Assessment of Female Presidents' Governance and Its Implications on Peaceful Co-Existence in Iceland and Liberia

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in International Relations and Diplomacy

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2025

Certification

This is to certify that **Abosede Abiodun ADELEKE** carried out this research work titled **"Assessment of Female Presidents' Governance and Its Implications on Peaceful Coexistence in Iceland and Liberia"** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/002100** in the Department of Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Dedication

This research work is dedicated to God, my helper, my supporter, my provider, and my sufficiency, from the beginning to the end.

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Even though the institutions and individuals mentioned above assisted in the process of this research work, I alone take full responsibility for any errors, if found, in this work.

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Abstract

Historically, societies have largely been shaped by patriarchal norms, often sidelining women from critical decision-making roles. While it is well-established that women contribute immensely to community and nation-building, there has been limited focus on directly comparing female presidential leadership and its specific impact on peaceful coexistence across diverse contexts. Therefore, this study examined women in governance and their implications for peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018. The study adopted a Content Analysis research design and was anchored on Feminist Theory. Findings revealed that the tenures of the two female presidents, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia between 2006 and 2018, represented global female leadership, as both governments significantly influenced peaceful coexistence and national harmony. Both leaders formulated and implemented specific policies and programmes to foster peaceful coexistence: in Iceland, these included gender equality initiatives, diplomatic peace-building, conflict resolution training, cultural literacy, and education; in Liberia, they encompassed national reconciliation architecture, an all-female peacekeeping unit, economic inclusion policies, and youth vocational training. The study concluded that the effectiveness of these policies and programmes initiatives had broad developmental implications, enhancing social welfare, inclusivity, conflict resolution, societal well-being, political stability, and national development in both Iceland and Liberia. Consequently, the study recommends that female leaders be encouraged to participate more actively in governance at national and international levels, as they often demonstrate distinct innovativeness in leadership. Moreover, longstanding stereotypes and misconceptions about female leadership capabilities must be challenged, and deliberate opportunities created for women to engage in top-level democratic leadership and governance. Ultimately, this study underscores that empowering women in leadership and governance is not merely a matter of gender equality but a critical strategy for building a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous world.

Keywords: Female Presidents, Governance, Peaceful Coexistence, Iceland, Liberia
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Table of Contents

Content		Page
Title Page		i
Certification		ii
Dedication		iii
Acknowledgment		iv
Abstract		v
Table of Contents		vi
List of Tables		ix
List of Appendices		xi
List of Acronyms		xii
Chapter One: Introduction		
1.1	Background to the Study	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	6
1.3	Aim and Objectives of the Study	7
1.4	Research Questions	7
1.5	Significance of the Study	8
1.6	Scope of the Study	8
1.7	Limitation to the Study	10
1.8	Operational Definition of Terms	10
	Endnotes	**12**
Chapter Two: Literature Review		
2.1	Conceptual Review	13
2.1.1	Women	13
2.1.2	Governance	16

Lead City University Ibadan DO NOT COPY

2.1.2.1 Global Perspective about Governance 18

2.1.2.2 Continental Perspective about Governance 19

2.1.2.3 Regional Perspective about Governance 20

2.1.2.4 Gender 23

2.1.2.5 Gender Policy 27

2.1.2.6 Gender Stereotyping 29

2.1.2.7 Gender Policy in Iceland 31

2.1.2.8 Gender Policy in Liberia 34

2.1.2.9 United Nations' Gender Policies 37

2.1.3 Women in Governance 41

2.1.4 Peaceful Coexistence 46

2.1.4.1. Social Cohesion 50

2.1.4.2. Conflict 52

2.1.4.3. Stages of Conflict 56

2.1.4.4. Common causes of Conflict 59

2.1.4.5. Mediation in Conflict Resolution 61

2.1.4.6. Steps involved in Mediation 63

2.1.4.7. Peacebuilding 65

2.1.4.8. Relationship between Peace and Development 68

2.1.4.9 African Union Peacebuilding Initiative 67

2.1.4.10. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 72

2.1.5. Governance in Liberia 73

2.1.5.1. First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997) 74

2.1.5.2. Second Civil War in Liberia (1999-2003) 75

2.1.5.3. External Intervention in the Liberian War 76

Lead City University Ibadan DO NOT COPY

2.1.6. Governance in Iceland 78

2.1.7. Profile of Some Female Presidents 79

2.1.7.1. Profile of President Vigdis Finnbogadóttir (1980-1996) 79

2.1.7.2. Profile of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2006-2018) 81

2.1.7.3. Profile of Margaret Hilda Thatcher (1979-1990) 87

2.1.7.4. Profile of Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (2024 till date) 88

2.1.7.5. National Profile of Iceland 91

2.1.7.6. National Profile of Liberia 96

2.2. Theoretical Framework 101

2.2.1. Feminist Theory 101

2.2.2 Liberal Feminism 106

2.2.3. Intersectional Feminism 107

2.2.4. Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory

2.2.5. Relevance of the Theory to the Study 109

2.3. Review of Empirical Studies 111

2.4. Conceptual Model 113

2.5. Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed 114

Endnotes 115

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Research Design 126

3.2. Population of the Study 126

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique 126

3.4. Description of the Research Instrument 126

3.5. Validity of the Research Instrument 128

3.6. Reliability of the Research Instrument 128

3.7. Administration of the Research Instrument 129

Lead City University Ibadan DO NOT COPY

3.8 Method of Data Collection 129

3.9. Method of Data Analysis 129

3.10 Ethical Consideration 130

Endnotes

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis 131

4.2. Presentation of Data 132

4.2.1 Presentation of Research Questions 133

4.3. Discussion of Findings 156

Endnotes **195**

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings 199

5.2 Conclusion 200

5.3 Recommendations 201

5.4. Contribution to Knowledge 202

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies 203

Bibliography **205**

Appendix **218**

Bio-data **230**

The University Compliance Certificate **233**

Lead City University Ibadan DO NOT COPY

List of Tables

Table	Title	Page
4.1a	Coding Categories of Document Analysis	121
4.1b	Distribution of Key Experts	122
4.2.1a	Iceland Government Policies Promoting Peaceful Coexistence (1980-1996)	123
4.2.1b	Liberian Government Policies Towards Peaceful Coexistence (2006-2018)	125
4.2.1c	Summary Table of Key Performance Indicators Comparison	127
4.2.2a	Iceland Government Programmes Towards Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence (1980-1996)	128
4.2.2b	Liberia Government Programmes towards Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence (2006-2018)	130
4.2.3a	Iceland Government Policy Implementation Towards Peaceful Coexistence (1980-1996)	132
4.2.3b	Liberia Government Policy Implementation Towards Peaceful Coexistence (2006-2018)	134
4.2.4a	Iceland Government Programme Implementation Towards Peaceful Coexistence (2006-2018)	137
4.2.4b	Liberia Government Programme Implementation Towards Peaceful Coexistence (2006-2018)	139
4.2.5	Implications of Iceland and Liberia Government Policies and Programmes towards Peaceful Coexistence	141
4.3.5	Summary of Key Comparative Criteria	158
4.3.8	Policy Implementation Scorecard	165
4.3.9	Program Implementation Matrix	168

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List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Page
I	Key Expert Interview Schedule on s Peaceful Coexistence (KEISPeCo)	197
II	Interview Transcript Template	198
III	Interview Transcript Template	214
IV	Interview Transcript Template	214

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADC	Annual Data Collection
BG	Bad Governance
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of forms of Discrimination Against Women
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
DAW	Division for Advancement for Women
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
EFGPI	Economic Forum Gender Gap Index
EPS	Equal Pay Standard
ESC	Economic and Social Council
EDF	Eternal Debt Forgiveness
GE	Gender Equality
GES	Gender Equality Strategy
GI	Gender Issues
GRC	Governance Reform Commission
GP	Gender Policy
GS	Gender Stereotype
GGGR	Global Gender Gap Report
GEEP	Gender Equality in Education Policy
GEP	Girls' Education Policy

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IBRW	International Bill of Rights for Women
IHRL	International Human Rights' Law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KPI	Key Personality Interview
LNGP	Liberia's National Gender Policy
MWD	Merrian Webster Dictionary
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTG	National Transitional Government
NGP	National Gender Policy
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
ODOS	One Day Off Strike
SDP	Social Democratic Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UND	United Nations' Day
UI	University of Iceland
UL	University of Liberia

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UNNSCR	United Nations Security
UNGP	United Nations Gender Policy
UNDWEDP	United Nations Decade for Women Equality, Development and Peace
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIRTIAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UNEU	The United Nations and the European Union
WIG	Women in Governance
WGIP	Worldwide Governance Indicators Project
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WEA	Women's Empowerment Act
WBD	Women on Board Directive
WHO	World Health Organisation
WCW	World Conference on Women

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

There have been many struggles by various women activists, writers and Human Rights Activists on the discrimination and oppression against womenfolk. However, the agitation is not yet over because many areas of oppression have not been adequately addressed. The language of patriarchy has always been "It is men's world." Patriarchy, refers to, a system where the female gender is subordinate to the male gender in all ramifications[1]. From all indications, this is manifestly true because while everyone seems to agree in principle that men and women are created equal and possess equal right to compete favorably like anyone else, and given the same opportunity as would be given to anyone else, there are still pockets of areas of limitations for female gender even in this twenty-first century[2]. There also exist a kind of natural law that apportions roles and responsibilities to genders. For instance, the male gender is entitled to own and cultivate lands while women are permitted only to assist men to weed, transport and sell the farm produces[2].

In the political landscape, patriarchy manifests when women are either excluded from participating in politics in some societies or are under-represented in leadership and governance, though with progress in some areas[3]. At present, in Nigeria, only few women have ever become Deputy Governors in a few states of the federation. By the end of year 2023, the annual report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), shows that only 26.7% of parliamentarians in the world were women. This is just a marginal increase above the January 2021 report, when women held 25.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide. In some regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, the percentage in the parliament seat is abysmally low. As at 1 January, 2024, the report of IPU on "Women in Parliament in 2024" shows another marginal increase as against the previous years – 26.9% of parliamentarians

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are women (+0.4 percentage point from last year)[4]. For women to contest for election or fully participate in the selection process, was considered as a kind of disrespect to both the men and the gods of the land[2]. To further affirm the indicators of gender inequality in our society, women are not involved in decision-making processes thereby making their perspectives and priorities overlooked due to policies and laws that do not address the needs and concerns of the female gender.

Study has shown that factors such as cultural norms, gender stereotypes, lack of access to education and resources, discrimination and bias against the female gender, and institutional barriers are from time immemorial responsible for low women representation in governance and leadership positions anywhere in the world[3]. Men are never accepted to indulge themselves in the art of cooking because it was considered to be a sign of weakness for any man that is spotted doing so, but with technology, modernisation and civilisation, most of these laws have been relaxed to fit both genders and are no more considered abominable to either of the gender[2]. The stigmatisation of women as being lower in status when compared to her male counterpart is a global disease.

Furthermore, the culture of male supremacy has roots in local traditions. Over the centuries, it has taken a form and characterised by cultural and religious beliefs. A clear example of this is the belief in the Northern part of Nigeria that a girl child has no business in school while the male child is adequately educated in preparation for leadership position. Instead, a female child is only good for marriage at puberty to a man who does not even have her best interest at heart**[2].**

Women play a very important role in governance as far as promoting peaceful co-existence is concerned in the entire world. Research has shown that women are agents of peace and when they are included in decision-making processes, attention is given to social welfare

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issues, conflict resolution and the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development[4]. It is worthy of note to say that there are countries where women have been democratically elected to the position of President, Lawmakers, Directors, Deputy Governors and the likes, in which such women had rightly proved the common adage that "What a man can do, a woman may even do it better". In many countries of the world, women have been Presidents and have performed excellently well, beating the records of men in all areas. Countries like Barbados, Slovakia, Republic of China, Nepal, Iceland, Greece, Georgia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Liberia, have produced the first female elected presidents.

It is remarkable that the first female president in the whole world, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir between 1980 and 1996 was elected in Iceland and she was the longest serving female Head of State to date and the only woman to ever hold the position of President in Iceland. It was on record that Iceland topped the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index for straight 11 years during her tenure as the female president in Iceland[5]. Iceland, with a population of about 408,102 as of August, 2025, is a land of vivid contrasts in terms of climate, geography and culture. Iceland is also the second largest island of Europe, and the 18th largest island in the world. Reyjavik, the capital of Iceland is a thriving city, handsome in aspect and cosmopolitan in outlook. Reyjavik is said to be among the cleanest, greenest and safest cities in the world.

Interestingly, in the Southern hemisphere of the world, the Sub-Saharan African country, Liberia also elected the first female president named Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Born in Monrovia, Liberia on October, 29, 1938, former President Ellen Sirleaf, a politician and economist, was the President of Liberia from 2006 to 2018. She is also the first woman to be democratically elected as the head of any African country, for which she became one of the three recipients of the 2011 Nobel Prize for Peace[6]. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent efforts in creating and promoting peace and economic progress in her

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country Liberia, and her struggle for women's rights during her tenures as the first elected female president in Liberia and Africa[7].

Liberia, the only Black state in Africa never subjected to colonial rule and Africa's oldest republic, is a country along the coast of Western Africa. As a multiparty republic, according to the 1986 constitution, the Head of State and government is the President, who is directly elected for a six-year term, as well as the members of the National Assembly, the Senate who also serve nine-year terms. Monrovia, founded in 1822, is the capital and the centre-point of political, economic, and cultural activities. Monrovia is situated on the left bank of the St. Paul River on the ridge formed by Cape Mesurado. Liberia is bounded by Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west[8].

Traditionally, women are known for peaceful co-existence in the society while on the contrary, men are more prone to wars and crisis. In history, women do not have many records of war compared to men. They are wired to be peaceful and persevere during hard times. Nevertheless, there are few places in the world where women had been involved in war. For example, in Nigeria, Aba Women's Riot of South-East Nigeria and the Abeokuta (South-West Nigeria) Market Women's Riot in 1948 were spearheaded and successfully carried out by women and few others[9].

Feminism, which under-guided this study was coined by a French socialist, Charles Fourier in 1837 but was first used in 1872 in France and in the United States in 1910, has been investigating how equal opportunities can be accorded both male and female gender in politics, economy, social, governance and other areas of human endeavor[10]. Feminism has been shining its light on issues and experiences that had tried to sweep women under the carpet, treating them as second-class citizens. Feminists have sought to remove any barriers

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to equal social, political and economic privileges for the female gender, and to deconstruct any established predominant male agenda responsible for the plight of women and construct a female perspective which support female experience[11]. The struggle had produced fruits to some extent but there are still many areas to cover so as to close the gap that exist between men and women within a social construct, most especially in governance. A Salvadoran activist, rightly opined "The patriarchal system has historically placed the masculine at the centre of the universe, favoring men and excluding women, marked relations and forged unequal power between the gender"[12].

Iceland, which produced the first democratically elected female President in the world, is located between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, though northwest of the United Kingdom, but slightly smaller than the state of Kentucky. Iceland population is about 398, 266 as of June 2025, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data[13]. Founded more than 1,000 years ago during the Viking Age of exploration and settled by a mixed Norse and Celtic population, Iceland settlement is primarily made up of Norwegian seafarers. Iceland's form of government is unitary multiparty republic with one legislative house or parliament of 63 members. Iceland's constitution, adopted in 1944, established a parliamentary democracy, whereby a directly elected President is the head of government. The powers of the President are similar to those of other Heads of State in Western European democracies but the real power rests with the 63-member parliament, the Althingi. In the history of Iceland, no party has ever held an absolute majority in the Althingi but the country has been ruled by coalition government. Two coalitions had remained in power for long, uninterrupted periods. For example, one coalition, formed by the Independence Party and the more left-leaning Social Democratic Party (SDP), governed the country from 1959 to 1971[14].

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Globally, several women have served as Presidents or Heads of Government, demonstrating that leadership is not confined to gender. Notable examples include Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, who became the world's first female Prime Minister in 1960; Isabel Perón, Argentina's first female President in 1974; Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany from 2005; Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India in 1966; and Margaret Hilda Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990. Also in Africa, similar milestones have been achieved. These include Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Namibia's first female President from since December 2024 till present; Sahle-Work Zewde, Ethiopia's first female President between 2018 and 2024; Joyce Hilda Banda, the fourth President of Malawi between 2012 and 2014; Catherine Samba-Panza, Acting Head of State of the Central African Republic between 2014 and 2016; and Rose Francine Rogombé, Interim President of Gabon in 2009[15], just to mention but a few. These leaders, among others, illustrate that gender is never a barrier to effective governance. Their contributions have paved the way for future generations of women to aspire to and attain leadership positions across the world and in Africa in particular[15].

Therefore, this study assesses the implications of women's leadership as it affects the society's and relates to the respective country's peaceful co-existence. The roles of the two female presidents in fostering peaceful cohabitation in the societies of their governance was duly assessed and analyzed. This was supported by x-raying the tenures of two female presidents in Iceland and Liberia respectively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women are often denied the opportunity to ascend to certain leadership positions, not because they lack qualifications or competence, but simply because of their gender. In many societies, it is still considered a taboo for women to lead men. Nevertheless, evidence from

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countries where women have served as national leaders, including presidents, suggests that they often record significant achievements. Studies indicate that female leaders tend to foster peaceful coexistence, combat corruption, rebuild devastated infrastructure, promote good governance, strengthen bilateral cooperation, and enhance internal security, among other contributions.

Though many scholars have studied and reported important roles played by women in governance, in nation building and contributions to peaceful coexistence in different countries of the world, however, it appears that less attention is given especially to comparative studies relating to tenures of women in governance with particular references and peculiarities to peaceful coexistence across the continents and regions of the world. Therefore, this study conducts an assessment of women in governance and its implications on peaceful coexistence in Iceland and Liberia and also aim at establishing the capacity of women in achieving more in governance or any leadership position especially in the area of peaceful coexistence in the society. The case studies are Ellen Johson Sirleaf in Liberia, and Vigdis Finnbogadottir in Iceland. Therefore, a thorough assessment of the achievements of these two selected female presidents, in this study, would likely debunk the societal erroneous belief of considering the female gender as not capable of leading a government. Hence, this study investigates women in governance and its implications on peaceful co-existence in Iceland (1980-1996) and Liberia (2006-2018).

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1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate women in governance and its implications on peaceful co-existence in Iceland (1980-1996) and Liberia (2006-2018). The objectives were to:

i. identify government policies that promote peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018;
ii. identify government programmes that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018;
iii. ascertain the extent of implementation of government policies that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018;
iv. ascertain the extent of implementation of government programmes that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018; and,
v. determine the implications of the implementation of government policies and programmes that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the government policies that promote peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?
2. What are the government programmes that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?
3. What is the extent of implementation of the government policies that promote peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?
4. What is the extent of implementation of government programmes that promote peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

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5. What are the implications of the implementation of government policies and programmes geared towards promoting peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The research shed more light on the advantages of women's participation in governance. Such findings can serve as motivating factors for more women to prepare for involvement at every level of governance, an arena that has often been regarded by men as a "no-go area." Rather than remaining confined to the position of second-class citizens imposed by patriarchal structures, women can be encouraged to challenge their male counterparts and participate more actively in leadership. This is particularly feasible when women are empowered educationally, socially, and economically, thereby strengthening their capacity to contribute meaningfully to governance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on Female Presidents in governance by highlighting the achievements of the two female presidents, that is, the first female president in the world, Vigdis Finnbogadottir in Iceland, and the first female president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia. The study also showcased the efforts of these two female presidents in establishing peaceful co-existence during their tenures in their different countries. This on the other hand confirmed the effects of the Feminist struggle to achieve gender equality, equal opportunities for both the male and the female gender.

The scope of this study covered two countries that produced the world's first female presidents: Iceland and Liberia. Iceland is a land of striking contrasts in climate, geography, and culture, characterised by natural features such as Vatnajökull Glacier, the largest in Europe. Geographically, Iceland is an island nation with no land borders; it lies between the

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Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, northwest of the United Kingdom, and is slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Kentucky. As of August 2025, Iceland's population is approximately 408,102. The capital city, Reykjavík, once resembled an overgrown Scandinavian village but has since transformed into a cosmopolitan centre, distinguished by luxury hotels, visitor centres, and tourist attractions. Politically, Iceland operates as a unitary multiparty republic with a single legislative chamber. The president, who served as the head of state, wass democratically elected for a four-year term[13].

Liberia, the country that produced Africa's first female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, is located along the coast of West Africa. It is home to lush rainforests that contain a rich diversity of flora and fauna. As of August 2025, Liberia's population is estimated at 5,750,471. Historically, Liberia holds a distinctive place in Africa as the continent's oldest republic and the only Black state that was never subjected to formal colonial rule.

1.7. Limitation to the Study

A key limitation of this study was the researcher's inability to travel to the two focus countries, Iceland and Liberia, to gather data directly. This constraint was largely due to the current global economic situation. To address this challenge, the study employed the Key Personality Interview (KPI) method, using participants' email addresses to obtain the necessary information. However, many of the experts interviewed were unable to respond within the timeframe of the research, which limited the breadth of the primary data collected.

1.8. Operational Definition of Terms

Women in Governance(WIG): This is an organisation that supports women in their career advancement, leadership development, advocates for the personal development and professional advancement of women through concrete actions to help strengthen women in governance: their rights, freedoms, involvement in decision–making to provide the women

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the opportunities to present their needs and demands to appropriate authorities and empowers women to contribute in policy formulations and Implements in a community or in a country.

Peaceful Co-existence: This is an act of living or existing together without war, or a policy of peace between nations of widely differing political systems and ideologies.

Liberia: Liberia is a country in West Africa, bordered by Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the east. Its capital city, Monrovia, lies on the Atlantic coast and hosts the Liberia National Museum, which preserves and exhibits aspects of the nation's culture and history. The coastal region is characterised by palm-lined beaches such as Silver Beach and CeCe Beach. Other notable coastal towns include the port city of Buchanan and Robert-sport; the latter, renowned for its relaxed atmosphere and strong surf.

Iceland: Iceland is a Nordic island nation located between the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans, positioned on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge between North America and Europe. Its capital, Reykjavík, literally translated as "Bay of Smokes", was the site of the island's first permanent farmstead. Today, it has developed into a thriving urban centre, notable for its cosmopolitan outlook, modern infrastructure, and cultural vibrancy, while retaining its historical significance.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents Literature review with the following headings and sub-headings:

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1. Women

Women are the pillars and backbone of families, both immediate and extended, as well as of society at large. They serve as wives to men and mothers to children. A woman is an adult female human being, while before adulthood she is referred to as a girl, a female child, or an adolescent. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a woman as an adult female person, belonging to a particular category, as by birth, residence, membership, or occupation[1]. A woman is distinctively feminine in nature, an individual of the sex typically capable of bearing children or producing eggs, with a gender identity that is generally regarded as the opposite of male. Female as the adjective of woman is the sex that typically has the capacity to bear young or produce eggs, even among animals[2]. It is interesting to note that what differentiates a woman from a man includes the female reproductive system, comprising the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, vagina, and vulva, as well as physical features such as a wider pelvis, broader hips, and larger breasts, which support childbirth and make breastfeeding possible. The term female is a powerful one, as it reflects love, care, nourishment, obligations, responsibilities, strength, eternity, and maternity, among other qualities[3].

Historically, traditional gender roles in the society had been responsible to limit women's activities and opportunities resulting in gender inequality over the years. Gender inequality then gave birth to different waves of feminism from women whose concern is to criticise the cause (s) of discrimination, opposition against women, and fight against policies and

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government programmes limiting women from enjoying equal resources and opportunities like the male gender.

The concept of women has developed over the years, and has been influenced by cultural beliefs, historical events, societal norms which relegated women to the level of nurturers, caregivers, and homemakers alone while men are seen as breadwinners in the society. Nevertheless, concept of women is expanding in recent years, and making known the broader range of women roles and identities. Study shows that women are making wave in a variety of professions such as politics, business and the arts. Through various research studies on women's issues, there has been a significant increase in the demand for their rights and equal opportunities in all aspects of life. This makes it clear that among women are independent individuals who can contribute to society in meaningful ways[3].

However, in spite of such progress, women still experience discrimination, opposition, higher rates of violence against women, low representation in leadership position, barriers to education and employment, women earning less than men for the same work (in some part of the world), making gender inequality to remain "a work in progress" in almost every part of the world. In the latest 'Women in Parliament' 2023 report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), women have 26.9% representation globally, in the 2023 appointments of the organisation which was founded 130 years ago to promote democracy, to help parliaments to be more gender balanced, among other objectives of the organization. The IPU Women in Parliament annual report shows that, as of January 1, 2021, the share of women in national parliaments was 25.5%, reflecting a slight increase from 24.9% in 2020. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the UN Women Executive Director, commented as follows:

"No country prospers without the engagement of women. We need women's representation that reflects all women and girls in their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social,

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economic, and political contexts. This year's map shows that we still need bold, decisive action across the world to bring women into the heart of decision-making spaces, in large numbers and as full partners. There is no doubt that this can and should be done. It should be done now"[4].

Furthermore, the Inter-Parliamentary Union Secretary-General, Martin Chungong, added: "This year's growth in the number of women in political decision-making is just not good enough, especially when you consider that 70 percent of health care and service workers during this pandemic are women. It is up to all of us, both men and women, to keep pushing for greater representation of women in politics. We have the tools to make it happen. What we need now is political will"[4].

In addition, study confirms that women make up almost half of the India population but they hold less than 10% of the country's parliamentary seats[5]. This is also to confirm that the story is just the same all over the world. Although most Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, had long imposed restrictions on women's travel and driving, 2018 marked a historic turning point. That year, the country passed an Anti-Harassment Law, which criminalised harassment and was later updated to include the public naming and shaming of offenders. In addition, the decades-long ban on women driving and travelling independently was lifted, symbolising significant progress in women's rights[6]. In addition, studies show that fiscal policies and laws related to labour and the personal status of women have contributed to tremendous progress in Saudi Arabia. Between 2019 and 2022, female labour force participation increased by 13.1 percentage points, reaching 26.8% of working-age women. The number of women in the formal labour market grew from about 100,000 in 2011 to 670,000 in 2022. Moreover, approximately six million Saudi women over the age of 21 have benefited from these reforms[6].

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However, this study is concerned not only with women's representation in politics but also with their participation in all aspects of governance and leadership positions at every level.

2.1.2. Governance

Governance is defined in different ways by different scholars. Governance is defined as a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, irrespective of whether that government is democratic or not[7]. This can be further explained as the performance of the agents (the executives or the executors) involved in carrying out the wishes of principals (the stakeholders) and not about the goals set by the principals (the stakeholders), thus governance is all about execution of what has traditionally fallen within the domain of public administration as opposed to politics[8]. Therefore, governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decision are being carried out. Attention is as well focused on the stakeholders either formal or informal, involved in deciding and implementing of the decision.

The World Bank defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development[8]. Closely related to this is the definition of governance by the Worldwide Governance Indicators Project (WGIP) of the World Bank as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. An alternative definition sees governance as the use of institutions, structures of authority and even collaboration to allocate resources and coordinate or control activity in society or the economy[9]. In addition, governance refers to the process of decision-making and the mechanisms through which those decisions are implemented, or not implemented. When decisions are effectively implemented, the outcome is referred to as good governance; when they are not, it is regarded as bad governance. An administration that is citizen-friendly, transparent, responsive, caring, and respectful of human rights is

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generally considered efficient and effective[10]. The modern concept of good governance is participatory, responsive, consensus-oriented, transparent, accountable, effective, efficient, equitable, inclusive, and guided by the rule of law. Together, these principles form the fundamental components of effective governance[10]. It is also important to add the three theories or what we call the approaches to governance. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance either at the local, state, national, regional or global level[11].

Governance can as well be viewed globally as the system of decision-making and co-operation among international actors, including states, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and civil society[12]. Global governance fosters issues like economic development, trade, human rights, environmental protection, and peace and security among the nations of the world. Few examples of global governance, the world's most prominent international organisations are:

- The United Nations (UN) System, comprising of a range of specialised agencies, programmes, and funds that are working on issues of health, education, climate change and peace and security.
- The World Trade Organisation (WTO), responsible for setting rules for international trade and resolves disputes between member countries.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose duty is to provide financial assistance to countries experiencing economic crises and to promote international monetary co-operation.
- The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, established as a framework for countries to work together to reduce greenhouse gas emission and to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

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- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). As the name implies, it is an International Organisation that sets out fundamental human rights that are recognised and protected by countries around the world[13].

Governance can also be considered at the regional level. The concept of the region historically evolved to bridge the gap between the national and the local.

2.1.2.1 Global Perspective about Governance

Global governance can be understood as a framework of international institutions, rules, norms, and procedures that facilitate collaborative action and cooperation among states and other actors. It operates beyond national boundaries and functions at international, transnational, and regional levels[14]. It can also be termed as the system of decision-making and co-operation among international actors, including states, inter-governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and civil society. These collaborative actions include economic development, trade, human rights, security, environmental protection and peaceful coexistence among nations. Global governance objective is mainly to see to global challenges that are beyond national borders and demand collective solutions. As new challenges emerge and new actors get involved, the concept of global governance also come to light. The institutions involved in global governance are: (1) the United Nations (UN); (2) The World Trade Organisation (WTO); (3) The International Monetary Fund (IMF); (4) The Paris Agreement on Climate Change; and (5) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights[13].

There is a foundation whose aim is to ensure that institutions involved in global governance address pressing global challenges such as climate change, nuclear war, pandemics, and related issues. Its perspective is rooted in the need for increased cooperation and coordination among member nations and other actors. The foundation argues that new and improved mechanisms for global decision-making are required, as the current global

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governance system is insufficient to address the scale and complexity of today's challenges. Furthermore, it maintains that only through collective action and collaboration can a fundamental transformation of the global governance system be achieved[15].

2.1.2.2 Continental Perspective about Governance

Having talked extensively on the global perspective about governance, it is of necessity to also discuss the perspective of governance at the continental level. Continent is a very large landmass, usually separated by water or other natural features such as mountains, oceans, and the likes[16]. A continent is one of the earth's seven main divisions of land; continents are from largest (global) to smallest. The seven continents of the world are Africa, Asia, North America, South America, Europe, Antarctica and Oceania[16]. Another author define continent as a large continuous mass of land conventionally regarded as a collective region[17]. From the different definitions of continent, we can say that continental governance covers a collective region of the earth, with the same climate and land mass.

Governance at the continental level can be understood as the way in which power and authority are exercised within a society, encompassing the structures, processes, and mechanisms through which decisions are made and implemented[18]. History records that many European countries once had a strong tradition of centralised governance, with power concentrated in the hands of the state. An example is France, where the government has long played a significant role in economic and social policy. In contrast, Germany reflects a strong tradition of federalism and regional autonomy, where power is more evenly distributed between the central government and the regions[19]. Recent developments show that governance at the continental level is no longer what it used to be in many countries. This shift is driven by the quest for greater efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability in governance, as well as by the desire to address regional disparities and promote democracy.

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These changes have, in turn, encouraged the devolution of power in several European countries, contributing to broader continental progress[19].

Nevertheless, the overall aim of continental governance is to strike a balance between the centralisation and decentralisation of power. The need for effective accountability and transparent governance cannot be overemphasised. For this reason, civil society and citizens alike must remain ready to shape and influence governance processes at every level.

2.1.2.3 Regional Perspective about Governance

Regional governance refers to the system of governance in which a group of countries come together within a specific region of a continent, for example, West Africa. At this level, governance involves the process of managing regional affairs through institutions that possess authority to govern, with such authority voluntarily delegated by member states[20]. At this level, stakeholders are guided by policies jointly agreed upon by the member states. Regional governance may also have fiscal authority to raise taxes within its territory, administer a portion of its income according to its policies, and elect its own officers. It is often regarded as the closest level of governance to the people, as it promotes economic growth and development, enhances regional security and stability, fosters cooperation and dialogue among member states, and advances political integration and cultural exchange within a specific geographic area. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many countries closed their borders and airports to minimise the spread of the disease. Similarly, collaborative efforts between Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Niger and Chad were instrumental in addressing the menace of the terrorist group Boko Haram, particularly at the peak of its attacks some years ago.

