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A Comparative Study of Gender-Centered Policies: Liberia and Uganda

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Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Gender equality and women's empowerment has taken the forefront of international relations and politics in recent years. The international community has placed greater emphasis on implementing legal mechanisms to promote gender equity around the world. For this reason I chose to conduct a comparative study to examine whether female leaders are more likely than a male leader to establish and implement gender-centered policies during their administration. I hypothesize that female leaders are not more likely than a male leader to prioritize gender-center policies. I contend that prioritization of gender policies depends on various factors including the political environment of the country and the personality and life experience of the leader.

There is a general assumption that a female leader is more likely to act to implement social policies that directly affect women and children. There are cases in which this may be true, however, this does not hold true in all cases. For this reason, I chose to compare a male and female leader. I also chose to examine countries where women played an instrumental role in the resolution of an internal conflict within the subject countries; as there an assumption that when women played a major role in the resolution of the an internal conflict and a female leader subsequently took power, gender-centered policy implementation would be the primary goal.

I chose to look at Liberia under the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Uganda under the administration of Yoweri Museveni. In both countries women played an influential role in civil war resolution. The examination of these two leaders also offers the opportunity to analyze leaders of opposite sex and different personalities, as well as life experience.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Design

Within the International Relations field, not much research has been done about the way gender influences leadership, especially female leaders, has been quite limited. Even less research has been done on the way gender issues are addressed during a leader's tenure. There are general assumptions about gender relations. There are arguments surrounding whether there are changes in the way gender issues are addressed in governments under female leadership. Some hold the position that the way gender issues are addressed remains unchanged even under female leadership.

The goal of this thesis is to examine whether more attention is given to gender-centered policies by females leader than by a male leader in a country where women played a significant role in an internal conflict resolution. My hypothesis is that female leaders are not significantly more likely than male leaders to pursue gender-centered issues during their tenure in office. It has been found that both male and female leaders tend to prioritize national security issues, which often take precedence over gender-centered issues.

Many observers might assume that when women played a major role in the resolution of an internal conflict in particular country and a female leader subsequently took came power in the said country; the pursuit of gender-centered policy design and implementation would necessarily be among the primary goals of the leader's administration. This assumption is generally speaking not made when a male leader comes into office under similar circumstances. I have chosen to examine this topic through the lens of this assumption. such This assumption hold true in some cases, research indicates that it does not apply in all cases

and for this reason I believe it is instinctive to examine some of the contributing factors that contribute to such assumptions.

I am particularly interested in looking at both male and female leaders who are leading developing countries in which women played a major role in the resolution of an internal conflict. One will often find, in countries that have experienced and emerged from internal conflict with damaged or even broken political and social infrastructures. Leaders who take office after a country emerges from such conflicts are frequently tasked with major nation building. For this reason I have chosen to look at the following leaders: President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Whether male or female leader a leader prioritizes policies based on a host of factors which vary based on his or her assessment of the country's need at that particular time. Eminent national security risk, environmental conditions, and a leader's personality are among the forces that affect the leader's prioritization.

By means of comparative study this thesis will examine the similarities and differences in policies enacted by a male and female leader of a developing country that has recently emerged from an internal conflict. The case studies seek to answer the following question: are female leaders more likely than male leaders to enact gender-centered social programs that benefit women? In this study I will look at legislations and initiatives pertaining to education, health, and human rights enacted during the tenure of the subject Presidents. In addition, I will explore what impact (if any) did the fact that women played a significant role in stabilizing the subject countries have on the prioritization of policies that directly benefit women? Furthermore, is there a direct link between female national leadership and female empowerment in politics? Authors such as David Close contend:

A female president or prime minister frequently has not spelled a good time for a country's women's movement. The most powerful and successful female heads of government in the twentieth century, Indira Ghandi of India and Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, may have inspired other women to enter politics and certainly showed male politicians that they did not hold a monopoly on toughness and cunning, but neither can be styled defender of feminist values. Indeed women political leaders have not been exceptionally strong defenders of women's rights.¹

This thesis will seek to review arguments as such.

The role that women play in peace-building and security sustainability in post-conflict countries has become a focus of some studies in recent decades, with the frequency of investigations increasing both domestically and internationally. This increased focus piqued my interest and motivated me to explore the possibility that there is a trending shift in the way women's involvement impacts peace-building during internal conflicts. I will examine the evidence to determine whether it support my position that female inclusion is vital to peace-building and peace sustainability in countries with episodes internal conflicts

How did these women become involved? Were they given the opportunity by the sitting governments during periods of conflicts or did they create the means for themselves? It can be speculated that female leaders are more likely to create gender-centered policies that would promote women's political empowerment: this is the classic top down a progression. It is also possible that female political empowerment a female leader to enact gender-centered programs or laws; perhaps women empowerment comes from a different place, example from the grassroots organization undertaken by women for women: the bottom up progression. I will examine the evidence to identify some of the relationships that often precipitates empowerment and also to determine if it supports the position that the empowerment of women is more likely in a bottom up progression.

¹ David Close, Nicatagua: The Chamorro Years (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 1999) p.79

In the following chapter I will outline the theoretical framework and research design. Then I will look at the political, social, and economic conditions in which Johnson-Sirleaf and Museveni came into power. This will set the stage for a comparative analysis of the subject leaders. I will review the policies and laws enacted by these figures during their tenure as national leaders. I will also look the national budgets breakdowns during the subject administrations. Later I will compare and contrast the performance of the two leaders.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

As outlined in the first chapter, I hypothesize that female leaders are not significantly more likely than male leaders to pursue gender-centered policies during administrations. I chose to particularly focus on leaders of countries that have experienced internal conflicts. I have chosen President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Looking at these leaders prioritization of gender centered issues can shed light on my hypothesis because they both came into power at during a time when their country's national security was a priority.

Realism contends that the state's interest should be consistent with the interest and issues prioritized by its leader. It should likewise follow that the national security interest of the state should be the leader's top priority. In accordance to realist beliefs that "states are the primary actors in world politics and no higher power sits above them."² Realism is not concerned with the well being of the individual citizen within the state. Donnelley states that the "realist recognized that human desires range widely and are remarkably variable."³ Thus he contends that "the core of realism lies in the conjunction of anarchy and egoism, and the resulting imperatives of power politics."⁴

² John J. Mearsheimer, "Realism, the Real World, and the Academy," in Michael Brecher and Frank P. Harvey, eds., *Realism and Institutionalism in International Studies* (Ann Harbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), pg 23-33.

³ Jack Donnelly, *Theories of International Relations, 4th Edition* (New York: Palgrave Mcmillian, 2009) p.33

⁴ Ibid

There has been much debate about the practicality of Realism in a Post Cold War world. Since realism has little regard for the individual (male or female) gender centered policies certainly would not be a priority according to this theory. Realists would instead hold that because state security and national interest is paramount, President Sirleaf and Museveni would prioritize state centered, primarily security oriented issues as as doing so would be the in the best national interest of the country.

International Relations has primarily been focused on power politics, war and security of the state. The study of IR has expanded over time to include Liberalist beliefs and concerns. It is said that liberalism is the most lasting and influential philosophical traditions that has emerged from the European Enlightenment.⁵ Liberalism is an approach to government which places emphasis on human rights, democracy, constitutionalism, and limitations on the powers of the government.⁶ Liberalism, an intellectual tradition with ancient roots, reemerged in IR after the Cold War. Burchill contends that Liberalism is responsible for the spread of the democracy after the Cold War and globalization of the world economy.⁷

Unlike Realism which places its emphasis on the state as the center of the politics, Liberalism places more emphasis on the individual. Liberals hold that a state's domestic policies can offer an indication of state behavior in the international community. This idea is known as the "inside out" approach.⁸ Liberals place great emphasis on maintaining peace. Liberals have held the view that legitimate domestic political orders will eventually cause the

⁵ Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, (New York, NY: 2009, Palgrave Mcmillian) p.57

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

end of international conflict. Liberals, unlike Realists highlight the fact that states have forgone their instincts for war and have institutionalized the norms of peaceful relations.

Liberalism highlights the important of human rights. Liberals believe that the legitimacy of any domestic political system is based on the states capacity to uphold the rule of law and the states respect for the human rights of its citizens. Liberals hold that human rights are inalienable as they cannot be given up or taken away. They are a universal set of “birthrights” that cannot be assessed or withheld based on race, gender, nationality, or status. This theory presents a normative commitment to human rights, believing that standards and values should be applied universally.

As stated earlier Liberals use the way states treat their citizens as a gauge of how they may behave within the international community. States that treat the citizens ethically and allow participation in the political process are thought to be less likely to behave aggressively in the international community. The international community placed emphasis on this Liberal in the post Cold War Era. This theory was challenged with the rise in internal conflicts and reported human rights abuses.

In relation to this thesis Liberal theory would support the prioritization of gender-centered policies. The governing administration’s efforts to address human-rights-oriented concerns would in fact be a move in the direction of development not only on the domestic from but within the international community. Liberal theory also gives way to important players within the subject state’s political stability. Liberals look at the role both humans and civil society groups play in a country’s peace sustainability. Civil society groups and organizations impact governments on both the domestic and transnational level. In numerous

instances, civil societies played a significant role in stabilizing the subject countries during periods of internal conflict.

