, I'm talking about the real decisions that are taken by the real people, they are during the night time when most people are sleeping.

The timing of these meetings excludes women due to the traditional gender roles assigned to women in Liberia. Marpu Speare of the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) stated: "The time of the meetings are 2am. A women needs to be home with her children, so they plan the meeting in a way that women cannot participate." Many research participants noted that most husbands would never allow their wives to go out in the middle of the night to attend these meetings, and political parties know that. This is an example of not only the male-dominated working pattern which is characterized by a lack of support structures for women and working mothers, but also the conscious exclusion of women from decision-making. Also noted is the expectation that women must put their domestic responsibilities above their professional responsibilities and the acceptance of this by women.

A number of research participants also noted that Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and SEA in political relationships prevent women's equal integration into political parties. Mardia Bloh a Programme Manager from National Democracy Institution (NDI) commented,

> Last month I had a conversation with a former female legislator, she had some constraints with her standard bearer, sexual attacks. Because she didn't agree to these propositions she was put back.

A similar story was told by Richelieu Allison, Executive Director of the West African Youth Network, who commented that in some cases when a woman aspirant is unable to contribute financially to a political party, she faces sexual harassment from party leadership to acquire the party emblem to contest in elections. It is important to note that GBV & SEA stand as barriers on a broader societal scale and as a human rights issue. Countless Liberian women were the victims of sexual violence that took place during the civil war and this trend continues on a massive scale today, principally by men in positions of trust (GoL 2008:32-38). The acts of and

the ideology behind GBV & SEA disempowers women on many levels, including and the loss of respect and trust between women and men, the loss of self-esteem, and the fear of assault, connecting this issue to ambition.

The key question of interest after highlighting that women are not equally integrated into political party leadership is: Why aren't women integrated into political party leadership? One answer to this question comes from Al Sambola, the Youth Representative of the Liberia Transformation Party who noted that similar to youth wings, women's wings are rarely prioritized because they are not connected to wealthy segments of society and thus do not bring money or prestige to parties. Sambola continued by stating that due to the low level of economic development and the lack of institutionalization of political parties in Liberia, party leadership tends to cycle around individuals with personal capital.

Here we can see that finances come up again in transition from stage 2 to 3 as a barrier because an aspirant's financial situation has a significant impact on their ability to build a constituency, and thus gain the support of a political party. Due to the fact that most political parties in Liberia struggle financially, a candidate's capacity to not only finance her own campaign, but also contribute financially to the party is a major indicator of whether an aspirant is nominated as a legislative candidate. Korto Jallah Socree described this when she stated:

> We came to notice that there were so many people that wanted to run with Unite Party
> because it is the ruling party and in the process it was like a demand of how much you
> can afford to give the people before you can be accepted in the party. So it was a huge
> financial burden to run on the ruling party. They will tell you, 'If X can bring good
> amount and you can't, I would prefer them.' It was no longer a process of accessing who
> is the best leader, it was a process of assessing who had the most money.

With reference to the financial burden of political campaigning, the feminization of poverty and women's financial dependence on men leave women with fewer resources. In turn, this lowers the demand for women by political parties, and women lose in what Sambola describes as the survival of the politically (or financially) fittest.

Another issue brought up in interviews in relation to why women are not integrated into party leadership was the perceived political competence of women. Many interviewees,

particularly men, came from the standpoint that Liberian women suffer from a lack of knowhow and an inferiority complex in the political realm, and are thus less qualified and less driven than their male counterparts. While self-esteem is noted in the Ambition sub-chapter as a barrier to transition to stage 2, interviewees were quick to argue that in transition to stage 3 it was the demand-led factors that limited women's representation in the 2011 elections. To further explore these demand-led factors, political party perceptions of gender quotas in Liberia are explored below as they describe the mindset of political parties towards female aspirants. Prior to the 2005 elections, the NEC worked along with civil society to come up with quota system where women would have at least 30% of candidate positions within political parties. Unfortunately, this quota stood and continues to stand only as a guideline and is not enforceable by the NEC. As such, no political party observed the 30% gender quota for their candidature in either the 2005 or 2011 election (GoL 2008:29). Many interviewees feel this trend will remain until a gender quota is legally enforced.

When investigating the reason why political parties failed to voluntarily nominate more female candidates, Mr. John Langely, the newly appointed Executive Director of the NEC explained it was an issue of perceived qualification level. Mr. Langely noted that most political parties continue to argue that incorporating women as 30% of their political candidates is problematic because of the lack of supply of qualified female candidates. They furthered that observing the gender quota would result in the nomination of unprepared and unqualified candidates to run as candidates and that parties would lose seats and power as a result. In essence, they felt that Liberian women were not as competitively advantageous as men in the political realm.

Krook (2010) defined these demand-led gender biases as out-group and distribution effects "whereby negative evaluations of female candidacy are based on their lack of surface similarity with predominantly male party elite […] and on the relative scarcity of women in high status positions, more generally" (159). These gender biases can also be understood through the concept of hegemonic masculinity which refers to the culturally normative ideal of male behaviour and the tendency for men to subordinate women (Hearn *et al* 2012:36). Most men and politicians in Liberia continue to believe that women need to change and fit into the political game, not the game itself that needs to change to equally include women. UNMIL (2012) noted:

Representatives from political parties and legislators […] see affirmative action including quotas as "*a desperate move by women to get attention*" or "*a backdoor means to get power*". They believe men and women should compete on merit within the parties and at national elections […] affirmative action as a temporary special measure to address a historical inequality in decision making has not been well understood by the people of Liberia.