Regional governance, and by extension local governance, plays a central role in the lives of people due to its proximity to communities at both the regional and local levels. One of its key advantages is that it provides a platform and resource base for representatives of

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member states, negotiators, ministries, and other stakeholders, extending beyond forums such as the Habitat III Conference[21]. In addition, the establishment of regional governance can promote local democracy, transparency, and accountability, particularly when such governance structures are composed of elected bodies and are accompanied by decentralisation measures at the local level[21]. Local and regional governments also gained international recognition at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where they were identified as one of the nine "major groups" in Agenda 21[21].

In the context of regional planning, a well-structured regional governance system allows for a bottom-up approach to development. This approach emphasises the execution of local projects and programmes that directly benefit the economy, the ecological environment, and the well-being of inhabitants within the region. Regional planning is broadly described as a strategic approach to managing and developing a specific region. It involves identifying the region's economic potential for growth, improving the living standards of its inhabitants, and ensuring both sustainability and economic security[22]. In the past, regional planning focused primarily on economic issues. However, contemporary approaches emphasise that social and ecological considerations must also be integrated in order to foster sustainable development and secure the future of regions.

Women's representation in governance cuts across global, continental, and regional settings. In some African countries, quotas have been established to increase women's participation in political positions, resulting in a higher number of women in parliaments and other decision-making roles. For example, in Sierra Leone, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act introduced a 30% quota for women in elections. During the July 2023 elections, this provision resulted in 41 women being elected to parliament out of 135 seats, representing 30.4%. Similarly, in Benin, 28 women were elected to parliament, the highest in the country's history, accounting for 25.7% of members, compared to the previous 18.5%.

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Nevertheless, women across Africa continue to face traditional barriers that hinder their participation in political office. Despite these challenges, ongoing efforts across the continent aim to address such barriers and promote women's leadership at regional and national levels[21]. A clear example is Nigeria, where only three women were elected to the Senate, representing just 2.8% of the chamber's total membership. Records further show that Nigeria ranks among the bottom five countries globally in terms of women's representation in parliament[23].

In Europe, many countries have made significant efforts to promote gender equality, particularly in governance. Iceland, for instance, produced the world's first elected female president (1980–1996), while Sweden and Finland continue to record high percentages of women in political leadership positions. The European Union has also taken notable strides to address gender disparities in governance through initiatives such as the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) and the Women on Boards Directive (WBD), both of which aim to increase women's representation in decision-making positions.[24].

The representation and participation of women in governance across Asia varies significantly from country to country. Nations such as New Zealand, the Philippines, and Nepal have made notable progress in increasing women's representation in political leadership. However, other countries in the region still record low levels of female political participation. In many of these contexts, women continue to face challenges such as entrenched societal norms, cultural barriers, and discrimination, all of which hinder their effective involvement in governance. Nonetheless, as in other parts of the world, ongoing efforts in most Asian countries aim to address these challenges by empowering women to take on decision-making roles in politics.

Similarly, in Latin America and the Caribbean, progress in women's political participation has also been evident. Countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, and Costa Rica now record

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comparatively high representation of women in political offices. As in Africa, gender quotas have been introduced in parts of the region to promote equality in governance, particularly within political parties. However, as seen in some African contexts, not all countries are fully committed to implementing these quotas effectively[23].

Campaigns aimed at addressing gender stereotypes, alongside initiatives that expand women's access to education and leadership training, are ongoing across different regions. Overall, while remarkable progress has been made globally in increasing women's representation in governance, there remains significant room for improvement. Achieving equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes continues to be a pressing need, not only at national and regional levels but also on the global stage.

2.1.2.4 Gender

By the law of creation, every child deserves the opportunity to grow and pursue his or her dreams, irrespective of gender. Unfortunately, many children's futures are put at risk from an early age due to entrenched norms of gender inequality. Gender norms and roles reflect society's expectations of how individuals should behave based on their gender. These expectations often create inequalities between boys and girls, with girls being the most adversely affected[25].

Gender equality means different things to different people, which explains why various authors define it in diverse ways, often shaped by their individual experiences, opinions, and perceptions. According to UNICEF, gender equality is defined as *"*women, girls, and boys enjoying equal rights, resources, opportunities, and protections"[26].

However, the gender inequality women have suffered throughout history continues to have intergenerational impacts even today. This persistent disparity has hindered progress in ensuring equal conditions, as well as in building new social relationships and fostering healthy, fair environments for all[27]. Gender inequality is found at all levels of society, in

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personal, family, and social relationships, as well as within institutions and public policies. Its effects are not limited to women and girls alone but also extend to men and boys.

Gender, in this context, refers to the characteristics and roles of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed rather than biologically determined[28]. This involves the behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as the relationships among them. The World Health Organization (WHO) observes that gender-based discrimination often intersects with other forms of inequality such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity, and sexual orientation, among others[29]. This is what is called intersectionality, a term used to describe how an individual may experience multiple forms of discrimination simultaneously, such as sexism, racism, classism, or ableism. Intersectionality highlights that these overlapping disadvantages do not exist in isolation but interact to shape unique experiences of inequality and exclusion[30]. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in the Public Sector observed that gender inequality is often compounded by other forms of discrimination such as aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation. This layered form of disadvantage is captured in the concept of intersectionality.

The term intersectionality was first coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. She illustrated it with a court case in which a group of African-American women sued a manufacturing company that had refused to employ them. The court dismissed the case on the grounds that the women could not claim discrimination based on both race and gender simultaneously, failing to see how the intersection of these identities created a unique form of discrimination[31]. To break it down furthermore, we can say discrimination occurs when an individual is treated unequally because of the individual's gender identity or gender expression[32]. There are four types of gender which include:

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- Masculine gender, used to describe male being
- Feminine gender, for female being
- Neuter gender as non-living and lifeless things
- Common gender is either male or female.

Gender can on the other hand be defined as the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women, and so gender equality then implies the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men and girls and boys, taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups and that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and prejudices about gender roles. Therefore, gender equality is a matter of human rights and should be considered a precondition for and indicator of sustainable people-centred development. Record from the United Nations shows that Gender Equality was made part of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 10 December, 1948[33].

In addition, gender equality exists when differential treatment is applied in a fair way that positively addresses biases or disadvantages arising from gender roles or norms (ideas about how men and women should behave) or from biological differences between the sexes (such as the ratio of female-to-male values). True gender equality takes into account the different needs of both men and women. However, equality does not necessarily mean that men and women must become the same; rather, it ensures that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female[34]. Anything short of fair treatment for women and men, based on their respective needs and equivalent in rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities, constitutes gender inequality. Such inequality creates a gender gap in achieving development goals, accessing resources, and participating

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fully in politics and governance[35]. However, any projects, government programmes, or policies that fail, or are blind, to the different natures, roles, and needs of men, women, boys, and girls risk creating gender bias. For instance, girls and women are often expected to handle household chores such as cooking and cleaning, while boys and men are more engaged in activities outside the home. This division reinforces inequality. Yet, who says men and boys cannot cook and clean as well? In Iceland, for example, it is part of the culture and tradition to train young people to clean their bedrooms, change linens, vacuum or wash the floors, prepare meals, and take responsibility for kitchen and environmental cleanliness.

In addition, there are attributes, characteristics, and roles often ascribed to people based on gender, known as gender stereotypes. Harmful examples include: "men can't change diapers," "women are bad drivers but better caregivers," or "men are strong while women are the weaker sex who should remain under rather than lead." Such stereotypes are particularly damaging when they limit a person's life choices in education, professional paths, or personal aspirations. Therefore, more government programmes and policies must be designed to promote equal rights to resources, leadership positions, pay, education, healthcare, budgeting opportunities, and governance. These measures should aim to eliminate gender constraints, gender-based injustices, and inequalities, thereby fostering gender balance and equality at all levels of human endeavour[34].

In addition to government programmes and policies, the empowerment of women and girls is another essential solution to the challenges of gender inequality. For women and girls to gain control over their own lives, there must be deliberate efforts toward awareness-raising, building self-confidence, and expanding educational opportunities. Empowerment also requires broadening their choices, ensuring increased access to and control over resources, and dismantling structures and institutions that reinforce gender discrimination and

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inequality. Ultimately, the goal of empowerment is to enable individuals to take control of their own destinies and participate fully in shaping their futures[34].

Gender has the following characteristics:

- Gender is learned.
- Gender is collaborative.
- Gender is something we do.
- Gender is assymmetrical[35].

2.1.2.5. Gender Policy

Gender Policy is a strategy which enforces the concerns of women and men as part of the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation policies and government programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men can enjoy equally[36]. In an organisation, Gender Policy is a written commitment by such organisation to promote equal opportunities for women and men in its workforce and operations and it should be written in a straight-forward language that is easy to understand by all[36]. Appropriate implementation of Gender Policy prevents violence against women and girls and makes society safer and healthier because gender inequality is not a 'women's issue' but affects all parts of the society. The safer and healthier the community, the better for all.

Furthermore, Gender Policy (GP) operates at all levels, national and international. The National Gender Policy (NGP) provides comprehensive insights into women's empowerment, rights, access to justice, leadership, and accountable governance, as well as gender roles, relations, and economic opportunities. The overarching aim of gender policy and empowerment at any given time is to reduce poverty levels and social injustices among women and men, improve health standards, and enhance the efficiency of both public and private sector investments, including the management of domestic finances[37]. However, the

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determining factor for achieving gender equality lies in the effective implementation, monitoring, follow-up, and evaluation of government policies and programme designs at all levels[38].

The responsibility of government to develop, design, and implement policies that foster gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusivity, and effective partnerships with various societal stakeholders cannot be overemphasised. Continuous advocacy and publicity on this responsibility are essential to ensure that the objectives of gender policy are fully achieved and implemented. Moreover, the periodic review of gender policies at all levels has become increasingly necessary to address persistent gender gaps in female representation in decision-making, access to and control of resources, and other socio-economic opportunities. The fallout from global financial and economic crises has further heightened vulnerabilities among the poor, marginalised groups, widows, the disabled, orphans, and, most importantly, women and girls. Reviewing gender policies provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of implementation, measure progress, derive lessons learned, and address emerging gender issues, including the experiences of women and girls amid counter-insurgency, conflicts, complex humanitarian emergencies, and other challenges affecting vulnerable populations[36].

Consequently, it is not an overstatement to assert that a well-implemented gender policy can significantly contribute to economic and industrial growth. Women constitute approximately half of the total population in any country, yet they remain under-utilised, comprising less than a third of the actual workforce, primarily due to gender inequality. According to the United Nations (UN) High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, as of 2016, about 700 million fewer women than men of working age were in paid employment. Moreover, women who were employed often earned lower wages, faced poor working conditions, and had limited career advancement opportunities. When

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women are able to fully develop their potential in their chosen careers, they tend to invest their resources in the education and health of their children. This, in turn, builds human capital, promotes future economic growth, and contributes to the stability of a country's financial sector[36].

2.1.2.6 Gender Stereotyping

Gender stereotypes can be explained as various conceptions commonly held by society which attributes to a set of characteristics, skills and behaviour to men and women, attaching the issue of masculine and feminine to roles of men and women in the society[37,38]. There are beliefs and opinion shared by authorities and individuals concerning roles suited for men or women gender. Such societal belief systems have made gender stereotypes to be descriptive and prescriptive; descriptive in the sense of how men and women are usually perceived while the prescriptive element reveals what men and women supposed to be, and what they ought not to be. The complexity of Gender stereotypes, on the other hand, originate from local culture and traditions, teaching children right from infancy, what constitutes female and male behaviour from their family and friends[38].

The study also shown that gender stereotypes actually also began with individual observation and perceptions of daily activities of a particular group and the perceiver's opinion that the personal attributes and abilities needed for a task are common in a particular group[37]. All those erroneous beliefs end up creating gender imbalance in the choice of profession sometimes, and the representation in governance. Gender Stereotypes (GS) can as well shape self-perception, attitudes to relationships and influence participation in the world of work, take for example, gender stereotypes in a school environment can affect a young person's classroom experience, academic performance, subject choice and well-being.

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Any assumptions made about boys and girls, whether conscious or unconscious, can result in students being treated differently or offered unequal opportunities based on their gender. A common example of this is the gender stereotype associated with clothing colors. It is often said that pink is for girls while blue is for boys. When a girl dresses entirely in pink, it generally goes unnoticed; however, if a boy wears pink, he is quickly remarked upon and scrutinised. This example illustrates the powerful influence of gender stereotypes on children. Over time, such stereotypes can shape preferences, behaviours, and attitudes for instance, a boy may grow up associating blue with desirability, while a girl associates pink with herself.

Studies have shown that adherence to rigid gender stereotypes can have negative effects on children's behaviours, interests, and self-perception as they mature[39]. Gender stereotypes as it relates to women in governance, portrays women as being less competent, emotionally incapable, caring and in need of protection, irrational, while men are seeing as rational, career driven and strong and comparison of female with their male counterparts. This has led to women facing barriers in making progress in their political career and in their choice of profession generally[38]. In governance, women are often expected to conform to "traditional gender roles" as mothers and wives at home, rather than being recognised as qualified and capable leaders. As a result, they frequently face discrimination and bias when seeking leadership positions or participating in policy-making decisions[38].

Furthermore, women in leadership positions are often criticized for being too assertive or aggressive, whereas men in similar roles are praised for demonstrating strong leadership qualities. These double standards highlight the pervasive impact of gender stereotypes, which hinder women's prospects in governance and contribute to perceptions that women are unfit to lead or participate in decision-making processes. All stereotypes, whether positive or negative, impose limitations. Therefore, there is a pressing need for increased

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awareness campaigns to challenge these stereotypes and to promote gender equality in governance and across all levels of leadership.

2.1.2.7 Gender Policy in Iceland

Iceland's gender policies are designed to foster a more equitable society, free from disadvantage or discrimination against women. A key measure in this effort is the Gender Equality Act, which was enacted in 2006 and has been in force since then. The Act requires both public and private organizations to take proactive steps to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination. Specifically, companies with more than 50 employees were mandated to ensure that at least 40% of board members were women and 40% were men by September 2013[40].

Resulting from that is the implementation of Equal Pay Standard (EPS) in 2018, which entails that all private sector employers with 25 or more employees undergo a gender-based pay audit every three years. The audit should be done by an independent third party with the aim of ensuring equal pay for all for work of equal value[40]. It is noteworthy that, as of 2023, Iceland has a gender pay gap of approximately 9.33%, one of the lowest in the world[40]. However, companies have been mandated to report their gender pay gap and take the necessary action towards addressing any disparities. Iceland's gender policy initiatives have achieved remarkable success in promoting gender equality, though challenges remain, particularly in addressing gender-based violence and discrimination against marginalized groups. In 2010, Iceland set a goal to ensure that at least 40% of board members in state-owned companies were women, a target that has since been extended to all public and private organisations.

Additionally, Iceland mandates that political parties include at least 40% women and 40% men among their candidates, a measure that has contributed to the country achieving one of the highest levels of female participation and representation in parliament globally. This

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commitment to gender equality is further exemplified by the election of Vigdis Finnbogadóttir in 1980 as Iceland's, and the world's, first female president, alongside the many women who have since held the office of Prime Minister[41]. As a matter of fact, Iceland has been recognised as the world leader in gender equality and had also put in place policies that can further promote gender equality in the country[40].

Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, the first democratically elected female president of Iceland, and of the world, was well known for her personal motto: "Never let the women down," and her frequent proclamation: *"*If anything can save the world, women can"[42]. History records that Vigdis Finnbogadóttir's presidency contributed significantly to the enactment of pro-women and family-friendly legislation. During her tenure, more than five percent of members of parliament were women, marking an important step toward gender inclusion in governance. Katrín Jakobsdóttir, one of Iceland's first female Prime Ministers, affirmed this legacy at a conference, stating: "She (Vigdis) paved the way for the rest of us"[43].

In 1975, Iceland witnessed its first women's strike, later referred to as the Women's Day Off (WDO) to avoid overlapping with the United Nations' Day (UND). Among the grievances raised were women's lack of representation in trade unions, their inability to become full members of the Farmers' Union, and the widespread under-appreciation of their domestic work. A scholar in gender studies at the University of Iceland described the day-long strike as a "wake-up call" for many women, noting that approximately 90% of Icelandic women participated, halting both paid and unpaid work for the day[44]. The scholar reported that in late October, approximately a quarter of Iceland's population, mainly women, estimated at around 100,000, gathered in the centres of towns, cities, and villages, including the capital, Reykjavik, which hosted the largest gathering. This nationwide mobilisation was part of a 24-hour strike protesting under the theme *"*Kallar þú þetta jafnrétti?" (meaning "You call this equality?"). The women who spoke demanded equal pay,

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an end to gender-based violence, and greater respect for women and non-binary people. This strike has its origins in the country's Red Stockings Movement.

Notably, the Women's Day Off paved the way for the 1980 election of Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, the world's first democratically elected female president, and also facilitated the formation of a political party composed entirely of women. The One Day Off Strike (ODOS) subsequently inspired other smaller strikes; however, the 2023 strike was the largest in Iceland's history since 1975.

Furthermore, the 2008 financial crisis exposed the masculine undertones in the Icelandic economy, according to a professor of gender studies at the University of Iceland. As one scholar remarked following the sudden collapse of the economy: "Now, when the men have run the economy into ruins, it's women's turn." The main objective of the strike was to demonstrate that when women cease working, Iceland itself halts. The strike, combined with the government's gender-focused policies, contributed to significant advances in women's leadership in Iceland. It led to the appointment of women to prominent positions, including the country's first female bishop and female prime minister, consolidating Iceland's reputation as a global leader in gender equality[45]. Iceland had topped the World Economic Forum's Annual Global Gender Gap Report (WEFAGGGR) for 14 consecutive years. However, since 2021, the country has experienced a degree of regression, attributed to a decline in female representation in senior positions and persistent pay disparities. Iceland now ranks fifth globally for wage equality, with a gender pay gap of approximately 13%. According to the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR), over 22% of Icelandic women experience gender-based violence during their lifetime. These statistics underscore that the struggle for gender equality in Iceland remains ongoing and must continue[46].

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2.1.2.8 Gender Policy in Liberia

The gender policy of Liberia is strongly committed to promoting gender equality as a means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice and promoting socio-economic development, enhancing women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development in the country[47]. The National Gender Policy (NGP) was developed in 2009 through a wide consultative process with input from various stakeholders. The committee put forward that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting should be adopted as a development approach and give the economic reform agenda, medium- and long-term development planning, value orientation, social transformation and other development initiatives of the Government[48]. The Liberia's National Gender Policy (LNGP) focuses mainly on areas such as education, health, economic empowerment, political participation, and gender-based violence[47]. The Constitution of Liberia guarantees equal human rights for all without discrimination. At the same time, Liberia is committed to amending any laws, policies, or practices that discriminate against women[48].

Gender inequalities and women's marginalisation in Liberia are caused by socio-cultural perceptions and practices supporting female subordinating and male superiority. Girls and boys, women and men are socialized into taking different roles in society. In turn, these roles are transferred to schools, public life, institutions and work places. The combined women's role in productive and reproductive work brings excessive burden of workload in the family as care-takers and providers and therefore curtails their participation in management and decision-making at all levels of the society. In Liberia, like in other countries of the world, women and men are not equally distributed across the productive sectors nor are they equally renumerated for instances in countries like Chad (the least gender equality country in Africa and third in the world, Mali, (ranked 155th out of 170 countries; GII), Sierra Leone (women population is 52% but less than 20 per cent

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represented in elected positions) , Niger, Benin and Togo just to mention but a few. Literacy rates for women in rural areas are enormously low compared to urban women, rural and urban men[49].

Gender disparities and imbalances are common in every sphere of life in Liberia. Most cases, women are disproportionately and unfairly represented. This leads to a variety of social problems that can be associated with gender inequality and imbalance such as unequal power relations, lack of access to basic services, economic disempowerment, low participation in decision making. Gender inequality and women's marginalization in Liberia is maintained by traditional and religious perceptions that portray women as subordinate and men as superior. Girls and boys, women and men are socialized and culturally ascribed different and rigid roles, duties and responsibilities with regard to division of labour, access and control over resources and decision- making positions[48]. Women participation and representation in politics in Liberia is quite low, having only 11.7 per cent seats in the Legislature in 2018 and this is due to dominant traditional and cultural beliefs that women place is at home and that matters of security are a man's palaver, resulting in the exclusion of Liberia women from peacebuilding processes[50]. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2019–2023) set a target of achieving 0% women in the Armed Forces of Liberia[50]. According to a report from the Armed Forces of Liberia, by December 2020, out of 1,858 members, 81 (4.4%) were women. This included 6 female officers out of 140 total officers (4.3%) and 75 female enlisted personnel out of 1,718 total enlisted members (4.4%)[50]. The Liberian government is guided by international, regional, and national laws and standards on gender equality. In particular, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) align their work on gender equality with the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPSA) and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Additionally, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2019–2023),

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the National Gender Policy (2018–2022), and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018–2023) provide further guidance[50].

In addition, Gender Equity in Education Policy (GEEP) was implemented by the Liberia government to promote gender equity in education, such as the Girls' Education Policy (GEP) which target at addressing barriers that are preventing girls from enjoying quality education. Government also supports initiatives to increase girls' enrolment and retention in schools[51]. Liberian government on the other hand passed the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) in 2008, which criminalizes domestic violence and provides legal protection and support services to victims of domestic abuse. The Act also covers the establishment of safe houses and counselling services for the survivors of domestic violence[52].

In an effort to further promote gender equality, Liberia adopted Affirmative Action to encourage women's participation in decision-making positions, including in political parties and government institutions. Additionally, the Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative is being implemented to ensure equitable allocation of government resources and to promote women's empowerment. Despite these efforts, challenges such as gender-based violence, limited access to healthcare and education for women and girls, and low representation of women in leadership positions persist. This underscores the need for continued efforts to implement and promote gender policies that remove barriers to gender equality and advance women's rights and empowerment in Liberia.

2.1.2.9. United Nations' Gender Policies

The UN gender policy is a comprehensive framework guiding the efforts of the United Nations in promoting equality among men and women and the empowerment of women and girls and also to create a more inclusive and equal world for all irrespective of age, race, sex, or ethnicity. The United Nations concept of gender equality was established among the

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core guiding principles of the UN, reflecting the UN commitment to the equality of men and women in all aspects of human endeavours, within the United Nations system[53].

The UN Gender Policy (UNGP) recognises the need to discuss about gender disparities and promote the full and equal participation and representation of the female gender in decision-making processes, sustainable development programmes and peacebuilding efforts at all levels. One of the guiding principles is the United Nations Charter (UNC), Articles 8 and 101, which states that "there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in every capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs"[53]. In 1995, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing affirmed that women's rights are human rights and committed to specific actions to ensure respect for those rights. Among its objectives on 'Women in Power and Decision-Making,' the Conference emphasised that the United Nations must take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making processes. The specific objectives outlined by the United Nations are as follows:

1. Gender Mainstreaming; this has to do with incorporating gender perspective into all programmes, policies and activities of the United Nations programmes so that gender equality could be prioritised and advanced.
2. Holding the United Nations accountable for achieving gender equality goals and ensuring progress through systematic data collection, as well as monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms.
3. Capacity Building: The UN Gender Policy aims to provide resources and training opportunities to empower UN staff, promote gender equality, and challenge harmful norms and stereotypes. This includes raising awareness, advocating for gender equality issues, and promoting the rights of women both within the United Nations and in the broader international community.

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4. The UN Gender Policy (UNGP) aims at working in collaboration with governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to ensure the advancement of the fight for gender equality, gender-based discrimination and gender violence in its totality.

Apart from these specific objectives of the UN Gender Policy (UNGP), there is also the need to approach the cases of disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, race intersectionality to create unique opportunities for everyone. All of these have been crossing with gender issues from time immemorial.

The UN, through the Secretary-General, views achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls as the 'unfinished business of our time' and the greatest human rights challenge globally. To address this, the UN has identified five key areas requiring joint action: investing in women, ending poverty, implementing gender-responsive financing, transitioning to a green economy and care society, and supporting feminist change-makers[54].

History shows that within its first year, the UN's Economic and Social Council (ESC) established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as the principal global policy-making body dedicated to gender equality, the advancement and empowerment of women, the promotion of women's rights, and the shaping of global standards on gender equality. Furthermore, gender equality was enshrined in international human rights law through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. As the global feminist movement progressed in the 1970s, the General Assembly declared 1975 as International Women's Year, and the first World Conference on Women (WCW) was held in Mexico City that same year[54].

In 1979, the General Assembly of the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) otherwise known as and described as

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an International Bill of Rights for Women (IBRW). The Convention frowned at any form of discrimination against women and saw culture and tradition as the influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations, and the affirmation of the Women's Reproductive Rights.

In 1985, the World Conference for the Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women Equality, Development and Peace (UNDWEDP), took place in Nairobi, the event which was described as "the birth of global feminism' because it was convened at a time when the movement for gender equality had finally gained global recognition with the participation of about 15,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[54].

In an attempt to accelerate remarkable progress in the issue of gender equality, the UN body unanimously resolved to form a new but single UN body in July 2, 2010. Four (4) among the UN body's agencies and offices such as the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (GI), and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UNIRTIAW), were merged together to have a new UN Women (UNW). The four main focus of the new UN Women are: Promotion of Women's leadership and political participation, empowering women economically, bringing an end to violence against women, and support for women's full and equal participation in peace processes and security efforts.

International Women's Day, celebrated annually on 8 March, originated from the Labour Movements of the 20th century in North America and Europe. It represents another significant achievement of the UN in advancing gender equality over the years. This global event recognises women's achievements in the fight for gender equality, regardless of

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nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, economic status, or political affiliation. Other international days observed by the UN include:

- International Women's Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women;
- International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation, on February 6;
- International Day of Women and Girls in Science, on February 11;
- International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, on June 19;
- International Widows' Day, on June 23;
- International Day of the Girl Child on October 11;
- International Day of Rural Women on October 15[54].

2.1.3. Women in Governance

Women, considered to be "weaker vessels" both by the society and religion, are rated high when it comes to taking initiative, acting with resilience, practicing self-development, driving for results, and displaying high integrity and honesty, solving problems and analysing issues in governance[55]. According to those who had worked closely with them, women make highly competent leaders if giving the opportunity to lead because they are likely to succeed in higher level positions as men[55]. Globally, there are factors limiting women participation in governance, be it in politics and other social areas of the society. In politics, women are constrained from participating due to general apathy to politics among women themselves, lack of resources, cultural and religion biases, all of which results to women low participation in politics. Also, it was observed that there seemed to exist some natural laws that assigns roles and responsibilities to genders, though not written anywhere in the world yet hold a level of relevance among human interactions[56].

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There are so many professional careers that the society believe are not meant for women because of the fragility nature of women and because such may not permit a woman either to have a home or not be able to succeed in keeping a home. However, women bring different perspectives and experiences to the table, which could lead to more effective policies and strategies[54]. Few of such examples are Medical, Engineering, Detectives, Sports professions, and so on. In this 21st century, question should be asked how will the world will be if only men are found in those afore-mentioned professions? However, study shows that women are making waves in all of those professions, rising to higher position, just like their male colleagues. Studies show that women and girls make up half of the world's population. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also essential for achieving peaceful societies and sustainable development. Moreover, women's participation in leadership positions has been shown to enhance productivity and drive economic growth[55].

Women are also effective in the area of mediation and peacebuilding, using their communication skills, empathy, and collaborative and cooperative approach to resolve conflicts which often promote understanding among different groups in the society. Women rather are known for dialogue and negotiation instead of violence[54]. Any country that excludes women from governance and decision-making process may be hindering her own progress towards peace and stability. Promotion of gender equality policies and empowerment of women so that they could participate fully in politics, governance, social processes and leadership positions, where their voices could be heard, and they could contribute their own quotas to the building of more peaceful and inclusive world, is becoming a matter of urgency.

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Traditionally, in certain professions such as farming, women were not expected to own or cultivate farmland or economic trees, as these roles were reserved for men. Women's roles were limited to assisting their husbands by weeding, transporting farm produce to the household, and later managing the sale of the produce[53]. As earlier mentioned, these rules are not written anywhere but they are just naturally adhered to in an attempt to prove the frailty of women and the superiority of men over women.

In politics, women are excluded in participating in the political affairs in the society but are only allowed to get information about politics from their men when they return to the house. Women as well do not contest election or participate in the process[55]. Women are used for campaign but when it comes to who governs, just a few percentages of women are involved. Despite the prescribed 30 percent women involvement in governance by the Beijing Platform of Action, even in Nigeria, only 7 percent has been achieved in this 21st century[56].

However, women participation in governance refers to equal representation of women in the process of decision-making, in government and other political organisations, such as serving as elected officials, policymakers, and leaders at all levels of government. Of a truth, the benefits of women participating in governance cannot be over-emphasised as it brings various perspectives and experiences to governance, decision-making, contributing to more inclusive and effective policies, and help to address gender inequality and women rights in diverse ways[57]. Despite the progress in recent times, with barriers including gender stereotypes, discrimination, cultural norms that says a women cannot rule over men, under-representation of women in governance continue all over the world.

Equally, it is important to note that women had been privileged to be in position of leadership in some parts of the world, and their performance had been quite outstanding and encouraging. Study shows that success of women in leadership can be attributed to women

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listening attitude, openness to people, partnering and team spirit, ability to bring people together, and their concerns about diversity and equity and they have the managerial capacity to move profits from 5% to 20% within a very short period of time[58]. Iceland produced the first female president, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir between 1980 and1996), who was democratically elected into office between 1980 and 1996. Vigdis was not only the first female president in Iceland but the first female president in the whole world[42]. Johnson Sirleaf ran for president and won in 2005 and was democratically sworn-in as the first female President of Liberia on January 16, 2006, two years after the end of the nation's bloody civil war. Ellen did not only become the first female President of Liberia and the 24th President in the history of Liberia, but also the first democratically elected female President in the whole of Africa[59].

In Nigeria, women such as the late Prof. Dora Akunyili, former Director of NAFDAC; Patricia Etteh, former Speaker of the House of Representatives; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, current WTO Secretary-General; Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili; and Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke are celebrated as women of valour. Their leadership and performance have often surpassed those of some of their male counterparts, both nationally and internationally. Studies show that significant national and economic development in Nigeria's economic sector coincided with the tenure of these women in various political and leadership positions during the Fourth Republic[60].

So also, a study on Nigeria's political development shows improvement in the Nigeria Ministries where women were appointed as the political heads, reason attributed to the fact that women by several functions they perform in the society are agents of societal development[61]. Development as defined by an author, is the process of bringing fundamental changes which involves not only capital and economic growth alone but the availability of food and job and income inequality in any given society[62]. Women often prioritise issues

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that are essential for building peaceful and cohesive society, such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, violence against women and girl child, and gender equality. A close example is the programme of the Nigeria First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, on the Home Farming policy, so that every family can have food in abundance. Therefore, lack of women representation in governance has significant implications in the overall development and sustenance of the society.

Nevertheless, the usual role of a woman should be given close attention. A woman is the central personality of the home and the family circle. Woman devotes her time, labour and thought for the welfare of the members of the family, performing the role of wife, mother, partner, organiser, administrator, director, recreator, disburser, economist, disciplinarian, teacher, health officer, artist and queen in the family. Apart from the above, a woman as well plays a key role in the socio-economic development of the society. Women are the key to sustainable development and quality of life in the family[63]. Any woman who can perform all of the above roles is capable of becoming leaders in different sectors of the society.

In the 2023 Nigerian elections, women constituted 49.32% of the country's population, nearly half of all Nigerians. However, only 8.9% of the election candidates were women, a decline from 12.9% in 2019. For instance, out of 92 women who contested for 109 senatorial seats (8.4% of candidates), only three were elected. Similarly, just 15 of the 288 women who contested for seats in the House of Representatives won[64]. It thus means only one woman, can perform better than men if given the opportunity to govern, especially when it comes to promoting unity and peaceful co-existence and good governance generally.