Apart from the two main theories of realism and liberalism, feminist theory bring a new perspective to the international relations table. Feminist theory refers to a school of thought that arose from feminist movements. This theory amongst other things seeks to define gender and the role it plays in power dynamics. Feminist theorist finds it essential to define the term “gender” which is central to the feminist discussion.⁹ As per feminist theory the basis of the gender definition is not based on the biological difference between male and female, but is instead based on the complex social construct of male and female identities.¹⁰ Using the concept of gender, feminism uses gender to analyze the relation of power involving men and women; it looks at how power is exerted and how the reaction to the exertion manifests over time.¹¹

With its focus on non-state actors, marginalized groups, alternative conceptualization of power and relationships, feminist has brought fresh thinking to world relations and politics.¹² a proliferation of research on gender and international security has emerged since the start of the new millennium. This research includes feminist analysis on the gendered impact of

⁹ Tricia Ruiz, “Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist challenge to Realism and Liberalism,” available at <https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/honors/documents/journals/soundings/Ruiz.pdf> accessed November 18, 2014

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, (New York, NY: 2009, Palgrave McMillian) p.237

war and quantitative analysis in which gender is used to explain state behavior and international conflict.¹³

Empirical feminist focuses on the role of women/gender as an empirical dimension of international relations. An example is the fact that there are still fewer women politically empowered than there are men. Women remain more likely to be found the in the group of non-state actors making their voices heard to speak up for the marginalized groups of a given society. These actions are often taken in efforts to affect policies to address the needs of the said group.

Unsurprisingly, women hold few positions in low levels of government. Their representation is even scarcer in higher levels of government. This absence of women in policy making bodies of governments means that local, regional, and national policy priorities are created without the input of women.

This theory contends that women's experience has been excluded from the study of IR. Many theorists maintain that IR is "gendered" to marginalize women's voices. They also stress that women's knowledge, experience and perspectives should be included in the study of IR.¹⁴ For example, in IR the security focus is on the security of the state and feminist theorists contend that security should be focused on the security of people, especially women within the state. During periods of internal conflict women are at a higher risk of being raped and rape has been used as weapon of war in many cases. For this reason policy making will u

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Tricia Ruiz, "Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist challenge to Realism and Liberalism," available at <https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/honors/documents/journals/soundings/Ruiz.pdf> accessed November 18, 2014

exclude the voice and experience of women and ultimately produce a policy that would likely be to the detriment of women.

A useful IR theory places its focus on leadership style. This theory looks at the difference in rational decision making and the personality of the leader. A variety of constraints affect the leader's decision making on both major foreign policy issues and simple domestic and local decisions. Unlike the aforementioned IR theories, this theory accounts for the variation of state policy based on the personality and leadership style of the leader.

Thomas Preston, Preston designates leaders as agents of change.¹⁵ As change agents, the actions and decisions of leaders have a greater effect on their constituents than the actions of the constituents have on the leader. This theory clearly highlights that there is a two-way relationship between leaders and followers (constituents). Preston contends that a leader is very little without their followers. Leaders play various roles in foreign policy making and their relationship with constituents and leadership style impacts the foreign policy process.¹⁶

The subject leaders of this paper had relationships with various constituent groups. These relationships will be explored, with special attention to their connection with women and whether that connection affected their gender-centered policy. Also, though there have been many scholarly studies on leadership styles and personality; most perspectives have been non gendered. Not surprisingly, there is a general assumption that political leaders are males.

¹⁵ Thomas Preston, *Leadership and Foreign Policy Analysis*, <https://mysite.wsu.edu/personal/tpreston/home/Various%20Preston%20Publications/Preston%20-%20Leadership%20and%20Foreign%20Policy%20Analysis%202010.PDF>, pg.4856 accessed November 19, 2014

¹⁶ Ibid

While the assumption maybe correct, within this paper, I will seek to analyze what, if any, impact does gender have on leadership, and if there are influences, what are they.

The concept of Human Security took rise in the international sphere in the early 1990's after the UNDP 1994 Human security Report which emphasized that the Human Security concept must focus on the security of people. It asserted that the concept of security needed to be expanded beyond the sole focus of national security to include the security of people. The concept called for shift from security through armament to security through sustainable human development.¹⁷ The report listed a number of perceived security threats including: food, health, environmental, economic, personal, community, and political security.

Ultimately, the human security approach seeks to question and alter the focus of security and how security is afforded. The concept replaces the state as the security focus and instead places emphasis on providing a cohesive long term view of security. Essential to this theory is the fact that there are different levels of security and that there is interdependence amongst the different levels. Scholars of this theory maintain that this interdependence implies that insecurity within one sphere will affect security within another.¹⁸ Within this concept the primary role of the state is to protect its citizens. Given past experiences, the state cannot be left with the sole responsibility of protecting its citizens. Scholars of the human security theory maintain that regional and international organizations share the responsibility

¹⁷ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004, p 24.

¹⁸ Ibid

to intervene in ensuring security when human lives are threatened.¹⁹ Sustainable peace and security must be inclusive of civil society organizations in formulation and execution of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction.²⁰

Human security theory looks beyond national security and aims to provide security on multiple levels including but not limited to: personal, institutional and structural-cultural. In an effort to effectively provide adequate security on each level the scholars of the theory maintain that power relations should be analyzed in socio-cultural context. This analysis includes gender perspective. Unlike any other IR theory, human security includes the impact of gender norms and historical constructs on sustainable peace and security. This is in an effort to understand human security in terms of those experiencing insecurity. The beliefs of the marginalized should be taken into account and not imposed upon them via policies that are not inclusive.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this paper, gender-centered policies will be defined as programs and policies that were designed to better the lives of women in the subject countries. Programs addressing the medical, educational, and political needs of women will be examined. Other social factors such as literacy rates, health services, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), and education will be reviewed to conclude how women fared under each administration. I will also seek to examine whether organizations and programs designed to enhance and empower

¹⁹ Cheryl Hendricks, "*From State to Human Security in South Africa*" available at

<http://www.issafrica.org/publications/monographs/monograph-122-from-state-security-to-human-security-in-southern-africa-edited-by-cheryl-hendricks> Accessed November 2014

²⁰ Ibid

women were created, and if they existed prior to the administration, were given sufficient funding to provide for sustainability. I will also look at, whether legislation was implemented to improve and secure the lives of women under the subject Presidents' administrations. Statistics compiled by various international organizations such as The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), The World Bank, The United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Human development Report were helpful with providing comparable statics in areas that I wish to analyze.

The UNDP has been producing and publishing the Human Development Report (HDR) since 1990. The report includes the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures primarily health, education and living standards. The HDI has four main indicators: life expectancy, expected years of schooling, average years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. There set minimums and maximums for each category and the indication of each country's rank compared to the set goals are indicated by a number between 0 and 1.

²¹ The report also includes a Gender Development Index (GDI), which uses the same dimensions as the HDI to measure the gender gap in human development achievements.²²

A Gender Inequality Index (GII) is also included in the HDR. Gender inequality remains a barrier to human development. While women and girls have made significant strides since 1990, there are remaining gender gaps as a result of discrimination against women and girls in education, health, political participation and access to economic participation. The GII measures gender inequality by three dimensions of human development: reproductive health measured by maternity mortality ratio and adolescent birth

²¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> accessed November 20, 2014

²² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi> accessed November 20, 2014

rates, political empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seat occupied by women and proportion of female and male age 25 and older with some secondary education, and economic status via economic market participation measure by rate of labor market participation by females and males age 15 and older.²³ The GII offers insight into gaps in human development and areas in need of policy intervention to overcome the systematic disadvantages faced by women.

GI I exposes the difference in the distribution of achievements between male and females. It measures the human development costs of gender inequality, therefore the higher the GII values, the more disparities there are between women and men.²⁴ It has been concluded that countries with high gender inequality also experience higher rates of unequal human development.

An analysis of subject administration's budgets will offer insight into the amount of funds allocated to areas that benefits women.

²³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii> accessed November 20, 2014

²⁴ Ibid

Chapter3: Literature Review

Essential to IR is the understanding fundamental IR theories. Scott Burchill's *Theories of International Relations* offers a comprehensive review of major theories of the field. The book begins with an introduction that explains the importance of studying international relations theories in order to gain insight into the field in theoretically sound manner. This is followed by nine chapter all dedicated to leading theories in the field. The theories of interest for this paper were Realism, Liberalism, and Feminism.

Realists maintain the focus of security is the state. Great emphasis is placed on national interest and the maintainance of a position of power within the international community. There is no room for social, economic, and certainly not any gender issues in this theory. Therefore, according to this theory the subject leaders will traditionally prioritize national security matters during their administration.

Liberals holds a more expansive view. While the security of the state remains important, Liberals expresses interest in the human conditions and emphasis is placed on advocacy for democracy. Liberals, unlike Realists, are concerned with domestic orders, and contends that the legitimacy of domestic political orders or policy is largely contingent upon the rule of law and the state's respect for the human rights of its citizens. Liberals also use state's domestic policy as an indicator of how the state can possibly behave in the international community.

Feminist theories have introduced gender as a relevant empirical category and an analytical tool to understanding power relations within the international community. Gender has also been introduced as a normative position from which alternative political world orders can be considered. Feminists emphasize the way in which gender is constructed. Unlike other IR theories, Feminism has shifted the focus to non-state actors. Feminist theory brought a new perspective to world politics. On general feminist theory principles, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf would prioritize gender-centered policies. This will be based on the fact that she is a female and would have a different outlook on the needs of the people of her state. On the surface, it would be expected that feminist theory will support the prioritization of gender-centered policies. While this may be the case, according to empirical feminism, due to the fact that men continue to dominate government legislative positions, there is a lack of female presence to influence policies regarding women empowerment. Therefore, empirical feminism as it seems would support my hypothesis that female leaders are not more likely than male leaders to prioritize gender-centered policies.