This mentality stands in stark contrast to the arguments of Anne Phillips (1991), noted in A Feminist Critique of Democracy and Human Rights, who described the necessity of guaranteeing that those marginalized have a voice in democratic systems. Phillips, along with the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and UN SCR 1325, call for the instatement of temporal measures to increase women's participation in decision making positions until the recruitment environment and structures no longer distort the recruitment system on the basis of gender (1991:6-8).

Many interviewees challenged the perception that women are under-qualified and stated that there are many Liberian women with the skills and political competence to serve in the legislature by providing the example that 30% of the cabinet is represented by women who are competently fulfilling their roles. They furthered that it is due to lack of demand in the recruitment environment and structures that keep women from reaching equal representation. A representative from LIWOMAC noted:

> We have a lot of men playing a role of competency who are incompetent; men who've been in the legislature and we are not even aware that they are there, they sit there, and all they do is open cheering squad and support second motion […] Women will normally be criticized more frequently than a man, or that people will expect you to perform two times more, if not 100 times more than your male colleagues.

Senator Geraldine Doe also noted:

> When it comes to the male, the issue of education is not a question, there are more men that are in the position of trust who are not competent, but when it comes to a woman in power, they start to question competence and education. Liberia has men in leadership positions that are crack heads that were holding fighting positions in this country during the war.

The issue that comes up in these statements is the different standards women perceive are applied to political aspirants in Liberia on the basis of gender, as was noted previously on the basis of education in transition from stage 1 to 2 of the legislative recruitment process. This double standard may be a manifestation of bias in the recruitment environment and structures including the private-public sphere mentality which questions women's competency in the political sphere. Nevertheless, it is a strong example of the lack of political party support for women in Liberia.

5.2.2 Lack of Constituent Support

Moving away from the perception of competency and onto the issue of popularity, interviewees noted that political parties do not only recruit on the basis of qualification and competence, they want candidates who have a strong constituency. The major focus of constituency building for female aspirants in Liberia is gaining female support. Virtually all respondents commented on the lack of female support for female aspirants and how this loss of constituent support was an extremely significant factor in the poor transition of women from stage 2 to 3 of the legislative recruitment process.

The lack of solidarity between women, and thus between female constituents and female aspirants is surprising due to the strength of the women's movement in Liberia noted in the Background: Historical Context chapter. It is unquestionable that Liberian women, rural and urban, Muslim and Christian united in their stance for peace and as such played a key role in bringing an end to 14 years of civil war. However, despite this unity for peace, it is documented that on a personal level Liberian women peace-builders were often divided and unsupportive. In her book *Mighty Be Our Powers* (2011) Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and leader in the Liberian women peace movement, describes the "pull her down" syndrome, a way in which too often women denigrate other women. Gbowee notes: "This infighting happens in any society or group that has been impoverished or disenfranchised for a long time. You see one person doing well, think she's getting it all and want only to take it away" (Gbowee & Mithers 2011:199). Marayah Fyneah termed it the "PhD syndrome" when she stated, "If I am up there and I see you down there trying to make an impact, I will crush you to keep you in your place".

During interviews female and male respondents alike described this phenomenon over and over, stating that Liberian women do not support each other and it is a great impediment to the emancipation of Liberian women. Kebbeh Monger notes:

> We the women, the problem that we have, we don't like to support one another, you know there are more men that get into parliament, that women put them there […] When our friend gets up there, we will always try to put our friend down […] so we are talking now to the women […] we got to understand that we did our own selves wrong.

Similarly, Senator Geraldine Doe notes:

> There is a personality clash, so women will not support women; they think, no she is my friend, she's not supposed to be a politician, so they would go against a woman.

In addition, Emmett Crayton comments:

> Women think that when a woman goes up there, she will not represent us. Most women feel that when you are voted in, you are no longer in the same class as me, and that is wrong.

While discontent and conflict between women are often labeled as personality-based and a catty characteristic of women, it is important to put this issue in the broader societal context. Understanding how the history of inequality in Liberia has impacted the social culture and legislative recruitment environment is integral to understanding why Liberian women suffer from in-group conflict and struggle to support female legislative candidates. It is important to note that this in-group conflict is no more dominant in one sub-group of women than another; both women of elitist and illiterate sub-groups struggle to support the ambitions and initiatives of other women. The classist division that was formally instated 190 years ago started a cycle of distrust and discontent that is easily perpetuated in Liberia today where the gap between the rich and the poor remains significant and there has been no development of a middle class. This issue of inequality between Liberian women connects directly to the topic of symbolic representation which refers to the represented's feelings of being fairly and effectively represented (Pitkin 1967 in Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler 2005: 408). This cycle of distrust and discontent between women continues to stand as a major barrier to gender representation, especially in transition from stage

2 to 3 of the legislative recruitment process, as political parties do not equally nominate women due to lack of constituent support.

The notion that women should support female candidates is deeply ingrained in Liberia culture and risks reinforcing essentialist notions that only women can support or represent women and only men can support or represent men. It may be that such a strategy is needed unil democratic and development processes are better instilled in Liberia. Nonetheless, certain leaders in the gender equality movement are trying to challenge this mindset through advocacy strategies that focus on candidate competency instead of gender or ethnic commonalities.

Moving on to media, it was noted by interviewees that female aspirants had less representation in the media during the 2011 election season and this negatively impacted their constituent support, and thus political party nomination. The debate on women's use of media in Liberia can be described as skill versus access, with one side arguing that Liberian women shy away from media due to incompetence and fear, and the other side arguing that access to the media in Liberia is financially based and gender insensitive. The issue of women's media skills and confidence is also related to the exclusion of women to the domestic sphere, as was discussed in the Ambition sub-chapter. Due to the exclusion of women from the public sphere and thus the media, women have not developed media skills and confidence in this realm in the same way that their male counterparts have. However, from a practical standpoint it is likely that both sides of this debate have merit, as to become skilled with the media, you have to have access to it, which still lies the ultimate responsibility on finances and media demand for gender representation. Emmett Crayton noted:

> I always say the media in Liberia goes to the highest bidder. If a woman is the highest bidder, she goes, if a man is the highest bidder, he goes. So it is not really about giving access to people, they give access to cash. This puts women at a disadvantage because there are more men that have cash.