It is high time we stopped using women merely as supporters for male politicians and instead encouraged their full participation in all electoral processes and governance, on par with men. If democracy truly means that all voices are heard, why are women still under-

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represented at all levels of governance worldwide? As Adenike Aloba, Programme Director at Dataphyte, noted in 2022, 'On every occasion of International Women's Day, Nigerian women have little or nothing to celebrate.' This is due to repeated rejection of important gender bills, and in 2023, INEC, in a poorly timed announcement on the eve of 8 March (International Women's Day), revealed that only 18 women 'made the cut'[64].

The President of Women in Politics Forum in Nigeria, provided the way forward on the issue of low representation of women in politics and governance said "The only way forward would be to commence activities towards enhancing female participation in politics. This is why we will continue to advocate legislations that ensure political participation of women; otherwise, our male counterparts will continue to use excuses like religion and culture to undermine women's political participation"[64]. In addition to that, to increase women's representation in governance at all levels, there will be need for legal and policy reform to promote gender equality, measures to remove systemic barriers, women leadership empowerment, advocacy, awareness-raising, and capacity-building programmes would play very crucial roles in advancing women's participation in governance[65].

2.1.4 Peaceful Co-existence

Peaceful coexistence, according to the dictionary meaning indicates competition without war, or a policy of peace between nations of widely differing political systems and ideologies, especially between Communist and non-Communist nations, for example peaceful coexistence between the United States and the Soviet Union[66]. It can also connote a living together in peace rather than in constant hostility. Peace must be understood in all its dimensions, theoretically differentiated as personal or mental peace, that is inner state of calm or tranquillity, or a deliberate state of either psychological or spiritual calmness despite the potential presence of trouble, while social peace means the state of social justice and

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development[67]. Peace has two types – Positive and Negative peace. Peace in the negative terms is the absence of bilateral war, the elimination of wars, whereas Peace can be seen as opposite of violence.

On the other hand, peace is not merely a state of non-violence or absence of wars, but a directive goal of person, society mankind, which has positive aspect that should not be overlooked. All over the world, all mankind is suffering from multidimensional crisis such as terrorism, population-explosion, denial of human rights, economic inequality, racial discrimination, vanity of cultural superiority, ideological extremism, religious intolerance, nationalism, poverty, starvation, to mention but few. All of these, even in the absence of bilateral wars can obstruct the peace of a nation, and the world at large. This will also establish the fact that no nation could achieve peaceful state in this world of international network, complicated by market-culture, ideological and other differences alongside ecological crisis[67].

Frankly, war remains one of humanity's most pressing problems, and peace is almost always preferable. Moreover, peace encompasses not only the absence of war but also the establishment of positive, life-enhancing values, political institutions, and social structures. Johan Galtung, a founder of peace studies and peace research, introduced the important distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' peace. According to Galtung, 'positive' peace refers to the simultaneous presence of many desirable conditions in society and the individual, such as harmony, justice, equity, and similar values[68]. 'Negative' peace has historically denoted the 'absence of war' and other forms of large-scale violent human conflict. To another author, positive peace means a state of tranquillity, social harmony, social justice, social equality, friendship or friendly relation, concord, public order and security, respect for human rights and ecological balance while negative peace is simply

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absence of war, hostility, agitation, social disorder, disturbances, social injustice, social inequality, violence, violation of human rights, riot, terrorism, ecological imbalance[68].

Peace can as well be classified into two namely: Internal and External peace. Internal peace is also called inner peace which is the peace of mind and soul. This type of peace is the state of calm, serenity and tranquillity of mind that arise due to having no sufferings or mental disturbances such as worry, anxiety, greed, desire, hatred, ill-will, delusion and or other defilements[68]. It is worthy of note that human being can create and maintain his inner peace in the noisy surrounding or in the un-peaceful society. Internal peace also influences external peace. The Constitution of UNESCO states that "wars begin in the minds of men so it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" and so the culture of peace must be cultivated in the minds of children and communities through formal and informal education, from generation to generation[69].

External peace on the other hand is the peace that occurs in society, nations and the world at large. External peace is anormal state of society, countries and the world and it is a state of peaceful and happy co-existence of people as well as nature, though in negative and positive senses. These two types of peace are interrelated and are both interdependent and support each other because the peace of individual foster societal peace.

Global peace then can be referred to as a state of harmony and cooperation among nations, where there is a lack of conflict and violence. It involves the absence of war, terrorism, violence and any other form of aggression that can disrupt the well-being and security of people around the world. Global peace also encompasses the promotion of equality, justice, and mutual respect among diverse cultures and societies[70]. Global peace requires the commitment and cooperation of all nations, organisations, and individuals to work towards creating a more peaceful and sustainable world for future generations[70].

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International Day of Peace, also known as World Peace Day, is celebrated every year on 21st September. It is dedicated to making the world peaceful and terror free. World Peace Day was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly and two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire. Every year, the Peace Bell, donated by the United Nations Association of Japan, rings twice, as a symbol of hope for peace. First, on the first day of spring and on 21 September to celebrate the International Day for Peace. On that same day, a 24 hour of non-violence and cease-fire is observed as declared by the UN General Assembly, but achieving a world of peace requires more than that. It involves creating a world where people are treated equally, irrespective of their race and colon[71].

On the other hand, regional peace is a state of relative tranquillity, stability, and cooperation within a specific geographic area or region. Peace at the regional level can also mean relations and harmonious interactions between countries, governments, and communities within that region. Regional peace is essential for promoting development, prosperity, and security, and involves the prevention and resolution of conflicts through diplomatic means, collaborations, and mutual understanding[71].

Coexistence then means a state in which two or more groups or countries are living together while respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts non-violently. The idea of coexistence came into use during the Cold War, while the policy of peaceful coexistence was used in context of United States and U.S.S.R. relations. Historically, coexistence was a cover for aggression, but later developed as a tool for reframing the relationship between the two powers, for example, in the late 80s, the policy of peaceful coexistence included principles of non-aggression, respect for sovereignty, national independence in internal affairs[72]. Furthermore, an author, Angela Khaminwa defines coexistence as:

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- relationship between persons or groups in which none of the parties is trying to destroy the other,
- interaction with a commitment to tolerance, mutual respect, and the agreement to settle conflicts without recourse to violence,
- Learning to recognise and live with difference,
- To exist together in time or place and to exist in mutual tolerance[73].

All of these are absent from the relationship between races in the United States, between the Left and the Right, and to some extent, and with some people between genders. Certainly, a state of peaceful coexistence provides psychological and physical conditions for individuals, organisations, and of course communities to reduce tensions, and for peacemakers to attempt to resolve the causes of the conflict. Therefore, the period of non-violence is useful during postwar, to provide an environment in which the causes of conflict can be addressed and peace can be envisioned, negotiated and achieved[73].

2.1.4.1 Social Cohesion

The root of the term social cohesion can be dated to the era of pre-modernisation, pre-modern society where solidarity is established among people share similar work, personal, educational, housing and food, also non-material: similar in beliefs, in morality, and in feelings[74]. The second solidarity is called organic solidarity which came from a more modern or capitalist societies and came from inherent interdependence of individuals due to division of labour[74]. Other terminologies that bring about social cohesion are social trust and social integration. As a matter of fact, social integration is the process that leads to social cohesion. Social integration occurs where people from different background live and interact together easily. When this happens, social cohesion becomes very easy among people.

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Therefore, Social Cohesion can be simply defined as the glue or bonds that keep societies together[74]. UN defines Social Cohesion as "the state of a society's convergence, or the "common bonds" that unify different people and groups that share space or territory[75]. This glue is, made up of four key components such as: (1) Social relationship (2) Connectedness, (3) Orientation towards the common good, and (4) Equality. However, these components in turn entail good governance, respect for human rights and individual responsibility. Therefore, social cohesion requires, the active commitment of all levels of society and is critical to the process of peacebuilding in a society and nation at large[76].

On the other hand, people's ability to cohabit together in trust, with social bond and a sense of unanimity, help them to fight against any external or internal influence which can cause tension amidst them, thereby preventing conflict amongst them[77]. In addition to that, in a society where exist justice and respect for human's rights and privileges, social cohesion would be in place and conflicts would be well managed or resolved if happens. Social cohesion helps shared values and norms which serves as a binding factors and gap bridging in societies. Inequality is never found in a society where individual, irrespective of age or gender is involved in decision making and is allowed to participate in every social engagement of that society. A cohesive community, resulting from policies which give room to every member to share its prosperity, would be stable politically and would focus on economic growth and business development, and competitiveness is sustained in such society[77].

To make it more understandable, we can say social cohesion is the belief of citizens of a nation that they share a moral community, that helps them to trust each other, absence of which results in social erosion. Study shows also that some important societal norms such as equal objective chances of citizen, employment, rule of law and the likes, as important as

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they are, are never indicators of the presence of social cohesion[78]. In addition, in the pre-modern age, the strong religious belief, and close monitoring, or harmonious cohabitation helped member of the same society to believe that they shared a moral community that compulsorily made them to trust each other. That be as it may, scholars fear that this kind of solidarity can be eroded by the advent of industrialisation, urbanisation and the likes.

Social cohesion can be measured using the following domains: (1) Belonging (2) Worth (3) Social Justice and Equity (4) Participation (political) and (5) Acceptance and rejection. UN believes that a cohesive society is where everyone has a sense of belonging, participation, recognition and legitimacy, such that the society is not necessarily demographically homogeneous[79]. On the other hand, UNICEF considers social cohesion as 'the quality of coexistence between multiple groups that operate within a society, though distinguished in terms of ethnic and socio-cultural origin, religious and political beliefs, social class or economic sector on the basis of interpersonal characteristics such as gender and age'[80].

One can conclude that social cohesion is the heart of conflict management or resolution as it enhances understanding, trust, unity, peace, harmony, justice and equity, and it effectively promote sustainable peace.

2.1.4.2 Conflict

Conflict is defined by a scholar as a clash between individuals arising out of a difference in thought process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even sometimes perceptions[81]. There is tendency of misunderstanding each other because of the uniqueness of attitude, opinion, interest and view about things and life in general. Another definition of conflict is a struggle between opponents over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources, especially power and status which are central influences in conflict and negotiation. Power usually determines negotiator's behaviour while status give rise to

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competition and conflicts between group of people or individuals[82]. The word conflict comes from the Latin word 'conflictus', meaning collision or clash.

Conflict can be understood as opposition between parties, the absence of agreement, social contradictions, or a natural aspect of human interaction. It arises when people perceive threats to their needs, interests, or concerns. Importantly, conflict can occur anywhere and in every society. It is an individual and social process, not necessarily tied to achieving a specific goal, but often directed toward dominating others or, in some cases, eliminating opponents[83]. Conflict is a fact of life, inevitable, natural, unavoidable and sometimes creative[84].

Conflict is often of short duration, temporary, and intermittent in nature. Once it begins, it can be difficult to stop and, in some cases, especially between nations, may escalate into war. However, due to its temporary nature, conflict can often be managed or avoided through processes such as accommodation and assimilation[84]. Conflict in itself is not completely negative because conflict can also lead to positive change, but the expression and the process especially of conflict resolution could be destructive, constructive or both, depending on the context of the conflict. Conflict becomes destructive when:

- misunderstandings escalate into crisis,
- communication breaks down,
- the root causes of conflict are not dealt with,
- there is lack of trust and interaction ceases,
- complete breakdown of relationship, and
- there is resistance to all efforts to resolve the conflict[80].

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Nevertheless, a positive shift of paradigm, belief, or vision for the future held by the parties and some others can change conflict from being destructive to constructive. The major types of conflict are as follow:

- Intrapersonal which occur within a person due to frustration from personal goals, target, plans, expectations or accomplishment, or as a result of competing values or question of conscience. An individual inability to make decision can lead to intrapersonal conflict,
- Interpersonal conflict occurs between two individuals due to their difference in attitude, opinion, values, interest and so on,
- Intragroup conflict as its name implies happens among individual within a team as a result of incompatibilities and misunderstandings between the different teams.
- Last but not the list is International/global conflicts which occur among the nation states due to disagreement over natural resources, over political issues among various international organisations, armed interventions involving significant loss of life, ethnic or religious conflicts, wars for self-determination and or of the creation of a new state[85].

In addition, conflict can be positive or negative depending on its management[86]. When conflict is negative, it becomes dangerous, dysfunctional and destructive, stress increases and anxiety is involved. Considering the causes of conflict which include organisational structures, limitations on resources, task interdependence, goal incompatibility, personality differences, and communication challenges, there bound to be increased participation and creativity, clarification of individual views that enhance learning, consideration of a broader range of ideas, resulting in a better, stronger idea, and discovery of assumptions that may be inaccurate, among individuals and nation-states when conflict is well-managed[86].

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What should be our next concern on the issue of conflict is to talk about how we can manage and resolve conflict. Research shows that there has been a very strong collaboration efforts between the United Nations and the European Union in the field of peacekeeping and conflict management in many unpredictable times. The scope of their work has been extended to places like West Balkans, Africa and the Middle East[87]. The United Nations and the European Union collaboration in the area of conflict management had prompted them to deploy efficient and fast responses to different crisis zone such as civilian, political or institutional. The UNEU Strategic Partnership on Peacekeeping and Crisis Management for 2019-2021 paid rapt attention more on women and peace, and security. In September 2020, during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, a Framework Agreement on Mutual Support in the field of conflict management was again signed[87].

Experience had shown that conflict can occur in different places such as home, workplace, between nations and in the society at large. Conflict in either home or workplace, if allow to continue for a long period can seriously undermine the relationship, people's performance and productivity, bilateral relations and the general peace of the place[88]. It is worthy of note to add that not all conflict is necessarily negative, but as earlier mentioned, even a minor disagreement between people can generate to unending strife and war if occurs between nations. Conflict occurs from individual diversity of experience and thought, background, perspectives, differences in opinion and as a result is inevitable. Conflict comes and manifests in different forms such as unfair and unethical behaviour, one-off disagreement or 'personality clash', bullying and harassment, open confrontation, all of which can escalate into war if not well-managed[89].

Giving answer to the question of how conflict can be managed or resolved in homes, organisation or nations, effective strategy must be applied to get a positive result at any

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giving time. Levels of conflict would as well determine the type of conflict styles that would be applied. It must be noted as well that conflict can be managed or solved. Conflict management means that the conflict is mediated, handled and coped with; there would be an agreement to disagree, yet they will decide to move on together in the area that is common. On the contrary, in conflict resolution, the conflict is settled, solved or finalised[90].

2.1.4.3 Stages of Conflict

This sub-heading, 'Stages of conflict" can be discussed under about seven (7) topics. Conflict begins and develops sometimes faster than expected like "a yeast put in a flour", until it gets to a stage of war, if there is no necessary deliberate intervention to stop it. Hence a Yoruba adage which says: "Ibere ogun la mo, ao mo ibi ti yoo pari si" (Only the beginning of a battle can be known but the end, no one can determine". The following are the different stages of conflict:

a. **Evolution or Latent Stage:** just like life itself develops as soon as the spermatozoa fertilises an ovum (egg), so conflict develops from one stage to another, except resolution process begins and breaks the chain[91]. Evolution stage is the beginning of everything that will happen thereafter such as disagreement or differences over an issue, tangible or intangible, after which conflict begins to develop. At this latent stage, conflict is yet to be visible due to the efforts of some leaders who try to settle the conflict between the two parties., but not without some feelings of frustration. Resentment, or dissatisfaction from the parties involved. If the intervention of the peacemaker cannot stop the conflict at this stage, then it will escalate to the second stage as a means of "prevention so as to avoid the cure".
b. **Enemy Formation or Perceived Stage:** At this stage, the conflict is becoming visible, no longer hidden. The parties involve is getting aware of the conflict and

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also recognise that there is a disagreement or difference in opinion thereby making the parties involve to begin to see each other as enemies. This stage of conflict is the stage of spreading propaganda, remembrance of past history and leaders begin to brainwash their followers in order to win their cooperation and support. The common language among parties then is "we and them" in preparation for the next stage unless of course something positive happens.

c. **The Stage of Gathering Storm or Emotional Heightened Stage:** This stage as its name implies, is a stage when things begin to get tougher, a stage of mobilisation and stock takings of resources that will be needed should in case the conflict develop into the next stage. At the international level, parties begin to gather ammunitions, preparing their armies, in case the conflict generate to a confrontational level. At the inter-personal level, the individual seek support around him or her. Whereas, at the communal level, youth mobilisation, consultation of oracles and rituals are made in preparation to the next stage of the conflict. It is worthy of note that even at this stage of the conflict, reconciliation steps are always on-going.

d. **Attack Launching Stage:** If the conflict is between individuals, the conflict begins to manifest in form of behaviours like arguments, power struggles, or avoidance or communication and relationship breakdown, and exchange of negative pleasantries. Retaliation from the party to whom attack is launched is inevitable. Conflict at the International level at this stage, the attacked party cares to take their case to the organisational bodies like the United Nations Security Council, and International Court of Justice. Also at this stage, efforts to prevent escalation of the conflict into war by powerful or superior authority becomes very necessary either at the communal, interpersonal or international levels. Religious bodies, respected family

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elders, organisation where the parties belong intervene to prevent the conflict from escalating into war.

e. **Hostility or Violent Stage:** This is a stage where individuals engage in physical and violent action, while between nations, this may be the time of full-blown civil war, but groups sometimes resort to terrorism, insurgency and so on. Apart from that, this is a stage of destruction of lives and properties because the nations involved pull resources together to fight for their interest and positions, but in a non-violent conflict, when it is between individuals, there will be total breakdown of relationship, ties and communication. If it be a communal or ethnic conflict, the government send forces to forestall peace and order. All efforts to stop the fight continue until one of the parties surrender arms.

f. **Ceasefire Stage:** At this point, the reconciliation or mediation efforts are about to yield fruit. All the conflict resolution strategies are employed so that there could be lasting peace. The term 'ceasefire' is a military expression which signifies 'a call to terminate hostilities' between the nations involved. The ceasefire peace process usually entails agreement or some level of commitment between the warring parties to put an end to the conflict. During ceasefire, parties can use the period as a coverage and then re-mobilise, re-arms and re-launch an attack against each other.

g. **Peace-making and Peacebuilding Stage:** This stage happens when the parties involved in conflict deem it fit to come to the negotiation table or by allowing the third party to mediate in the conflict, then peacebuilding process can start. Once the ceasefire has been successfully done, peace-making process becomes easy. Resolution of conflict also make possible the restoration of diplomatic relation and ties among the two parties involved in the conflict, either at the International, national and community level.

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h. **Transformation Stage:** The last but not the least is the restoration or Transformation Stage. This happen when ceasefire has taken place and the two parties are ready for improved relationship. Restoration stage becomes necessary because of the damage to lives and property in the course of the violence, this stage follows immediately after the resolution of the conflict. The major stakeholders in this reconstruction exercise are the national government, and international organisation like the World Bank, African Development Bank and various international donors who offer necessary assistance to facilitate the reconstruction procedure[92]. Few of the common languages of ceasefire are: Humanitarian Pause, Truce, Cessation of Hostilities, Ceasefire and Armistice[92].

2.1.4.4 Common Causes of Conflict

What causes conflict at the global level cannot be the same at the continental, region and national levels, hence the need to discuss the common causes of conflict at these four levels. Conflict occurs in the context of the family, the community and the society because of human interactions, when the individuals' or groups' interests are not met[93]. When this happens, the people involved try to change the social and familial norms and structures by force, then violent conflict would arise. At the international level, ideological differences in political, religious or ideologies can cause conflicts between countries.

Border disputes over territorial boundaries can generate into serious conflict between nations. This may occur between nations, region or states. There could be resource competition over limited resources such as water, oil, or minerals can lead to conflict that will escalate to war between countries as a result of human nature that is selfish who would always want to have more than what they can chew[93, 94]. Study shows that any of the causes of conflict must be timely and well-managed, efforts should be made to addressed the causes

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of conflict without delay, giving early recognition and paying attention to the conflicting parties and negotiation between the parties involved should be adopted instead of the use of force and intimidation[95].

Some other time, conflict can be caused by economic disparities or inequality between countries which could lead to conflict especially when one party or country feels exploited or cheated by another. Conflict also translates to crisis many other times when parties go beyond attaining their goals peacefully and try to dominate, damage, or forcefully pursue their own interests[95]. In addition, a weak or corrupt government can cause instability within a country, spilling over to conflict with neighbouring nations or states. This is common during civilian rule, it is sometimes considered as revolution. Governance failures many times create economic hardship in the society and when it gets to an unbearable point, the people are forced to revolt, sometimes in form of a coup d'etat. This is becoming a frequent occurrence in many African countries[96].

The study also shown that the contest for political power is another source of conflict especially in Africa. The contest for power in Liberia between the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Samuel Doe's regime was the cause of the second civil war in Liberia, and the same thing happened in Sierra Leone, in 1991, by Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front, in a confrontation against the government of President Saidu Momoh, which later began a decade long civil war[96]. The most common style that is used in conflict resolution and management is Mediation.

2.1.4.5 Mediation in Conflict Resolution and Management

Mediation in conflict means a conversation between people who are in conflict, which is usually made happen by a third person called Mediator, who only help the disputants to arrive at a voluntary, negotiated resolution. In that case, mediation is never about finding

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the truth or justice of the matter but it is about looking for solutions which would allow the parties involved to make progress and at last put the issue of conflict behind them. Through mediation, the people involved are given the opportunity to work together towards resolving either home or workplace conflict. The mediator allows the people involved to determine the outcome of the process, because it is the disputants who control the outcome of the mediation process. The process of mediation must be voluntary, that is, the disputants are expected to participate voluntarily not by coercion, and the consent of the parties involved gained, which would on the other hand lead to failure of the process[97]. Mediator also help the people to pass across their concerns and interests while maintaining the confidentiality and is required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement[98]. Solution become easier when the people involved are given the opportunity to listen and be heard, otherwise, mediation is concluded at any time[97].

It is also important for the mediator to remain neutral and impartial throughout the process of mediation in order to build trust between the disputing parties and this would also encourage free communication and willingness to engage in the mediation procedure from the beginning to the end[99]. Impartiality on the other hand buttresses the mediator's commitment to fair and balanced procedure so as to achieve success at the end. For a successful outcome of mediation, importance of a well-structured, collaborative and sympathetic system, taking into consideration, the uniqueness of each case, cannot be over-emphasised.

Since the process of mediation is informal and not a court issue, less time and expenses are involved; compared with when it is an investigation or trial. Not only that, parties are not bound in advance to whatever could be the outcome of the process and the mediator does not impose a settlement, unless when a settlement agreement is involved which would be

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binding and enforceable in a court of jurisdiction[100]. In addition, the meeting of mediation usually takes place in a neutral place where individual can be open to discuss their point of view. The mediator must be neutral by not having the intention to benefit from the settlement, be impartial or bias about how the conflict must be settled. The meeting is private and confidential and should not be heard outside the meeting[97].

Since peace is a situation or period of harmony and tranquillity, a time of no violence or war, the state of being calm, being in friendship and understanding, then the fundamental aim of conflict resolution is nothing but the achievement of peace between the people involved in conflict. Therefore, any process of mediation must end in achieving peace, harmony, friendship and understanding among the parties involved without bias[101]. At the end of mediation process, there must not be war, fear, anxiety suffering and violence. In Peace and conflict, methods of conflict resolution are broadly categorised into two namely: Proactive and Reactive. The Proactive methods are as follows:

1. Good Governance
2. Trust and confidence building
3. Communication
4. Inter-party collaboration

While Reactive methods are:

1. Mediation
2. Negotiation
3. Conciliation
4. Arbitration
5. Mini-trials
6. Litigation

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7. Crisis Management or Law enforcement
8. Expert determination[102].

Benefits of Mediation:

- It speeds up the resolution of conflict,
- Mediation is cheaper than Litigation,
- It provides a kind of win-win solution for the parties involved,
- Mediation process is not complicated or technical,
- Mediation is voluntary for both parties,
- Reconciliation is the main aim of Mediation,
- Language is never a barrier in Mediation process because both parties are permitted to communicate in their own language[103].

2.1.4.6 Steps Involved in Mediation

For the purpose of making Mediation effective, there are steps to follow: The steps are as follow:

1. The first step to Mediation in conflict resolution is preparation or planning. The first thing the Mediator does is to meet the parties involved in conflict to decide where should be the meeting venue and who should be in attendance for the mediation process and also to know their perspectives and the goals of the mediation process through opening statement from the Mediator and the parties. Each party makes statement concerning their side of the conflict and the consequences without interruption from the other.
2. Joint Discussions give everyone the chance to discuss what has been presented at the first stage, questions are raised to build dialogue so as to know the issues

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to be dealt with in order to bring lasting solution to the conflict. Parties are implored not to raise voices in anger but to be calm as they take turns to discuss.

3. After the Joint Discussions, each party is allowed to have a private meeting in different rooms while the mediator go from room to room to know the position of each side. The Mediator ask each group question and from this point notes the strengths and weaknesses of each party, and develop the idea required to make a settlement work.
4. The fourth stage of mediation session is called "Negotiation". Here the two parties return to the same room to talk about the way forward to settle the conflict. Reason being that the two parties would present whatever ideas they have and both agree on the ones that would work for the purpose of the mediation. The Mediator needs to be patient and wait for each party to present whatever they have settled for so as not to lose everything at this stage.
5. The final settlement in the process of mediation is what is called "Settlement". The Mediator tries to put every agreement in writing if settlement is achieved, and would be signed by the parties, if not, the Mediator help the two parties to decide either to try the process again or to take the matter to court. At the end of everything, Settlement offer is paid by both parties[104].

There might be some additional steps mediators could add to the ones discussed in this study depending on the exposure and experience of the mediators.

2.1.4.7 Peacebuilding

Scholars, including those within the UN, have offered various definitions of peacebuilding. Historically, the term 'peacebuilding' emerged about 30 years ago through the work of Johan Galtung, the founder of peace studies. Galtung advocated for the creation of

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peacebuilding structures that foster sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of conflict at all levels and by supporting local capacities for managing peace and resolving conflicts[105]. After its emergence, peacebuilding gained prominence within the UN in 1992 through Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report, An Agenda for Peace. In this report, peacebuilding was defined as actions taken to reinforce peace and prevent a relapse into conflict.

Furthermore, the Brahimi Report of 2000 described peacebuilding as 'activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reorganise the foundations of peace while providing tools to build something beyond the mere absence of wa[106]. Peacebuilding is beyond just resolving conflict but it takes into account structural forms of injustice and violence, some underlying cultures, histories and not just the causes of violence. This makes peacebuilding a very complex task, involving many actors and requires values, goals and commitment to human rights and human needs must seriously be taken into consideration as well. The established structure must ensure a longtime peace and prevent the re-occurrence of violence[106]. The process of effective peacebuilding as we all know, must begin with the elimination of threats to peace to the root cause(s) of conflicts in any society, so all government strategies to curb conflict and bring peace to the society must be put in place[105]. However, building peace could on the other hand means putting in place adequate food security, access to education and skill development, health care, social protection and dignity for all, strengthening resilience to climate shocks and investing in adaptation, closing the digital divide and harnessing the benefits of digital inclusion as a way of protecting against the perils of modern technologies[106]. Peace building could also mean equal participation of women in position of power and creating opportunities for young people as well. Ability of developing countries to access long term financial capacity so that they could invest in public goods and services for their citizens also amount to peacebuilding.

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It is important to also add the essential agent of peacebuilding especially as it concerns the individual who strives to be involved in peacebuilding activity. The individual should uphold high personal standards, such as honesty, integrity and must maintain the respect of others around him. The peacebuilder must also be of good report in the society. Then he or she would be able to build peace through the four (4) C's of peacebuilding such as Contact, Cooperation, Communication, and Conciliation[107].

1. Contact: this is one of the essential elements of peacebuilding process which determine the success or the failure of the peacebuilding process. The 40th President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 1987. The agreement aimed to eliminate all intermediate- and short-range ground-based missiles and launchers from Europe. Reagan recognised that face-to-face meetings with Gorbachev were crucial, and after three additional meetings, an accord was reached. This underscores the idea that the level of direct contact between individuals or groups involved in the peacebuilding process can significantly influence the likelihood of success.
2. Cooperation: As good as diplomacy is on the issue of agreement between two nations, cooperation is the "common threat or superordinate goals", which can "overrides people's differences from one another[107]. Reagan and Gorbachev knew that there was a need for both of them to work together (cooperation) for the common good of the two countries in order for the nuclear disarmament to occur. Hence the cooperation between the two leaders was the tie that bound them to further acts on the issue of diplomacy.
3. Communication: In peacebuilding, communication typically takes three forms: bargaining, mediation, and arbitration. The peace talks between Reagan and

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Gorbachev were characterised by bargaining, or direct negotiation, which was the method that made the INF Treaty possible. Had communication been hindered by tensions or an inability to reason together, the peace accord might have stalled.

4. Conciliation is the last elements of peacebuilding. By 'conciliatory,' we mean an intention to gain goodwill or favour to reduce hostility. At the first meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev, the United States had developed the so-called 'Star Wars' defence system, which Gorbachev strongly opposed, attempting to block the disarmament plan. Even Reagan's offer to share information to help the Soviet Union develop their own project was initially rejected by Gorbachev, bringing the peace talks to a halt. Eventually, however, both leaders committed to peace, and the disarmament agreement was successfully achieved[107].

In addition to the United Nations' ongoing efforts to promote and sustain peace globally, the Secretary-General, in the May 2023 Monthly Forecast of the UN, released a report titled Our Common Agenda on 10 September 2021. In this report, he presented his vision for effectively addressing global challenges and threats. The Secretary-General outlined six potential areas for a new agenda to sustain peace, including:

1. reducing strategic risks;
2. strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new risks;
3. reshaping responses to all forms of violence;
4. investing in prevention and peacebuilding;
5. supporting regional prevention and;
6. putting women and girls at the centre[108].

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As a follow-up to the Secretary-General report, in February, the UN system was called to develop a New Agenda for Peace, in close consultation with the UN member States and all relevant partners as part of their preparation for the future Summit, suggested to hold on 22-23 September, 2024[108].

2.1.4.8 Relationships between Peacebuilding and Development

To say that peacebuilding is paramount to development could only be an overstatement considering the fact that lack of development is an underlying factor to reoccurrence of conflict either at the individual level, State, National, Continental and International levels[109]. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals represents a global effort to address challenges and create a more sustainable and equitable world for all. However, achieving sustainable development must go hand in hand with the promotion of peace at all levels and with finding permanent solutions to the root causes of conflicts. Peacebuilding and development should be integrated into the agenda to foster a transformative approach that sustains the collective well-being of people. Peace is essential for development across political, social, and economic domains, highlighting the strong interconnection between these areas.

Research also indicates that environmental development and environmental peacebuilding are closely linked, particularly in the context of climate change, and cannot be overlooked. Environmental peacebuilding provides an inclusive framework that integrates different stages of the conflict life-cycle, emphasizing the important role the environment plays in both conflict and peacebuilding processes[109]. Moreover, environmental peacebuilding advances academic discourse on the environment, on peace and conflict and at the same time helps policy/decision-makers to achieve a more peaceful and sustainable world[109].

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To affirm how important peacebuilding is to development, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres remarked to the Security Council during the debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Sustaining Peace through Common Development" "Our Organisation is built on three pillars: peace, development, and human rights"[109]. This was also reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit that "development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing"[109]. In addition to that, development is considered not to be sufficient to secure peace, neither could peace be secured without inclusive and sustainable development that is people-oriented, but development is very important[109].

As it concerns sustainable development, peace is a key component because, a healthy environment is essential for development. Communities where conflict strives, business operations are affected because of unreliable social services, poverty, hunger and inequality are not left out as well[110]. In such environment, businesses are made to close down to move to a more secured environment while the conflict-ridden community continue to suffer poverty, hunger and decreased opportunities. We can conclude then that promotion of peace and sustainable development would bring an end to poverty, prevent conflict, provide a healthier business environment which would foster more effective delivery of products and services[110].