Tricia Ruiz in an article titled “Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist Challenge to Realism and Liberalism” contends that feminists use the concept of gender to analyze the relation of power involving men and women, how that power is exerted, and how that interaction has been socially and historically implemented over time. Ruiz goes on to define patriarchy, a term she finds essential to understanding feminist theory. As per Ruiz, patriarchy is defined as:

A system in which women are subordinate to men in terms of power and status, and which is based on the belief that it is right for a man to command a woman to listen.²⁵

She goes on to discuss how gender and patriarchy is used to describe IR and whether it should remain the same or evolve. Ruiz states that feminist theory holds that major players within the field such as policymakers, diplomats, heads of governments and academics professionals, have been and remain primarily males who come from a patriarchal background both socially and politically.²⁶ Therefore, discussion within the field remains dominated by a demographic that is socialized to ignore the value that women can bring to the field of world politics.

Furthermore, Ruiz went on to discuss how feminism seeks to have a more expansive view of security. She maintained that feminists argue that security should address acts of rape and violence, not only from foreign perpetrators, but also from their fellow citizens. Women are at greater risk of being raped at during periods of war; as well as rape is often used as a weapon of war or ethnic cleansing

One of the primary roles of the state is to provide peace and security for the citizens both within the state and to ensure their protection against threats from outside. In a piece entitled “A Theoretical Conceptualization of Human Security”, Saragen Naidoo offers an appraisal of literatures written on threats to human security that does not derive from military confrontation. This theory offers an expanded definition of security. She points out Barry Buzan’s perspective that the militaristic approach that dominated the discourse during the

²⁵ Tricia Ruiz, “Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist challenge to Realism and Liberalism,” available at

<https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/honors/documents/journals/soundings/Ruiz.pdf> accessed

²⁶ Ibid

Cold War was simple-minded.²⁷ As per human security theory security threats were expanded beyond militaristic and include political, economic, environmental, and social threats.

Naidoo also discusses what is referred to as the postmodernist or critical human security approach which essentially attempts to remove the state as the focal point of security. This approach places greater emphasis on the interdependency and transnationalization of non state actors.²⁸

This approach to human security was further discussed in Naidoo's paper in with reference to Ken Booth's advocacy for a broadened conceptualization of security beyond military determination of threats. As per Booth "the state should be dislodged as the primary referent of security and instead should encompass a wide range of non-state actors, such as individuals, ethnic and cultural groups, regional economical bodies, multinational corporations (MNCs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOS), and just about all human kind."²⁹ Essentially Booth is calling for a coalition of parties to be included in the determination of security threats. By expanding the scope of security on multiple levels, Booth argues that human security is ultimately more important than state security.

Booth also contends that the state should be removed as the primary referent of security because governments and states which are suppose to ensure the safety and security of their citizens have been in many cases the sources of insecurity of their people (rather than military threats from neighboring states).³⁰ This was especially helpful perspective with regards to the case studies for this thesis. The citizens of Liberia and Uganda were subject to great human

²⁷ Saragen Naidoo, "A Theoretical Conceptualization of Human Security" pg. 2

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid, pg. 3

security threats perpetrated by their governments. The mention of a broadened definition of security to include the individual and gender offers some insight into the possibility of the subject Presidents prioritizing gender-centered policies. Though this particular document was unable to offer insight whether a female or male leader are more likely to focus on security beyond the state; it pointedly argued that states which have been the source of insecurity for its citizens should place its focus on security beyond the state as the referent. The subject states in this thesis fits the profile as argued by Booth and therefore, I believe that both leaders or at least one of the them will be open to enacting policies to address security threats that directly affect the well being of citizens within their state.

Earl Conteh-Morgan wrote an article “Peacebuilding and Human Security: A Constructivist Perspective”, which I found interesting because of its focus on sustainable peace within nation-states that have experienced internal conflicts. The article argues human security at the personal, institutional, and structural-cultural level can be more effectively realized in the process of peacebuilding. Conteh-Morgan asserts that human security can be more effective via peace-building if:

Culture and identity and an interpretative bottom- up approach to peace-building are taken into account when addressing the problems of marginalized people, groups, and communities. Both material as well as socio-cultural contexts are considered critical factors to human security and peace-building; and serious attempts are made to move beyond short term functions of maintaining a ceasefire, demobilization and disarmament , and monitoring competitive elections among former adversaries.³¹

The article poses a series of questions to analyze. One question of interest was, how was daily life affected by the historical construction of gender, class and culture, and their impact on individuals, institutions, and structures? This interested me as is sought to look at the

³¹ Earl Conteh-Morgan, “Human security and Peace-building: a Constructivist Perspective,” International Journal of Peace Studies Vol.10 No.1 (2005) Pg.69

constructs of gender and its effects on sustainable peace-building. This author asserts that sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict nation-states occurs when the true nature of things such as class, gender, and ethnic equality is understood. He found it important to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates the dissatisfied demographics of a state and the beliefs of marginalized individuals. Understanding these elements is critical and these beliefs should be seriously taken into consideration versus imposing beliefs of external groups. Understanding the construct of gender within the subject nation-states can offer greater insight into whether women empowerment may be in the forefront of the leader's agenda.

Carol Miler and Shahra Razavri edited a book titled "Missionaries and Mandarins" which examines the ways women worked to transform the structures of institutions, NGOs, and state organizations to make them more gender friendly. Institutional laws, funding and resource allocations, and procedures were examined throughout the book. It was argued that though it is challenging to alter the gendered nature of government it is not impossible to do so. One chapter highlighted the lack of awareness of gender issues found amongst state personnel. It was determined that perhaps the reason for such insensitivity was due to the fact that most state departments were headed by males who are generally deemed more insensitive.

The writers also argued that similar attitudes can be found amongst women within government institutions. Furthermore, the writers contended that contrary to the general assumption that women in positions of power automatically work on gendered-centered initiatives, women actually tend to behave in an insensitive manner similar to their male counterparts. The author offers a possible reason why women in government positions neglect women's matters during their tenure:

Their class status distances them from the concerns of poorer women. More importantly the few women who do gain access to political power tend to be so

isolated from other women and are under powerful pressures to conform to the dominant orientation of their institutions and the work patterns of their male colleagues. These pressures limit possibilities for developing sensitivities to, and acting in, women's interest."³²

This is a plausible rationale that may be useful for explaining female leader's lack of action on gender-centered policies.

David Sear's book entitled, "Handbook of Political Psychology," discusses various approach within political psychology theory. One section highlighted the affects that the personality of a leader has on their tenure. This was of particular interest to me as I question whether a female leader such as Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf promoted gender-centered policy because of her personality or gender, or both.

Another helpful read was V Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Ruyan's "Global Gender Issues". The authors argue for the need for a new perspective within international affairs. They contend that gender cause us to be oblivious to the presence of women within the political arena. While there are women who hold positions of political power, there are other women in less influential roles working and hoping for equality. There are also those women who are invisible to many: those that labor to care for their families on a daily basis, working menial jobs, with little to no access to resources.

The authors seek to highlight gender inequality in terms of political power, economics, and security. They also highlight the links between women's issues and world politics. Peterson and Ruyan offered hope for a brighter future with regards to gender equality within world politics. This can be achieved via the redefinition and reshaping of gender roles and relations within the international affairs field, and the setting of new standards for power.

³² Carol Miller and Shahra Razavi, *Missionaries and mandarins* (London, England: UNRISCO, 1998) pg.71

Augusto Lopez Claros and Saadia Zahidi conducted a study with the World Economic Forum. The study entitled “Women’s Empowerment: Measuring the Gender Gap” was conducted to assess the socio-economic disparity between women and men in 58 countries and measure the level to which women have gained equality to men across five dimensions: political empowerment, education, economic opportunity, economic participation, and health and well being. Over the past three decades there has been increased awareness of the need for women empowerment. Despite the United Nations’ efforts to “ensure women’s involvement in mainstream activities,” achieving gender equality has been progressing at an extremely slow rate. This change challenges one of the most deep rooted attitudes and will require more than just a change of law to change practices within multiple spheres; namely the policy arena, communities, and the home.

The study offers an array of statistics on each country’s performance in the five categories previously mentioned. This study was helpful to me with regards to statistics on Africa and how African nations fared within the categories. Africa scored low in terms of gender equality in most of the measured dimensions.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf’s *This Child Will be Great* offers extensive insight into the life of Africa’s first female President. Sirleaf gives the reader a tour of her life, from her early childhood through her marital years (in which she endured physical abuse), her numerous journeys to the United States, and her determination to alter the political atmosphere in Liberia. The book highlighted her journey during her rise to power. I found her struggle for political empowerment especially intriguing. Despite what seemed like insurmountable odds and a myriad of threats against her life Sirleaf pursued political enfranchisement with great tenacity.

Sirleaf also made very clear her gratitude for the role that women played throughout her life. She consistently highlighted the strength of the Liberian women and sought to empower them as much as she can. When she became President in 2006 Sirleaf vowed to “give Liberian women prominence in all affairs of the country.”³³

From this book we get insight into the life story of Johnson Sirleaf. We have the opportunity to see some her motivations behind some decision made over the years of her administration. The book also outlined several goals of her cabinet; the plans directly related to women and children were of special interest.

A United States Institute of Peace (USIP) briefing written by Dorina Bekoe and Christina Parajon entitled, “women’s Role in Liberia’s Reconstruction” gives an overview of the influential role that women and women led organization played in peace sustainability in Liberia. They pointed out the multiple fronts that women and organizations for and by women worked at during periods of internal conflict and their role in peace sustainability. The brief highlighted that women headed five major ministries within Johnson Sirleaf’s administration.

The brief names various organizations such as the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), and the Mano Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPNET); which took a major part in advocating for peace during periods of armed conflicts, and the mobilization of women during the 2005 elections. The brief highlights various international economic and political institutions that worked with women in Liberia to further reconstruction. Lastly, Bekoe and Parajon emphasize the need for a women inclusive plan to continue rebuilding Liberia. They offer three recommendations to include women in Liberia’s reconstruction: Policy trainings

³³ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child will Be Great* (New York, NY:2009 Harper Perennial) Pg.271

for women and civil society groups, economic empowerment via gender equitable economic policies, and a changed perception of traditional gender roles.³⁴

Another important book is *Genocide and Persecution: Uganda* edited by Myra Immell. This book is part of the *Genocide and Persecution* series which offers various perspectives on incidents of mass murders or crimes against humanity in various countries. This particular volume features previously published writings on acts of mass murder, human rights violations, crimes against humanity, and other instances of extreme persecution in Uganda. Some chapters offered crucial historical background which helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the political atmosphere of the country.