But beyond the monetary issues of purchasing media space and time, are the internal decisions that take place that underrepresent women. Because women occupy few decision-making positions in media agencies, their needs, issues and voices are marginalized in the projected

media. A LIWOMAC representative noted that media institutions in Liberia suffer from a lack of gender equality and gender awareness when she noted:

> The representation of women in these institutions is very low, so when it comes to responsibilities and making decisions in terms of what goes out to the public, women are not a part of that process […] Men are the editors, they make the decisions in the newsroom.

Again we can see that when demand is shaped by men who have a poor understanding of or respect for gender equality, it perpetuates a cycle of gender inequality where women's issues are not prioritized or understood in the media landscape. In turn this plays a major role in reinforcing a cultural ideology that marginalizes women. A representative from LIWOMAC also described a story they encountered in Grand Bassa County where a female aspirant was denied access on a local radio station. When this case was discussed at a post-election hearing, it was identified that it was that the media wanted to exclude the female candidate, but they did not understand how to highlight or promote women's concerns and issues, and feared that their listeners would tune out to a female focused program. As such, because female candidates and their platforms are poorly represented in the media landscape of Liberia, they fail to gain the same constituent support as their male counterparts. This in turn impacted female political party nomination on account of poor constituent support.

5.2.3 Strategies to enhance female transition from stage 2 to 3 (Demand)

After identifying and describing the key barriers present for women in transition from stage 2 to 3 of the legislative recruitment process this section responds to the second research question which calls for an analysis of the strategies to enhance women's representation in Liberian Parliament. Strategies that will enhance the constituent support of women and the nomination of women as candidates by political parties, including the integration of women into political parties and media agencies, and developing a cohesive, supportive mandate for female aspirants within the Liberian women's movement are discussed here. This section does not provide an exhaustive list of strategies to enhance female political aspirant nomination, but instead conceptualizes and problematizes the strategies discussed by interviewees for further analysis at the program design and implementation level.

Gender quotas are recognized statistically worldwide as the most effective fast-track method to gender representation in parliament. The only African country to achieve critical mass in gender representation in Parliament without a gender quota is Seychelles, although Yoon (2011) notes that "a series of legal reforms for gender equality might have directly or indirectly contributed to this achievement" (99). The positive role quotas play in enhancing gender representation is an important point as it problematizes arguments that emphasize supply-led constraints and strategies over demand-led strategies and constraints. As such, a key strategy to enhance gender representation in Liberia is a legally enforceable gender quota that would alter the recruitment structure and reshape party norms and rules by obliging parties to nominate 30% female candidates.

A legalized political party quota strategy has been adopted by the Liberian Women's Caucus who has presented and re-presented The Gender Quota Bill (2011) numerous times throughout the 52nd legislature. The legal aspect of this quota is an issue of prime importance because as stated earlier, the voluntary political party quota has not been adhered to. To date this bill has not been passed and thus, the previous strategies utilized to promote the bill need to be re-evaluated and re-invigorated. A key strategy recommended by Mr. Langley of the NEC was enhancing public education and advocacy on both the ideology behind the bill and what the latest version of the bill seeks to accomplish. It was evident during the data collection process that both rural dwellers and political leadership lack a clear understanding of the bill and this misinformation has been a major contributant to public discontent and lack of support for the bill.

Due to the lack of critical mass in the legislature, the Women's Caucus has much to gain by turning to their constituents for support to counter the opposing schools of thought on gender quotas that exist within the legislature and political system. Opposing schools of thought include: quotas are undemocratic and against the principle of equality opportunity for all and the belief that passing a gender quota bill will result in additional quota requests on the behalf of other marginalized groups. Several interviewees noted that the Women's Caucus would gain a lot of support by engaging with Liberians through an informed and unified campaign for the bill. Such an advocacy strategy must emphasize the governments commitments to women's representation through the signing of the before mentioned declarations and conventions, as well

as the right of women to participate in parliament and the utility of female participation. Drawing on the support of donors and the women's movement in Liberia is key to the success of this strategy.

Multiple interviewees noted the lack of vision and mission behind the Liberia women's movement. Mayor Etewedae Cooper noted that the uniting of the women of Liberia in support of gender representation in Parliament does not mean eliminating sub-groups within this movement nor does it mean washing over inter-group differences, but it does mean that we have to work to disempower their negative effects. Mayor Cooper posed the following rhetorical questions with reference to the segregation of women between groups: "Aren't there various male organizations? Aren't there all these groups? Does that mean that they are not united?" Creating forums for women to come together as equals to discuss their stories, goals and ideas is a key strategy to address the lack of unity in the women's movement in Liberia. During the peace protests of 2000-2002, women came together wearing white-shirts, head-wraps, and no jewelry or make-up to blur the classist divide between women and create a united front (Gbowee & Mithers 2011:136). As such, finding similar ways to disempower the inequality that exists is essential to overcoming it today, but in the same vein, the movement's mandate must be sensitive to inherent inter-group differences and avoid treating women as a homogenous group. Gbowee & Mithers (2011) describe the "Being a Woman", "Crown and Thorns" and "The Shedding of Weight" exercises that were used to help Muslim and Christian women unite in their peace movement (128). Members of W.I.P. noted that they were able to bring together women, some of whom had competed against each other in the 2011 elections, through strong leadership and by sharing their experiences. This helped W.I.P. members to develop a sense of empathy for each other and see their shared commonality, despite coming from different backgrounds and ethnicities.