2.1.4.9. African Union Peacebuilding Initiatives among Member Nations

The African Union which was founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and launched on 9th July, 2002, in Durban, South Africa, to replace the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U), established in Addis Ababa on 25th May, 1963, is a geo-political entity covering the totality of African continent. Its formation can be dated back to the First Congress of independent African States, which took place in Accra, Ghana between 15th to 22 April, 1958[111]. But it

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was later established on May, 1963, to promote unity and solidarity of African countries, to also promote economic development and to promote international cooperation. African Union was actually to be more economic in nature, similar to the European Union and it was to comprise of the Central Bank, a Court of Justice and an all-Africa parliament. The Constitutive Act, which provided for the establishment of the African Union was ratified by two thirds of the OAU members and then came into force on May, 26, 2001. After a transition period, the African Union came to replace the Organisation of African Unity.

In 2004, the African Union Pan-African Parliament was inaugurated and the organisation agreed to create a peacekeeping force of about 15,000 soldiers[112]. As earlier mentioned, the transformation of OAU to AU in 2002 confirmed the desire of the African Nations to be in control of their own affairs and resources from peace, security, economy, trade, and governance, upholding and strengthening their democracies, African Union has indeed made a number of strides, most especially in the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding[113]. Few of the African Union contribution to peacebuilding in the continent of Africa are as highlighted below:

1. The African Union Peace and Security Council, the African Union's Blue Print, was established in 2004 to promote peace and stability in all African countries, through conflict prevention, management resolution[114].
2. African Standby force (ASF) is also put in place as a multidimensional peacekeeping force comprising of the military, the Police force and the civilians gathered from African Union member States. The major function of the African Standby force, as the name implies, is to respond quickly to conflicts from any part of the continent[115].

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3. Another body called Panel of the wise, comprising of five (5) prominent African personalities whose duty is to provide guidance and support to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in conflict management and resolution[115].
4. Next the Panel of the Wise is the African Union Mediation Support which was formed to provide technical and strategic support to African Union Mediators and Envoys during their efforts to prevent conflict and peacekeeping operation across the continent.
5. Not only that, Women Peace and Security Agenda is also added to promote women involvement in peacebuilding efforts in an attempt to recognise women's role in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction[116].
6. In 1993, African Peace Fund was established to provide financial support to peacebuilding initiatives in the area of mediation, conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations all over African soil[115].
7. Peacebuilding and Reconstruction division was as well formed within the African Union Commission to provide technical support and guidance to AU member states in developing and implementing peacebuilding strategies and initiatives.
8. In addition, African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy framework aims at supporting countries coming out of conflict, to rebuild their societies, promote reconciliation efforts and sustainable development.
9. As time goes on, there arose the need for system collects and data analysis initiatives to discover and provide timely prevention to any potential conflicts and threat to peace and security in Africa.
10. The last initiatives of the African Union to peacebuilding that will be discussed in this study is what is called Conflict Prevention Framework. This body sends early

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warning, mediation efforts and preventive diplomacy to discard any potential conflicts before they escalate[117].

2.1.4.10 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goal 16

After a two-year-long series of global meetings, debates, consultations and countless written submissions with national institutions, civil society organisations, academia, regional and international organisations, departments and agencies of the UN, which led to the adoption and creation of a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the former Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) for the period of 2015-2030, study confirmed that small countries were given a very strong voice in the debates, resulting to diversification of ideas and positions[118].

There was a significant improvement on the process that brought about the creation of the former MDG, which was spearheaded by only the United Nations agencies and their donor nations without sufficient consultation[118]. Another significant difference between the MDG and SDGs is that the former's focus was on developing countries while the SDGs' goal is to promote development through a global, integrated and indivisible approach. SDGs major focus is on the promotion of peace, justice and strong institutions, with different targets demanding an end to violence, promotion of the rule of law, strengthening institutions and inclusive decision-making and reducing corruption at all levels of governance[118].

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims at fostering peaceful, equality, and inclusive society for sustainable development, which would in turn provide access to justice, and accountability, and effective society at all levels. The overall goal of the UN SDG goal 16 is to build a peaceful and just world, where rule of law and human rights of members are respected and every individual have a sense of belonging to that society. As good as that may be, the successful achievement of these UN SDGs goals

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depends on the functioning of implementation structures at all the three levels of political and administrative institutions such as the Continental, Regional and Member State[119].

This goal has been criticised for neglecting justice, advancing the rule of law, supporting strong institutions and deviation from its original plan of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. This resulted in a new global process that could develop or apply strategies that would facilitate integrated approaches to achieving sustainable peace and security, economic, social and environmental sustainability[119]. Over the years, studies had shown that extreme poverty, environmental degradation, poor governance, political social and gender-based inequalities, marginalisation, and high unemployment are responsible for conflicts in the world at large. Therefore, urgent solution to all the pressing issues is required. Some key targets of the SDG goal 16 are as follows:

1. Reduce all forms of violence and any related death rates everywhere,
2. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of vices and torture of children,
3. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all,
4. Combat organised crime and illicit financial and Arm flows,
5. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms,
6. Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels,
7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels,
8. Strengthen the participation in Global Governance,
9. Provide Universal Legal Identity,
10. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedom,
11. Strengthen relevant National Institutions,

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12. Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development[119].

2.1.5 Governance in Liberia

Liberia, a constitutional republic, with a population of approximately 5,507,073 million as of April, 2024, was patterned after that of the United States with the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial branches. As a multiparty republic under the 1986 Constitution, the Head of State and government is the President, directly elected to serve for six-year term, members of the bicameral National Assembly, who also serves six-year terms and the House of Representatives, and nine-year terms in the Senate. The Senate and the House of Representatives are also elected directly. Liberia under the democratically elected female President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was divided into 15 counties, each of which was headed by a Superintendent, appointed by the President[120].

In Liberia, major political parties and organisation are:

- The Unity Party
- The Congress for Democratic Change
- The Alliance for Peace and Democracy
- The United People's Party
- The National Patriotic Party and,
- The Liberty Party.

The Civilian rule was established in 1986 after political parties were legalised in 1984[120]. Record has it that governance in Liberia was dominated by various political unrest and violence which prevented any stable leadership in power between mid-1990s to the early 2000s but a power-sharing agreement was reached in 2003 which ended the fight and

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brought about the creation of a National Transitional Government (NTG). With the support of the United Nations peacekeeping troops, the government was replaced, under the 1986 constitution and ruled until a democratically elected administration was brought to power in 2006, the administration of the first female elected President of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf[120].

2.1.5.1 First Liberia Civil War (1989-1997)

Historically, the First Liberian Civil War is considered one of Africa's bloodiest post-independence conflicts. Out of a population of approximately 2.1 million at the time, more than 200,000 lives were lost, and many people became refugees in neighbouring countries, including Nigeria. The conflict began on 24 December 1989, when a band of Libyan-trained rebels, led by Charles Taylor, invaded Liberia from the Ivory Coast. The rebel group, known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was primarily composed of Gio and Mano peoples from Nimba County in eastern Liberia, who had been opposed to and persecuted by Liberian President Samuel Doe and his Krahn ethnic group[121]. From December 1989 to mid-1993, there were ongoing clashes between the NPFL and government forces, alongside other ethnic groups supporting President Doe. Members of Doe's ethnic group who remained loyal to him became primary targets of the NPFL.

Although Nigerian and Ghanaian troops, deployed through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as peacekeepers, intervened in Monrovia, their presence ultimately prolonged the conflict by supporting Doe's forces. On 9 September 1990, President Doe was captured by Prince Johnson of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), a rebel group that had been campaigning against Doe's government[121].

The next line of action from the ECOWAS was to force the creation of an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), led by Dr. Amos C. Sawyer, and was made the nation's President. Instead of cooperating and be working with the Interim Government,

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Taylor continued to fight. As the fight continued, about seven other factions got involved in the war. They are: (1) The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), (2) The United Liberian Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), The Lofa Defence Force and many others who remained loyal to the detained Samuel Doe's government[121].

Again in 1992, a massive attack was launched on the capital city, Monrovia by Taylor and the NPFL, called Operation Octopus for almost two months, until August 1996, when the Nigerian troops subjected the warring factions to sign an Accord named Abuja Accord which required them to disarm and demobilise by 1997 and abide by the UN-monitored elections, which gave victory to Charles Taylor, the leader of the National Patriotic Party, after defeating Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the first time[121].

2.1.5.2 Second Civil War in Liberia (1999-2003)

The Liberian first civil war ended on a note of the UN-monitored election, which gave victory to Charles Taylor, the leader of the National Patriotic Party, after defeating Ellen Sirleaf for the first time. It suffice to ask the cause(s) of the second civil war in Liberia, which is no other reason but the failure of the post-first civil war peacebuilding/transitional process like disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and re-integration, security sector reform, which later led to armed attacks launched by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and the counter-attacks launched by Charles Taylor against the northwest regions of Liberia on April 21, 1995. However, record has it that Taylor's regime abuses human rights, and Taylor also fails to solve the chronic social economic problems, security sector reform and national reconciliation as expected. Charles Taylor hasty nature of the disarmament and demobilisation processes, suddenly launched Liberia into the second civil war in 1999[122].

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The Second Liberian Civil War began with attacks by a warlord militia known as 'Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy' (LURD). This group was an amalgamation of members from militias involved in the First Liberian Civil War, disaffected members of Charles Taylor's former National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and some wartime opportunists. The primary aim of the warring factions was the private accumulation of capital. LURD launched its initial attacks from Guinea, Liberia's northern neighbour, and the conflict soon escalated with the involvement of other militant groups, including the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), which was formed by LURD members primarily to target Charles Taylor's regime[122].

2.1.5.3. External Intervention in the Liberia War

Peacebuilding efforts in Liberia after the civil wars was very important to ensure stability and reconciliation in the entire country. The United Nations Misson in Liberia (UNMIL) played a key role in providing security and support for the peacebuilding processes in the country[123]. International donors and organizations also provided support for economic reconstruction and development in Liberia to address the root causes of the conflict and establish more resilient society[123].

Liberia being a member of the Economic Community of West Africa State, a group of West African nations rose to the responsibility of bringing an end to the bloody second civil war in Liberia. The security outfit of the ECOWAS called ECOMOG, after three years of intervention succeeded in temporarily bringing an end to the bloodshed and ethnic killing. Although, ECOMOG intervention can be divided into three stages: from August to November, 1990 which led to cease-fire, from November 1990 to October 1992, known as "the fragile truce" and from October 1992 to the end[124].

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ECOMOG, meaning the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, was a West African peacekeeping group created to help the members states to enforce peace and security especially when there are conflict and war. ECOMOG started with 3,000, but later increased to between 10,000 and 12,000 drawn from five West African countries such as Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone with additional soldiers contributed by Mali[124]. ECOMOG was formed and largely supported by personnel and resources from the Nigerian Armed Forces, with sub-battalion strength units contributed by other ECOWAS member states. The role played by ECOMOG in returning peace to the land of Liberia cannot be overemphasised though not without some human rights violation especially against women, involvement in looting and occasional harassment or detention, killings, and beating of civilians and many other abusive behaviours[124]. The initial mandate of ECOMOG was to impose a cease-fire, help form an interim government and hold elections within 12 months. Unfortunately, with National Patriotic Front of Liberia's attacks continuing, this became impossible and ECOMOG was forced into combat to push the National Patriotic Front of Liberia out of the capital city, Monrovia[125].

The United Nations contributed significantly to the emergency relief and humanitarian aid that has gone to Liberia but the United Nations did not address the Liberian crisis in political terms until November 1992, almost three years after the war started. Reason attributed to probably the United Nations considering Liberia crisis a regional problem which is better dealt with by ECOWAS, the regional body[123]. By November 19, 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 788, calling on all parties to the conflict to respect a cease-fire and authorising an arms embargo against Liberia with the exemption of the ECOMOG.

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The U. N's support to Liberia war is also linked to financial consideration. The U.N. in addition to humanitarian assistance, provided a total of $8.6 million to ECOWAS for peacekeeping, and $18.75 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and Department of Defence Drawn down (DOD) authority of ECOWAS member states to support ECOMOG[125]. Some of the key aspects of peacebuilding in Liberia civil wars are majorly, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programs for former combatants, promotion of national reconciliation through Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) and the support for the establishment of democratic institutions and processes[124].

2.1.6 Governance in Iceland

Iceland is a constitutional republic with a multi-party system of government. In Iceland, the head of state is the President and the Executive power is exercised by the government. Iceland being the world's oldest parliamentary democratic country with the Parliament, otherwise known as 'the Althingi', established in 930. The Legislative power is also vested in both the Parliament and the President, while the Judiciary is independent of the Executive and the Legislature[126], 63 representatives are elected by the electorate in every fourth year, to sit in Althingi. As many that eligible to vote can stand for parliament, with the exception of the President and Supreme Court Judges. In addition to that, a cabinet of ministers remain in power until another election or a new government is formed. The ministers sit in Althingi, but only those elected have the right to vote in parliament. The President who is elected by direct popular vote for a term of four (4) years, do not have term limit. Judicial power is vested in the hand of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and the district Courts.

In Iceland, government authority is symbolised and guided by four key elements: the National Anthem, National Flag, Coat of Arms, and Constitution. The National Anthem, 'Ó guð vors lands' ('Our Country's God'), was written as a hymn in 1874 during nationwide

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celebrations commemorating the millennium of Iceland's settlement. The lyrics were penned by Rev. Father Matthias Jochumsson, one of Iceland's most beloved poets, while he was in Britain during the winter of 1873–1874. The music was composed by Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson (1847–1926), the first Icelander to pursue a professional career in music. The anthem was first performed at a commemorative service at Reykjavik Cathedral on Sunday, 12 August 1874, attended by King Christian IX of Denmark, who was visiting Iceland for the millennium celebrations[126].

2.1.7 Profile of the Female Presidents

2.1.7.1 Profile of President Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, Iceland President, 1980-1996

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was born on 15 April 1930 into a wealthy and well-connected family. Her mother chaired Iceland's National Nurses Association, while her father was a civil engineer. After graduating from Reykjavik College in 1949, she pursued further studies at the University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne in France, the University of Uppsala in Sweden, the University of Denmark, and the University of Iceland, where she later taught French, drama, and theatre history. From 1972 to 1980, Finnbogadóttir served as Director of the Reykjavik Theatre Company (Leikfélag Reykjavíkur) and participated in an experimental theatre group. During this period, she also presented French lessons and cultural programs on Iceland State Television, which earned her national recognition and popularity. During the summer tourist season, she worked as a guide and translator for the Icelandic Tourist Bureau. In 1976, she became a member of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Affairs in Nordic Countries and was elected Chair in 1978[127].

Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, an Icelandic teacher, cultural figure and politician was the world's first female democratically elected president. Vigdis came in on June 29, 1980 after winning with 33% of the votes of other contestants with 32.3%, 19.8% and 14.1% respectively.

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Finnbogadóttir served for 16 years, until August 1, 1996, making her the longest-serving elected female head of state even till date, reason because there is no term limit for Presidents in Iceland[127].

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was re-elected in 1988 with 94.6% of the vote against her opponent Sigrún Pósteinsdóttir, ran uncontested in 1992, and chose not to run in 1996. Although not Iceland's longest-serving president, she remains the only woman to have held the office. Her election in 1980 paved the way for other women to attain high political office, including Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Iceland's Prime Minister since 2017, who has spearheaded policies to make Iceland carbon-neutral by 2040, and Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Iceland's first female Prime Minister, elected in 2009.

Finnbogadóttir also left a lasting legacy on the international stage by hosting the Reykjavik Summit in October 1986, where U.S. President Ronald Reagan met with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Prior to her presidency, from 1978 to 1980, she chaired the Nordic Council of Ministers' Culture Committee. Throughout her tenure, she actively promoted Iceland as a cultural ambassador.

A scholar and teacher of French, drama, and theatre history, Finnbogadóttir championed linguistic diversity and became UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for Languages in 1998, even after retiring as President. In recognition of her historic contributions, a UNESCO prize was established in 2020 on her 90th birthday, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of her presidency as Iceland's first female head of state[128].

Finnbogadóttir was well-known by a personal motto: "Never let the women down" and her usual proclamation "If anything can save the world, women can"[129]. History has it that Vigdis' presidency contributed immensely to more pro-women and family-friendly legislation. During Finnbogadóttir's time, it was on record that a more five percent of

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members of parliament were women. To also confirm this fact, Katrin Jakobsdóttir, one of the first country's female Prime Ministers, said at a Conference "She (Vigdis) paved the way for the rest of us"[129].

After her tenures in 1996, Vigdis became the founding member and Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders in 1997, and a year later, Finnbogadóttir was appointed the President of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). between 1999 and 2004, Vigdis acted as Chair of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology. In 2000, Finnbogadóttir served as the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador in the Fight Against Racism and Xenophobia. Vigdis was named "a World Theatre Ambassador" in 2008, at the World Congress of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) in Madrid, Spain. Vigdis was also appointed as the Head of the Board of Trustees of the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights and a member of the Club of Madrid[127].

The study areas are Iceland located in the North Atlantic Ocean, lying between North America and Europe and Liberia, a country in the Western part of Africa, bordering Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

2.1.7.2 Profile of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberian President, 2006-2018

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was born on 29 October 1938 in Monrovia, Liberia, of mixed Gola and German heritage. Her father was the first indigenous Liberian to sit in the National Legislature. She was educated at the College of West Africa in Monrovia and married James Sirleaf at age 17, though the marriage later ended in divorce. In 1961, Johnson Sirleaf traveled to the United States to study economics and business administration, earning a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University in 1971.

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Following her studies, she entered government service in Liberia, serving as Assistant Minister of Finance from 1972 to 1973 under President William Tolbert and later as Finance Minister from 1980 to 1985 during Samuel K. Doe's military regime. Known for her personal financial integrity, Johnson Sirleaf clashed with both heads of state, resulting in imprisonment twice under Doe's rule and narrowly escaping execution.

In 1985, she campaigned for a Senate seat, openly criticising the military government, which led to her arrest and a 10-year prison sentence. She was released after a short period and went into exile in Kenya and the United States for 12 years. During this time, she became an influential economist, working with the World Bank, Citibank, and other international financial institutions. From 1992 to 1997, she served as Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa at the United Nations Development Programme.

Under Charles Taylor's government, she was charged with treason and forced back into exile in 2003. After Taylor went into exile that same year, Johnson Sirleaf returned to Liberia to chair the Commission on Good Governance, overseeing preparations for democratic elections[130].

Johnson Sirleaf ran for president and won in 2005 and was democratically sworn-in as the first female President elect of Liberia on January 16, 2006, two years after the end of the nation's bloody civil war. Ellen did not only become the first female President of Liberia and the 24th President in the history of Liberia, but also first democratically elected female President in the whole of Africa. Ellen Johnson first served in the Transitional Government (TG), as the Chairman of the Governance Reform Commission GRC, leading the country's anti-corruption reform, before her reflection in November, 2011[130].

During her two tenures as Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's attention was to rebuild the schools, clinics and markets, which she successfully carried out through the

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attraction of about $16 million in foreign direct investment and more than $5 million in private resources. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf successfully fought and won $4.6million in External Debt Forgiveness (EDF) and the lifting of the UN trade sanctions, giving Liberia the opportunity to access International Markets once again. Ellen also successfully increased Liberia's budget from (in 2006) to over $672 million 2012, making the country's annual GDP growth rate to be more than 7%[129].

Globally, Ellen Sirleaf was known and addressed as 'Africa's Iron Lady due to her achievement as a leading promoter of freedom, peace, justice, women's empowerment and her democratic style of governance, a voice for freedom and advocate for women. Ellen Sirleaf was jointly awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, with Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, and Tawakel Karman of Yemen, in recognition of her work in ensuring women's participation in peacebuilding and their efforts to further women's rights. In the interview of Melanne Verveer, from Georgetown University, with Ellen Johnson on how she successfully sustained peace during her administration in Liberia, Ellen Johnson said:

> "I inherited a devastated country, which means the needs to sustain peace were profound. Every area of our society had been destroyed. I just became the catalyst and the spark to move all these things together into a combined, a collective force of wanting to bring the change that we have"[131].

Few of the challenges Ellen Johnson met on ground when she was sworn-in as the first female elected president in Liberia are:

i. Foreign debt totalling approximately $3.5billion
ii. A shattered economy and infrastructure.
iii. No electricity, postal or telephone service.
iv. Sanitation and roadways in shambles.

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v. Eroded health care and education, with illiteracy rates of 44%

vi. Eighty percent unemployment[132].

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf benefited from the U.S. reconstruction assistance under the leadership of President George W. Bush in all the area of challenges confronting Liberia mentioned above, on assumption of duty by Ellen Johnson. President George Bush had a policy for the African continents to promote peace, security and democracy in partnership with African countries and regional organisations, including Liberia. Partnering with Liberia government through the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP), the United States provided life-saving support for Liberia's people, many of who have been refugees or internally displaced, helped the Liberian Government to raise revenues to tackle the Liberian debt and development challenges. The United States' humanitarian assistance between 2004-2005 included:

- $90 million to help Liberian refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and conflict-affected communities
- $44 million in food assistance and livelihood regeneration for IDPs
- $9 million for health issues including HIV /AIDS
- $6 million for GEMAP
- $481 million for UN peace building operations
- $75 million for reintegration, including work and education programs for youths and former combatants. $60 million for training and equipping civilian-led Liberian military and police,
- $23 million for rule of law, judicial structures and civilian police programs[129].

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All of the above financial statements made easy the policy of President Ellen Johnson in sustaining peace and good governance throughout Ellen's administration as the first female democratically elected President of Liberia between 2006 and 2018.

Ellen Johnson chaired the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and served two terms as Goodwill Ambassador for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Africa. In addition, Sirleaf was ranked among the top 100 most powerful women in the world, the first most powerful woman in Africa, according to Forbes, 2012, and Forbes Africa, 2011. Ellen was among top ten (10) female leaders (TIME, 2010). She was called 'the best President the country has ever had (The Economist, 2010, and one of the six 'Women of the Year' (Glamour, 2010)[130].

On assumption of duty as the first democratically-elected female President, Ellen led Liberia through reconciliation and recovery as a result of the nation's decade-long civil war. Not only that, Johnson also led the country out of the deadly Ebola virus crisis in 2014. In 2008, in her efforts to eradicate corruption, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf created Anti-Corruption Commission and established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) in 2006 to heal ethnic tensions.

In addition, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf realised that the dividend of peace needed to be quickly put in place in Liberia and the economic and financial haemorrhaging as well. Ellen's core principles were democracy, accountability, free enterprise, good governance, respect of human rights and equitable distribution of natural resources. Poverty reduction was also the heart of Johnson's strategy based on "pillars" of reconstruction and development; enhancing security and peace in Liberia. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf declared:

> "Our mission is to make the Liberian government work again and be more responsive in delivering quality services to the Liberian people"[131].

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Ellen Johnson added that: "Liberians were a resilient people, and they were counting on her and her administration to create the conditions (peaceful, I supposed) to realise their dreams. Their dreams are not complicated. They just want the simple things that most people take for granted: to live their lives in peace, get a good education, and be able to provide for their families. These things are not too much for Liberians to dream about"[131].

President Ellen Johnson indeed made Liberia work again under her leadership, beating the record of her male predecessor. Ellen was committed to building a new Liberia from the ashes of an old turbulent past to a future of hope and promise. All of these she did as the first female President in Liberia. Johnson was particularly credited with maintaining peace in Liberia after it was torn apart by years of civil war. We can conclude by saying that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was "God-sent" to Liberians at a time as such.

Due to the positive changes in Liberia under the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in February, 2018, the 2017 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership was awarded to her. The Award came with $5 million to be disbursed over 10 years, followed by an annual $200,000 stipend for the rest of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's life. Also, the amount of $200,000 was awarded by the Foundation annually, for 10 years to charitable causes supported by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf[129].

It is also important to highlight the factors behind Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election victory. Leymah Gbowee, one of the three women awarded the Nobel Peace Prize alongside Johnson Sirleaf for her non-violent efforts to promote peace and advocate for women's rights in Liberia, played a pivotal role. Gbowee organised the grassroots movement, Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, bringing together Christian and Muslim women to present a unified, non-violent message of peace. She also led mobilisation efforts to encourage Liberian women to vote for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, helping her secure victory in 2005 as the

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first democratically elected female president of Liberia, and, by extension, the first female head of state in Africa.

2.1.7.3 Profile of Margaret Hilda Thatcher – United Kingdom Prime Minister, 1979-1990

Margaret Hilda Thatcher, Europe's first female prime minister, was born 13 October, 1925 in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England. Margaret studied Chemistry and graduated at the University of Oxford, worked as a research chemist but later trained as a barrister, specialising in tax law. Prior to her election as the Prime Minster of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher had held various ministerial positions, such as, Secretary of State for Education and Science between 1970 to 1974 under the administration of Edward Heath, MP for Finchley in 1959, among many. History shows that Margaret was raised in a modest, politically aware home because Margaret's father, Alfred Roberts, was a mayor. Margaret Thatcher got married to Denis Thatcher in 1951. Her first attempt in politics was in 1950 when she stood for parliament though unsuccessful but in February 1975, Margaret successfully defeated Edward Heath and became the leader of the Conservative Party, while on May 4, 1979, she won through Conservative win and became the first female Prime Minister. Study confirmed that Thatcher was the longest serving Prime Minister because she consecutively won three general elections in 1979, 1983 and 1987, until November 28, 1990 when she voluntarily tendered her resignation as the Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative due to internal party unrest[132].

One of Thatcher's major achievements was her education reform, through the 1988 Education Act which left an indelible legacy during and after Margaret Thatcher's premiership. Record also affirmed that there was an astounding change in educational policy and teaching practice during her 11-year tenure, aside the complex socio-economic,

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cultural and political changes[132]. Few of other policies of Margaret Thatcher's administrations are as follows:

- Economic Reforms: Emphasis on monetarism, that is the control of inflation through tight control of money supply.
- Deregulation: Thatcher reduced government controls and subsidies and reduced the role of State in the economy.
- Housing Policy: Enactment of Housing Act in 1980 helped council tenants to purchase public housing homes at discount. This helped to promote the 'Right to Buy', that is home-ownership and reduced government role in the provision of housing.
- Tax cuts and public expenditure policy which minimised some welfare spending and lowered direct payment of tax were in force.
- Introduction of market mechanisms into education and health which fostered efficiency in government.
- Foreign Policy and Defence: Thatcher took a very strong anti-Communist stance by aligning with the United State of America during the reign of Ronald Reagan by promoting NATO's role during the Cold War[133].

These and many others are some of her policies that gave her a significant legacy during and after her tenure as the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

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2.1.7.4 Profile of Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah – Namibia President, 2024-Date

Just like other female presidents discussed in this study, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah contested and won the 2024 presidential election, with around 57-58 percent vote in Namibia. In 2017, she was elected into the position of the Vice President of the party and

was re-elected in 2022, as the first woman in that position and re-elected in 2022. She briefly held the position of the Vice President of Namibia in 2024 due to the demise of President Hage Geingob, before she finally won the presidential election in 2024 through the nomination of SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation), the party she joined as a teenager since the age of 14[134]. Her inauguration on March 21, 2025, coincided with Namibia's 35th Independence anniversary. President Netumbo was married to Epaphras Denga Ndaitwah.

Born in October 29, 1952 in Onamutai, Namibia, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, held various ministerial positions far before she became the 5th president of Namibia:

- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1990 and 1996.
- Director-General of Women's Affairs between 1996 and 2000.
- Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare between 2000 and 2005.
- Minister of Information and Broadcasting between 2005 and 2010.
- Minister of Environment and Tourism between 2010 and 2012.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs (later known as International Relations and Cooperation) between 2012 and 2024.

Netumbo's key achievements since her election as the President of Namibia are as follows:

- Gender Equality and Women's Right – a strong advocate for women's right. Through the National Assembly, Combating of Domestic Violence act was formulated.
- Her Priority to create 500,000 new jobs over five years- with focus on Agriculture, fishing, creative industries and sports.

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- Free Tertiary Education – subsidised tuition and registration fees in state universities and vocational institutions by the government.
- Economic Diversification and Managing Natural Resources – emphasis was placed on diversification of economy in Namibia, to reduce over-reliance on extractive industries and to ensure that Namibia government benefit more from the country's resources.
- Cabinet and Governance Reforms: to achieve more efficient governance, there was cabinet reshuffle, reduction in the number of ministries, resulting in the reduction of duplication[134].

Being privileged to serve as the first female president in Namibia, breaking gender barriers, giving more attention to issues of unemployment, inequality, access to education facing youth and making development more inclusive are Netumbo's governance key priorities which she made clear upon taking office as the president of Namibia.

Summarily, studies of policy outcomes link increased female leadership to greater attention and resources for social policies with priorities on health, education, welfare, family policy, attention on challenges facing youth, inequality and inclusivity in governance. Female heads of state/government often appoint more women into cabinet and ministerial positions, increasing women representation in senior executive roles. Examples of these are recorded in the administration of many of the female presidents and leadership at some other levels. Findings also affirmed the link between female presidents and peace as ambiguous and conditional because women leaders make more peaceful foreign-policy that will result in fostering peaceful coexistence in their government. Not only that, empirical study also finds female leaders relying more on consultative, coalition-building strategies and more

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collaborative in terms of change in policymaking processes, even when final policy direction is similar.

2.1.7.5 National Profile of Iceland

Iceland is located between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It is northwest of the United Kingdom, and is slightly smaller than the state of Kentucky. The land is plateau with mountain peaks, and ice fields, with a coastline marked by fjords, which are deep inlets carved by glaciers. Iceland was founded more than 1,000 years ago during the Viking age of exploration and settled by a mixed Norse and Celtic population, and the early settlement is made up of Norwegian seafarers and adventurers[135].

Iceland with the population of about 398,462 as of Friday July 18, 2025, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data, is a land of vivid contrasts of climate, geography and culture. It has sparkling glaciers like Vatna Glacier which is the Europe's largest. It lies across its ruggedly beautiful mountain ranges; abundant hot geysers providing heat for many of the country's homes and buildings and allow for hothouse agriculture year-round. Iceland's mild climate makes it the northernmost inhabited places on the planet. The colour of Iceland flag is Navy blue, white and red which represent three of the elements that make up the island; Red is for the island's volcanic fires; white for the snow and ice fields of the island; and the navy blue is for the surrounding ocean.

Iceland capital city is Reyjavik, a thriving city, handsome in aspect and cosmopolitan in the outlook, with the population of about 142,116, as of July 2025. The city capital of Reykjavik, once resembled an overgrown Scandinavian village has given way to the hurried construction of luxury hotels, visitor centres, and tourist stops. Every day, it appears Reykjavik, the country and the entire population are changing, thereby attracting international travellers, holidaymakers, business people, artists, musicians, students, job-

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seekers, on regular basis. Tourism has basically been the saving grace of the Iceland economy and the stakeholders in the field of tourism in Iceland include government, parties, airlines, tourism operators, tour providers, local businesses, real estate holders, local residents and the tourists themselves.

Also, Nature Tourism seems to be the primary engine for Iceland's travel industry. What we mean by 'Nature Tourism' is the chance to experience unblemished human solitude in wide open landscapes. In Iceland today, the two most important models of tourism are 'Sustainable Tourism' and 'Mass Tourism'. The 'Sustainable Tourism' is not just about profit-making but is the future, and a means of protecting the industry, the environment and the people, while 'Mass Tourism' priorities lie not in conservation or continuation of the practice but only in the increase of profits at all costs[135]. The 2010 eruption of the immense ice-capped volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, we can say, was what opened the eyes of the world on Iceland and since that period, Iceland had experienced unprecedented rise in visitor numbers into the country[135].

It is worthy of note to add that Icelanders are known for their openness, friendly attitude and sincere interest in visitors. Icelanders are also incredibly proud people and loyal to their heritage, their island and their kinship with one another and the virtue of patience which they are being cherished for centuries is being tested due to internal pressure[136]. Icelanders are also incredibly diligent and proactive in keeping their environment clean. This is one of the first observations a visitor will make entering the country. Litter bins are displayed on almost every street corner of downtown to ensure that there is always a better spot for that empty can of coke than the neighbouring bushes. The nations streets and countryside are kept clean always.