One chapter authored by former US Secretary of state Henry Kissinger, discussed the state of affairs under the administration of Idi Amin. Kissinger describes Amin as a repressive leader that caused great tribalism as he has never seen. The chapter highlighted Amin's expulsion of Asians from Uganda, purging along tribal lines, and other human rights violations.

Several chapters discussed human rights violation under the administration of Yoweri Museveni. A controversial chapter written by former Ugandan President Milton Obote, Obote claimed that human rights violations and mass killings are still prevalent under Museveni's governance. He writes that the international community and media turned a blind eye to the extreme persecutions and killings happening under Museveni's administration.

“The Role of women in Global Security“ report written by Valerie Norville examined women's role in peace-building, post conflict reconstruction, and economic development. The report focuses on multiple countries including both Liberia and Uganda. The report points out

³⁴ Dorina Bekoe and Christina Parajon, “ Women's Role in Liberia's Reconstruction” , United States Institute of Peace, 2007

that though progress has been made, women still remain underrepresented in governments and other political arenas. Norville contends that the female perspective is often overlooked with regard to security. She goes on to argue that in order to promote increased female participation in post-conflict reconstruction the following should happen: the deployment of gender-balanced peacekeeping forces, a holistic government approach to security and judicial reforms, and more inputs of women at the local level on priorities for national budgets and international programs.³⁵

Dan Ottemoeller's article "The Politics of Gender in Uganda: Symbolism in the Service of Pragmatism" offers a realist explanation for women's increased participation in formal politics in Uganda. The article recounts Uganda's turbulent political and economic history, the increased participation in political advocacy by women and women's organizations, and the influence of global feminist movements on national political norms. Ottemoeller goes on to assert that politicians can secure support from women at relatively low-cost. This essentially means that the female demographic is easily sold on set political platforms advanced by the leader seeking power. With regards to my hypothesis and Uganda as a case study, the article causes one question the motivations for instituting gender-centered policies under Museveni's administration? And if such policies were extant, would it be because there is a sincere interest in female empowerment within the country or is it merely keeping good on the promises made during the campaign for power?

Data

A significant portion of my research was analyzing statistics and reports produced by various international institutions and organizations. Reports from various United Nations

³⁵ Valarie Norville, "Role of Women in Global Security" United States Institute of Peace, 2010

bodies such as UNIFEM, UNICEF, and UNDP were useful. Reports from these bodies offer data depicting the social, political, health, and economic development in countries around the world. Data from these reports also help when surveying the status of women within the subject countries. Information in the reports is categorized by year and enables easy attribution to specific administrations based on year of data.

In the next chapter I will discuss the presidency of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. I will begin with a historical overview to offer a background of the political climate of the country prior to her taking office. Then I will examine her tenure in office and the progress made towards women empowerment during her administration.

Chapter 4: Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

For nearly two decades prior to the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia faced great civil unrest. During this period there were mass murders, extreme persecution. As in most cases women and children are most victimized. The conflict resulted in the death of approximately 150,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more, resulting in the migration of about 850,000 refugees to neighboring countries.³⁶ A historical overview of Liberia offers a valuable background that promotes a greater understanding of the change and stability that that President Sirleaf-Johnson brought about.

Historical Background

The founding of Liberia came as a result of the decision made by members of the American Colonization Society (ACS), which was an organization which was created to address the growing population of freed blacks in the United States. The group decided it was best to resettle blacks back to the African continent. The state of Liberia came as the result and was the second (Haiti being the first) independent black nation at the time.³⁷ In the early 1820's a group of 100(including 88 free blacks) settled in present day Liberia after much resistance from local tribal communities.

³⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/background.shtml> Accessed November 30, 2014.

³⁷ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/liberia> Accessed November 30, 2014.

Many other colonies were formed near Morovia, Liberia and combined into one community with nearly 20,000 settlers. Liberia was provided financial and diplomatic backing from the United States. However, Liberia was expected to progress towards self-sustenance, and thus declared independence from the ACS to become an a sovereign state that could create its own laws of governance. On July 29, 1847 the Republic of Liberia was born. After declaring independence, settler or (Americo-Liberians as they are often called) experienced ongoing contention by the native Africans. Liberia also faced intrusion from various European colonial expansionists who were in search of new territory. Liberia lost large amounts of land to such intrusions.

For over a century the True Whig Party (TWP) dominated the political arena in Liberia. This party represented the interest of the English speaking Americo-Liberians who made up about 5% of the population.³⁸ The constitution of Liberia was fashioned after that of the United States. Ironically, the Liberian constitution limited the rights and freedoms of the indigenous Africans.³⁹ The voting rights of the natives were limited and they were not granted citizenship until 1904.⁴⁰ American born Joseph Jenkins Roberts was elected the republic's first president.

The TWP remained the ruling political party from the country's inception until Samuel Doe seized power in a coup d'état in 1980. Doe was the first political leader descended from an indigenous ethnic group (Krahn). Doe had a strong military background. He enlisted at the age of 18 and rapidly rose through the ranks eventually becoming a Master Sergeant in 1979.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ <http://www.infoplease.com/country/liberia.html> Accessed November 30, 2014.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Like most Liberians, Doe harbored resentment for the privileges and power afforded to and enjoyed by Americo- Liberians. In 1980 Doe led a group of Krahn soldiers in an attack on the executive mansion in which President William R. Tolbert was executed.⁴² Later 13 of Tolbert's close associates, descendants of Americo-Liberian settlers, were tried by a military tribunal and subsequently executed.⁴³ Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Finance Minister under Tolbert was one of 4 members of Tolbert's administration whose life was spared.⁴⁴

Doe formed and established the People's Redemption Council (PRC) and appointed himself General. He along with 14 other lower ranked officers, most of whom were members of his Krahn tribe dominated the political and military life in Liberia. Doe also suspended the nation's constitution until 1985 when a new constitution was approved by referendum.⁴⁵

In 1985 Doe won an election that was deemed fraudulent by many. During his tenure ethnic tension increased often resulting in hostilities between the favored Krahns and other ethnic groups within the nation. Doe's administration was often described brutal and fraudulent. He faced opposition and criticism on the local and international front. Doe tighten his grip with increased human rights abuses. His term in office was burdened by deteriorating economic conditions.⁴⁶ Liberians lived life fearfully under the doe regime. As in most cases, women are very vulnerable under conditions as such. There were many reports that "women

⁴¹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/167633/Samuel-K-Doe> Accessed November 30, 2014.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child will Be Great* (New York, NY:2009 Harper Perennial) Pg.103

⁴⁵ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/167633/Samuel-K-Doe> Accessed November 30 2014

⁴⁶ Ibid

were often raped and forced to strip naked and military checkpoint.”⁴⁷ There was no accountability or penalty for rape or sexual abuse during this period. It is safe to say, rape was used as systematic weapon of war and means of inflicting fear. A statement given by a man during the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Council described it this way:

Doe proceeded to take the law into his own hands, effecting murders and rape with impunity. Everyone was frightened; if a man was walking with his wife or daughter on the street, Doe’s men or others would simply take the woman and rape her. I personally witnessed such an event one day in the vicinity of the radio station. When I saw three soldiers take a woman into a building, I ran to find their commander; but by the time the commander arrived, the woman presumably raped by all three, simply sat weeping on the ground. Only one of the perpetrators was detained and he was released the next day.⁴⁸

This per numerous reports, these were common occurrences during Doe’s tenure. Furthermore, human rights violations extended beyond women; everyone one experience great repression during that period in Liberia.

Civil War 1989-1996

The civil war started with the invasion into Liberia by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor. Taylor and the NPFL aimed to oust Doe’s rule over Liberia. Initially Taylor gained widespread support, but was soon met with military resistance by The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). There was widespread fighting throughout the country. Ethnic tensions fueled the fighting. Despite multiple requests for resignation Doe adamantly refused, and the fighting continued. There were continuous assassination plats and attempts, which he suppressed with brutality. Almost a year after the civil was started the

⁴⁷ The Advocates for Human Right, Human Rights Violation During the Rice Riots and Doe Era, Pg. 92

⁴⁸ Ibid, pg. 91

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeepers entered the conflict to enforce a ceasefire and peace deal which the NPFL was not in agreement with or party to. Meanwhile intense fighting continued throughout the country.

Doe was ultimately captured after a visit to peacekeeping headquarters in 1990. He was captured and said to be tortured and killed by Prince Johnson of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL).⁴⁹ The NPFL by then had control of 90 percent of the country.⁵⁰ In 1991, former members of Doe's administration and exiled Krahns formed the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO).⁵¹ Fighting intensified as the Revolutionary United Force (RUF) from Sierra Leon joined the fight to support Taylor.⁵²

In 1996 the warring parties created the Liberian Council of States, and after fighting intensified, they signed the Abjua peace agreement and conceded to hold elections.⁵³ As agreed, the Presidential election was held in July 1997 and Charles Taylor was elected President with a great majority.

As is the case in all civil wars, people are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighboring villages and countries. About half of Liberia's population was forced to flee their home at least once during the conflict, giving Liberia the largest percentage of refugees and internally displaced people of any country in the world.⁵⁴ Liberians that fled Monrovia had

⁴⁹ Peter Dennis, "A brief History of Liberia," International Center for Transitional Justice, May 2006

⁵⁰ <http://www.wmd.org/resources/whats-being-done/ngo-participation-peace-negotiations/history-conflict-liberia>

Accessed November 30, 2014

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Shana Swiss, "Violence Against Women During the Liberian Conflict", Women's Rights International, 1998

previously traveled and stayed in various parts of the country controlled by one or more warring parties before they reached Monrovia and the protection of the peacekeepers.