In addition, many interviewees placed these inter-group conflicts within the national mandate of peace and reconciliation. Interviewees felt that putting the divisions and grievances between women under the umbrella of national reconciliation would aid in resolving grievances and misunderstandings by addressing the broader historical context. Marietta Williams noted that this process is dependent on the women leaders of Liberia to facilitate this process: "This is what we call reconciliation, you have to visit where you come from, let them [national leaders]

go back to the grassroots and reconcile the people, then they [rural dwellers] will all come up […] let the leaders come back to the masses." Noted here is the need for reconciliation and relationship building between national leadership and their constituents, further emphasizing the problematic classist divide in Liberia.

Finally, female candidate media usage during the 2011 election is addressed by analyzing and problematizing the programmes which aimed to increase women's use of media, particularly radio, the dominant type of media in Liberia. Gender sensitive media reporting training was provided for media representatives by the NEC; however The LMC's election media monitoring report identified that the gender sensitivity of election media was low and the percentage of election media that referenced women and women's issues was extremely low (LMC 2011:7-8; 24-25). While it was noted by several interviewees that access to media, particularly radio was enhanced during the election period, and that there is a need for gender sensitivity training within the media, both of these efforts failed to target the core of the problem: the lack of women in decision making positions in media agencies and the lack of gender sensitivity in editing decisions. As such, strategies that target women's entry into decision-making positions need to be considered as a long term strategy before the next election period. While the above noted media enhancement strategies may have failed to enhance women's use of and representation in the media in the 2011 elections, it is still likely that these programmes provided some aspirants and candidates with much needed media experience and thus targeted a need noted earlier in the Lack of Constituent Support sub-chapter.

5.3   Stage 3 to 4– Candidate to Legislator (Outcome)

In progression from stage 3 to 4 of the legislative recruitment process the voter plays the dominant role in selecting a single candidate from the pool of candidates representing their district or county. In Krook's 2010 article she excludes an analysis of the gender dynamics at the outcome stage as she states there is a wide range of evidence that has firmly debunked the third explanation that prejudices on the part of voters, who prefer to elect men than women, exist and affect gender representation in parliament (157). However, emphasizing the need to evaluate the contextual circumstances in Liberia, a new democracy where civic, voter and democratic education is low, and voters' decisions are frequently influenced by non-democratic factors, an analysis of the outcome-led factors was included in this thesis for analysis.
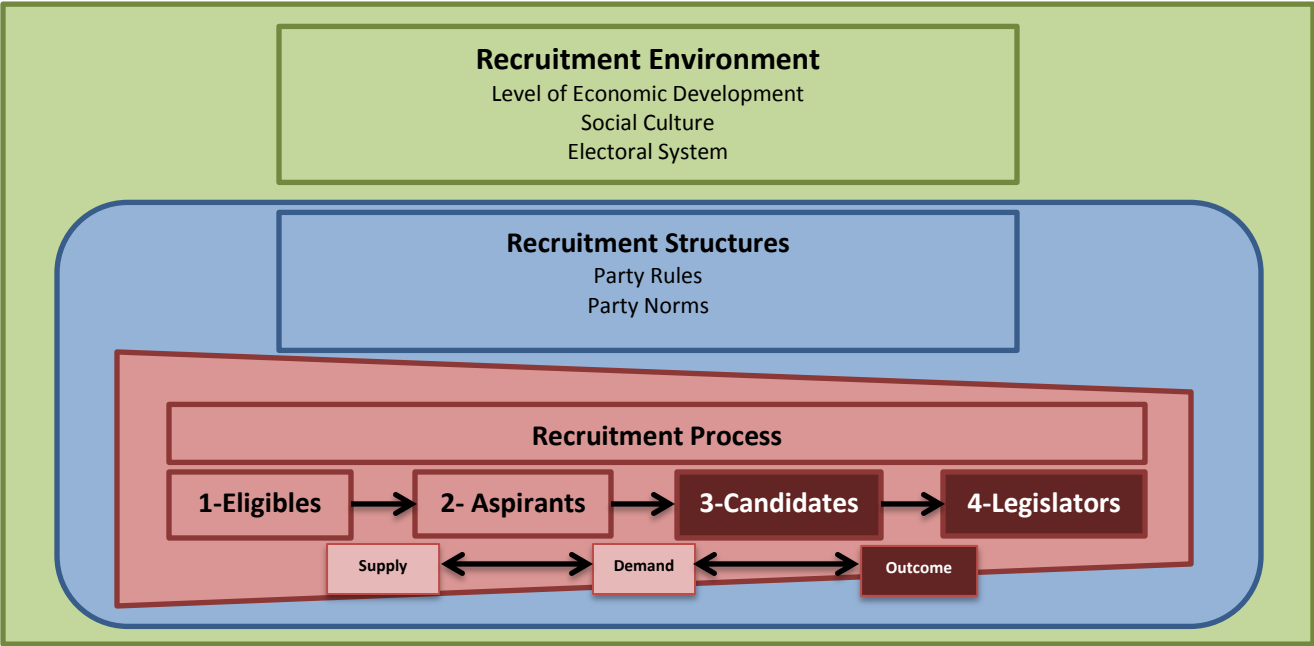
The data collected in Liberia confirmed that at the outcome level, gender does not appear to be a significant factor in gender representation in the legislative recruitment process. The SDD elections statistics provided by the NEC show that women represented 11% of both Senate and Representative candidates, nearly the same percentage of women elected as Senators and Representatives (9.2% combined).