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Iceland head of government is Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdóttir while the Head of State is President Guôni Jóhannesson. Its form of government is Unitary Multiparty Republic with one Legislative house. Iceland is governed by a president who is elected by popular vote for a four-year term. There are no limits so the president can stay in power until another is elected by the people. For example, the 2008 election was not held because no one ran against Ólar Ragna Grimsson, serving that term and was re-elected in 2012. Iceland also has the history of electing female heads of state since becoming the first country to do so in 1980. Katrin Jakobsdottir enforced policies which made the entire Iceland carbon-neutral by 2040 and also revived the country's economy following the fallout of 2008 economic collapse[135].

Physiologically, Icelanders are of Scandinavian descent and are generally tall, blonde, and light-skinned. Iceland is the world's oldest democracy but modern in nearly every respect. Unlike most European countries, Iceland is ethnically homogeneous and because there is little diversity in the population, genetic researchers have used its inhabitants to study hereditary disorders among Icelanders and have developed cures for a host of hereditary diseases. Icelanders preserve their traditions and language, some still believe in elves, trolls, and other mythical characters dated back to their Celtic and Norse beginnings.

Most Icelanders live in the southwest part of the country. Iceland also has a very dynamic family structure, whereby the extended family members do not live together but uncles, aunts, and grandparents often help in taking care of children. In Iceland culture and tradition, house-chore is shared by the whole family with the exemption of no-one. As a matter of fact, Icelandic youth are trained to be self-sufficient, and are expected to clean their bedrooms, change the linen, vacuum-clean or wash the floors, do laundry, prepare meals and clean the kitchen after general use[135].

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On the other hand, Icelandic teens are somehow independent and spend time in soccer, parties, movies, chess and enjoying the outdoors. Students-teachers relationship tends to be casual and friendly to foster a general atmosphere of creativity and support. As a result of that, students join clubs such as photography, cinema, radio, choir or participate in other activities like mountaineering, modelling and cooking[136].

In Iceland, school is free for all natives all the way through college and every student is taught to speak both Danish and English in school. Iceland official languages are Icelandic, English, Nordic languages and German, which are widely spoken. Republic of Iceland money is called Icelandic Króna. Also, Handball and Soccer are the two most popular Sports for children, but they also enjoy swimming and horseback riding[136].

Due to Iceland's nearness to the Arctic Circle which nearly touches its northernmost peninsula, eleven percent of the land is covered by Glacier Ice and cooled lava, with approximately one-tenth of the country's total area and is surrounded by water. If global warming continues, rising water levels and melting ice could be devastating to Iceland. In 2010, Iceland experienced severe volcanic activity whereby the Eyjafjallajokull volcano at an elevation of 5,466 feet (1,666 meters) erupted, blowing ash high into the atmosphere and disrupting European air traffic for weeks. Eruptions occurred in Iceland every four years on the average[135].

In addition, Iceland is known as "the land of fire and ice" due to its extreme contrasts and dramatic landscapes. Iceland homes some of the largest glaciers in Europe and some of the world's most active volcanoes. Iceland is also known as the land of light and darkness because of its long summer days with near 24-hours of sunshine are offset by short winter days with only a few hours of gloomy daylight, which is responsible to the perfect scenario for enjoying the magical Northern lights[137].

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Being an island, Iceland has no borders with other countries. The nearest neighbour of Iceland to the west is Greenland about 286 km, 180 miles, away, to the east is the Faroe Islands, 420 km (260 miles), Scotland 795 km (495 miles), and Norway 950 km (590 miles). Iceland is a relatively large island in the middle of the North-Atlantic Ocean, just south of the Arctic Circle, between 63.4oN and 66.5oN latitude. Iceland is the second largest island of Europe, following Great Britain and the 18th largest Island in the world. In addition, numerous smaller islands are found all around the coast, some of which are inhabited. The largest among the island is Heimaey in the Westman Islands archipelago in the south that is 13,4 km2[138]. Iceland also keeps the world's newest island named Surtsey, which rose from the sea in a volcanic eruption between 1963-1967. Surtsey is considered a unique geological formation and has been listed as a UNESCO world heritage site.

There are some interesting facts about Iceland. They are:

- Iceland had one of the first parliaments in the world.
- Iceland is one of the most sparsely populated countries on Earth with about 377,105 population count.
- The word « Geyser » is from Icelandic.
- Iceland has no standing army.
- There is no MacDonald's
- Iceland is one of the "freest" countries in the world[138].

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2.1.7.6 National Profile of Liberia

Liberia, a country along the coast of Western Africa, is home to a lush rainforest containing a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Liberia population is estimated at 5,534,388 million, as of Wednesday June 26, 2024[141]. Liberia is the only Black state in Africa never subjected to colonial rule and is Africa's oldest republic. It was established on land acquired for freed U.S. slaves by the American Colonisation Society (ACS) which founded a colony at Cape Mesurado in 1821. But in 1824, the territory was named Liberia, and its main settlement was named Monrovia, which till the present day is its capital city. According to record, Liberia's form of government is multiparty republic with two legislative bodies, that is Liberian Senate, 30 in number, and House of Representatives, 73 in number. Its government was patterned after that of the United State with Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches[137].

Since its Independence in 1847, Liberia had enjoyed relative stability until 1989 when a rebellion escalated into a destructive civil war from 1990 which lasted till 2003. Political parties were legalised and civilian rule was established in 1986. Record has it that a power-sharing agreement in 2003 largely ended the civil war and a National Transitional Government, NTG, came into being. Supported by the United Nations Peacekeeping Troops, the National Transitional Government replaced the government under the 1986 constitution and ruled until a democratically elected administration was sworn-in in 2006. The election which brought into power the first female President in the history of the country and in Africa at large, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and she has remained the only female President in the whole of Africa till date[137].

As a multiparty republic, according to the 1986 constitution, the head of state and government is the President, who is directly elected for a six-year term, as well as the members of the National Assembly while the Senate serves nine-year terms. To ease the

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administrative system, Liberia is divided into 15 counties, each headed by a Superintendent, appointed by the President. The major political parties in Liberia are Unity Party, the Congress for Democratic Change, the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, the United People's Party, the National Patriotic Party, and the Liberty Party. In addition, in the first decade of the 21st century, women held about one-seventh (1/7) of seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and about one-third (1/3) at the Local Government level. Also, women had served as Ministers and Deputy Ministers in the Cabinet and as Justices of the Supreme Court[138].

The ethnic groups of Liberia are represented in its population as refugees, African nationals from other countries and Europeans which can be classified into three linguistic groups belonging to the Niger-Congo language family, the Mande, Kwa and Mel, Southern Atlantic. The Mande located in the northwest and central regions of Liberia and also in Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The Kwa-speaking peoples include the Bassa, who happens to be the largest ethnic group in Monrovia. The oldest inhabitants of Liberia are the Mel group found in Sierra Leone, live in the north and in the coastal region of the northwest. The Americo-Liberians are most closely associated with the founding Liberia. Most of them migrated to Liberia between 1820 and 1865.

Furthermore, history has it that the Americo-Liberians controlled the government until a military coup in 1980. More than two dozen indigenous languages are spoken in Liberia but English is the official language. Among the predominant languages in Liberia are Kpelle, Bassa, Grebo, Dan, Kru, Mano, Loma, and Mandingo, spoken by the Malinke. About four-fifths of Liberians are Christians, one-tenth – Muslims while a small number belongs to other religions, traditional beliefs primarily, or are non-religious. Monrovia, founded in 1822, is the centre-point of political, economic, and cultural activities. It is situated on the

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left bank of the St. Paul River on the ridge formed by Cape Mesurado, commanding an imposing view of the Atlantic Ocean and the coastal plains.

Liberia is bounded by Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west. Its climate especially on the coast, is warm and humid year-round and is dominated by a dry season from November to April and by a rainy season from May to October. Annual temperatures range between 65° F (18° C) in the northern highlands to 80° F (27° C) along the coast. Liberia has year-round evergreen vegetation with trees like red ironwood, camwood, Whitmore, teak, mahogany, cacao, coffee and the raffia palm.

It is worthy of note that there is a strong rural-to-urban movement, especially to the capital city, Monrovia, enclaves around rubber plantations and mines. The result of urbanisation in Liberia is the segmentation of Liberian society into two co-existing subsystems, that is traditional-rural and modern-urban. In addition, economically, Liberia is predominantly agrarian while raw materials, equipment and consumer goods are imported. Foreign ships registering under a Liberian 'flag of convenience' made Liberia one of the world's foremost countries in registered shipping tonnage but Liberia remains primarily agricultural. The coastal districts receiving a greater share of economic benefits than the hinterland, with the administrative centres as the next beneficiaries, is responsible for the unevenness of wealth distribution in the country[137].

Liberia is a member of two regional economic unions. The Mano River Union (MRU), a free trade group to which Sierra Leone and Guinea belong, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Liberia is also rich in natural resources. It was among the leading producers of iron ore in Africa before the civil war. Its four areas of reserves are found in the Bomi Hills, the Bong Range, the Mano Hills, and Mount Nimba, having

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the largest deposits. Other minerals are Diamonds, Gold, lead, Manganese, Graphite, Cyanite, a silicate of aluminium, with thin blade-like crystals and barite.

One-fourth (1/4) of Liberia workforce is in agriculture, about the same number in trade and tourism and the public sector, while the rest work in manufacturing, sales, services, administration and management. It is worth placing on record that about two-fifths (2/5) of the total labour force is made up of women, more women are employed in agriculture. The government operates several public corporations and there is no nationalisation of industry. There is a National Federation of Labour Unions (NFLU), a Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) and several other employees' Unions.

Monrovia is the principal commercial port, with facilities for transhipping Iron Ore and Liquid Latex. All Ports are administered by the National Port Authority of Liberia (NPAL). There are also two major airports in Liberia named Roberts field International and James Spriggs Payne Airport, near Monrovia. The Judicial System in Liberia comprises the Supreme Court, an Appeal Court, Magistrate Courts, and Criminal Courts.

Malaria and measles are the major health problems in Liberia but Yellow Fever, Cholera, Tuberculosis, and malnutrition are also on the rampage. Among the infants, Dysentery, Malaria and Diarrhoea are the major common diseases which sometimes lead to infant mortality. HIV /AIDS is also on the increase. International Relief Organisations (IRO) operated makeshift hospitals to serve the country's health care needs, reestablishing the health care infrastructure becomes a priority to any government, due to the poor conditions of health facilities after the war in Liberia.

The years of civil war and strife between 1980s and early 2000s disrupted Liberia Education but after the Peace Accord of 2003, the government of Liberia started the task of rebuilding the country's educational system. Education became compulsory for children between the

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ages of 7 and 16 and is free at the Primary and Secondary levels since 1939. Institutions providing higher education are the University of Liberia (1951) in Monrovia, Cottington University College (1889); Episcopalian in Suakuoko, and the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology (1970) in Harper and few other vocational schools like the Booker Washington Institute at Kakata, which is a government school.

Culturally, traditional and western lifestyles coexist in Liberia but the traditional values, customs, and norms influence the western lifestyle. This is seen in the way schools instruct students in the legends, traditions, songs, arts and crafts of African culture and the government promotes African culture through agencies like the National Museum in Monrovia, the Tubman Centre for African Culture in Robert sport, and the National Cultural Centre in Kendeja. In addition, the University of Liberia has an Arts and Crafts Centre. There are also many Libraries, including a Children's Library in Monrovia and a National Public Library[137].

The most popular sport in Liberia is Football. Intercounty Football competition and Annual Sports Competitions are held for the Annual Championship. The immediate former President of Liberia, George Weah is the best football player and the most popular sports figure who used his sport popularity and personal funds to enable the Liberia's National Team, the Lone Star compete in the African Nations Cup (ANC) competitions, during the mid-1990s when the civil war was going on. He was also the founder of a sports school and a Youth Football Club (YFC).

Liberia was proclaimed independent in the year 1847 by Joseph Jenkins Roberts but was not recognised as such till 1848-56 by many countries. Formal recognition by the United States did not even come until 1862. Joseph Jenkins Roberts was the first President of the Republic till 1856, while with the help of United Nations, Presidential election were held in

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2005 and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the winner of a Nobel Peace Prize emerged as President and during her tenure, she addressed the issue of corruption which was the order of the day in Liberia then, opportunity for youth and a lack of social policy was effectively addressed by her as well, their resources in education and the health of their children thereby building human capital to increase the future growth and stabilise the financial sector of the country.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Feminist Theory

The theory that was considered for this study is Feminism. Feminist theory focuses on analysing power relations, gender inequality and the ways in which patriarchal systems suppress women's participation and limit their representation in governance and in leadership position. It examines the social, political, and cultural barriers that hinder women's progress in decision-making positions. The word feminism was first coined by a French Philosopher and utopian socialist in 1837 and its socio-political movement first took place in France centres in 1880s, in form of demonstration[140]. Feminist theory is a collection of ideas and perspectives which seek to understand and challenge the social, political, economic and cultural inequalities and the power dynamics between men and women[141].

Feminism major aim is to address issues related to gender discrimination, patriarchy, sexism, and many other forms of oppression faced by women in the world, and to remove, (by way of emphasis) all the societal norms and barriers to equal social, political and economic opportunities for women. All of these areas had been the concern of all the waves of feminism since inception as early as 17th century till date. Among the whites, cyberfeminism is used to describe the work of feminists interested in theorising, critiquing, and making use of the Internet, cyberspace, and new media technologies.

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Feminism has its origin in the struggle for women's rights. Some scholars' publications were the early major contributions to feminist literature[138]. The growth of feminism began in Europe and America in the 19th century when women became conscious of their oppression and marginalisation and took steps to address the oppression. Feminism had spread all over the world and feminist idea are now part of everyday global thinking. Historically, feminism has diverse and culturally varied international movement answering the "question of women" and feminism means different things to different people, reason having a concise universal definition has been difficult[141]. What feminism means to various people then depends on individual's political or sociological observations and goals, individual's understanding or interpretation of the word "woman" and many other factors[141].

Feminism originates from the Latin word "femina" which describes women's issues. Some feminists share the belief that women are being oppressed because of their sexuality. This can be considered true because women and men's biological differences are reflected in the organisation of society, which also considered women as inferior to men. Therefore, one can conclude that whether as a theory, a social movement or a political movement, feminism focuses on women's experiences and highlights various forms of oppression which the female gender is subjected to in the society[141].

Male domination which is found in almost all the important aspects of life is regarded to be responsible for social inequalities and injustice and this is what prompted feminists to, by all means remove all the barriers to such equal social, political and economic opportunities for women. They seriously opposed to the view that a woman's worth is determined principally by her gender and that women are inherently inferior, subservient or less intelligent than men. What a man will do, a woman will surely do it better[141].

A feminist scholar, expresses some beliefs or values that can be considered as the manifestos for feminism. They are:

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i. Feminists value woman in and of themselves and for themselves not in the hypocritical fashion of male dominated cultures.

ii. Feminists value and price the act of being women as much as being human. They see themselves as strong, capable, intelligent and successful ethical human beings.

iii. Feminists value autonomy for themselves as individuals and for women as a group who are developing their own political, social, economic and personal destinies.

iv. Feminists reject separation of human qualities into two categories – one for men and one for women and the valuing of one of those categories better than the other. For instance, male characteristics of aggression, power and competition are celebrated while female characteristics of compassion, tenderness and compromise are termed weak and ridiculed.

v. Feminists recognise that attitudes in regarding women in many cultures are false and wrong-headed based on myth, ignorance and fear. Thus, they believe in the necessity of replacing these myths with reality and ignorance with knowledge created by women, first for women and finally for all people.

vi. Feminists point out the denial of their rights as humans for centuries. Rights such as voting, earning a substantive living commensurate with their work, freedom to determine whether to bear children, and so on.

vii. Lastly, feminists recognise women's strength in the face of oppression and are optimistic about the possibilities of a change[142].

It is worth noting here that many forms of feminism have been identified and practised by feminists. They include:

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i. Marxist/Socialist feminism which believe that economic power is the only way proletarian culture can be effective. Economic and cultural significance of women's domestic work is a major concern of Marxist feminists.

ii. Humanist feminism: this type of feminism believes that women are oppressed because they are women despite class and racial distinctions. To them, the exploitation of women is neither a racial or class phenomenon but a gender phenomenon.

iii. Liberal feminism aims at achieving equal legal, political and social rights for women.

iv. Radical feminism argues that women's oppression originates from being categorised as inferior to men on the basis of gender and therefore aims at destroying the sex classed system, especially patriarchy system. Radical feminism is usually man-hating in orientation and encourages androgyny ,mixture of traditional masculine and feminine virtues in an individual) and so on[142].

In addition to all that has been said, the key concepts of Feminist Theory are as follows:

1. **Gender Inequality**: The concepts bring about all other concepts in feminism. This concept establishes the fact that resources, positions of authority, employment, healthcare, representation in decision-making processes are not equally distributed in all levels of society and there is need for gender awareness-raising to put things right.
2. **Patriarchy**: The feminists were able to discover the role of patriarchy as a social system which is responsible for the privileges men have over women which has caused imbalances and subordination of the female gender in all the spheres of life.

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3. **Empowerment and Agency**: Through many researches, feminist theory discovers that for women to get their rights, and the autonomy in making decisions about their lives, the issue of empowerment must be taken more serious than before. Feminst theory raises the alarm of some traditional gender roles and norms that are limiting women's privileges and choices.
4. **Representation and Diversity**: If the problem of gender inequality will become a thing of history, representation of female gender in all aspects of society, such as politics, governance in general, media, academia and workforce, and the diversity of women's experiences and perspectives should be greater now than before.
5. **Intersectionality**: This happens to be the key concepts in feminist theory, because it is a concept that observes that women multiple experiences of oppression and discrimination is based on their intersecting identities due to race, class, sexuality, and gender which need to be addressed to have greater inclusivity and social justice[143].

Advocacy for gender equality, empowerment, and inclusivity for all irrespective of gender will go a long way to solve the problem once and for all.

Over the years, there has been a growing feminism movement for the African women which seeks to address the issue of gender inequality and especially to confront the patriarchy in Africa. Why African Feminism? There is need for African Feminism due to the uniqueness of gender-related experiences of African women as a result of race, culture and colonialism which had created a sort of harmful cultural norms and practices that is limiting gender equality and social justice for the female gender in Africa.

Secondly, the peculiarity of black females and other women of colour because feminism in practice, concentrated on the needs of Middle-class white women in Britain and America,

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though posing as the movement for the emancipation of women in the entire world. This later led to the development of another ideology called womanism championed by Alice Walker, through her collection titled "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose (1938)". Few of the African Feminists include Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, A. Ata Aidoo, Tsitsi Dangarembga among others[143].

As against the belief of the feminists, Womanism is in partnership with the men folk and this is what distinguishes womanism from feminism.

This research work aligns more with affording women with appropriate right to hold political positions and be relevant in all areas of society activities. For this reason, Liberal Feminism and Intersectional Feminism Theories seem appropriate for this research work.

2.2.2 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is a form of feminist theory which tend to achieve gender equality through political and legal reform. Liberal feminism expects the State to protect individual rights to everything men want such as access to education, equal employment, equal pay, better working conditions and the likes. This type of feminism supports any legal action affirming the inclusiveness of women in the pool of applicants to prevent discrimination against qualified women for the same position men are given. Liberal feminism also aims at proving wrong the societal belief that women are naturally less intellectual and physically incapable to do some things like men, such discrimination blocks women's entrance into the public world and as such strive to integrate women into the structure[144].

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2.2.3 Intersectional Feminism

This type of feminism opines that people are oppressed differently based on their gender, class, race and sexuality. Intersectional feminism is first coined by an American Civil Rights, in 1989, to study the intersecting human identities that can cause oppression, domination or discrimination, for example a woman with a disability could be oppressed because she is a woman and at the same time because of her being disabled, and the experience(s) of a black woman is not likely to be the same with that of a white woman because issues they face socially and culturally differ despite the fact that they are of the same gender[145].

Black women suffer racism and sexism in the areas of employment and criminal Justice while women of other colour experience discrimination as a result of sex, gender identity, race and so on. The disabled people of colour also suffer ableism and racism leading to their inability to access healthcare, education and other social amenities that others enjoy. Every woman at one time or the other uniquely encounter one form of oppression, discrimination and inequality for the reason of their gender, sexuality, race, class or ability intersectionality. The proponent, aim is to challenge the assumption that women's experience in the area of oppression is the same and to give a clear understanding of how social identity of individual brings about overlapping forms of discrimination.

2.2.4 Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT)

Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) provide a useful way to study how gender affects peacebuilding and leadership. It argues that traditional peace and conflict studies often ignore women's experiences, especially in war and post-war societies. Instead of focusing only on military strength or state security, FPCT looks at peace as something deeper: based on justice, inclusion, and equality[146]. This theory is especially useful for understanding the leadership of two female presidents, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland and

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Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, who both played important roles in promoting peace during and after times of national tension. Feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe explains that national security is often built around the image of strong, aggressive men, while women are either seen as victims or left out completely[147].

Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory concentrate on the importance of women's visibility in conflicts and has led to a more comprehensive understanding of security challenges. However, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's presidency between 1980 and 1996 challenged this model. Iceland has no standing army, and Finnbogadóttir focused her leadership on diplomacy, education, and cultural development. She promoted peace through dialogue and social development rather than military action. This shows how FPCT can help explain alternative models of leadership where peace is built through care and inclusion, not force. In contrast to Iceland's peaceful context, Liberia had just emerged from two civil wars when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became president in 2006. Her leadership offers an example of post-conflict peacebuilding through gender-sensitive governance. Sirleaf worked to include women in politics, rebuild state institutions, and promote transitional justice. She supported the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which helped document war crimes and gave voice to female victims of violence[148]. This aligns with FPCT's argument that peace is not just about ending war, but also addressing the inequalities that caused it in the first place[149].

Finnbogadóttir, for example, built her presidency on cultural and educational policies rather than military involvement. Sirleaf, on the other hand, showed that a woman can govern a post-war country using fairness, development, and inclusive justice, rather than authoritarian control. Their leadership shows that women can lead in ways that are both strong and peace-oriented, without relying on outdated gender roles. Feminist theorists like

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Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler argue that gender is not something we are born with, but something society teaches us[150],[151]. The way Sirleaf and Finnbogadóttir led their countries proves that leadership styles are not tied to biology but shaped by social and political values.

Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) suggests that peace and full citizenship can be built through participation in politics, education, and civil society, not just the military. Iceland's experience under Finnbogadóttir supports this idea. Even without a military, the country was peaceful and democratic[152]. This suggests that military power is not required for legitimacy or effective leadership.

The leadership of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf offers real-world examples of Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory in action. Both women helped move their countries toward peace, not through war or dominance, but through inclusion, justice, and community-building. Their presidencies challenge traditional ideas of leadership and show that peace can be achieved when we question gender roles and promote equality at every level of society.

2.2.5. Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The theory of feminism is known globally as the main theory that advocates for gender equality, discrimination against women, empowerment, and women's participation in governance and leadership positions at all levels so it is highly relevant to the study. Since inception, feminism has been working and still striving to fight the problem of inequalities and seeks to see more inclusive and equitable society where women could enjoy equal opportunities like their men counterpart and to be involved in all the decision-making processes at all levels[152].

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Feminism becomes relevant to any study that talks about the issue of women because there is need to advance the rights and the interests of women involvement in governance and the promotion of a more inclusive, equitable and just society. Feminism recognises the discrimination and oppression of women in diverse ways based on the issue of race, class, sex, and ability. Through an intersectional feminist perspective, complex and multi-dimensional issues of inequality are being taken care of[153].

In addition, through the lens and struggle of different types of feminism theory, increased representation of women in leadership positions in politics, corporate and organisational leadership is becoming visible, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered and that policies and decisions are reflecting the needs and experiences of every member of the society, irrespective of gender, race or age[153].

Apart from the issue of representation, women empowerment is another area of struggle for the feminists, so that women would be able to assume leadership roles and assert their rights in governance. By challenging patriarchal norms and barriers, feminism advocates that women speak and demand equal treatment, and policies that promote gender equality. Reformation of policies relating to education, healthcare, labour rights, equal employment and equal pay, gender-based violence, and economic empowerment would go a long way to change the narratives of women representation and participation in governance.

Over the years, feminism has been playing a critical role in shaping policies, institutions and systems, removing barriers that has served as deterrent to effective participation of women in governance globally, regionally and at the national level. Study shows that there is a prominent presence of independent women's activism in Saudi Arabia that adopt feminist principles and methods challenging patriarchal political structures, cultural stereotypes and religious interpretations, responsible for gender inequality suffered by the women in Saudi

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Arabia, while many of them suffered detention, travel bans, torture or mistreatment in prison, sexual assault and the likes[153]. One out of their many activities was the women driving ban's protest, organised by Aziza Youssef, but joined by about 60 women. The end result of this protest was the lifting of the ban on women driving and travelling restrictions in Saudi Arabia in 2018, after the passing of an anti-harassment law, making harassment a criminal offense in Saudi Arabia[153].

2.3. Review of the Empirical Studies

Study shows that numerous empirical studies have been carried out on women in governance across the globe and at different times, examining aspects such as representation in governance, political participation, leadership, decision-making, and women's impact in governance on policy outcomes, effectiveness in governance, and the general societal well-being[154]. One of such study examined if women's participation in governance reduces corruption and strengthen efficiency of governance in Nigeria using Annual Data Collection from 2000 to 2019. At the end of the study, it showed clearly (i) that the limited participation of women in parliament harmed governance efficiency due to corruption; (ii) that when women participation in governance increases, it causes remote effect of reducing income disparity in the economy[155].

A study on the other hand shows that more women in local government and female leadership in the opposition result in better levels of efficiency through reduced spending whereas female leadership in the government and many women in the opposition reduce efficiency by supporting spending without increasing welfare services[156].

Women represent half the potential talents and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole[156]. Women representation in governance globally is still very low and calls for urgent changing of the general

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perception that the public office is a male domain[156]. There are few arguments brought forward as to why women representation is essential. They are:

1. The Justice Argument which claims that women have a right to a half of the seats since they make up half of the population;

2. The Experience Argument believes that women have different experiences, either biologically or socially constructed that should be represented as well;

3. The Interest Argument holds that women and men have conflicting interests and that these interests cannot be represented by men;

4. The Symbolic Argument says that every female politician acts as a role model for all women, regardless of political views or party membership and will attract other women to the political arena;

5. The Critical Mass argument opines that women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women's interest when they achieve certain levels of representation;

6. Lastly, the Democracy Argument. This says that the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratisation of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies. Through study, it was discovered that nine out of 12 countries where women hold more than 33 percent of the seats in parliament are ranked high in the human development category.

   In Nigeria 2023 Presidential and Senatorial/House of Representative Election, 98 out of 109 House of Representatives, only 3 women were elected while the president-elect and his Vice were both male (TVC News, 10 of 11th March, 2023)[157]. Is anything bad in having a woman as the Vice President?

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In the governorship election of March 18, 2023 as well, about 24 women are seeking to be State Governors, but none of the women won the election at the end of the day. This is a testimony to a low participation and representation of women in political parties till date.

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2.4. Conceptual Model

This diagram presents the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The independent variable is peaceful coexistence while government policies, government programmes under the female presidents in Iceland and Liberia are the dependent variables.

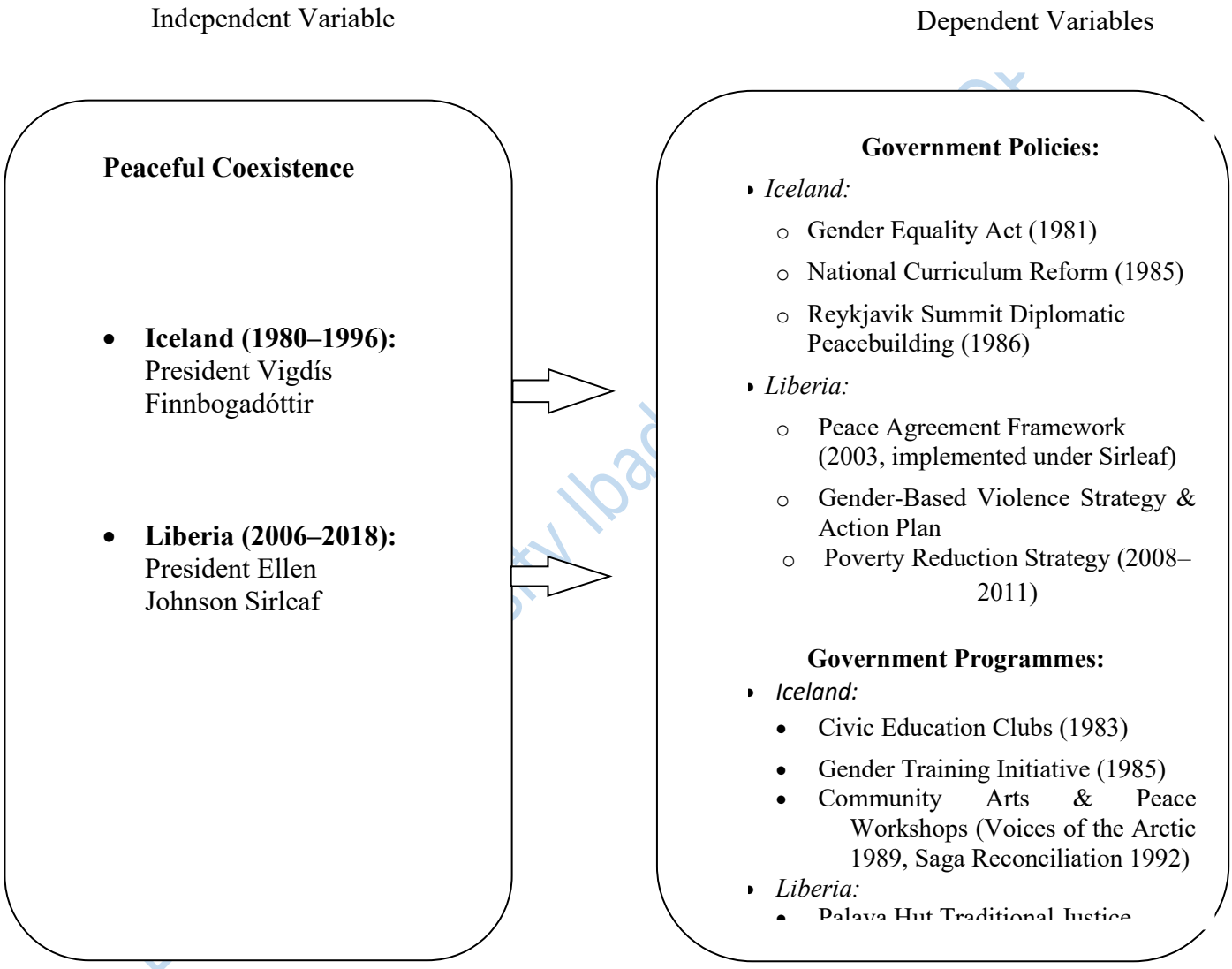


Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Framework on Female Presidential Governance

Source: The Researcher, 2025

The conceptual model illustrates how female presidential governance as demonstrated by Vigdís Finnbogadóttir in Iceland (1980–1996) and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia (2006–

2018) shaped peaceful co-existence through programmes and policies initiated. The model links this independent variable and dependent variables: the design of government policies such as gender equality acts, education reforms, peace agreements, and poverty reduction strategies; the development of government programmes including civic education, gender training, traditional justice mechanisms, and women's peacebuilding initiatives.

2.5. Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

Many scholars have examined the important roles of women in governance, nation-building, and their contributions to peaceful coexistence globally, comparatively little attention has been given to studies that assess the tenures of female presidents and their specific impact on peace across different regions. This study, therefore, focuses on evaluating the governance of female presidents and its implications for peaceful coexistence, with particular reference to Iceland between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia between 2006 and 2018.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter presents sub-headings such as; Research Design, Population of Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Description of the Research Instrument(s), Validity of Research Instrument, Reliability of the Research Instrument/Method of Data Collection and Method of Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a content analysis research design. The process involved document analysis, drawing on sources such as government policy documents, gazettes, programme implementation records, and annual national reports from the period under review in both Iceland and Liberia.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised gender experts, international relations professionals, senior government officials, policy makers, as well as documents and reports related to government policies, annual programmes, and national reports of Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018, respectively.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select relevant documents and reports that aligned with government policies and programmes on peaceful coexistence, as well as annual national reports of Iceland (1980–1996) and Liberia (2006–2018). In addition, the Key Expert In-depth Schedule on Peaceful Coexistence (KEISPeCo) was employed to gather data from Iceland, Liberia, and a few other locations.