A 1994 survey of 205 Liberian women and girls ages 15 to 70 from four settings: markets, displaced persons camps, high schools, and urban communities in Monrovia was conducted to understand their experience during the armed conflict. The survey showed that 49 percent of the women and girls experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a soldier at least once.⁵⁵ Furthermore, 17 percent reported being beaten and/or detained, 32 percent reported being subjected to a strip search on at least one occasion, and 42 percent reported witnessing the death or rape of another.⁵⁶

1997-2003 Civil War

Peace after the special elections of 1997, in which Charles emerged as President was short lived. It was rumored that he won the election due to the atmosphere of intimidation under which voters felt that the fighting will resume if Taylor was not elected. Taylor was in command of a multitude of armed groups including: the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the Liberian National Police (LNP), the Anti-terrorist Unit (ATU), the Revolutionary United Front(RUF) of Sierra Leone, and the Special Security Service (SSS).⁵⁷ Taylor's association with and support for RUF, which was responsible for civil war in Sierra Leon, prompted the United States to place a travel ban on Liberian senior Government officials.⁵⁸ A United Nations Security Council also imposed a limited sanction on Liberia for continued support of

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1997.htm Accessed November 30, 2014

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the RUF and the widespread bloodshed it caused in Sierra Leon and Guinea. The three sanctions applied were;

- An arms importation ban
- A ban on foreign travel by government officials and their immediate families
- A ban on trading illicit or “blood diamonds”⁵⁹

Two main opposition groups which controlled 60 to 80 percent of the population attempted to oust Taylor from power.⁶⁰ Opposition primarily came from the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) group, which has been fighting Taylor since 1999 and grew from an insurgent group based in the northern region of the country to one that grew to control the majority of Liberia.⁶¹ Taylor also received opposition from the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), a southern Liberia based faction that crossed in to Liberia via the Cote d’Ivoire boarder.

The effects of the ongoing fighting resulted in the devastating humanitarian consequences for Liberia. Liberians experienced daily ongoing violations of human rights and major repression during the period of war. Both the government and LURD were continuously accused of severe human rights violations as well as the conscription of child soldiers.⁶² Fighting intensified throughout the Liberia resulting in the high amounts of Liberians taking refuge in neighboring countries. LURD leaders called for Taylor to resign the Presidency, while Taylor was adamant about completing his term.

Taylor eventually agreed to participate in an ECOWAS- sponsored peace talk in Ghana.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

Prior to the conference in Ghana, Taylor was charged with bearing the “greatest responsibility for the war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of international humanitarian laws” during the civil war in Sierra Leone.⁶³

An international warrant was issued for the arrest of Charles Taylor. The indictment was announced at the peace summit in Ghana in hopes that Taylor will be detained there. With no prior knowledge of the indictment, the government of Ghana did not detain Taylor, who left the summit and returned to Monrovia.

There was intensified fighting in the months to follow. Taylor continued to maintain his resistance to resignation despite having only partial control of Monrovia. By in August 2003, Taylor accepted asylum in Nigeria, which was part of the cease fire agreement in Ghana. Upon his resignation Taylor’s term was completed by his Vice President and followed by the implementation of an interim transitional government which Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was party to. The UN took over peacekeeping from ECOWAS with the creation of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In the years to follow rebuilding and sustainability efforts occurred throughout Liberia.

Women’s Organization in Liberia

Women’s organization played an influential role in Liberian history Their presence was undeniable during the civil wars and unforgettable during the Presidential campaign which resulted in the election of Ellen John Sirleaf. To this end it is important that these organizations are discussed.

⁶³ Ibid

As previously mentioned, women and children are most vulnerable during periods of armed conflicts. It is not uncommon for rape to be used as a weapon of war. Furthermore, women continue to be vulnerable after the armed conflicts have been concluded, due to the loss of a male (husband or son) who is often the financial backbone of the family. The women of Liberia for too many years watched their sons and husbands die during the civil wars. They themselves were subjected to rape, violence, displacement, and knew that something had to change. The Liberian people recognized that there is power in numbers and united to affect change and bring about peace in their country.

When traditional diplomacy failed, a group of women decided to create a strategy to implement peace in Liberia. With the leadership of Leymah Obowee and now Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was formed and launched.⁶⁴ The leaders of these organizations believed that women had the power to affect positive change in Liberia. Leymah Obowee led the Christian Women's Peace Initiative and organization created to address female discrimination in Christian churches. Meanwhile, another woman Asastu Bah Kenneth a 25 year old police officer, worked to organize and motivate women in the Muslim community via the Liberian Muslim Women's Organization. When the women and organization came together to form a coalition was the start of Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace.⁶⁵ These women mobilized across religious lines for peace because they recognized that the war was affecting all women. Over 300 women of varying religions, ethnic groups, ages, and social backgrounds organized and placed increasing

⁶⁴ [the-women-of-liberia-mass-action-for-peace-women-can-make-the-difference](#)

⁶⁵ Ibid

pressure on Taylor's administration and the rebel groups to come to a peace agreement.⁶⁶ They also lobbied for coverage and support from the international community; and to be included in the ECOWAS peace talks which gave rise to the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CAP), marking the end of the civil conflict.⁶⁷

Women's organizations remained involved after the civil war. They were instrumental in the reconstruction of Liberia. One such organization was the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), which was duly noted for playing an influential role in the election of the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. WIPNET led a national campaign to ensure women's participation in the 2005 election. They mobilized the women across the nation to register to vote, even providing the necessary mechanisms to ensure that their daily life was not adversely affected by registering to vote. Within the last five days of voter's registration for the 2005 election a WIPNET coalition of women were able mobilize an additional 7, 400 women to register for the elections.⁶⁸

Biographical History

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was born to Carney and Martha Johnson on October 29, 1938 in Monrovia, Liberia. Her father was the son of a Gola chief, who was sent to the city as a ward to the McGrity family. He was educated and benefited from being with the family. He later apprenticed with a lawyer and eventually became an attorney himself. Carney Johnson was a forward thinker and pursued a political career as a way to serve his country while building his

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ <http://www.usip.org/publications/women-s-role-liberia-s-reconstruction>

career in the public sector. He was the first native person elected to the House of Representatives under the Presidency of William Tubman, a major accomplishment at the time.⁶⁹ As recalled in her memoir, Sirleaf said her father was “well thought of by President Tubman,” and often appointed him to foreign delegations and made frequent visits to the Johnson home.⁷⁰

Sirleaf’s mother had a similar story. Her mother was the daughter of a native woman from Sinoe County and a German trader. She stood out in her community because she was biracial. Like Carney she was sent to be a ward of a prominent American-Liberian family. She too was afforded a solid primary education by the Dunbar family. Sirleaf’s parents would meet and marry and as stated by Sirleaf in her memoir, be determined to give their family the best life possible.⁷¹

Sirleaf described her father as womanizer in her book. He had extramarital relationships, which she went on to say was not uncommon in the regional West African culture.⁷² Her mother, a religious woman, was especially pained by her father’s encounters, however she placed her focus on her religious growth and her education. Her mother later became a teacher and opened a school in the neighborhood which was attended by many children including Sirleaf and her siblings.

Sirleaf spent most of her childhood summer vacations in the native village of her father. Her father found it important for the children to know and remain connected to their cultural roots. During her time there she got a feel of the rural Liberian life and even learned a

⁶⁹ Sirleaf, 16

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid

bit of the Gola language, which will be a benefit that saves her life later in her life. Sirleaf writes that she was happy that her father did this because it would have been easy for him to disconnect from his culture as he was accepted by the settler class and he married a woman that did not look African.⁷³ It would have been easy for him to do as so many did before him and disown his rural background and culture, but he did not.

Sirleaf has an impressive professional career spanning over four decades in both the Liberian and international sphere. She attended the College of West Africa from 1948-1955. She later continued her studies and traveled to the United States on a scholarship to attend Madison Business College, in Madison Wisconsin, where she earned an Associate's degree in Accounting.⁷⁴ She went on to study economics at Colorado University and Public Administration and Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. She received her Master's degree in 1971. She returned to Liberia to join the Treasury Department as an Assistant and was later appointed the Minister of Finance under the administration of William Tolbert. She served in that position until the coup d'etat in 1980.

She went on to serve as president of the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment until she fled the country in fear of Samuel Doe's repressive government. She returned to the United States to work for the World Bank, where she stayed for less than a year before she assumed the Vice-President position at Citibank's African Regional office in Kenya.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Daniel Bergner, "An Uncompromising Woman," The New York Times Magazine; October 2010

⁷⁵ Sirleaf, 114

She also worked as the Vice-President and Director of Equator Bank.⁷⁶ Sirleaf also served in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as the Assistant Administrator and Director at the Regional Bureau for Africa, with the rank of Assistant Secretary General.⁷⁷ She resigned in 1997 when she ran for Liberian presidency in 1997. During her time at the UN she was one of seven persons designated in 1999 to investigate the Rwandan genocide. She was also one selected by UNIFEM to report on the effects of conflict on women and the role of women in peace building.⁷⁸

Unbeknownst to many, Sirleaf was verbally and physically abused during her marriage to her husband and children of her four sons.⁷⁹ This experience served as motivation to make women's empowerment a priority of her administration. She offers insight on her take of domestic violence in her memoir when she wrote:

Domestic violence knows no geographical boundaries. It exists in every nation, every society, every corner of the world and neither Africa in general nor is Liberia immune to this particular disease.⁸⁰

She goes on to discuss her commitment to address this issue in her administration. She speaks passionately the legal repercussions abusers will face when she states:

Right from the start of my administration, even in my inaugural address, I pledged to bring the full weight of the government against those who would continue this terrible abuse. Those who violate our women and girls know that will bear the force of the law.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2content.php?sub=121&related=19&third=121&pg=sp>

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Sirleaf, 38

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

She made her commitment to addressing domestic violence very clear and would be given the opportunity to follow through when she became President in 2006.