The discrepancy in the gender representation between the election results statistics observed here (9.2% combined) and the gender representation statistics referenced earlier (11.65%) is explained by the staggered Senate elections in Liberia. In the 2011 elections only 15 of the 30 senatorial seats were up for election and thus the overall statistics take into account the female Senators that were already present in the legislature.
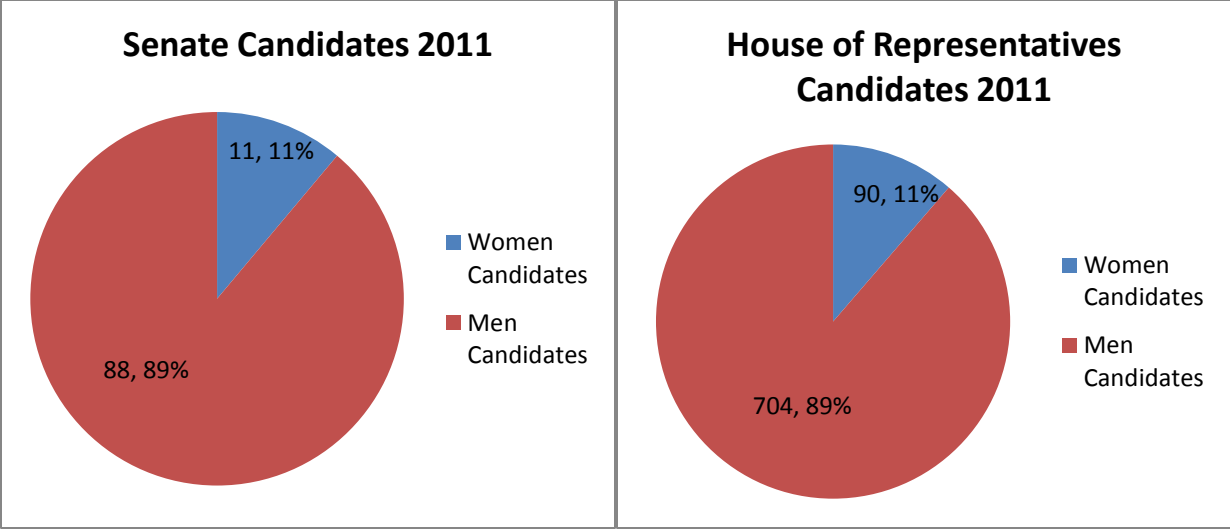
Senate Candidates 2011

11, 11% — Women Candidates
88, 89% — Men Candidates

House of Representatives Candidates 2011

90, 11% — Women Candidates
704, 89% — Men Candidates

Chart 2 (Above): SDD for Candidates of the 2011 Legislative Election in Liberia (NEC).

Elected Senators 2011

1, 7% — Women Senators
14, 93% — Men Senators

Elected Representatives 2011

7, 10% — Women Representatives
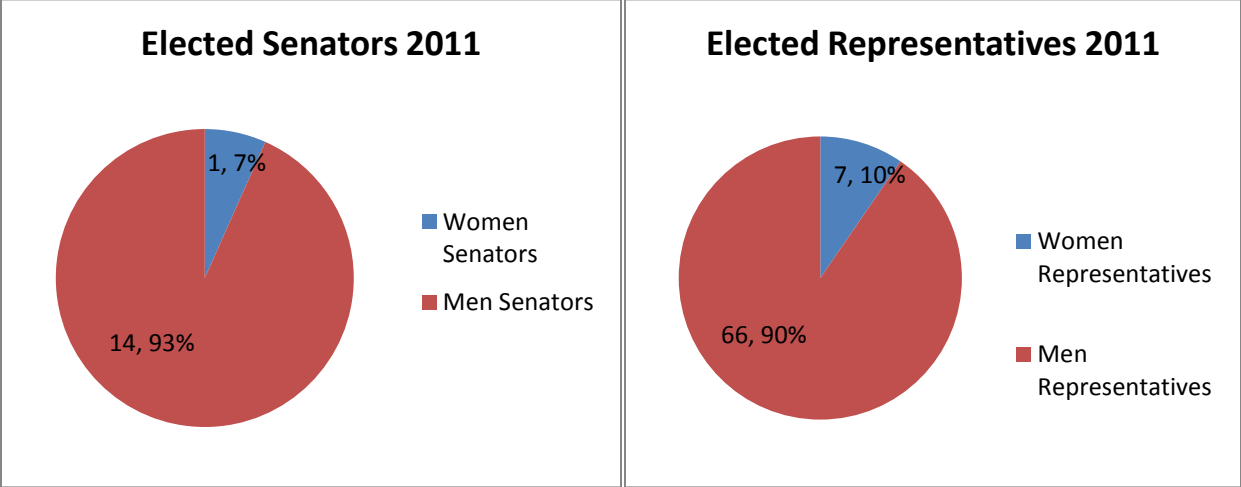66, 90% — Men Representatives

Chart 3 (Above): SDD for results of the 2011 Legislative Elections in Liberia (NEC).

In comparing the candidate statistics with the election results, it is evident that by proportion, men and women were elected at nearly the same rate from the pool of candidates; women occupy nearly the same percentage of candidates as they do elected legislators. From this information, the researcher can conclude that in transition from stage 3 to 4 gender played an almost neutral role in whether a candidate earned a seat as a legislator.

From this information it can be assumed that either the barriers women face in transition from stage 3 to 4 are no more significant than those men face, or women are able to level the playing field by overcoming significant gender barriers. Strategies to overcome, limit and

remove the barriers to gender representation are not discussed in this section as no barriers on the basis of gender were visible. While interviewees noted barriers such as political propaganda and sabotage as significant in transition to stage 4, based on the NEC statistics, the barriers noted by candidates in interviews were no more prominent for women as they were for men, and thus did not distort the legislative recruitment process on the basis of gender.