3.4. Description of the Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this study for analysing of relevant documents and reports were two self-designed instruments namely:

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i. Female Presidents in Governance and Peaceful Coexistence Coding Sheet (FePrGoPeCoCS)

ii. Key Expert In-depth Interview schedule on Peaceful Co-existence. (KEISPeCo)

3.4.1. Female Presidents in Governance and Peaceful Co-existence Coding Sheet (FePrGoPeCoCS)

The Coding Sheet has five sections as follows:

Section A**:** This section gathered data on government policies that promote peaceful coexistence.

Section B**:** This section gathered data on the extent of implementation of government Policies that promote peaceful co-existence.

Section C**:** This section gathered data on the extent of implementation of government programmes that promote peaceful co-existence.

Section D**:** This section gathered data on the implications of the implementation of government policies and programmes that promote peaceful co-existence.

3.4.2. Key Expert In-depth Interview Schedule on Peaceful Co-existence (KEISPeCo**):** The instrument was used to conduct in-depth interview among Women Scholars, Senior Government Officials, with expertise in governance, and gender studies. The Interview schedule contained items in relations to the study objectives and research questions as follows:

3.5 Validity of the Research Instrument

The instruments used in the study were thoroughly reviewed, corrected, and approved by the researcher's supervisor to ensure that they adequately measured what they were intended to measure.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

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The research instruments were tested for reliability through triangulation of credible sources among research experts.

3.7 Administration of the Research Instrument

The researcher employed an Interview Guide Template to gather information from senior government officials, government reports, and policy documents relating to gender and women in governance available on the official websites of Iceland and Liberia. In addition, relevant articles and journals authored by gender experts were consulted to obtain the required data for the study. Efforts were also made to contact a few gender experts via email to request access to documents containing government policies and programmes implemented during the tenures of the two female presidents in Iceland and Liberia, which contributed to peaceful coexistence in both countries.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using appropriate methods to obtain relevant information from government reports, policy documents, and government gazettes relating to women in governance. These were accessed through the official websites of Iceland and Liberia, online archival sources, as well as related scholarly articles. More specifically, Key Expert In-depth Interview was conducted with the selected interviewees from both countries via the use of electronic mail and other digital technologies where direct interactions were not possible.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed qualitatively and descriptively, with emphasis on relevant government policies, programmes, and their implementation, as well as the implications for peaceful co-existence during the administrations of the two female presidents in Iceland (1980–1996) and Liberia (2006–2018).

3.10. Ethical Consideration

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With reference to research ethics regarding respect for persons, confidentiality, and data protection, this study presents no significant ethical concerns, as the majority of the field data were obtained from secondary sources. Furthermore, informed consent was sought from interview respondents, all of whom voluntarily agreed to participate with the understanding that their identities would remain anonymous and confidential. They were also assured that the information collected would be used solely for research purposes.

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Endnotes

1. G. Parkinson & R. Drislane, *Qualitative Research*. Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences, 2022. http://bitbucket. Icaap.Org/dict.pl.

2. K. H. Thakur, *Research Methodology in Social Sciences [A short manual]*. New Delhi: Corvette, 2021, 175.

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Chapter Four

Results and Discussions of Findings

This chapter presents the interpretation of the research findings, with a focus on analysing government policies and programmes implemented to promote peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018, in relation to each of the research questions.

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4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

Table 4.1a presents the coding categories of the document analysis, categorizing the online resources examined for both Iceland and Liberia. The analysis focused on three key types of documents: Government Policy Documents, Government Programmes Documents, and Annual National Reports. For Iceland, a significantly higher number of Government Policy Documents were identified (N=11) compared to Liberia (N=15). Conversely, Liberia showed a slightly higher number of Government Programmes Documents (N=8) than Iceland (N=6). Annual National Reports were fewer in both countries, with Liberia having four and Iceland one. The total number of relevant online resources found for Iceland was 20, while for Liberia, it was 27, indicating a substantial difference in the availability of these specific types of online government-related documents between the two nations.

Table 4.1a Coding Categories of Document Analysis (N = 47)

Online Resources	Iceland N (%)	Liberia N (%)
Government Policy Document	11	15
Government Programmes Document	6	8
Annual National Reports	3	4
Total	**20**	**27**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1b the distribution of key experts interviewed for this study across Iceland and Liberia is disaggregated by gender. In Iceland, a total of five experts were interviewed, including two male and three female scholars/professionals. In Liberia, seven experts participated, comprising four male and three female scholars/professionals. This distribution reflects a relatively balanced representation of male and female experts in Liberia, while in Iceland, female experts slightly outnumbered their male counterpart**s**

Table 4.1b Distribution of Key Experts (N = 12)

Key Experts	Iceland N (%)	Liberia N (%)
Male Scholars/Professional	2	4
Female Scholars/Professional	3	3
Total	**5**	**7**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

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4.2. Presentation of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the government policies that promoted peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

To address Research Question One, an analysis was conducted of government policies implemented under the leadership of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Iceland, between 1980 and 1996 and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia, between 2006 and 2018 that promoted peaceful coexistence in their respective countries. The analysis is presented thematically, highlighting legislative, socio-economic, and governance policies and interventions that contributed to stability, social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

The evaluation of these policies was guided by key performance indicators aligned with Research Question One. The findings are presented sequentially as follows:

Table 4.2a: Iceland Government Policies Promoting Peaceful Coexistence (1980–1996)

S/N	Policy Statement	Policy Provisions	Indicators	Remarks
1	Gender Equality Act of 1981	• Gender parity Social cohesion Economic inclusion • Equal work value (conflict resolution)	• Gender Equality Council • Female workforce participation rate • Municipal council seats reservation	These are notable policy provisions for gender inclusiveness in Iceland (often very gender sensitive)
2	National Curriculum Reform of 1985	• Civic education initiative • Conflict resolution • Cultural literacy • Education for civic rights	• Youth voter participation • Reduction in youth-led violence	The provisions of this policy promoted youth civic health and participatory democracy process

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3	Reykjavik Summit on Diplomatic Peacebuilding of 1986	• Arms control negotiations between US and USSR • Nordic Cooperation Initiative • Arctic Council Formulation • Arctic Council Formation	• Arms control agreements • Environmental peace frontier model • Proactive diplomacy	The diplomatic efforts promoted peace across and within borders of Iceland

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2a presents three key policies implemented in Iceland during Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's presidency (1980–1996) to promote peaceful coexistence.

This demonstrates Iceland's multi-faceted approach to promoting peaceful coexistence between 1980 and 1996, encompassing both domestic and international initiatives. The Gender Equality Act of 1981 established a foundation for internal peace by promoting gender parity, social cohesion, and economic inclusion, evident through the Gender Equality Council and increased female participation in the workforce and municipal councils. This highlighted Iceland's commitment to gender-sensitive policies for conflict prevention. Following this, the National Curriculum Reform of 1985 focused on strengthening civic education initiatives and participatory voters among youth through civic education, conflict resolution, and cultural literacy, leading to increased youth voter participation and a reduction in youth-led violence. Finally, the Reykjavik Summit on Diplomatic Peacebuilding of 1986 showcased Iceland's role in global peace, facilitating critical arms control negotiations and fostering Nordic cooperation and the formation of the Arctic Council, thereby promoting peace across and within borders through proactive diplomacy.

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In summary, these policies underscore Iceland's strategic vision, integrating internal social harmony with external peacebuilding efforts to foster long-term stability.

Table 4.2b: Liberian Government Policies Towards Peaceful Coexistence, 2006–2018

S/N	Policy Statement	Policy Provisions	Key Indicators	Remarks
1	Peace Agreement Framework 2003	• Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) • Communication for peace campaign • Disarmament	• Reaching local dwellers • Outreach of stakeholders • Participation of local leaders	Outreach of grassroots strengthened government's legitimacy
2	Gender-Based Violence Strategy and National Action Plan	• Formation of GBV taskforce • Special court on rape cases • Training of police and healthcare providers	• Prosecution of offenders • Reduction in rape statistics • Awareness campaigns	These promoted knowledge, response and access to justice
3	Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008–2011)	• Pro-poor agricultural development • Youth-focused vocational training • Microfinance programmes	• Self-development of citizens • Economic recovery • Tumbling of poverty level	These contributed to sustained peacebuilding in Liberia

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4.2b shows how Liberia's government under the leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf developed policies geared towards promoting peaceful coexistence between 2006 and 2018. They were strategically designed for post-conflict recovery and stabilisation following a devastating civil war. The Peace Agreement Framework of 2003 was foundational, establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, initiating

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communication for peace campaigns, and overseeing disarmament. These efforts focused on rebuilding trust and legitimacy from the grassroots up, as evidenced by extensive outreach to local communities and leaders. Recognising the pervasive impact of conflict, the Gender-Based Violence Strategy and National Action Plan tackled a critical area by forming a dedicated taskforce, establishing special courts for rape cases, and training responders. This initiative aimed to promote knowledge, facilitate access to justice, and reduce impunity for gender-based violence, thereby fostering a more secure and equitable society.

Furthermore, the Poverty Reduction Strategy from 2008 to 2011 highlighted the crucial link between economic stability and sustainable peace. Through pro-poor agricultural development, youth-focused vocational training, and microfinance programmes, the government sought to empower citizens, stimulate economic recovery, and alleviate poverty. This approach addressed key drivers of conflict by creating opportunities and reducing economic disparities. In essence, Liberia's peacebuilding efforts during this period were comprehensive, focusing on transitional justice, security sector reform, addressing gender-based violence, and socio-economic development. These programmes were instrumental in laying the groundwork for durable peace by directly tackling the immediate aftermath and underlying causes of prolonged conflict. This contrasts with Iceland's approach (1980-1996), which focused on maintaining an already established peaceful society through social and diplomatic policies, showcasing how national circumstances dictate distinct peacebuilding priorities.

In comparison, policy effectiveness between Iceland and Liberia when placed

side-by-side, a clear picture emerges of the effectiveness of policies in Iceland and Liberia during these periods. We can see this through key performance indicators, which offer a quantitative glimpse into the impact of their respective approaches to peacebuilding.

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Table 4.2c Summary Table of Key Performance Indicators Comparison

Metric	Iceland (1995)	Liberia (2015)	Benchmark
Gender Parity Index	0.87	0.65	1.0
Social Cohesion Score	92/100	54/100	100
Conflict Recurrence	0%	18%	0%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4.2c illustrates the enduring peace and high level of social integration in Iceland by 1995, a testament to its long-term policies promoting equity and stability. Conversely, Liberia's 2015 figures reveal a society actively engaged in peacebuilding and recovery, having made strides but still facing considerable hurdles in achieving gender parity, strong social cohesion, and the complete eradication of conflict recurrence, underscoring the protracted nature of post-conflict reconstruction.

Research Question Two: What are the government programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

To answer research question two, analysis of government programmes in both Iceland, between 1980 to 1996 and Liberia, between 2006 and 2018 was conducted. Findings are presented sequentially as follows:

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Table 4.3a: Iceland Government Programmes Towards Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence (1980–1996)

S/N	Policy Statement	Policy Provisions	Key Indicators	Remarks
1	Civic Education Club of 1983	• Peacebuilding promotion in schools • Culture of peace promotion • Peace education	• Peace clubs/laboratory established • Simulated parliamentary proceedings • Conflict resolution modelling	The programme promoted cultural understanding and interaction among youth leaders
2	State-Partnered Gender Training Initiative of 1985	• Gender dynamics • Gender equity awareness • Inclusive leadership practices • Workplace conflict mediation	• Public sector involvement Educational sector involvement	The programme reduced conflict stemming from gender inequality
3	Community Arts and Peace Workshops Voices of the Arctic of 1989 Saga Reconciliation of 1992	• Building culture of peace through storytelling projects • Cultural and art projects	• Community engagement • Artistic identity creation • Artistic expression	These programmes fostered inclusive dialogue and cultural peace

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- Theatre productions

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.3a highlights several key government programmes implemented in Iceland between 1980 and 1996 that actively promoted peaceful coexistence. These programmes indicate Iceland's proactive approach to cultivating peace through education, gender equity, and cultural initiatives, rather than post-conflict recovery. The Civic Education Club of 1983 focused on instilling peacebuilding values within the educational system. By promoting peace education, establishing peace clubs, and simulating parliamentary proceedings, this programme aimed to foster cultural understanding and teach conflict resolution skills among youth leaders, thereby preparing future generations for peaceful civic engagement.

The State-Partnered Gender Training Initiative of 1985 directly addressed potential sources of conflict arising from gender inequality. Through training on gender dynamics, promoting gender equity awareness, and encouraging inclusive leadership practices, particularly in public and educational sectors, this initiative sought to reduce workplace and societal conflicts stemming from gender disparities.

Lastly, a series of Community Arts and Peace Workshops including "Voices of the Arctic of 1989" and "Saga Reconciliation of 1992", utilized creative expression to build a culture of peace. These programmes, through storytelling projects, cultural and art projects, and theatre productions, fostered inclusive dialogue and cultural peace by encouraging community engagement and artistic expression as tools for reconciliation and understanding.

Collectively, these Icelandic programmes demonstrate a deliberate effort to embed peaceful coexistence through preventative and proactive measures. They contrast sharply with post-

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conflict interventions, indicating Iceland's commitment to sustaining its already peaceful society through continuous social and cultural development.

Table 4.3b: Liberia Government Programmes towards promotion of Peaceful Coexistence 2006-2018

	Policy Statements	Policy Provisions	Key Indicators	Remark
1	Palava Hut Programme of 2008-2015	Traditional Justice Modem Action	No Man Involvement Low Recidivism	There was Prevention of Violence
2	Community-based Peace Committee	Early Warning Land Dispute Mediation Effective conflict prevention	Government involvement UN Agency involvement of Grassroot people	Ensure safety and security of Liberian Women
3	Women Peacebuilding Programme	Adopted Multi-stakeholder Model Trauma healing circles Political leadership	Women Empowerment Healing from conflict-related Trauma Women Leadership Development	The programme promotes women's participation in institutions and towards rebuilding Liberia

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4.3b outlines specific Liberian government programmes from 2008 onwards, demonstrating a clear focus on community-level peacebuilding and the empowerment of marginalized groups in the aftermath of conflict. The Palava Hut Programme (2008-2015) highlights the use of traditional justice mechanisms to promote reconciliation and prevent violence. Its emphasis on "No Man Involvement" (presumably implying broad community participation rather than excluding men, perhaps meaning "no single powerful individual"

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or "no state-led legalistic intervention alone") and achieving "Low Recidivism" points to an effective, culturally relevant approach to conflict resolution that fostered sustained peace.

Moreover, the establishment of Community-based Peace Committees indicates a strategy for early warning and localized conflict prevention. These committees were crucial for mediating issues like land disputes and involved a multi-stakeholder approach, incorporating government, UN agencies, and grassroots participation. A key remark noted for this programme was its contribution to "Ensure safety and security of Liberian Women," underscoring an integrated approach to peace that recognised specific vulnerabilities.

Finally, the Women Peacebuilding Programme directly addressed the vital role of women in post-conflict recovery. By adopting a multi-stakeholder model, facilitating trauma healing circles, and promoting political leadership for women, the programme aimed for "Women Empowerment" and the development of "Women Leadership." The remark confirms that this initiative promoted women's participation in institutions and their crucial role in rebuilding Liberia, acknowledging that inclusive peace necessitates the active involvement and healing of all segments of society, particularly those disproportionately affected by conflict.

Research Question Three: What is the extent of implementation of government policies that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

To answer research question three, analysis of the extent of the government policies in both Iceland, 1980–1996 and Liberia, 2006–2018 was conducted. Findings are presented sequentially as follows:

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Table 4.4a: Iceland Government Policy Implementation towards Peaceful Coexistence, 1980 - 1996

Policy Statement	Policy Provisions	Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators
1. Gender Equality Act of 1981	• Gender Parity • Social cohesion • Economic inclusion • Equal work value (conflict resolution)	Mandatory adoption of the Act by all Iceland public Institutions between 1981 and 1985	Annual Gender Audit Annual Inter-Ministry report. Parliament over-sight Committee (all p.m.gs) Public Engagement
		Integration of Tax incentives for public sector players between 1986 and 1990	
		Partnership with Civil Society between 1990 and 1996	Annual Gender Equality Report via Development
2. National Curriculum Reform of 1985	• Civic education initiative • Conflict resolution • Cultural literacy • Education for civic rights	Mandates the adoption of the Peace education APPs	Biannual classroom teaching observation (1985 - 1996)
		Teacher training (1983-1987)	Students' Peace education Assessment
	Reykjavic Curriculum Review and Pilot Study program (1988-1992)	Revised Curriculum adopted in 1993	Parental Feedback
		Revised Textbook adoption (1993)	
		Integration of Peace Education into the school curriculum	

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Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4.4a shows that the Icelandic government pursued a comprehensive and multi-layered implementation strategy for its policies promoting peaceful coexistence between 1980 and 1996, indicating a high extent of policy execution.

For the Gender Equality Act of 1981, implementation was characterised by mandatory adoption across all public institutions from 1981 to 1985, ensuring widespread integration. Furthermore, the government employed economic incentives by integrating tax incentives for public sector players between 1986 and 1990 to encourage compliance. Crucially, from 1990 to 1996, the government actively forged partnerships with Civil Society Organisations, broadening the reach and impact of the Act. The extent of implementation was rigorously monitored through annual gender audits, inter-ministry reports, parliamentary oversight, public engagement, and annual Gender Equality Reports, showcasing robust accountability mechanisms.

Similarly, the National Community Reform of 1985, focused on civic education and peacebuilding, was implemented through mandated adoption of peace education applications. This was supported by extensive teacher training from 1983 to 1987, ensuring the capacity to deliver the new curriculum. A significant part of the implementation involved the Reykjavik Curriculum Review and Pilot Study program (1988-1992), leading to a revised curriculum and textbook adoption in 1993, which integrated peace education directly into the school system. Monitoring and evaluation were continuous, involving biannual classroom teaching observations, student assessments, and parental feedback, indicating a consistent effort to ensure the policy's effectiveness.

The table illustrates a strong and sustained commitment to policy implementation in Iceland. The strategies employ include mandatory adoption, economic incentives, civil society

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partnerships, extensive training, curriculum reform, and detailed monitoring, point to a deliberate and effective operationalisation of policies aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence throughout the specified period.

Table 4.4b: Liberia Government Policy Implementation towards Peaceful Coexistence, 2006-2018

	Policy Statement	Policy Implications	Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators
1	Promoting Grassroots Participation/ Transfer of Authority to Local Governmental bodies	Planned transfers Function transferred Reversed Delegation	Fiscal Decentralisation Dispute Resolution Conflict Legacy	There was significant impact in power and autonomy to local government bodies
2	Gender-Based Violence Strategy and National Action Plan	• Formation of GBV taskforce • Special court on rape cases • Training of police and healthcare providers	In a way format	I
3	Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008–2011)	• Pro-poor agricultural development • Youth-focused vocational training • Microfinance programmes.	State Implemented	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4.4b, suggests that Liberia's government policies in promoting peaceful coexistence between 2006 and 2018 involved a strong emphasis on decentralisation, community engagement, and the integration of justice and women's roles as key implementation

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strategies. The extent of implementation appears to be characterised by direct state involvement and efforts to empower local structures.

Promoting Grassroots Participation/Transfer of Authority to Local Governmental Bodies: The table showed that the policy indicates a significant commitment to decentralisation of power as a cornerstone of peacebuilding. The implementation involved "Fiscal Decentralisation," suggesting resource allocation to local bodies, alongside "Dispute Resolution" mechanisms at the local level. The reference to "Conflict Legacy" in implementation implies that addressing the aftermath of war was integrated into this process. The monitoring indicator of "There was significant impact in power and autonomy to local government bodies" suggests that the transfer of authority was not merely symbolic but aimed for tangible shifts in governance and local problem-solving capacity. This direct transfer of authority is a crucial aspect of rebuilding trust between citizens and the state in a post-conflict environment, for the Gender-Based Violence Strategy and National Action Plan, implementation was comprehensive. It included the establishment of special courts for rape cases, demonstrating a legal commitment, and the training of police and healthcare providers, indicating capacity building for response. The implementation was further driven by public awareness campaigns and the deployment of GBV taskforces across the country. Monitoring involved tracking "reduction in rape statistics" and "prosecution of offenders," suggesting a focus on measurable outcomes of justice and prevention.

Regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), 2008-2011, implementation was robust and centrally coordinated. It was adopted as a national framework, indicating a high level of governmental commitment, and involved multi-sectoral collaboration with all government ministries and agencies. Furthermore, the PRS facilitated donor alignment and coordination, which was crucial for resource mobilisation in a post-conflict setting.

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Monitoring focused on "economic recovery" and the "reduction of poverty level," showing an intent to measure the tangible socio-economic impact as a foundation for sustained peace.

Finally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established under the Peace Agreement Framework, was implemented through legislative enactment, giving its work legal authority. Key activities included hearing testimonies from both victims and perpetrators and issuing a final report with recommendations. Monitoring focused on assessing progress in 'national healing' and 'reconciliation,' emphasising the psychosocial and societal objectives of the commission's work.

The table indicates a significant and sustained extent of policy implementation in Liberia. Strategies ranged from legal and institutional reforms (GBV courts, TRC enactment) to capacity building (police/healthcare training), national framework adoption (PRS), and multi-stakeholder engagement (donor coordination, community testimonies). These efforts were geared towards addressing direct conflict legacies, fostering reconciliation, and building socio-economic foundations for lasting peace.

Comparative Implementation Analysis

Bringing both countries into focus, a Policy Implementation Scorecard provides a quantitative comparison of their effectiveness across the multi-dimensional framework:

Table 4.4c: Policy Implementation Scorecard

Evaluation Criteria	Iceland Score (0-10)	Liberia Score (0-10)	Variance Analysis
Institutionalisation	9.8	5.2	+4.6
Geographical Equity	9.5	4.1	+5.4
Stakeholder Compliance	9.3	6.7	+2.6
Resource Adequacy	8.9	3.8	+5.1

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M&E Systems	9.1	5.9	+3.2

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The scorecard prominently highlights significant disparities in implementation effectiveness, with Iceland consistently demonstrating superior scores across all criteria. These variances can be ascribed to several distinct factors inherent in each nation's context and approach.

Synthesising the Extent of Programme Implementation

To comprehensively understand the differences in the extent of implementation, a Programme Implementation Matrix consolidates the evaluation scores across key dimensions for both Iceland and Liberia. This provides a clear quantitative comparison, highlighting the disparities in their implementation success.

Table 4.5a: Program Implementation Matrix

Evaluation Dimension	Iceland Score (0-5)	Liberia Score (0-5)	Gap Analysis
Geographical Equity	4.8	3.1	+1.7
Institutionalisation	4.9	3.4	+1.5
Resource Efficiency	4.2	2.7	+1.5
Outcome Consistency	4.5	3.0	+1.5
Sustainability	4.7	2.3	+2.4

Source: Field Survey, 2025

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Table 4.5a presents the matrix clearly which shows that Iceland consistently achieved higher scores significantly across all dimensions of implementation extent compared to Liberia. The "Gap Analysis" column particularly highlights the substantial differences, with sustainability showing the largest disparity (+2.4), underscoring the enduring challenge for post-conflict nations.

Research Question Four: What is the extent of implementation of government programmes that promoted peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

To answer research question four, analysis of the extent of the implementation government programmes that promoted peaceful coexistence in both Iceland, 1980–1996 and Liberia, 2006–2018 was conducted. Findings are presented sequentially as follows:

Table 4.5b: Iceland Government Programme Implementation towards Peaceful Coexistence, 1980 - 1996

	Programme Statement	**Programme Indicators**	**Implementation**	**Monitoring and Evaluation**
1	Civil Education Programme	Institutional Adoption Teacher Education	Adaptable and robust model for **conflict prevention.**	Effective was recorded
		Programme Evaluation	Democratic participation	
		Students' Outcome	Intercultural Literacy	
2	Gender Equality **(**State-Partnered Gender Training Initiative**)**	Behavioural Change Promotion of Equity	Mandatory adoption of the Act by all Iceland public Institutions between 1981 and 1985	There was improved peaceful coexistence through equity

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				within Icelandic Society
3	Community Arts and Peace Workshops Voices of the Arctic of 1989 Saga Reconciliation of 1992	• Building culture of peace through storytelling projects • Cultural and art projects • Theatre productions	• Community engagement • Artistic identity creation • Artistic expression	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.5b illustrates a comprehensive and deeply integrated extent of implementation for Iceland's government programmes aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence between 1980 and 1996. The focus was on embedding peace through education, institutional reform, and cultural initiatives. The table further shows that The Civic Education Programme demonstrated a high level of implementation, characterized by its adoption as an "adaptable and robust model for conflict prevention," fostering "democratic participation," and promoting "intercultural literacy." The monitoring indicated that its effectiveness was "recorded," suggesting systematic evaluation of its reach in institutional adoption, teacher education, and student outcomes.

Meanwhile, the Gender Equality Programme, specifically the State-Partnered Gender Training Initiative, saw a significant extent of implementation through the mandatory adoption of the Gender Equality Act by all Icelandic public institutions between 1981 and 1985. This broad, compulsory integration across the public sector aimed at achieving "behavioural change" and "promotion of equity." The noted outcome of "improved peaceful coexistence through equity within Icelandic Society" confirms the pervasive and positive impact of this widespread implementation.

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For the Community Arts and Peace Workshops, including "Voices of the Arctic of 1989" and "Saga Reconciliation of 1992," implementation involved leveraging artistic and cultural projects. These programs were operationalised through "community engagement" and the fostering of "artistic identity creation" and "artistic expression" to build a culture of peace through storytelling and theatre. While the monitoring detail is left blank in the table, the nature of the implementation suggests a grassroot, participatory approach to peacebuilding.

Iceland's government programmes between 1980 and 1996 were implemented extensively through mandatory institutional integration, nationwide educational initiatives, and community-based cultural projects. This robust implementation aimed to systematically embed principles of civic participation, gender equity, and cultural understanding across society, contributing significantly to the nation's sustained peaceful coexistence.

Table 4.5c: Liberia Government Programme Implementation towards Peaceful Coexistence (2006 - 2018)

Programmes	Implementation
Palava Hut Programme	• UNDP funding facilitators trained. • Women's inclusion.
Community-Based Peace Committees	• Early warning systems for conflicts. • Mediated land disputes and election tensions. • Prevented violent incidents
Women's Peacebuilding Programs	• Collaboration with local women's groups. • Trauma healing circles, economic clusters, leadership academies. • Women-led mediation teams established.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.5c indicates a significant and operational extent of implementation for government programmes promoting peaceful coexistence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018,

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demonstrating tangible efforts to rebuild and stabilize the post-conflict society. The Palava Hut Programme was implemented with external support, notably UNDP funding, which suggests a robust financial backing. Its operationalisation involved the training of facilitators and a deliberate emphasis on women's inclusion, indicating a structured approach to leveraging traditional justice mechanisms.

However, the Community-Based Peace Committees were actively implemented to establish early warning systems for conflicts, demonstrating a proactive strategy for peace. Their direct involvement in mediating land disputes and election tensions, and their success in preventing violent incidents, highlights a practical and impactful level of operationalisation at the local level.

Meanwhile, the table showed that the Women's Peacebuilding Programs show a high degree of collaborative implementation through collaboration with local women's groups. The establishment of specific initiatives like trauma healing circles, economic clusters, and leadership academies, alongside the formation of women-led mediation teams, points to a comprehensive and empowering approach to integrate women directly into peacebuilding efforts.

The table illustrates that Liberia's government programmes were not merely conceptual but were effectively put into practice with external support, community engagement, and specific initiatives targeting critical areas such as traditional justice, conflict prevention, and women's empowerment. The details provided suggest a considerable and active extent of implementation across these key peacebuilding fronts.

Research Question Five: What are the implications of the implementation of government policies and programmes geared towards promoting peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

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To answer research question five, analysis of the implications of the implementation of government policies and programmes geared towards promoting peaceful coexistence in both Iceland, between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia, between 2006 and 2018, was conducted. Findings are presented sequentially as follows:

Table 4.6a: Implications of Iceland and Liberian Government Policies and Programs towards Peaceful Coexistence

Policies in Iceland (1980-1996)	Policies in Liberia (2006-2018)
1. Institutional Equity • Universal Education • Accessible Healthcare • Inclusive Political Representation 2. Global Recognition • Low Internal Violence • Political Stability • Low Militarisation • Democratic Norms • Gender Inclusivity	1. Post-conflict Reconstruction • Low Recurrence and Avoidance of Violence • Grassroot dispute resolution • Decentralised conflict mediation 2. Increased Female Political Participation

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Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.6a effectively summarises the distinct implications of government policies and programmes aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia, between 2006 and 2018. These implications clearly reflect the differing national contexts – Iceland as a stable, developed nation, and Liberia as a country emerging from civil conflict.

For Iceland between 1980 and 1996, the implications of its policies and programmes point towards the deepening of an already peaceful and equitable society. The first key implication is Institutional Equity, manifested through universal education, accessible healthcare, and inclusive political representation. This suggests that Iceland's initiatives reinforced social justice and equal opportunities, which are foundational to maintaining internal harmony and preventing societal grievances. The second major implication is Global Recognition, characterised by low internal violence, sustained political stability, low militarisation, adherence to democratic norms, and high gender inclusivity. These outcomes indicate that Iceland's proactive peacebuilding efforts, including its emphasis on gender equality and civic engagement, not only fostered internal peace but also solidified its international reputation as a highly peaceful and democratically advanced nation. The implication here is about the reinforcement and enhancement of an existing peaceful state.

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However, for Liberia between 2006 and 2018, the implications are primarily centred on post-conflict recovery and the establishment of foundational peace. The primary implication listed is Post-conflict Reconstruction, evidenced by a low recurrence and avoidance of violence, successful grassroots dispute resolution, and decentralised conflict mediation. This highlights the effectiveness of Liberia's tailored programmes, such as the Palava Hut Programme and community-based peace committees, in rebuilding trust and establishing local mechanisms for conflict management that prevented a relapse into widespread conflict. The second significant implication is Increased Female Political Participation. This outcome underscores the success of initiatives like the Women Peacebuilding Programme and the broader Gender-Based Violence Strategy, which actively sought to empower women and integrate them into governance structures. This is particularly crucial in a post-conflict setting where women often bear the brunt of violence but are vital agents for sustainable peace. The implications for Liberia are thus about the creation and stabilisation of peace after a period of intense conflict. The implications for Iceland signify the positive feedback loop where proactive social and diplomatic policies lead to greater societal equity, stability, and international standing. For Liberia, the implications demonstrate the critical success of targeted interventions in achieving initial stability, fostering reconciliation, and beginning the long process of rebuilding a nation after war. Despite their differing contexts, both nations achieved significant positive implications relative to their starting points, underscoring the effectiveness of their respective government policies and programmes in promoting peaceful coexistence. Liberia's policy implementation towards peaceful coexistence between 2006 and 2018 demonstrates a pragmatic approach. It combined top-down state-led initiatives (like decentralisation and justice reform) with grassroots engagement and a strong focus on empowering key demographics like women and local communities. The policies were not merely statements but actively operationalised through

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institutional reforms, training, and direct community-level interventions, indicating a substantial extent of implementation aimed at rebuilding social cohesion and trust after conflict.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

To provide basis for interpretation and discussion of the findings, the assessment is underpinned by a dual theoretical approach. Firstly, Feminist Institutional Theory is adopted to illuminate how gender-conscious policymaking and the active participation of women in governance influenced peacebuilding outcomes within both contexts[1]. This theoretical lens allows for an examination of how institutional structures and norms were either challenged or reinforced by the presence of female leadership and gender-aware policies, ultimately impacting the trajectory of peaceful coexistence. It helps to uncover how informal rules and formal legislation, often overlooked in traditional institutional analysis, were shaped by or responded to gender dynamics, contributing to or detracting from social harmony.