When she became president it was event that there was much to do to rebuild a country that had greatly suffered from civil wars for nearly two decades. Along with government, economic, and education reconstruction, Sirleaf made it clear that gender centered policy would be a priority to her administration. During her inaugural address she stated:

My administration shall thus endeavor to give Liberian women prominence in all affairs of our country. My Administration shall empower Liberian women in all areas of our national life. We will support and increase the writ of laws that restores their dignities and deal drastically with crimes that dehumanize them. We will enforce without fear or favor the law against rape recently passed by the National Transitional Legislature. We shall encourage families to educate all children, particularly the girl child. We shall also try to provide economic programs that enable Liberian women to assume their proper place in our economic revitalization process.⁸²

Again, she made her stance on prioritizing the needs of Liberian women clear. She began by appointing women the head of the following ministries: finance, commerce, justice, youth and sports, and gender and development. They were also five of the fifteen county superintendants.⁸³

Within the first year of her Administration, Sirleaf created the Liberian Education Trust (LET) to address the educational needs as promised to the Liberian women. This organization can be credited with the building of over 50 schools, recruiting and training over 500 Teachers in short-term intensive programs, and providing approximately 5000 scholarships to girls and women in formal schools and literacy programs.⁸⁴ Three years after

⁸² Inaugural Address of H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, January 16, 2006

⁸³ <http://www.usip.org/publications/women-s-role-liberia-s-reconstruction>

⁸⁴ <http://www.peopletopeople.info/id490.html>

its launch, LET reports reaching every county via construction, literacy, and scholarships.⁸⁵ LET has also implemented multiple scholarships for target demographics. Additionally, LET have built partnerships with many organizations and corporations as means of additional support and funding to meet their mission.

Another noteworthy policy is the National Gender Policy (NGP), which was developed in 2009 via a multi-dimensional strategic group with participation from: the Liberian Government, women's NGO and civil service groups, religious organizations, youth and community based organizations, public and private institutions. This policy is instrumental to promoting Liberian stability because it called for an interdisciplinary effort and approach for a gender policy. The Liberian Minister of Gender Development spoke about the importance of the NGP and the role it plays in Liberia's development and stability:

The Government of Liberia is strongly committed to gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice, and promoting development in the country. It is the furtherance of this commitment, that a National Gender Policy was developed in 2009 through a wide consultative process with inputs from various stakeholders. The policy recommends that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting should be adopted as a development approach and shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long term development planning, value re-orientation, social transformation, and other development initiatives of government.⁸⁶

The NGP aims to empower the Liberian woman and girls for sustainable and equitable development, and create and strengthen gender responsive mechanisms in which both women and men can participate and benefit from development programs on equal basis.⁸⁷ This policy is a clear indication of priorities of Sirleaf's administration. As promised she has worked on

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ministry of Gender and Development, Liberia National Gender Policy, Monrovia: Liberia 2009

⁸⁷ Ibid

policies and mechanisms to promote gender equality. Furthermore, these policies are priorities because planning for them began shortly after Sirleaf's election as President.

The report shows that women play a vital role in Liberia's economic development; however they face various challenges that impede their ability to benefit substantially. The report highlights two challenges, the multiple roles that women play in the home, which limits the opportunities for economic empowerment, and the segregation of the labor market.⁸⁸ The report also highlighted the fact that despite the vital role that women play in the Liberian agricultural labor sector, unlike their male counterparts, they do not have secure tenure to the land they work on.⁸⁹ For these reasons, a policy such as the NGP was deemed a top priority to promote women empowerment in Liberia's reconstructive era.

Gender statistics compiled on Liberia offers insight into the progress made towards gender equality since President Sirleaf came into the office. One instrument of measure is the Human Development Index (HDI) which was .335 in 2005 and the most recent 2013 HDI of .412.⁹⁰ There has been steady increase in the dimensions of the HDI. In 2005 before Sirleaf took office the life expectancy in Liberia measured at 55.1, in 2011 the end of her first term it measured at 59.9, and most recently in 2013 it measured at 60.6.⁹¹ The average years of schooling measured at 3.4 in 2005 to 2.9 in 2013.⁹² Liberia is ranked 175 of 187 countries

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/LBR.pdf

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

and territories, placing the country in the “low human development category.”⁹³ Nonetheless, however small the increments, it is a step in the right direction for Liberia.

Another important measure to review is the female literacy rate. The rating measure the literacy of females between the ages 15 and older who can read, read write and understand a simple statement in their daily life. In 2005, before female literacy measured approximately 47 percent; in 2009 it measured at 56 percent in 2010.⁹⁴

Infant and maternity mortality rates are also important indication of the condition of women. In 2005 before Sirleaf became President the Maternity Mortality Rate (MMR) measured at approximately 900 per 100,000 live births; in 2013 MMR measured at 640.⁹⁵ In 2005, the Infant mortality in Liberia measured at 130 per 1,000 live births. The IMR measured at 74 in 2010.⁹⁶ The decrease indicates that there are improvements happening within the women’s healthcare sector. While the numbers indicate progress, the rate of progress is slow and thus is an indicator that there is more work to be done in Liberia.

Liberia most recently measure percentage on education expenditure is according to the World Bank is 12.06 percent, compared to its most recent military expenditure of 0.7percent.⁹⁷ There has also been steady increase in the government’s healthcare expenditure from 8 percent in 2005 before Sirleaf took office to 15.5 percent in 2012.⁹⁸ It would be fair to

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ <http://www.indexmundi.com/liberia/literacy.html>

⁹⁵ <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/liberia>

⁹⁶ <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/profiles/Liberia/Health>

⁹⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS/countries/LR?display=graph>

⁹⁸ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.TOTL.ZS/countries/LR?display=graph>

say the fact that more money is being allotted for education and healthcare than the military is an indication of the priorities of Sirleaf's administration.

Under the Johnson-Sirleaf administration noticeable strides are being made in efforts to bridge the gender gap on the political empowerment front. In march 2013 the Liberian Senate voted unanimously to maintain the 2011 Electoral Reform Law which states in section 4.5 (1A): “ In submitting to the Commission, a list of candidates for elective office, a political party or coalition should endeavor to ensure that the governing body and the and its list of candidates have no less than 30 percent of its members from each gender.”⁹⁹ The purpose of the 30 percent as explained under (1b) is. “is to support the move to gender equity in the representation of both genders in the governance of political parties and in the list of candidates they present for every election.”¹⁰⁰

Another noteworthy imitative in the Sirleaf administration is the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG). This project is a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Liberian Ministry of Gender Development and supported by the World Bank. The project is aimed at increasing the employment and income of young women participating in the program. The program proposal states that the goal of the program is:

Smooth the path of adolescent girls to productive employment through job skills training and business development services. The training offered to participants will focus on technical skills, as well as the integration of life skills training to address some of the crucial barriers to the development of adolescent girls in Liberia.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ <http://www.liberianobserver.com/news/senate-maintains-30-%E2%80%98gender-equity%E2%80%99-law>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166093&entityID=000158349_20140403112059

A program as such is beneficial to the Liberian adolescent girl as she will learn skill that will transcend the conventional “female” skills like sewing and cooking. In a 2011 on the impact of EPAG, it was reported that EPAG increased employment by 47 percent and earnings by 60 percent.¹⁰² In addition there were positive effects on a variety of empowerment measures; including self confidence, access to money, and anxiety about circumstances and the future.¹⁰³ Also under the Sirleaf administration, according to a UN report, Liberia has made steps towards implementing the recommendations of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹⁰⁴

While the data and policies indicate that Liberia making progress towards reconstruction; there remains much to be done. Violence against women remains a primary concern for the Liberian government. There are high rates of reported rapes and countless unreported incidents as well. Liberia remains in the “low ranking country” category the most recent UNHDR with a rank of 174 of 187.¹⁰⁵ While there has been much improvements, there remains work to be done. President Johnson- Sirleaf is currently serving her second term after being reelected in 2011. She vows to continue to work for gender equality and women empowerment.

President Johnson-Sirleaf has received some criticism for her extensive travels outside of Liberia. It has been said that she should spend more time locally to address her country’s

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ <http://sim.law.uu.nl/SIM/CaseLaw/uncom.nsf/804bb175b68baaf7c125667f004cb333/1d2b974b3bb90850c125763c00425052?OpenDocument>

¹⁰⁵ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/LBR.pdf

need. However, her travel and widespread relationships have been beneficial to her country. Through her international relationships and extensive professional history, she was able to raise her country's international profile. She was also able to negotiate \$4.2 billion debt forgiveness in 2010 from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.¹⁰⁶

President Sirleaf has continuously demonstrated her commitment to women empowerment. . She is widely celebrated around the world and often referred to as the “Iron Lady” a phrase coined to describe her during the 2005 presidential campaign. President Johnson-Sirleaf received the Noble Peace Prize in 2011 for her work done during the civil ars and her commitment to women empowerment.