6.0   Conclusion

The case study of lack of women's representation in Liberian Parliament shows that the key distortions to the legislative recruitment process for women are supply-led in transition from eligibility to the aspirant stage with lack of ambition and resources standing out as the main barriers to gender representation. Demand-led factors, including lack of political party and constituent support stand out as the key barriers in transition from the aspirant stage to candidacy for women, though there is some account of interrelation between supply and demand-led factors in both transitions. The distortions to the legislative recruitment process function as a result of the recruitment environment and structures which are heavily impacted by the private-public sphere divide which works against feminist understandings of gender equality. In transition from the candidate stage to the elected legislator stage, no distortions were found on the basis of gender.

This thesis highlights that the lack of women in decision-making positions impedes the further inclusion of women into parliament. Having women, from various backgrounds, in the structures and sectors that affect the legislative recruitment process is important to ensure the system is not distorted on the basis of gender or class. This is best achieved when women reach the level of critical mass within these structures and are absorbed into decision-making positions. As such this thesis exemplifies how women's legislative representation is not only an ends, but also a means to gender equality as is affirmed by Nobel Economics Prize Winner Amartya Sen (1999:1-5).

In Liberia, women are most often labeled or blamed as politically incompetent, but a deeper-level analysis demonstrates that the responsibility bearers for the lack of women's representation are not only women, but also institutions and society as a whole. Therefore, highlighting the need for women to have a voice is not sufficient, organizations and institutions

must also work to integrate women's voices in decision making. As such, individuals and political structures need to accept responsibility and begin acting as agents of change along with the women of Liberia. As a heterogeneous group Liberian women need to come together in this fight because as was seen in the 2003, they are capable of great things when united for a cause.

6.1   Limitations and Future Research

While this thesis presents a model of legislative recruitment that speaks to gender barriers at the societal, political party and media institutions level, the semi-structured interview methodology was less successful in obtaining detailed data on the second research question which addressed strategies to overcome, limit or remove the barriers to women's representation. In hindsight, a focus group discussion methodology may have been more successful as it may have provided a brainstorming atmosphere to allow respondents to discuss and problematize the election strategies that addressed gender. In addition, reports by national and international actors on 2011 election programming were not complete at the time of this research. As such, further research is needed to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the 2005 and 2011 election strategies to improve programme design and implementation for the next election period and confirm the findings listed in transition from stage 3 to 4 of the legislative recruitment process.

In addition, future research is warranted to investigate the various types of quotas and electoral systems that may enhance gender representation in Liberia, such as proportional representation systems and multi-member districts (Krook 2010; Lindberg 2004; Matland 2005:99), as these strategies were not recognized as having the potential to succeed in Liberia by Liberian interviewees and thus were not discussed in this thesis. In addition, future research on the impact of women legislators in office is warranted in Liberia as this thesis limits discussion to the proposed gender bill, as this and critical mass were the main issues of consequence noted by respondents. Future research on the inner workings of the Liberian Legislature, including how high level political reforms made and how female legislatures can have a more balanced influence in these processes (Reingold 2008; Karam & Lovenduski 2005) is also warranted.

References

Adams, M. (2008). Liberia's Election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Women's Executive Leadership in Africa. *Politics & Gender 4*(3), 475-484.

Anderson, E. (2005). Sen, Ethics, and Democracy. In: Agarwal, B., Humphries, J. and Robeyns, I., (Eds.) *Amartya Sen's work and ideas: A Gender Perspective*. New York: Routledge, ch. 10.

Arneil, Barbara. (1999). *Politics & Feminism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Badmus, I. A. (2009). Explaining Women's Roles in the West African Tragic Triplet: Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote D'Ivoire in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences 1*(3), 808-839.

Ballington, J. and Karam, A., (Eds.) (2005). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition*. Stockholm: IDEA Publications Office, ch. 3.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods, 3rd edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Conner, B. (2008). "You Made a Mistake – You Selected a Woman!": The Implementation of Political Gender Quotas in Postconflict African Nations. *Tulane Journal of International & Comparative Law 17*, 203-224.

Corder, Mike. (2012). Charles Taylor Verdict A Warning to World Leaders. The Record [online] 26 April. http://www.therecord.com/news/world/article/713234--charles-taylor-verdict-a-warning-to-world-leaders, Accessed 2012-05-21.

Dahlerup, D. (2008). Gender Quotas – Controversial But Trendy: On Expanding the Research Agenda. *International Feminist Journal of Politics 10*(3), 322-328.

Dewalt, K. M. and Dewalt, B. R. (2002). Analyzing Fieldnotes. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press, ch. 9.

Economist Intelligence Unit. (2011). Democracy Index. Democracy in retreat: A report from the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Fourth World Conference on Women. (1995). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Gbowee, L. and Mithers, C. (2011). *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*. New York: Beast Books.

Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. (2009). *Case Study Method*. London: Sage Publications.

Gouws, A. (2008). Changing Women's Exclusion from Politics: Examples from Southern Africa. *African and Asian Studies 7*, 537-563.

Government of Liberia (GoL). (1986). Liberia Constitution, Article 1 & 30.

Government of Liberia (GoL). (2008). State Party Report on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Government of Liberia (GoL). (2011). Freedom of Information Act.