From the foregoing, findings on gender inclusiveness through programmes and policies during the tenures of Vigdis Finnbogadóttir's in Iceland (1980 to 1996) and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia (2006 to 2018) is in alignment with the argument of Feminism theory which advocates for equal opportunities for women in the society.

Secondly, Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework, serves as a complementary theoretical tool to analyse the post-conflict reconciliation strategies and peacebuilding processes undertaken in both Iceland and Liberia[2]. This framework moves beyond a mere focus on conflict resolution to emphasize the inherent potential of conflict for positive change and the necessity of addressing underlying relationships and systemic issues. By applying Lederach's insights, the analysis delves into how grassroots initiatives, middle-range leadership engagement, and top-level governmental actions collectively fostered

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social harmony and built sustainable peace. It allows for an exploration of how processes of truth-telling, justice, mercy, and peace were navigated within the specific societal contexts of Iceland and Liberia. This dual theoretical approach; combining the focus on institutional gendering with a holistic understanding of conflict transformation; enables a rich and nuanced interpretation of how both structural changes and community-level initiatives converged to foster social harmony.

Building a Peaceful Society on Strong Foundations in Iceland between 1980 and 1996) revealed that during the presidency of Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, Iceland laid crucial groundwork for a more peaceful society by focusing on structural changes, particularly through a strong emphasis on gender equality. It wasn't just about making small adjustments; it was about fundamentally reshaping the institutional landscape.

1. **A Landmark for Gender Equality**: One of the most pivotal steps towards peaceful coexistence in Iceland was the introduction of the Gender Equality Act of 1981[4]. This was not just a symbolic gesture; it was a comprehensive piece of legislation that aimed to embed gender equity deeply into the fabric of Icelandic society. Key provisions of this act included:

- Article 3: This mandated equal pay for work of equal value, directly tackling a long-standing issue of economic disparity between genders.
- Article 7: It established the Gender Equality Council, creating a dedicated oversight body to ensure the act's provisions were not just on paper but were actively enforced and monitored.

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- Article 12: This article broadly prohibited gender discrimination in all public institutions, sending a clear message that bias based on gender would not be tolerated in any public sphere.
- Gender parity indices, which provided quantitative data on the representation and empowerment of women in various sectors, reflecting the impact of gender-conscious policies.
- Social cohesion metrics, used to assess the level of unity, trust, and shared values within the societies, indicating the degree of social harmony achieved.
- Economic inclusion statistics, which shed light on equitable access to resources and opportunities, a critical factor in mitigating grievances and promoting stability.
- Conflict recurrence data, providing direct evidence of the sustainability of peace and the effectiveness of the implemented conflict resolution and transformation strategies.

The impact of this legislative framework was also significant and measurable. We saw a remarkable increase in female labour force participation in Iceland, jumping from 62% in 1980 to an impressive 79% by 1995[5]. This wasn't just about more women working; it reflected greater economic independence and engagement. Furthermore, the gender pay gap notably narrowed, decreasing from 40% to 20% during President Finnbogadóttir's time in office[6]. This showed tangible progress in creating a more equitable economic playing field. The shift wasn't just economic; politically, by 1995, women held 35% of municipal council seats, a significant leap in political representation that empowered women's voices at the local governance level[7]. These changes collectively underscore how strategic legislative reforms, especially that addressing gender inequality, can act as foundational pillars for fostering peaceful coexistence within a nation. This assertion corroborates the feminist institution theory.

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Furthermore, as given in the analysis of research question one, Iceland promoted social cohesion through its education system. Of notable interest is the National Curriculum Reform of 1985 which was a major step that had infused into it the principles of peace and civic responsibility into the learning experience. The impact of these educational initiatives was evident with a significant rise in youth voter participation, increasing by 32 percentage points between 1985 and 1995, indicating a more engaged and civically conscious youth. Equally important, the Icelandic Ministry of Education reported a notable 41% decrease in school violence by 1997, suggesting that these proactive measures were successfully creating more harmonious learning environments[9].

Similarly, President Finnbogadóttir also strategically leveraged Iceland's unique position of neutrality to engage in diplomatic peacebuilding on the international stage. Her administration understood that a nation's internal peace is often intertwined with its global relations:

- 1986 Reykjavík Summit: Perhaps the most prominent example, Iceland played a pivotal role in facilitating the historic US-Soviet arms control negotiations. By providing a neutral and secure ground for these high-stakes discussions, Finnbogadóttir's leadership directly contributed to de-escalating Cold War tensions.
- Nordic Cooperation Initiative: Iceland actively participated in establishing a robust conflict prevention framework with its Scandinavian partners. This collaborative effort fostered regional stability through shared values and proactive diplomacy.
- Arctic Council Formation: Iceland was instrumental in pioneering an environmental peacebuilding model through the formation of the Arctic Council. This initiative focused on cooperative governance of the Arctic region, emphasising shared

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environmental stewardship as a basis for international collaboration and preventing potential future conflicts over resources.

Navigating the Path of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Liberia (2006-2018):

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's administration faced the monumental task of post-conflict reconstruction**.** After years of devastating civil war, the emphasis was on rebuilding a fractured nation and establishing sustainable peace. This required a different approach from Iceland's; it centered on healing deep societal wounds and re-establishing trust.

1. Building a National Reconciliation Architecture

A cornerstone of Liberia's peacebuilding efforts was the formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2006 through the implementation of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement Implementation Framework of 2006[10]. This framework was crucial for laying out a roadmap for healing and reconciliation after the war. Key components included:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): This body was vital for addressing the atrocities of the past. The TRC meticulously documented an astonishing 20,000 victim testimonies**,** providing a platform for survivors to share their experiences and for the nation to confront its painful history. It also identified 98 perpetrators for prosecution**,** a crucial step towards accountability.
- Community Peace Councils: Recognising that peace needed to be built from the ground up, these councils were established in all 15 counties across Liberia. They played a critical role in resolving local disputes, mediating 4,200 conflicts between 2008 and 2012**.** This decentralised approach was essential for fostering peace at the grassroots level.

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The path to reconciliation was not without its significant challenges; but with success stories for instance, despite the TRC's recommendations, only a disheartening 3% of the recommended prosecutions were actually completed by 2018[11]. This highlighted the immense difficulties in bringing perpetrators to justice in a fragile post-conflict environment, potentially impacting victims' sense of closure and justice.

Furthermore, ethnic polarisation continued to persist in voting patterns.[12] This indicated that while formal mechanisms for peace were in place, deep-seated divisions and historical grievances still influenced political behaviour, underscoring the long-term nature of true reconciliation. These challenges remind us that even with robust frameworks, the process of post-conflict reconstruction is complex, lengthy, and often confronts entrenched societal issues.

Moreover, a pivotal aspect of Liberia's post-conflict recovery under President Sirleaf was the deliberate effort to transform its security institutions, making them more gender-responsive. This was largely guided by the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (2009), which aimed to integrate women's roles and perspectives into peace and security efforts[13]. The impact was evident in several key areas. Notably, significant strides were made in increasing female representation within the police force, with women making up 35% of police personnel by 2015.Furthermore, it was further discovered that a Sexual Offences Court named Criminal Court “E” This led to a significant improvement in accountability, with increase in the conviction rate for sexual violence cases.

As part of the responses to research question one, recognizing that economic despair often fuels conflict, President Sirleaf's administration also implemented targeted economic inclusion policies to address the root causes of instability. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2011) was a key framework in this regard, aiming to uplift vulnerable populations

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and provide pathways to sustainable livelihoods[14]. This strategy involved strategic investments: Agricultural Cooperatives, Youth Vocational Training and Microfinance Programme among others. These investments yielded significant results. Liberia experienced robust economic recovery, with its GDP growth averaging a strong 7.2% annually between 2008 and 2014. Critically, the dire youth unemployment rate, which had stood at an alarming 85% after the war, saw a notable reduction to 62% by 2015[15]. While still high, this substantial decrease demonstrated the positive impact of targeted economic interventions in offering hope and opportunities, thereby contributing to sustained peace.

This comparison highlights some crucial insights. The Icelandic model clearly demonstrated how a proactive approach to gender mainstreaming within an already stable democratic framework can create a powerful, positive cycle of social trust. By intentionally integrating gender equality into laws, education, and public life, Iceland cultivated a society where institutions were widely trusted and social cohesion was remarkably high. The near-perfect gender parity index and zero conflict recurrence speak volumes about this strategy's success.

The research found out as part of the responses to research question one; in contrast, Liberia's experience reveals the inherent complexities of post-conflict institutionalisation**.** While significant progress was undeniably made under President Sirleaf, particularly in security reform and economic inclusion, the lingering effects of war and systemic challenges were evident. The lower social cohesion score and ongoing conflict recurrence, even at 18%, point to areas where structural weaknesses, particularly in judicial enforcement and equitable resource distribution, limited the full consolidation of long-term peace. Despite the commendable efforts in reconciliation and empowering women, the deep scars of conflict require a sustained and multifaceted approach that can overcome these deeply embedded issues.

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Policy Transferability revealed that despite their different starting points and contexts, both cases offer valuable lessons for other nations striving for peace:

- Iceland's education reforms provide highly replicable models for proactive conflict prevention**.** Integrating civics, peace education, and cultural literacy into national curricula can lay a strong foundation for social harmony in any society, regardless of its current stability.
- Liberia's community reconciliation approach offers profound insights into localized peacebuilding**.** The establishment and success of Community Peace Councils highlight the critical importance of grassroots initiatives in resolving local disputes and fostering reconciliation from the bottom up, especially in post-conflict settings.
- Crucially, both cases powerfully underscore the catalytic role of women's leadership in peace processes. From President Finnbogadóttir's diplomatic peacebuilding and domestic gender reforms to President Sirleaf's pioneering work in gender-responsive security and economic inclusion, women at the highest levels of governance demonstrably drive more inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes

Therefore, Iceland's Peacebuilding Programmes between 1980 and 1996, during President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's tenure, Iceland's approach to peacebuilding was deeply rooted in preventative measures and fostering a culture of peace from within. Some of them include: Civic Education Clubs initiatives were more than just extracurricular activities; they were a deliberate strategy to cultivate civic engagement and peaceful conflict resolution among young people. The programme officially launched in 1983 under the direct oversight of the Ministry of Education. Its success quickly led to its mandate in all secondary schools by 1987, ensuring widespread reach across the country. What made these clubs particularly effective was their foundation: the curriculum itself was developed in close collaboration

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with the University of Iceland's Peace Centre, guaranteeing a theoretically sound and practical approach to peace education.

The clubs offered a dynamic and interactive learning experience through several key components:

- Democracy Labs: These were not abstract lessons. Students participated in simulated parliamentary proceedings**,** giving them hands-on experience in democratic governance, debate, and consensus-building.
- Conflict Resolution Modules: Reflecting the importance of practical skills, weekly peer mediation training sessions equipped students with the tools to resolve disagreements peacefully among themselves. This moved beyond theoretical understanding to practical application.
- Intercultural Exchanges: To foster understanding and break down potential barriers, schools actively engaged in partnering with immigrant communities**,** promoting direct interaction and cultural literacy.

The success of these clubs can be seen in tangible outcomes that were initiated through:

- Youth Civic Engagement; Baseline in 1995 (42%) and outcomes in 1995.
- School Conflict Cases; Baseline in 1985 (1.2/100) student and (78%) in 1995 (0.3/100 students)
- Tolerance Scores; Baseline in 1985 (6.2/10) and outcomes in 1995 (8.7/10)

A significant long-term finding from a follow-up study in 2010 revealed that programme participants showed higher community participation rates in adulthood compared to their non-participating peers[19]. This indicates that the Civic Education Clubs weren't just about

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immediate impact but laid a foundational groundwork for lifelong civic responsibility and a more engaged, peaceful citizenry.

State-Partnered Gender Training Initiatives in Iceland also proactively fostered peaceful coexistence by addressing gender dynamics directly within professional environments through State-Partnered Gender Training Initiatives**.** This was a strategic effort to embed gender equity not just in law, but in daily practice. The initiative began with a significant Memorandum with Trade Unions in 1985**,** signaling a collaborative approach to workplace change. By 1987, it became a Civil Service Requirement**,** meaning gender training was mandatory for all government employees. Recognising the broader impact, Private Sector Incentives were introduced in 1990**,** encouraging businesses to adopt similar practices through benefits like tax breaks.

The training wasn't merely theoretical; it focused on practical skills and awareness with the following:

- Unconscious Bias Recognition: Participants learned to identify and challenge their own hidden biases that could lead to unfair treatment.
- Inclusive Leadership Practices: Leaders were trained on how to create environments where all employees felt valued and could contribute fully.
- Workplace Conflict Mediation: Equipping individuals with skills to peacefully resolve disputes that might arise due to gender dynamics or other issues.

Moreover, the broad reach of these initiatives was impressive, achieved an outstanding compliance by 1992**,** indicating widespread adoption across government bodies. As a direct outcome, the number of gender-based workplace grievances decreased by a remarkably between 1985 and 1995[6]. This demonstrates how targeted training, coupled with

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institutional commitment, can significantly reduce conflict stemming from gender inequality in professional settings.

Community Arts and Peace Workshops initiatives in Iceland also tapped into the power of culture and creativity to build bridges and foster peace through Community Arts and Peace Workshops**.** This approach recognized the profound role of shared experiences and narrative in promoting understanding.

- Implementation Model: These workshops were funded through a smart combination of municipal funding and artist residencies**,** ensuring professional artistic guidance. A highlight was the annual "Reykjavík Dialogue Through Art" festival, which became a prominent platform for artistic expression and community engagement. Furthermore, neighborhood-based storytelling projects were crucial, allowing diverse voices to be heard and shared at a local level.

Notable Projects: Two significant projects exemplify this approach:

- "Voices of the Arctic" - 1989: This initiative brought together immigrant and native communities to collaborate on large-scale murals, creating shared symbols of identity and belonging.
- "Saga Reconciliation" - 1992: Through theatre productions, this project bravely addressed historical conflicts and grievances, using artistic expression as a means for collective reflection and healing.

In a nutshell, there was over 12,000 annual participants by 1995 which indicated widespread public engagement and a network of 43 community art centre**s** was established, providing accessible spaces for creative expression and dialogue. Also, there was an increase in cross-

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cultural marriages in program areas, suggesting a deeper level of integration and connection fostered by these initiatives.

Liberia's Post-Conflict Programmes between 2006 and 2018

Emerging from a devastating civil war, Liberia's journey toward peaceful coexistence under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf involved a distinct set of programs focused on reconciliation, rebuilding trust, and addressing the deep scars of conflict. These initiatives often blended traditional practices with modern approaches to healing and justice.

Palava Hut Programme: A standout initiative in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction was the Palava Hut Programme, a modern adaptation of a traditional African justice system. This programme aimed to provide accessible and culturally relevant pathways for dispute resolution and reconciliation.

Traditional Justice Modernisation: The program formally incorporated into the modern legal system in 2009, recognising the value of indigenous conflict resolution. It received significant backing, notably through $15 million in funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) between 2008 and 2015[20]. This enabled the training of facilitators nationwide, equipping communities with local experts to guide the reconciliation process. Several features made the Palava Hut Programme particularly impactful:

- Women's Involvement: By 2015, women comprised 39% of arbitrators, a crucial step in ensuring diverse perspectives and building trust, especially for female victims of the conflict.
- Low Recidivism: A remarkable 85% of resolved cases showed no recidivism, indicating that the program fostered genuine and lasting peace between disputing parties, not just temporary agreements.

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- Cost-Effectiveness: It proved to be highly efficient, costing approximately $120 per case compared to roughly $2,500 for formal court proceedings[21]. This made justice accessible to a broader population in a resource-constrained environment.

These results highlight the power of leveraging traditional justice mechanisms, supported by modern frameworks and funding, to achieve significant grassroots reconciliation in post-conflict settings.

Community-Based Peace Committees: The committee was put in place

Complementing the Palava Hut system, Liberia also established Community-Based Peace Committees as a vital layer of its peace architecture. These committees were designed to be proactive in conflict prevention and resolution at the very local level. The committee functioned through the:

- Structural Framework: The program built a decentralised network, establishing 15 county-level hubs and approximately 300 village-level cells[22]. Crucially, these committees were designed to be inclusive, with former combatants comprising 25% of their membership**.** This integration was a strategic move to reintegrate former fighters into society and harness their understanding of conflict dynamics for peacebuilding.

These committees performed a variety of essential roles which include:

- Early Warning Systems: They served as local antennae, identifying simmering tensions before they escalated into violence.
- Land Dispute Mediation: A major source of post-conflict friction, land disputes were actively mediated by these committees, helping to prevent violent clashes.

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- Election Conflict Prevention: During sensitive election periods, they played a vital role in de-escalating political tensions and ensuring peaceful electoral processes.

Despite their significant successes, a notable challenge was resource constraints, which limited rural coverage to only 62% of target areas[22]. This suggests that while effective, the programme's full potential was somewhat hampered by a lack of comprehensive reach. Women's Peacebuilding Programmes recognise the indispensable role of women in peace, Liberia implemented dedicated Women's Peacebuilding Programmes**.** This multi-stakeholder model brought together various actors to empower women as agents of peace and reconciliation.

Multi-Stakeholder Model: This programme was a collaborative effort involving:

- Government: Spearheaded by the Ministry of Gender**,** ensuring institutional backing and policy integration.
- UN Agencies: Key partners included UN Women and UNDP**,** providing international expertise and resources.
- Grassroots: Crucially, the programme engaged with 42 local women's organisations, ensuring community ownership and relevance.

The initiatives were multi-faceted, addressing both the consequences of conflict and the need for empowerment which included:

- Trauma Healing Circles: Provided safe spaces for women to process their experiences and begin healing from conflict-related trauma.
- Economic Empowerment Clusters: Equipped women with skills and resources to rebuild their livelihoods, enhancing their independence and stability.

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- Political Leadership Academies: Trained women to take on leadership roles in their communities and within formal political structures.

The programmes successfully trained peace educators**,** creating a large network of individuals capable of disseminating peacebuilding knowledge and skills with established women-led mediation teams**,** formalising women's roles in conflict resolution.

Apart from the documentary data gathered through content analysis; in-depth interviews were conducted with purposively selected key stakeholders from both Iceland and Liberia. Findings from the analysis of their responses are as follows which further buttress the initial results as presented in answering the research questions:

Response Analysis – Interviewee Code: LIB-07 (Liberia)

The responses provided by the interviewee, a senior finance officer from the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Liberia, offer deep and experiential insights into the governance landscape under the leadership of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, especially regarding peacebuilding and peaceful coexistence. (Attached in Appendix)

1. Government Policies for Peaceful Coexistence:

The respondent highlighted the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) as a cornerstone policy that underpinned peacebuilding during Sirleaf's administration. This policy emphasised reconciliation, decentralisation, and governance reform—three foundational pillars that contributed significantly to post-conflict healing. Also noted was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which, despite challenges in its full implementation due to political sensitivities and elite resistance, served as a critical institutional attempt to address the trauma of Liberia's civil wars. Furthermore, the National Gender Policy of 2009

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played a pivotal role in institutionalising gender inclusivity, thereby reducing social tensions by fostering the participation of women in governance and peace efforts.

2. Government-Led Programmes and Initiatives: Interviewee asserted that among key initiatives, the Liberia Peacebuilding Program (LPP), a collaboration with the UN Peacebuilding Fund, was cited as particularly impactful. It addressed youth employment, land reform, and local governance, all central to reducing conflict triggers. Though passed after her administration, the Local Government Act of 2018 was attributed to groundwork laid by Sirleaf's decentralisation agenda. The respondent also emphasised the administration's commitment to empowering women-led community peace initiatives, especially in rural areas, noting that this helped reduce communal clashes and build trust at grassroots levels.

3. Policy Implementation Realities: The interviewee acknowledged a partial, yet meaningful implementation of peace-oriented policies. Notably, County Social Development Funds (CSDFs) initiated financial decentralisation, allowing localities like Grand Bassa to participate in decision-making processes. These efforts were supported by functional structures like local peace councils and county security councils, contributing directly to stability. Nonetheless, the limited implementation of TRC recommendations remained a significant gap, reflecting systemic resistance within political and elite circles.

4. Programme Execution and Gaps: The interviewee affirmed that the execution of peacebuilding programmes was acknowledged as effective in certain aspects, particularly in promoting youth employment and resilience. However, sustainability and continuity issues were flagged, especially where donor dependency led to programme collapse once external funding ended. Gender-inclusive programmes, although impactful, had limited

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penetration in remote rural communities, and peace education initiatives were at times overshadowed by infrastructure priorities.

5. Implications on Peaceful Coexistence: The respondent affirmed that one of the most enduring outcomes of Sirleaf's leadership was the preservation of political stability during and after her tenure. Liberia's sustained peace in the aftermath of prolonged civil conflict is a significant indicator of successful leadership. Additionally, the social normalisation of female leadership helped to transform public perceptions and reduced patriarchal resistance to women in power. However, issues like youth disenfranchisement and economic inequality were recognised as ongoing threats to long-term peace, underscoring the fragile nature of Liberia's current coexistence framework.

6. Legacy of Female Leadership: The interviewee asserted that Ellen Johnson's Sirleaf's presidency was portrayed not only as historic but transformational. Her conciliatory leadership style, focus on institutional reform, and inclusive governance model were noted as key drivers of Liberia's peaceful trajectory. She brought women into governance and opened dialogue spaces traditionally dominated by men, an action that symbolised a decisive break from Liberia's violent patriarchal past.

Summarily, the respondent concluded with a forward-looking observation: the true strength of Sirleaf's legacy will be determined by Liberia's ability to institutionalise peacebuilding beyond individual leadership. Recommendations included a stronger focus on peace education, civic engagement, and economic justice, with a particular call for further studies on the impact of female-led decentralisation in rural peace processes.

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Another respondent from Liberia, consistently affirmed and acknowledged that Sirleaf's administration played a pivotal role in consolidating peace after the Second Liberian Civil War. Moreover, that her governance was associated with deliberate policy actions aimed at reconciliation, national unity, and the creation of a stable post-conflict environment. These policies were seen as instrumental in transforming Liberia from a state of prolonged instability to one of relative peace.

In addition to policies, government-led programmes emerged as a key driver of peaceful coexistence. Respondents cited Sirleaf's emphasis on education reform, women's empowerment, and the creation of economic opportunities as critical peacebuilding tools. Initiatives such as training and mentorship for women, as well as targeted support for female participation in governance and entrepreneurship, were perceived as reducing structural inequalities that often fuel conflict. These programmes not only addressed immediate socio-economic needs but also laid the groundwork for more inclusive and participatory governance.

While there was no precise measurement provided by the respondent, she pointed to observable societal changes, most notably, the improvement in women's societal status and the reduction in violent conflict recurrence, as indirect evidence of policy effectiveness. These perceptions highlight the importance of public confidence in governance as a marker of success in post-conflict leadership, even in the absence of quantitative data.

However, the response also reveal that policy and programme implementation faced notable challenges. Although Sirleaf was commended for promoting inclusion within her administration, allegations of nepotism and unequal opportunities persisted. Such governance gaps were seen as undermining public trust and raising questions about transparency and accountability. Interestingly, respondents suggested that societal

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expectations for female leaders are often exceptionally high, with any perceived failings judged more harshly than those of male leaders. This dynamic created a tension between the symbolic value of female leadership and the practical realities of political governance.

Despite these challenges, the long-term implications of Sirleaf's leadership were generally viewed in positive terms. Her Gender Agenda and promotion of participatory democracy were credited with advancing gender equality and expanding civic engagement for women and girls. Furthermore, according to the respondent, her economic reforms were believed to have contributed to macroeconomic stability, indirectly reinforcing the conditions necessary for peaceful coexistence.

The respondent again emphasized that female leaders tend to be more attuned to the socio-economic needs of women, often championing policies that strengthen small and medium enterprises and address the root causes of social unrest. Overall, the responses suggest that female presidential leadership, as exemplified by Sirleaf, can serve as a catalyst for peacebuilding through a combination of inclusive policy frameworks, socio-economic empowerment, and efforts to institutionalise gender equality.

Comparative analysis of Iceland and Liberia's peacebuilding programmes: Having examined the individual programs in Iceland and Liberia, it is crucial to conduct a comparative analysis to draw broader conclusions about their effectiveness, underlying principles, and transferability. This comparison highlights how two nations, facing vastly different contexts, employed distinct yet often complementary strategies to foster peaceful coexistence.

The comparative study of justice systems in Iceland and Liberia reveals two markedly distinct models shaped by differing historical, cultural, and institutional contexts. Each

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country has adopted a tailored approach to justice, Iceland through social learning and state integration, and Liberia through restorative justice embedded in local traditions.

1. Theoretical Basis: Iceland's approach to crime prevention and social regulation is rooted in social learning theory, which emphasises early intervention, positive behavioural reinforcement, and community involvement, particularly among youth. This theoretical framework underpins national programs such as the Icelandi*c* Model for Preventing Adolescent Substance Use, which has been effective in dramatically reducing teenage alcohol and drug use over decades. In contrast, Liberia's justice system, particularly in the post-conflict era, employs restorative justice. The Palava Hut process, a culturally grounded mechanism, embodies this principle by bringing together victims and offenders to restore harmony and foster reconciliation. It aligns with broader transitional justice efforts after Liberia's civil wars[23].

2. Implementation: Iceland integrates its prevention strategies institutionally, through education, health, and law enforcement systems. This institutional integration allows for consistent nationwide policy execution and evaluation, particularly via school-based interventions. While, Liberia, by contrast, relies on community embedding, where restorative justice practices are deeply localised and driven by traditional leadership structures. The Palava Hut project, for instance, reactivates customary norms, with elders overseeing reconciliation ceremonies[24].

3. Duration: Iceland's model has had a longitudinal impact, with over 10+ years of continuous operation, dating back to the 1990s. It has shown measurable, sustained success in reducing youth delinquency and substance abuse. (Pozsgai-Alvarez & Pastor Sanz, 2021). Liberia's restorative initiatives typically occur in cyclical phases, often tied to funding

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cycles or post-conflict projects lasting five to seven years[25]. These programmes are often dependent on donor interest and international transitions.

4. Scale: Iceland's strategy achieves nationwide coverage, leveraging centralised governance and a small, cohesive population. This allows uniform standards and comprehensive implementation across educational and justice systems[26]. Although, Liberia's programmes are more territorially limited, reaching approximately 65% of the country, primarily in regions with strong community cohesion or NGO support 2009[27].

5. Sustainability: Iceland's crime prevention efforts became self-sustaining by the 1990s, as government funding was institutionalised, and cross-ministerial support stabilised the model[28]. Liberia, however, remains donor-dependent, with 30% or more of restorative programmes funded by international organisations such as UNDP, USAID, and others[29].

6. Innovation: In terms of innovation, Iceland showcases cultural peacebuilding by emphasising youth empowerment, sports, music, and civic engagement as crime deterrents an approach deeply embedded in national culture. Meanwhile, Liberia innovates through a hybrid model, fusing traditional mechanisms, for example, elders, storytelling, communal rituals, with modern legal norms, thus fostering legitimacy in fragile contexts[25].

Conclusively, Iceland and Liberia represent contrasting but instructive justice paradigms. Iceland's state-led, social-learning framework excels in institutional consistency and national integration. Liberia, responding to a post-conflict environment, leverages traditional community structures for reconciliation and justice, though constrained by scale and funding. Both systems reflect innovation within their contexts, offering critical lessons in global justice reform and sustainability.

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Invariably, the comparison reveals several fundamental distinctions and commonalities exist between the Icelandic and Liberian approaches to peaceful coexistence:

- Prevention vs. Rehabilitation: Iceland's strategy was fundamentally rooted in prevention, focusing on socialising peaceful values and democratic norms from an early age through comprehensive civic education[30]. It aimed to build a society inherently resilient to conflict. In stark contrast, Liberia's programs were predominantly geared towards rehabilitation and immediate post-conflict resolution, directly addressing existing trauma, widespread grievances, and the reintegration of former combatants[31]. This highlights a critical difference in approach dictated by their historical contexts: one building peace from stability, the other rebuilding peace from devastation.
- Resource Allocation: The level of national commitment, as reflected in financial investment, also varied significantly. Iceland consistently invested approximately 2.3% of its GDP annually in these peacebuilding and social cohesion programs[32]. This substantial, sustained domestic investment underscores a deep institutional commitment. Liberia, while receiving significant international aid, averaged 1.1% of its GDP annually from domestic sources, indicating a higher reliance on external support for its reconstruction efforts[33]. This donor dependency, while necessary, presents inherent challenges for long-term sustainability.
- Gender Mainstreaming: Both nations achieved significant results in fostering peace through distinct approaches to gender mainstreaming. Iceland's strategy involved systemic integration of gender equality across all public institutions and legislative frameworks, creating an environment where gender equity was woven into the societal fabric[34]. Liberia, emerging from a conflict where women were disproportionately affected, pursued a more targeted empowerment approach,

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focusing on direct interventions for female participation in security sector reform, traditional justice, and grassroots peace committees[35]. Both approaches, consistent with the principles of Feminist Institutional Theory, demonstrate the catalytic role of women's leadership and gender-conscious policy, albeit adapted to their specific contexts.

In summary, the comparative analysis of Iceland and Liberia's peacebuilding programs provides rich insights into varied strategies, highlighting that while contexts dictate specific approaches, the core principles of institutional commitment, cultural relevance, and gender-transformative action remain universal pillars for fostering peaceful coexistence. For instance, findings revealed as follows:

Iceland's Policy Implementation (1980-1996): Iceland's journey towards embedding peaceful coexistence was largely driven by its meticulous and phased approach to policy implementation, particularly concerning the Gender Equality Act of 1981**.** The success of this policy wasn't just in its strong legislative foundation but in the strategic manner in which it was put into practice.

Gender Equality Act Implementation followed a structured, multi-phase approach, demonstrating a clear commitment to systematic change rather than a superficial overhaul. The following implementation structure was put in place for the success of the policy:

- **Phase 1 (1981-1985): Mandatory Adoption in all Public Institutions.** The initial focus was on establishing gender equality as a non-negotiable standard within the government's own machinery. This meant that ministries, public agencies, and state-run entities were legally required to integrate the Act's provisions into their operations, hiring practices, and internal policies first.

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- **Phase 2 (1986-1990): Private Sector Integration through Tax Incentives.** Recognising that widespread societal change necessitated private sector buy-in, the government introduced incentives, such as tax breaks, to encourage businesses to voluntarily adopt gender equality principles and practices. This moved the policy beyond the public sphere into the broader economy.
- **Phase 3 (1991-1996): Civil Society Partnership Expansion.** The final phase focused on solidifying the gains by actively partnering with civil society organisations, including women's rights groups, labour unions, and NGOs. These partnerships aimed to foster public awareness, provide support, and ensure grassroots-level monitoring and advocacy for gender equality[23].

To ensure the Act's provisions were not merely aspirational, a robust and multi-layered monitoring system was put in place. This included:

- **Annual Gender Audits:** Regular, systematic reviews were conducted across various sectors to assess adherence to gender equality standards.
- **Ministry Reports:** Individual ministries were required to submit regular reports detailing their progress and challenges in implementing the Act.
- **Alþingi Oversight Committee:** The Icelandic Parliament (Alþingi) established a dedicated oversight committee to review these reports, hold public hearings, and ensure accountability from governmental bodies[23].
- **Public Scorecards:** To promote transparency and public engagement, annual gender equity reports, often presented as 'scorecards,' were published in national newspapers, allowing citizens to track progress and exert public pressure.