She has followed through on the promises made to Liberia during her in augural address. Sirleaf continues to advocate on behalf for her country around the world; especially for the women of Liberia. While change is happening at a slow pace in Liberia, after fourteen years of armed conflict, the road to reconstruction will be a long and tedious one.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2010/car062910a.htm>

Chapter 5: Yoweri Museveni

Uganda's recent history includes two brutal dictatorships, over twenty years of civil wars, humanitarian crisis, and political repression. Monthly death tolls were reported at 3,500 as a result of preventable diseases, extreme violence and torture.¹⁰⁷ Much of the civil wars occurred during the tenure of Museveni who is the current President and has held the position since 1986, which is the longest period in Ugandan history. A historical background is helpful to offer insight to some of the events and conditions that led to events surrounding the political unrest the country faced for an extensive period. It is also essential for the examination of whether the administration of Museveni affected any positive changes during his governance of Uganda.

Historical Background

Uganda has an extensive history with few records of early settlement, although the country was inhabited very early. Powerful social and political orders developed including the Bonyoro, Buganda, Busoga, Ankole, and Toro kingdoms.¹⁰⁸ By the 19th century, the Buganda Kingdom gained control partially due to its alliance with the powerful Shirazis of Zanibar. Buganda was ruled by traditional kings called Kabaka whose power was circumscribed by a

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.africafocus.org/docs06/ugan0604.php>

¹⁰⁸ <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/uganda/history>

council of nobles.¹⁰⁹ The standing army and the well developed agriculture allowed the kingdom to survive after the decline of the slave trade.

Britain set up in Buganda via the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888 and the Buganda was declared a British Protectorate in 1894. Control of the country was passed to the British Colonial Office in 190 although Uganda was never fully colonized because non-African were not allowed to establish freeholds.¹¹⁰ Well developed agriculture was the primary economic source. The high prices of cotton and coffee bought an economic boom after World War II.¹¹¹

The transfer of power to the local people began with the setup of the legislative and executive council in 1921. By 1955, half the legislative council were African, the executive council was developed into a ministerial system, as well as a party political system was developing.¹¹² In 1962 Uganda became a self governing country and a general election resulted in Milton Obote of the Uganda's People's Congress (UPC) as the President.¹¹³

Idi Amin

Obote remained in power until 1971 when he was ousted by a military coup led by army Commander Idi Amin Dada. At first very popular, Amin quickly moved into a brutal authoritarianism. His rule was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecutions, extrajudicial killings, corruption, and gross economic mismanagement. In

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid

1972, he ordered the expulsion of Uganda's Asian population. Authorities ordered all Asians without Ugandan citizenship to leave the country and their properties were seized. He responded to attempted invasion by Ugandan exiles in 1972 by targeting Obote supporters predominately those of the Acholi and Lango ethnic group. At least 5,000 Acholi and Lango soldiers and twice as many civilians were killed by early 1972.¹¹⁴ These killing extended to include other ethnic groups as well as intellectuals. The death toll during the eight year rule of Amin has been estimated at 500,000.¹¹⁵ The Amin regime was hallmarked by the deteriorated public order which resulted in widespread murder, looting, destruction of property, and rape.

Amin declared himself President for life in 1978 and in the same year invaded the Republic of Tanzania northern territories.¹¹⁶ Tanzania had long opposed Amin's regime and declared war on Uganda. With support from several groups of Ugandan exiles who joined as the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), the Tanzania People's army counterattacked and took Kampala in April 1979.¹¹⁷ Amin escaped into exile to Libya where he had a long relationship with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Milton Obote's Second Term

After a series of disputes over leadership, a 1980 election resulted in Milton Obote as president for the second time. The results of the elections were widely disputed. However, he solicited foreign aid in an attempt to restore Uganda's economy from the ruin of the Amin

¹¹⁴ Charles Moore, "Obituary of Idi Amin" The Guardian, London: 2003

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/uganda/history>

¹¹⁷ Ibid

years.¹¹⁸ Obote was unable to restore the country's severely damaged economy. Further political instability and civil war continued during his term. Obote drew most of his support from the Acholi and Lango ethnic group. He said very little when the Acholi and Lango soldiers murdered and pillaged the southern region of Uganda and Amin's home district.¹¹⁹ It was reported that he ordered the murders of innocent civilians in attempts to combat rebels. It is approximated that over 300,000 civilians were killed during Obote's 1981-1985 term.¹²⁰ Obote's government became bogged down with fighting the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni. The NRA launched its attacks in 1981 after accusing the government of rigging the 1980 elections.¹²¹ Obote was overthrown by his own Uganda National Liberation Army after divisions within the force. He fled to Zambia where lived until his death in 2005. The coup was led by General Okello who then became President in 1985.

Biographical History: Yoweri Museveni

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was born on August 15, 1944 in Ntungamo, the southwestern region of Uganda. His parents were cattle farmers and gave him the last name Museveni in honor of the Seventh Regiment of the King's African Rifle, the British colonial army in which many Ugandans served during World War II.¹²² Museveni is one of three children for his parents. He received a solid primary and secondary education in Uganda. He attended the Mbarara High school and the Natara School. It was during high school he was

¹¹⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/423934/Milton-Obote>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/past-presidents/president-apollo-milton-obote>

¹²⁰ http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Apollo_Milton_Obote.aspx

¹²¹ <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/past-presidents/president-apollo-milton-obote>

¹²² <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/people/h-e-yoweri-k-museveni>

reported to have become a devout Christian and a student leader.¹²³ In 1967, he began studies at that the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where he studied Economics and Political Science. While at the university, he founded the University Students' African Revolutionary Front, which led a student rebellion delegation to the FRELIMO territory in Mozambique and other Pan-African movements.¹²⁴ Some biographies also say that he was a Marxist and was an admirer of International revolutionary Che Guevera.¹²⁵ He received military training in guerilla warfare, which at the time was unknown in Uganda and much of Africa. It however became helpful to him in the near future.

In 1970 Museveni joined the Intelligence Service of then President Milton Obote. It was reported that he said he joined the Obote administration not because he liked Obote, he joined because he wanted to see how government is ran.¹²⁶ Museveni was forced to flee the country to Tanzania when Idi Amin ousted the Obote administration in 1971. During his time in exile, he allied himself with other exiled Ugandans which led to the deposing of the Amin regime. He also served in various capacities during the transitional period between Amin's and Obote's administration. He again left Uganda after the 1980 election which resulted in the election of the Milton Obote for a second term.. As previously mentioned, the 1980 elections was said by many to be rigged.

The Ugandan War in the Bush: 1981-1986

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Ibid

Museveni and his supporters retreated to the rural Luwero province where he formed the Popular Resistance Army (PRA) which later became the National Resistance Army (NRA). The group planned to overthrow the second Obote regime often referred to as “Obote II”. The initial attack of the rebellion occurred in February 1981.¹²⁷ It has also been said that Museveni may have planned the rebellion much earlier than it happened. This speculation was due to the fact that he only had 40 supporters with him in Luwero but over three battalions of soldiers trained FRONASA and integrated into the UNLA.¹²⁸ The PRA also included intelligence personnel trained in Cuba.

By the end of 1981 the NRA controlled most of Luwero and Nakaseke.¹²⁹ NRA control grew over the years and by 1985 the NRA controlled the majority of western Uganda. The second Obote regime was overthrown by Acholi soldiers after division within the UPC. General Okelli became President thereafter and peace talks began between the NRA and the governing military chief. During negotiations human rights abuses by the Ugandan government continued and attacks against NRA continued. Eventually the talks broke down and fighting continued. Museveni and the NRA captured power in January 26, 1986.

Museveni in Power

Museveni was sworn in as Uganda’s 8th president three days later on January 29, 1986. In his address he told Ugandans, “this is not a mere change of guard, it’s a fundamental change.”¹³⁰ He ensured the people that the country will return to democracy and stated:

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

“The people of Africa, the people of Uganda are entitled to a democratic government; it is not a favor from any regime. The sovereign people should be the public, not the government. The main problem in Africa is of leaders who do not want to leave power.”¹³¹

This would later be ironic as President Museveni continues to serve as President of Uganda, making him the longest serving President in the country’s history.

A four year interim government was setup; which included a wider political base than past administrations. Cabinet members were representative of other political parties. Also a parliament, the National Resistance Council (NRC) was created and included both elected and nominated representatives. Parish level Resistance Councils were elected to address local matters. The election of Resistance Councils was the first interaction with direct elections after decades of dictatorships for many Ugandans. Uganda has since had four Presidential elections held in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and an equal number of parliamentary and local elections.

Museveni implemented economic policies designed to rebuild the once booming Ugandan economy. Uganda began participating in an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Economic Recovery Program in 1987. The program was aimed at the restoration of incentives to encourage growth, investment, employments, and exports.¹³²

Museveni received great international support following his election. He was praised by western governments for adhering to the recommendation of the IMF’s Structural Adjustment Program for Uganda. He was also elected at the Chairperson of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1991 and 1992. Museveni’s government is most widely noted for its success for the campaign against HIV/AIDS. Uganda had one of the highest HIV/AIDS

¹³¹ Sheila Rule, “Rebel Sworn in as Ugandan President” New York Times, January 20, 1986

¹³² <http://www.imf.org/External/NP/PFP/UGANDA/uganda.pdf>

rate in the 1990's. Museveni's government implemented the ABC Program to battle the virus. The program had three main parts, "Abstain, Be faithful, or use Condoms." The program has been reported to be one of the most successful global campaigns against HIV/AIDS. Uganda experienced its lowest infection rate of 6.4 percent in 1996.¹³³

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

Museveni's administration faced a powerful insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony. The LRA formed in northern Uganda in 1986 to overturn the Ugandan government.¹³⁴ LRA operated from bases in southern Sudan. The LRA committed numerous atrocities including the abduction, maiming, and killing of many civilians, including children.¹³⁵ In attempts to overthrow the Ugandan government, the LRA inflicted brutal violence on the northern Ugandan population. They also targeted local government officials as well as international humanitarian convoys and local NGO workers.¹³⁶

Lacking public support, the LRA resorted to forcibly recruiting to fill the ranks. The primary victims were children and young adults. According to a UNICEF study an estimated 66,000 children and young adults were abducted by the LRA between 1986 and 2006.¹³⁷ The LRA abducted young girls as sex and labor slaves. Some girls were reportedly sold, traded or given as gifts to arms dealers in Sudan. The conflict resulted in nearly two million people of

¹³³ <http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-uganda.htm>

¹³⁴ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186734.htm>

¹³⁵ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/lra.htm>

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186734.htm>

the northern province being displaced.¹³⁸ With increased pressure from the government forces, the LRA withdrew from Uganda and began operation in the western border region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).¹³⁹ From 2006 to 2008 the Government of Uganda and the LRA participated in negotiations in Juba, South Sudan, mediated by South Sudan officials. The negotiations finalized a peace agreement but Joseph Kony refused to sign on multiple occasions.¹⁴⁰

Women Empowerment in Uganda

Museveni's administration has demonstrated its intentions to address gender inequalities by implementing national mechanisms to promote women empowerment as well as to sign on to various international commitments and initiatives. Uganda is a signatory to various intern commitments including, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, and subscribes fully to the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of promoting gender equality and empowering women.¹⁴¹ These and other commitments are domesticated through Uganda's Constitution, which guarantees gender equality between men and women, and includes affirmative action measures to ensure and increase women's role in decision-making and development.