Hearn, J., Nordberg, M., Andersson, K., Balkmar, D., Gottzén, L., Klinth, R., Pringle, K., and Sandberg, L. (2012). Hegemonic Masculinity and Beyond: 40 Years of Research in Sweden. *Men & Masculinities 15*(1), 31-55.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2011). Liberia: Elections. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm, Accessed 2011-01-24.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012a). Women in National Parliaments: World Classification. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm, Accessed 2012-05-19.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012b). Liberia: House of Representatives. http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2183_A.htm, Accessed 2012-05-21.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012c). Liberia: Senate. http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2184_A.htm, Accessed 2012-05-21.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012d). Canada: House of Commons. http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2055_A.htm, Accessed 2012-05-21.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012e). Canada: Senate. http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2055_A.htm, Accessed 2012-05-21.

Jupp, V. (Ed). (2006). *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. Sage Publications, London.

Karam, A. and Lovenduski, J. (2005). Sweden: A Step-wise Development. In: Ballington, J. and Karam, A. (Eds.) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition*. Stockholm: IDEA Publications Office, ch. 5.

Kerner, I. (2012). Questions of intersectionality: Reflections on the current debate in German gender studies. *European Journal of Gender Studies 19*(2), 203-218.

Krook, M. L. (2010). Why Are Fewer Women than Men Elected? Gender and the Dynamics of Candidate Selection. *Political Studies Review 8*, 155-168.

Liberian Media Center (LMC). (2011). Because Accountability Matters: 2011 Elections Media Monitoring Report.

Liberian Women's Caucus. (2011). An Act to Provide for Equitable Participation and Representation of All Persons in Governance and Political Process (Gender Quota Bill).

Lindberg, S. I. (2004). Women's Empowerment and Democratization: The Effects of Electoral Systems, Participation, and Experience in Africa. *Studies in Comparative International Development. 39*(1), 28-53.

Longwe, S. H. (2000). Towards realistic strategies for women's political empowerment in Africa. *Gender and Development 8*(3), 24-30.

Maloutas, M. P. (2006). The Gender of Democracy: Citizenship and gendered subjectivity. New York: Routledge.

Matland, R & Montgomery, K. (Eds.) (2003). Recruiting Women in National Legislatures: A General Framework with Applications to Post-Communist Democracies. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Matland, R. E. (2005). Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems. In: Ballington, J. and Karam, A. (Eds.) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition*. Stockholm: IDEA Publications Office, ch. 3.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (Ed.) (1997). *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, Anne. (1991). *Engendering Democracy*. Penn. State Press.

Reingold, B. (Ed.) (2008). *Legislative Women: Getting Elected, Getting Ahead*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Scheyvens, R. and Storey, D. (2003). *Development Fieldwork*. London: Sage Publications, ch. 9.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing Qualitative Research 2nd edition*. London: Sage Publications.

Shvedova, N. (2005). Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament. In: Ballington, J. and Karam, A. (Ed.) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition*. Stockholm: IDEA Publications Office, ch. 2.1.

Statistics Canada (Stats Canada). (2010). University Enrollment. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100714/dq100714a-eng.htm, Accessed 2012-05-19.

UNDP. (2011). Human Development Report: Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All: Explanatory Note on 2011 HDR composite indices: Liberia.

UNIFEM. (2004). Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained.

UN. (1947). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/, Accessed 2012-03-26.

UNMIL. (2012). Analysis of women's political participation and integration of a gender perspective in the 2011 Electoral Process in Liberia.

UN Women Liberia. (2011). UN Women Liberia Country Strategy.

Wangnerud, L. (2005). Sweden: A Step-wise Development. In: Ballington, J. and Karam, A. (Eds.) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition*. Stockholm: IDEA Publications Office, ch. 5 Case Study.

World Atlas. Map of Liberia and Liberia Locator Map. http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/lr.htm, Accessed 2012-05-19.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Method 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Yoon, M. Y. (2011). Factors hindering 'larger' representation of women in parliament: the case of Seychelles. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics 49*(1), 98-114.

Appendix A: Interview List

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date of Interview
James Mugo Muriithi, pilot interview	UNMIL Gender Advisor	Jan. 25th 2012
Roseline Toweh	YWCA Liberia Country Director	Jan. 30th 2012
Marpu Speare	WONGOSOL, Executive Director	Jan. 30th 2012
Senator Geraldine Doe	Liberian Senate	Jan. 31st 2012
Group Interview (3)	Liberian Senate- Senator Jewel Howard Taylor	Jan. 31st 2012
	Aspirant in 2011 elections- Jebbeh Jalaibah-	
	Political advisor- Marayah Fyneah	
Group Interview (3)	Rural Women's Association	Feb. 2nd 2012
Mardia Bloh	NDI, Programme Manager	Feb. 3rd 2012
Emmett Crayton	Gender Ministry Employee	Feb. 9th 2012
John Langley	Executive Director of the NEC	Feb. 9th 2012
Julia Duncan-Cassell	Minister of Gender and Development	Feb. 15th 2012
Marietta Williams	Muslim Women's Association, Executive Director	Feb 16th 2012
Richelieu Allison	Executive Director of WAYN	Feb. 16th 2012
Etewedae Cooper	Mayor of Edina, renown female peacebuilder	Feb. 17th 2012
Group Interview (7)	LIWOMAC	Feb. 21st 2012
Group Interview (2)	Transformation Party of Liberia, Youth Rep.- Al Sambola	Feb. 21st 2012
	Women's Advocate- Charles Jonic	
Ma Kebbeh Monger	Rural Women's Association	Feb. 27th 2012
Dr. Izeduwa Derex-Briggs	UN Women Liberia Country Representative	Feb. 27th 2012

Representative Mariama Fofana	Liberian House of Representatives	Feb. 29th 2012
Representative Sekou Kanneh	Liberian House of Representatives	Feb. 29th 2012
Siah Vane Hare (not recorded)	WIP	March 2nd 2012
Korto Jallah Socree	WIP	March 2nd 2012

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Opening Questions

1.) What are your thoughts on gender representation in general? Theoretically?
2.) Are you aware of any particular arguments for and against equal gender representation in parliament?
3.) Have you experienced any interesting stories/encounters which demonstrate any value/relationship struggles concerning gender politics?