Affirmative action has been used by governments all around the world, to counteract historical discrimination and marginalization faced by ethnic minorities, women, and other

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ <http://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/>

underrepresented groups. In Uganda affirmative action has been primarily used in politics to include groups that have been historically marginalized, as well as in education to ensure gender equity. Institutionalization of affirmative action in Uganda began in the mid 1980's and extended into the 1990's with the establishment of the Ministry for Women in Development (MWD), the provision for reserved seats for women in parliament and local governments, and the incentives of additional points for women to join academic institutions.¹⁴²

The 1995 Constitution of Republic of Uganda is proves to be gender-inclusive by creating laws and therefore strong legal basis for addressing gender issues by directly prescribing equality between men and women as well as requiring that equal opportunity is afforded to women. The constitution addresses affirmative action in Article 32 (1) which states:

The state shall take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability, or any other reason created by history, tradition, or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.¹⁴³

Article 33(2) states:

The state to provide facilities and opportunities for enhancing the welfare of women and to enable them to realize their full potential and to protect their rights taking into their account their unique status and natural maternal functions in society.¹⁴⁴

Uganda since has become one of eight countries that have reached the target of at least 30 percent women in national parliament.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Women-s%20Empowerment/UgandaFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

¹⁴³ Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, ROU (1993)

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

The National Development Plan (NDP) defines “gender issues, negative attitudes, mindsets, cultural practices, and perceptions” as key binding constraints to socio-economic development in Uganda.¹⁴⁶ This demonstrates that the Museveni administration understands the adverse affects that gender inequality can have on the nation’s development. To further its commitment to gender equality the Museveni administration established and implemented the National Gender Policy (NGP) in 1997 and revised it in 2007. The development of the policy and its development confirms the administration’s commitment to take actions that would foster equal gender relations. The policy is states that it aims to “guide all levels of planning, resource allocation, and implementation of development programs with a gender perspective.”¹⁴⁷ The policy indicates that it is operating with the understanding that “gender” is a development concept that is useful in identifying and understanding the social roles and relations of women and men of all ages and the impact these relations have on development.

Through the policy, the challenge of women decision-making in the home, which is exacerbated by high levels of gender based violence, will be addressed. It noted that 59 percent of married women ages 15-49 have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual abuse.¹⁴⁸

Another measure of gender equality in Uganda will be looking at categories such as female literacy rate, infant and birth mortality rates. According to the World Bank, when Museveni took office in 1986, there was a youth (ages 15-24) female literacy rate of 63

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ Uganda Gender Policy, 2007, p. IV

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/>

percent; that rate is currently 85 percent.¹⁴⁹ The adult female literacy rate when Museveni first took office was 45 percent and is currently 65 percent.¹⁵⁰ This is an indication of progress in terms of access to education. Another important factor in gender equality is the condition of women in terms of health. Important measures of health include maternal mortality (MMR) and infant mortality (IMR) rates. MMR is the annual number of female deaths per 100,000 live births related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management. In recent years Uganda has seen a decrease in MMR. In 2008 Uganda had an MMR rate of 430 and compared to the most recent 2010 rate of 310, there has been a decrease in the maternal mortality.¹⁵¹ This indicated that women are receiving prenatal care and the necessary services after giving birth to ensure best health. IMR are also important measurements. Uganda had an IMR (children under the age of one) of 107 and currently has an IMR of 47.¹⁵² Reports show that there is an average IMR reduction rate on 4.3 from 1990-2012.¹⁵³ Yet another indication of progress in terms of health for women and children in Uganda under the Museveni regime.

Another substantial measure is the development is the HDI. According to the 2014 HDR, Uganda currently has a HDI of 0.484, which pales the country in the low human development category, positioning the country at 164 out of 187.¹⁵⁴ Between 1980 and 2012, Uganda's HDI has increased from 0.293 to 0.484, which is a 65 percent increase.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.13>

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda_statistics.html

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Human Development Report, United Nations 2013

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

In terms of the Gender Inequality Index (GII), Uganda is ranked 115 out of 149 and has a GII value of 0.529.¹⁵⁶ In Uganda 35 percent of parliament seats are held by women, and 22.9 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 33.5 percent of their male counterparts.¹⁵⁷ Female participation in the labor market is 75.9 percent compared to 79.3 percent compared to their male counterparts.¹⁵⁸ These statistics indicate that strides have been made in terms of gender equality in Uganda under Museveni however, there is much work to be done. The share of women in the non agricultural sector, another key indicator of the women's empowerment went from 39 percent in 2003 to 28 percent in 2006.¹⁵⁹ This is an indication of the gender disparity in the labor sector. Additionally women are face by other differences such as less secure employment, lower skills levels and lower wages. Furthermore, although women comprise an estimated 70 percent of those working in agriculture, they experience unequal access to and control over, important production resources, notably land, which limits their ability to raise productivity and even move out of subsistence agriculture.¹⁶⁰

Uganda's policies on affirmative action have steadily increased the role of women in decision-making in the political arena on all levels. Museveni's administration has recognized through the NDP that critical gender equalities remain, which have hindered Uganda's progress towards meeting some MDGs and over all national development. Gender base violence continue to be a primary area of concern, with 40 percent of women reporting that

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

they have at experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, compared to 11 percent by their male counterparts. Also, at least 25 percent of girl's first sexual encounter is associated with the use of force.

Comparing the budget expenditure Museveni's government offers insight into the amount of funds allocated to address certain needs. Museveni's current health care expenditure is 8 percent of the GDP, while their military expenditure is 1.83. One can argue that the higher health expenditure can indicate that healthcare is a priority to the administration.

Overall Uganda has come a long way in terms of gender-centered policy during Museveni's tenure as President. However there remains much progress to be made. Uganda continues to rank in the low human development category and has been noted to be behind on meeting many MDGs. Despite the challenges, Museveni can be credited with establishing and implementing gender-centered policies that promote women empowerment and overall development in Uganda.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis sought to examine whether more attention is given to gender-centered policies by female leaders than by a male leader in a country where women played a significant role in the resolution of an internal conflict. Thus my hypothesis stated that; female leaders are not significantly more likely than male leaders to pursue gender centered issues during their tenure in office. I maintain that there are multiple variables that influence a leaders prioritization of gender policies. The personalities of the leaders as well as the political environment of the country are major factors in the prioritization of gender policies.

I found it important to highlight the biographical background of both leaders. Sirleaf came from a prominent family with political rank within Liberia. However, Sirleaf is a woman within a society where women traditionally do not hold high ranking political positions. Sirleaf even experienced great adversity towards her educational and professional pursuits from her husband. Breaking the glass ceiling within her personal life could be the motivation behind Sirleaf's vocal advocacy for women and gender policy.

Museveni on the other hand came from a farming family without any political prominence. However, a great emphasis was placed on his education, which subsequently led to his political involvement. His political orientation and focus was primarily on warfare and the possibility of internal political conflict.

I conclude that my hypothesis is supported by the case studies. Based on the data presented, both Sirleaf and Museveni established and implemented policies that promoted women empower. Sirleaf unlike Museveni, was more vocal about her commitment to women empowerment and gender policies. She affirmed her commitment during her inaugural address and publicly continued to do so throughout her administration. Museveni, was not as vocal, however, major gender-centered policies were established and implemented during his tenure.

The data collected indicated that both Presidents allocated more of their budgets to education and healthcare versus military expenditures. This is an indication of the prioritization of programs that directly affect the well being of women and children. Despite the similar expenditures, Sirleaf's administration made faster progress with regards to establishment and implementation of gender-centered social policy.

In terms of international commitments to women empowerment, both Sirleaf's and Museveni's administrations signed on to CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of Action. However, the UNHDR indicates that there is a difference in their progress towards gender equality and overall development. Liberia is ranked 175 out of 187 while Uganda is ranked 164. While there has been in their respective HDI and GII, Uganda has made more progress towards development based UN measurements.

It is fair to say that both leaders have different personalities but both have a genuine interest in women empowerment. Sirleaf has certainly been more vocal in terms of women's advocacy, but has not produced results that can indicate that she prioritized gender-centered policy significantly more than Museveni. I will conclude that both Presidents performed on a similar if not the same level in terms of prioritization of gender-centered policies.

Both leaders remain in offices and continue to commit to gender equality and women empowerment. The international community as a whole has been placed greater focus on women empowerment and gender equality. As a result many countries including Liberia and Uganda are expanding national mechanisms to promote gender equity in their respective countries.

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