Obstacles

4.) Could you explain any significant obstacles which prevent equal gender representation in Liberia?
5.) Which type of obstacles would you argue are the most significant?
    a. Political barriers?
    b. Economic barriers?
    c. Ideological/psychological hindrances?
6.) Where do these stated obstacles stem from?
7.) What could ideally be done to remove these obstacles? What can practically be achieved?

Quotas

8.) What would you say to convince someone that installing a 30% gender quota is a bad idea? A good thing?
9.) Why was the electoral quota law instated during the transitional post-war government never enforced? Who was responsible for enforcing it?
10.) What has been the process behind the equal opportunities bill?
11.) Are you aware of what is demanded in the bill?
12.) Are you for or against it?

Election - Context

13.) How do regional/international/national treaties/conventions affect gender politics in Liberia?
14.) How has the war affected gender politics in Liberia?
15.) In Rwanda, women hold over 50% of legislative seats in parliament. The women of Mozambique, South Africa, Burundi and Tanzania hold over 30%. What can explain the discrepancy between these statistics and those of Liberia's current parliamentary gender representation?
16.) What are Liberian political parties doing that is restraining/promoting women in gaining high level positions on their electoral lists? Who decides candidates positioning on electoral lists?
17.) Are you aware of why so many potential candidates failed primaries?
18.) Women lost one seat in the House of Representatives and in the Senate from the 2005 elections. Was this expected?

19.) Do the women who earned seats in parliament share any particular characteristics or circumstances which enabled their success?

20.) Do the women who failed to earn seats share any particular characteristics or circumstances which limited their success?

21.) Did women's issues take a significant place in the 2011 election discourse? What was the discourse on women's representation on the run up to the 2011 elections?

22.) What role has the Women's Caucaus played in promoting women's representation? What role have women's organizations played? Are these organizations endogenous or were created/supported through the donor community?

23.) Do you think the movement to promote gender representation in Liberia is an organic process stemming from local interest, or a movement promoted from outside Western ideals?

24.) How do think Liberians chose who they vote for?

Media - Elections

25.) What role did the media play in promoting women's representation?

26.) Do you feel women had equal access to unbiased media during the campaign season?

Women in Politics/Gender

27.) How do you see female participation in the Sirleaf administration over the past 6 years?

28.) Do female electives forward pro-women legislation or enact more legislation which serves participator/inclusive growth?

29.) How have successful women politicians benefitted society/women/men?

30.) Is it fair to assume that a government headed by Africa's first democratically elected female president would have a higher representation of women throughout?

31.) Do you think gender roles are socially constructed or are a concept created by nature or God? (Nature/Nurture debate)

32.) What are the common gender stereotypes in Liberia? How do these stereotypes play for and against women's equal representation in parliament?

33.) How does Ellen's gender play to or against her successful election?

Men's perspectives

34.) What position do most men hold of women's representation? Locals and politicians?

35.) How do men benefit/loss out from women's equal representation?

36.) How can women and men better work together to promote women's representation?

37.) What can men do to support women's representation?

Strategies for success

38.) What can be done to promote equal gender representation in parliament in Liberia?

39.) What can be done to prevent women from representing only token seats?

40.) Can you think of any changes to Liberia's electoral system which may promote equal gender representation in parliament?

Closing Questions

41.) What is to be gained/lost by supporting women's equal representation in Liberia?
42.) What is the road ahead for gender representation in Liberia, in your eyes?
43.) What do you predict for the future of Liberia's gender politics?
44.) Are there any questions/themes/issues that I have missed or any additional comments you would like to make?
45.) Who should I interview next?

Appendix C: Research Participant Information Sheet

Despite having democratically elected Africa's first female president, Liberia's female representation in parliament (10.68% in 2011, down from 16.49% in 2005[1]) falls below her continent's average (20.3% in 2011[2]). As a means of supporting gender parity in decision making this research investigates the limiting and contributing factors to women's equal representation in parliament in Liberia.

Rights of Research Participants

Research participants may choose to contribute their experiences, insights and knowledge to the research as an anonymous or identified source. Anonymous sources will be protected by utilizing pseudonyms whereby identities will be revealed only on a secured master list. Data will be stored and protected on the researcher's personal computer and all precautions will be taken to ensure the privacy of participants.

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequence and all information provided will be removed from the pool of collected data. In addition, participants have the right to have any audio recording device turned off at any time during the interview.

Participants are free to ask questions about the research at any time. Data will be collected, analyzed and reported following Scheyvens and Storey's 2003 Development Fieldwork Ethical Guidelines with a combined approach of absolutist and relativist ethical models. All efforts will be made to minimize the potential harms to the participants and maximize benefits.

Participants are entitled to receive information about the research results which will be freely available to the public after dissertation defense in June 2012. It is hoped that the research will be used by various individuals and groups in Liberia, including NGOs, women's groups and government, to support women's representation in parliament.

Thank you for your time and patience. Please feel free to contact me at any time with your questions or concerns.

Julia Boyle, Lund University Master's Candidate 2012

Liberia: +231 (0) 880947719

Sweden +46 (0) 764089106

Canada: +1 (519) 5787169

Email: julesb.83@gmail.com

---

[1] Data sourced from Inter-Parlimentary Union (IPU) – www.ipu.org on 1/24/2012.
[2] Ibid.