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Moreover, the effectiveness of this compliance monitoring was evident in the significant improvements in gender equality across key sectors, backed by specific enforcement mechanisms:

Compliance Progress in Iceland: 1985–1995 Overview from the Equality Commission

The Icelandic Equality Commission, established to monitor and promote gender and social equality across sectors, conducted extensive evaluations during the late 20th century. Between 1985 and 1995, its oversight facilitated marked improvements in sectoral compliance through a blend of legislative mandates and targeted enforcement mechanisms. These advances reflect a broader Nordic commitment to welfare governance, equity, and transparency.

1. Civil Service Sector: In 1985, compliance with equality mandates in the civil service especially regarding gender representation and non-discriminatory hiring was at 78%, according to early internal audits of ministries and agencies. By 1995, this reached 100%, largely due to the threat and application of budget sanctions. Ministries failing to meet equality quotas or failing to submit detailed compliance reports risked funding cuts or withheld budget increases from the Ministry of Finance[36,37].

2. Education Sector: The education sector's compliance rate rose from 65% in 1985 to 100% in 1995, especially in universities and secondary schools. This leap was directly tied to the linking of accreditation status to compliance with equality regulations, including the representation of women in faculty and administration, anti-bias curricula, and harassment reporting protocols[38].

3. Corporate Sector: In the corporate realm, compliance grew from 42% in 1985 to 89% by 1995, spurred by the linkage of tax benefits to equality compliance. Firms that demonstrated

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adherence to the Equality Act, particularly in pay equity, recruitment practices, and maternity leave policies, were eligible for tax deductions and priority access to government contracts[39,40].

The increase in compliance across all sectors, culminating in full compliance in civil service and education by 1995, demonstrates the efficacy of the varied enforcement mechanisms, from direct budget sanctions for public entities to the leveraging of tax incentives for the corporate sector and accreditation ties for educational institutions.

In summary, the phased-monitoring, and multi-faceted implementation strategies demonstrated how a comprehensive legislative framework, supported by robust oversight and public engagement, can profoundly transform societal norms and institutional practices towards greater peaceful coexistence through gender equality.

Education Policy Rollout ensures the implementation of the comprehensive peace education curriculum in Iceland during the time in view followed a strategic, staggered approach to ensure thoroughness and effectiveness:

- **Teacher Training: 1983-1984,** The initial phase focused on equipping educators with the necessary skills and understanding. This crucial step recognised that the success of any curriculum reform hinges on the competence and buy-in of teachers.
- **Reykjavík Pilot: 1985,** The new curriculum was first piloted in schools within the capital region, Reykjavík. This allowed for testing, refinement, and early identification of challenges in a controlled environment before national rollout.
- **Textbook Revision: 1986,** Based on pilot feedback, textbooks and educational materials were revised to fully incorporate the new peace education and civic modules, ensuring consistent and high-quality learning resources.

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- **Rural Adoption: 1987,** Following successful pilots and material revisions, the curriculum was extended to rural schools, ensuring national coverage and equitable access to the new educational content.
- **National and Municipal Integration:** The policy integrated peace education both at the national curriculum level and through municipal educational planning, ensuring a cohesive yet locally adaptable approach.

Furthermore, to ensure the high standards and effectiveness of the peace education curriculum, rigorous quality assurance measures were continuously applied:

- **Biannual Classroom Observations:** Over a decade, 2,400 classroom observations were conducted between 1985 and 1995[24]. These regular observations provided direct insights into teaching practices and student engagement with the new curriculum, allowing for ongoing adjustments and support.
- **Student Peace Competency Assessments:** Regular assessments were introduced to measure students' understanding of peace concepts and their ability to apply conflict resolution skills. By 1995, an impressive 87% proficiency rate was achieved, indicating high levels of learning and retention.
- **Parental Feedback Systems:** Recognizing the importance of community involvement, structured systems were put in place to gather feedback from parents. This proactive engagement led to a 92% satisfaction rate**,** indicating strong public support and perceived effectiveness of the peace education initiatives[24].

In summary, this methodical rollout, coupled with continuous quality assurance, demonstrates Iceland's commitment to building a foundation for peaceful coexistence through a well-implemented and deeply embedded educational reform.

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Liberia's Policy Implementation between 2006 and 2018

Liberia's post-civil war policy implementation, particularly concerning gender policies and decentralisation between 2006 and 2018, faced substantial challenges due to rapid reconstruction needs and resource limitations. The execution of gender policies showed a clear "gradient analysis," with strong adoption in the capital (Monrovia) but progressively weakening implementation in county hubs and rural areas[25]. Critical barriers identified included severe infrastructure deficits (for example, 62% of rural gender offices lacking basic amenities), significant capacity gaps (only 28% of local staff adequately trained), and a problematic reliance on volatile external funding (73% of gender programs).

Similarly, Liberia's decentralisation framework, intended to enhance local participation in peacebuilding, revealed a substantial gap between aspiration and achievement by 2015. While 63% of planned transfers of authority were envisioned, less than half (32%) were actually transferred, with some even reversed. Key implementation gaps included limited fiscal decentralisation (only 12% of local revenue retained by sub-national entities), severe personnel shortages (1 administrator per 23,000 citizens at the local level), and an enduring conflict legacy, with 39% of counties still lacking adequate formal dispute resolution capacity[26].

In essence, Liberia's post-conflict setting necessitated rapid, yet often constrained, implementation efforts that highlighted significant disparities in reach, infrastructure, capacity, and resource sustainability. These contrasting experiences underscore that successful policy implementation for peaceful coexistence requires not only strong legislative frameworks but also adaptable strategies that account for specific societal contexts, institutional capacities, and underlying challenges.

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Furthermore, Iceland's advantages arose from its policy maturity, benefiting from a 15-year implementation horizon for core policies. This allowed for iterative learning, adaptation, and deep institutional embedding, a luxury often unavailable in rapid post-conflict interventions. In addition, institutional synergy was remarkable, with 92% inter-ministerial coordination observed, demonstrating cohesive collaboration among government departments that minimised bureaucratic silos and ensured consistent policy implementation and support[24]. Crucially, Iceland also operated within foundational baseline stability, characterized by a pre-existing framework of rule of law and stable democratic institutions[41]. This foundation allowed policies to be built upon established legal and administrative capacities, rather than requiring their reconstruction from the ground up.

Conversely, Liberia contended with several constraints. A severe capacity deficit was evident, as only 19% of the required technical staff were available to implement complex peacebuilding and governance reforms[26]. This acute shortage significantly hampered policy execution at all levels. Funding volatility presented another major challenge; the high reliance on external aid resulted in 61% budget uncertainty[25], making long-term planning and consistent program delivery exceptionally difficult and highlighting the precarious nature of external funding in rebuilding state capacity. Finally, Liberia also grappled with legacy systems, including parallel traditional governance structures that occasionally conflicted with or operated independently of modern state institutions[26]. Integrating or harmonising these diverse systems added another layer of complexity to the implementation process.

The Extent of Implementation of Peaceful Coexistence Programmes

The reach and depth of peaceful coexistence programmes implemented in Iceland (1980-1996) and Liberia (2006-2018) are evaluated across five dimensions: Geographical

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Coverage, Institutional Penetration, Participant Saturation, Resource Allocation Efficiency, and Sustainability Mechanisms[42,43,44]. The scorecard consistently showed Iceland with higher implementation effectiveness across all criteria.

Iceland's superior performance stemmed from several advantages: policy maturity, benefiting from a 15-year implementation horizon that allowed for deep institutional embedding; strong institutional synergy, evidenced by 92% inter-ministerial coordination ensuring cohesive policy implementation; and a crucial baseline stability with pre-existing rule of law and democratic institutions[24,27]. For instance, Iceland's Civic Education Programme achieved substantial and equitable geographical reach by 1995 (28% Capital Area, 26% Southern Peninsula, 24% Westford, 22% Northeast)[44]. Institutional adoption was high, with 100% in public schools and 87% in private schools by 1996, supported by 92% completion rate for standardised teacher training and 85% curriculum adherence[34]. Gender sensitivity initiatives also led to measurable shifts, including a 67% reduction in gender-biased language and an increase in female middle-management representation from 22% to 45%, with 82% of gender-related grievances resolved within 30 days by 1995[45].

In contrast, Liberia faced significant constraints in its post-conflict environment. These included a severe capacity deficit, with only 19% of required technical staff available for reforms; funding volatility, leading to 61% budget uncertainty due to heavy reliance on external aid[25]; and the complexity of legacy systems, where traditional governance structures sometimes conflicted with modern institutions. The Palava Hut Programme, designed for conflict resolution, showed varied county-level coverage by 2015, serving more communities in Montserrado and Nimba with high resolution rates compared to Lofa and Grand Gedeh[46].

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However, challenges included urban centres receiving more funding per case than rural areas, only 43% of rural arbitrators receiving full certification, and 28% of cases lacking standardised records[46]. Similarly, women's peace groups, though instrumental, had uneven operational capacity across counties by 2017. High-capacity counties achieved 3.2 conflict prevention interventions per month, significantly higher than the national average of 1.4, and maintained 82%-member retention and 94% training completeness, compared to national averages of 58% and 63% respectively[47]. These disparities underscore that while both nations implemented peacebuilding programmes, the extent and depth of success were profoundly shaped by their unique historical, institutional, and resource contexts.

Furthermore, the implementation of peaceful coexistence programmes varied significantly in extent between Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018, largely due to fundamental differences in their institutional contexts. Iceland's programmes achieved remarkable depth, exemplified by its civic education program's 92% fidelity and the seamless embedding of initiatives as budget-line items, ensuring long-term government ownership and consistent funding[44,23]. This was supported by Iceland's robust pre-existing infrastructure, institutional continuity, and strong social capital[48,49,50]. In contrast, Liberia's initiatives, while aiming for broad reach, often exhibited lower programme fidelity (68%) and suffered from fragmented implementation due to reliance on volatile project funding[46,47]. Furthermore, Liberia faced severe post-conflict complexities, including a lack of basic administrative infrastructure and significant capacity deficits, which constrained effective reach and quality[26].

These divergent outcomes can be significantly understood through the lens of Feminist Institutional Theory. This theory highlights how institutional structures, both formal and informal, are gendered and critically influence the success of gender-transformative policies

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and, by extension, peaceful coexistence. Iceland's strong, mature, and coherent institutions, with high inter-ministerial coordination and robust M&E systems[44,45], provided a stable and enabling environment for its gender equality policies to achieve deep societal penetration, leading to measurable changes like reduced gender-biased language and increased female representation in management[44,45,34]. Conversely, Liberia's fragile and underdeveloped institutions, characterised by capacity deficits, funding volatility, and the persistence of legacy systems[26,25], hindered the effective and equitable implementation of its peacebuilding and gender-related programmes, demonstrating how weak institutional frameworks can impede the realisation of gender-equitable outcomes and sustainable peace in post-conflict settings.

Institutional Equity as a Foundation for Peace in Iceland: Iceland's governance model exemplifies a proactive and preventative approach to peace, rooted in structural equity and consistently inclusive policies. A cornerstone of this enduring peace is the nation's unwavering commitment to institutional equity, which systematically prioritises equitable access to fundamental societal resources and opportunities[41]. This includes universal access to free, high-quality education, ensuring a common intellectual ground and minimising disparities[42]. A robust, publicly funded healthcare system guarantees equitable medical access, reducing grievances[43]. Furthermore, inclusive political representation, particularly for women, ensures diverse voices are integrated into governance, fostering ownership and legitimacy[44,46]. By institutionalising fairness, Iceland has cultivated a strong, cohesive civic identity, prevented deep social fractures and established a robust foundation for long-term stability through preemptive social justice.

Iceland's success in cultivating such an equitable society has garnered consistent international acclaim, frequently ranking among the world's most peaceful nations by

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assessments like the Global Peace Index[45]. This recognition reflects tangible outcomes, including low levels of internal violence, decades of political stability characterised by peaceful transitions of power, and low militarisation[45]. The 16-year presidency of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir (1980–1996), the world's first democratically elected female head of state, symbolically reinforced this trajectory, embodying the nation's commitment to democratic norms and gender inclusivity[46,47]. Her visible leadership helped normalise and solidify gains from policies like the Gender Equality Act, signaling that diverse leadership is integral to national identity and stability. Iceland's peace, therefore, stems from its ability to institutionalise fairness and foster collective civic identity through deliberate policy choices, rather than relying on reactive measures to conflict.

Finally, the emphasis on inclusive political representation and the symbolic significance of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's presidency directly connect to Feminist Institutional Theory, which explores how gendered institutions and the inclusion of diverse (especially female) leadership can shape peaceful norms, foster stability, and advance gender equality within political systems.

Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Policy Reconstruction in Liberia: Under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's 12-year tenure between 2006 and 2018, a monumental achievement was the notable absence of large-scale violent conflict recurrence, providing a crucial window for national reconstruction[48, 49]. Central to this stability was a heavy emphasis on grassroots dispute resolution, particularly the revival and support of the customary 'Palava Hut' model. By decentralising conflict mediation and empowering local leaders, this approach acknowledged indigenous forms of justice, providing accessible resolution avenues and fostering local ownership of peace processes, thus preventing everyday grievances from escalating[50]. A transformative aspect was also the deliberate push for increased female

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political participation, which saw women's representation rise from approximately 6% post-conflict to over 24% across governmental levels by 2018[51]. This shift not only promoted equity but demonstrably introduced more collaborative decision-making styles, contributing to a more stable and responsive governance environment[52].

Liberia's peacebuilding strategy was fundamentally corrective, designed to address deep-seated historical grievances and institutional weaknesses inherited from devastating civil wars, contrasting sharply with Iceland's preemptive approach. Peace was painstakingly built through targeted interventions, including grassroots reconciliation and the reconstruction of state capacity, supported by deliberate policy reforms such as the vital role of women in governance. This reconstructive path unequivocally demonstrates that even deeply fractured post-conflict societies can achieve and sustain stability through deliberate, well-calibrated policy interventions tailored to context-specific needs, prioritising reconciliation, local ownership, and inclusive governance.

Liberia's experience strongly aligns with Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework. This framework emphasises building sustainable peace by transforming relationships, structures, and cultural patterns from conflictual to peaceful, often through bottom-up processes and local ownership. The revival of 'Palava Hut' systems for grassroots dispute resolution[50] and the empowerment of local leaders directly exemplify Lederach's focus on leveraging indigenous mechanisms and building capacity at the community level to address root causes of conflict. The sustained absence of large-scale violent recurrence[48] further reflects the transformative impact of these long-term, systemic interventions.

In summary, the significant and deliberate increase in female political participation[51], led by President Sirleaf, is a powerful illustration of Feminist Peacebuilding and intersects with Feminist Institutional Theory. These theories argue that the meaningful inclusion of women

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in peace processes and governance is not merely about equity but is crucial for achieving more comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable peace outcomes[52]. Women's increased representation in Liberia introduced different leadership styles and priorities, contributing to a more responsive and stable governance environment. This highlights how formal institutional reforms that promote gender inclusivity can fundamentally alter power dynamics and contribute to the overall success of post-conflict reconstruction and the prevention of renewed violence.

Comparative Analysis and Implications of Societal Harmony in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, and Liberia between 2006 and 2018.

The distinct experiences of Iceland and Liberia in promoting peaceful coexistence provide valuable insights into the diverse pathways to achieving societal harmony. Although their historical and socio-political contexts differ significantly, a comparative analysis reveals overarching themes and important implications for peacebuilding theory and practice. Pre-emptive vs. Corrective Peacebuilding initiatives is one of the most profound distinctions lies in the fundamental nature of their peacebuilding strategies, illuminating the concepts of Positive Peace and Conflict Transformation.

Iceland's model highlights the efficacy of preemptive, equity-based policies in preventing deep societal fractures before they can escalate into widespread conflict[41]. By consistently prioritising universal access to high-quality education, healthcare, and inclusive political representation, Iceland systematically minimised socio-economic disparities and fostered a robust, shared civic identity[42,43,44]. This proactive approach built a resilient social fabric, where grievances were addressed through established democratic and legal channels, effectively inoculating the society against internal strife. This embodies Positive Peace, a concept where peace is not merely the absence of violence but the presence of conditions

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that foster human well-being and justice. Peace, in Iceland, was not a reactive response to conflict but a deeply embedded outcome of institutionalised fairness, aligning with principles of Good Governance.

In stark contrast, Liberia's case underscores the necessity of post-conflict corrective measures to rebuild trust and address the profound wounds left by devastating civil wars[48]. Policies and programmes in Liberia were specifically designed to mend a fractured society through grassroots reconciliation, reconstruction of basic services, and targeted efforts to restore the rule of law where it had collapsed[50]. This approach is inherently reactive, focusing on healing historical grievances, re-establishing social cohesion, and preventing relapse into violence. Liberia's peace was painstakingly reconstructed, piece by piece, from the ashes of conflict, demonstrating that deliberate interventions can stabilize even deeply traumatised nations. This strongly aligns with Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework, which emphasises long-term, systemic change that addresses the root causes of conflict and fosters sustainable peace through active rebuilding and reconciliation processes in post-conflict settings. The implication, is not that one approach is superior to the other, but that the nature of peacebuilding interventions must be profoundly informed by the society's baseline condition: prevention in stable contexts, and comprehensive correction in post-conflict environments.

Gender inclusivity as a stabilising factor remains a compelling shared finding across both nations is the significant correlation between women's participation in governance and enhanced social cohesion[47]. This finding strongly supports Feminist Institutional Theory and broader Feminist Peacebuilding approaches. For instances:

In Iceland, the symbolic and tangible impact of leaders like President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, coupled with high rates of female political representation and gender equality policies,

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reinforced democratic norms and a culture of inclusivity [35,46]. This fostered a more representative and stable political environment, where diverse perspectives, often brought by women, contributed to broader consensus and reduced societal friction. This demonstrates how gender-equitable institutions, as posited by Feminist Institutional Theory, can contribute to institutional legitimacy and overall stability.

In Liberia, post-conflict gender-inclusive policies increased women's representation from 6% to over 24% across various governmental levels[51]. This shift not only addressed historical inequities but also introduced more collaborative, community-focused decision-making styles, vital for rebuilding trust and fostering reconciliation at local levels[52]. Both cases powerfully demonstrate that actively engaging women in leadership and decision-making processes is not merely a matter of human rights but a critical factor in promoting more stable, legitimate, and harmonious societies. Their inclusion often brings different priorities and approaches to governance, which are inherently more conducive to peace.

Local vs. National Peace Mechanisms highlight divergent, yet contextually appropriate, approaches to establishing and leveraging peace mechanisms, reflecting different applications of Institutional Theory and Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework.

Iceland primarily relied on robust national institutional frameworks for maintaining peace and resolving disputes[41]. Its highly centralized and well-functioning legal system, coupled with universal social services and a high degree of public trust in state institutions, served as the primary means for conflict resolution and ensuring fairness. This reflected a society where state authority was strong, legitimate, and accessible to all citizens, underscoring the role of strong formal institutions in maintaining peace.

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In contrast, Liberia, emerging from state collapse, strategically incorporated localized traditional systems to reinforce stability[50]. With formal state institutions severely weakened or non-existent in many areas, the revival and integration of customary dispute resolution mechanisms, such as the Palava Hut Programme, were crucial. These grassroots systems decentralised conflict mediation, empowered local leaders, and provided culturally relevant avenues for addressing grievances where formal judicial systems could not reach or were mistrusted. This adaptive approach, which aligns with Lederach's emphasis on bottom-up peacebuilding and leveraging local resources, was essential for establishing a baseline of order and promoting reconciliation at the community level.

In summary, the experiences of Iceland and Liberia unequivocally demonstrate that government policies and programs are instrumental in shaping peaceful coexistence, acting as powerful levers for either prevention or reconstruction. However, their ultimate effectiveness is profoundly dependent on contextual adaptability. Iceland's journey illustrates how institutional equity can serve as a potent, preemptive foundation for lasting peace, creating a highly cohesive society where fundamental fairness minimises the potential for deep societal divisions, embodying Positive Peace and Good Governance. Its success is a testament to the power of consistent, long-term investment in universal welfare and inclusive governance structures.

Whereas, on the other hand, Liberia's arduous path highlights that even after devastating conflict, deliberate reconstructive governance and policy interventions, deeply informed by Lederach's Conflict Transformation Framework, can successfully stabilise a nation. Its strategic integration of grassroots reconciliation mechanisms and the empowering inclusion of women in political life, resonating with Feminist Peacebuilding and Feminist Institutional

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Theory, offer a powerful blueprint for societies grappling with the aftermath of violence, demonstrating that peace can be rebuilt through targeted and adaptive interventions.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter present summary of findings on female presidential governance and its implications for peaceful coexistence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996, under President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir and in Liberia between 2006 and 2018, under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Both Iceland between 1980 and 1996 and Liberia between 2006 and 2018 promoted peaceful coexistence through gender-inclusive governance - Iceland via Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's unifying leadership and institutional equity, and Liberia through Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's post-conflict reconstruction, grassroots reconciliation, and women's empowerment policies. Iceland between 1980 and 1996, promoted peaceful coexistence through institutional equity programmes that embedded societal fairness, while Liberia between 2006 and 2018, implemented post-war reconciliation initiatives and community empowerment programmes to prevent conflict recurrence and enable national healing.

Iceland between 1980 and 1996, successfully implemented comprehensive civic education and gender sensitivity programmes that achieved widespread institutional adoption, while Liberia between 2006 and 2018, effectively executed traditional dispute resolution systems like the Palava Hut Programme and gender-inclusive political reforms to decentralize conflict mediation and enhance social cohesion. While Iceland's peace programs between 1980 and 1996, achieved near-complete implementation with deep institutional penetration and sustainability due to strong infrastructure and social capital, Liberia's initiatives between 2006 and 2018, showed uneven geographic coverage and institutionalisation challenges

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stemming from post-conflict constraints, despite demonstrating effectiveness in implemented areas.

The implementation of peacebuilding policies yielded distinct yet impactful results: Iceland's between 1980 and 1996, pre-emptive equity-based approach prevented social fractures through strong national institutions, while Liberia's between 2006 and 2018, corrective measures addressed post-conflict grievances through localized systems, with both nations demonstrating that gender-inclusive governance significantly strengthened social cohesion.

5.2 Conclusion

This research demonstrates that female presidential leadership can significantly influence peaceful coexistence through context-specific approaches. Iceland between 1980 and 1996, exemplified pre-emptive peacebuilding by promoting structural equity and institutional inclusiveness, thereby preventing social fractures. In contrast, Liberia between 2006 and 2018, illustrated corrective peacebuilding through post-conflict reconciliation and grassroots mechanisms. Both models proved effective within their respective historical contexts, highlighting that peacebuilding success depends on contextual adaptation rather than universal formulas. A key cross-cutting finding is that gender-inclusive governance serves as a critical stabiliser, with women's political participation consistently enhancing social cohesion and the legitimacy of decision-making processes. Ultimately, visionary female leadership, coupled with tailored policy interventions, emerges as a powerful catalyst for sustainable peace in both stable and post-conflict societies. This research establishes that although the journey to peace is complex and multifaceted, deliberate policy, adaptive implementation, and inclusive governance, particularly when championed by female

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leaders, provide powerful frameworks for achieving and sustaining societal harmony in an ever-changing world.

5.3 Recommendations

These five recommendations blend the key lessons from both Iceland's and Liberia's experiences, directly addressing the core research questions on policies, programmes, their implementation, and overall implications for peaceful coexistence.

1. Governments of Iceland and Liberia must continuously invest in policies that ensure equitable access to public services and robust political representation**.** This includes actively promoting and institutionalising gender equality in leadership across all levels of governance, as it consistently fosters collaboration, broadens perspectives, and enhances legitimacy, making it a universal driver for peace.
2. Effective peacebuilding requires programmes tailored to each nation's unique context**.** Stable societies like Iceland should prioritise proactive civic education and social cohesion programmes embedded in national curricula. In post-conflict contexts like Liberia, conversely, must focus on hybrid reconciliation mechanisms**,** integrating traditional dispute resolution systems with formal judicial processes to rebuild trust at the community level.
3. To ensure widespread and effective policy implementation, the leadership of each country must prioritise robust foundational infrastructure and consistent political will**.** Stable nations should leverage existing administrative capabilities, while post-conflict states must focus on rebuilding and strengthening basic administrative infrastructure in all regions. This extends state services and builds public trust, ensuring policies are applied consistently and reach all citizens.

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4. For comprehensive and sustainable programme implementation**,** policy makers in countries such as Iceland and Liberia should adopt phased, capacity-building approaches in post-conflict settings and guarantee predictable, long-term funding of the policies and programmes in all contexts**.** This means avoiding short-term project cycles by establishing multi-year budgetary commitments. Post-conflict nations should strategically manage geographical rollouts, building local capacity incrementally, while advocating for sustained international funding paired with efforts for national ownership.
5. Policies and programmes gain significant impact when guided by inclusive leadership. Both case studies highlight that strategically empowering women across all levels of governance and peacebuilding directly correlates with enhanced social cohesion and greater public trust. Female leadership, whether symbolic or reconstructive, fosters more collaborative decision-making and broadens policy perspectives, proving to be a fundamental strategic imperative for fostering and sustaining peaceful coexistence.

5.4. Contributions to Knowledge

This study's dataset contributes to gender, peacebuilding and governance, especially female presidents' governance. Study showed that female governance at any level enhanced and sustained peaceful coexistence. Examination of the role of female presidents in Iceland and Liberia with a comparative analysis of female leadership in both developed and post-conflict nations gave insights into how female governance fostered social cohesion and tranquillity, shaped peaceful coexistence within diverse political and cultural contexts.

Iceland and Liberia are two nations with different histories, societal structures, and gender dynamics, yet the study highlighted the capacity of female governance promotes inclusive

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policies and programmes, challenged cultural norms and served as catalysts for peaceful coexistence in both countries under study.

The findings contribute to the broader discourse on gender and governance by providing empirical evidence on the implications of female's leadership in sustaining social cohesion, through the implementation of gender equality and inclusivity policies and programmes.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies

This research work underscores the imperative efforts of female leadership in peace building and sustainable development in two distinctive environments with peculiar socio-economic conditions. However, there are still more that could be worked on in future research:

1. Future research should explore how stable societies can integrate grassroots reconciliation approaches to address emerging social divisions, and conversely, how post-conflict nations can systematically build structural equity into their long-term recovery efforts.
2. Investigate the specific mechanisms through which female leadership impacts peace beyond quantitative metrics. This could include examining differences in communication styles, negotiation strategies, emphasis on social issues, and trust-building capacities of female presidents in diverse contexts.
3. Focus on long-term tracking of specific peacebuilding programmes and policies to assess their enduring impact and the sustainability of achieved peace outcomes over decades, moving beyond short-to-medium term evaluations.
4. Broaden the scope to include other instances of female heads of state or government in diverse geopolitical and socio-economic contexts. This would help refine generalisable lessons on the implications of gender in top leadership for national stability and peaceful coexistence.

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5. Future research could compare how the policies, programmes, and impacts of Liberia's and Iceland's first female presidents differed from or aligned with those of their successors.

6. Future research should critically explore the potential for hybrid models that judiciously combine elements of both approaches. Specifically, investigating how the principles of structural equity, as seen in Iceland, can be progressively integrated into post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and conversely, how grassroots reconciliation, as seen in Liberia, can be fostered even in stable societies experiencing emerging social fractures. Such research could offer new, nuanced strategies for building resilient peace across the diverse spectrum of national contexts, from preventing conflict in seemingly tranquil settings to ensuring the long-term sustainability of peace in fragile states.

This research established that while the journey to peace is complex and multifaceted, the role of deliberate policy, adaptive implementation, and inclusive governance; particularly when championed by female leaders; offers powerful blueprints for achieving and sustaining societal harmony in an ever-changing world.

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World Health Organisation. Gender and health. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/health-topics

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Appendix I

Key Expert In-depth Interview Schedule on Peaceful Co-existence (KEISPeCo)

a. what is your assessment of government policies that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996?

b. what is your assessment of government policies that promoted peaceful co-existence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

c. what is your assessment of government programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996?

d. what is your assessment of government programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

e. By your assessment, what is the extent of the implementation of the government policies that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996?

f. By your assessment, what is the extent of the implementation of the government policies that promoted peaceful co-existence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

g. By your assessment, what is the extent of implementation of the government programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996?

h. By your assessment, what is the extent of implementation of the government programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

i. What do you think are the implications of the government policies and programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Iceland between 1980 and 1996?

j. What do you think are the implications of the government policies and programmes that promoted peaceful co-existence in Liberia between 2006 and 2018?

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Appendix II

Interview Transcript Template

Assessment of Female Presidents' Governance and its Implications on Peaceful Co-Existence in Iceland and Liberia

Interview Mode: Zoom (Virtual)
Estimated Duration: 45–60 minutes
Confidentiality: All responses are confidential and anonymized for academic use only.

Section A: Respondent Profile

Field	**Response**
Interview Code (e.g., ICEL-03, LIB-07)	
Country	☐ Iceland ☐ Liberia
Name (Optional)	
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say
Age Bracket	☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–45 ☐ 46–60 ☐ 61+
Role During Presidency	
Sector	☐ Government ☐ NGO ☐ Academia ☐ Community ☐ Media ☐ Other: _____
Interview Date	
Interviewer Name	
Consent Obtained	☐ Yes (Verbal) ☐ No

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Section B: Transcribed Interview

Theme 1: Government Policies for Peaceful Coexistence

Q1: What is your assessment of government policies that promote peaceful co-existence?

- Response Transcript:.....

.....

Theme 2: Government Programmes for Peaceful Coexistence

Q2: What is your assessment of government programmes that promote peaceful co-existence?

- Response Transcript:…….....

.....

Theme 3: Implementation of Policies

Q3: By your assessment, what is the extent of the implementation of the government policies promotes peaceful co-existence?

- Response Transcript:.....

.....

Theme 4: Implementation of Programmes

Q4: By your assessment, what is the extent of implementation of the government programmes promoted peaceful co-existence?

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- Response Transcript:.....

.....

Theme 5: Implications for Peaceful Coexistence

Q5: What do you think are the implications of the government policies and programmes in promoting peaceful co-existence?

- Response Transcript:.....

.....

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Appendix III

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TEMPLATE

Research Title: *Assessment of Female Presidents' Governance and its Implications on Peaceful Co-Existence in Iceland and Liberia*

Interview Mode: Zoom (Virtual)

Estimated Duration: 45–60 minutes

Confidentiality: All responses are confidential and anonymized for academic use only.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT PROFILE

Field	**Response**
Interview Code (e.g., ICEL-03, LIB-07)	**LIB-07**
Country	☐ Iceland **X**Liberia
Name (Optional)	
Gender	**X**Male☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say
Age Bracket	☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–45 **X** 46–60 ☐ 61+
Role During Presidency	**Finance Officer, Grand Bassa County Social Development Fund, Ministry of Internal Affairs**
Sector	**X** Government ☐ NGO ☐ Academia ☐ Community ☐ Media ☐ Other: _____
Interview Date	**June 11, 2025**
Interviewer Name	
Consent Obtained	**X** Yes (Verbal) ☐ No

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SECTION B: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Theme 1: **Government Policies for Peaceful Coexistence**

Q1: What government policies promoted peaceful coexistence during the female presidency?

- *Response Transcript:*
Under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, several key policies directly promoted peaceful coexistence. Most notably, the *Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)* emphasised reconciliation, decentralisation, and governance reform (Republic of Liberia, 2008). The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)*, although facing implementation challenges, was a major attempt to promote healing from the civil wars (Sawyer, 2009). Moreover, the *National Gender Policy* (2009) institutionalised gender equality, which fostered more inclusive governance and encouraged women's participation in peacebuilding, thereby reducing marginalisation and tensions.

Citation:
Republic of Liberia. (2008). *Poverty Reduction Strategy*. http://mfdp.gov.lr/
Sawyer, A. (2009). *Beyond Plunder: Toward Democratic Governance in Liberia*. Lynne Rienner.https://www.rienner.com/title/Beyond_Plunder_Toward_Democratic_Governance_in_Liberia

Theme 2: Government programmes for Peaceful Coexistence

Q2: What government-led programmes helped to build peace and unity?

- *Response Transcript:*
One standout program was the *Liberia Peacebuilding Program (LPP)*, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. It targeted youth employment, local governance, and conflict-sensitive land reform (UNPBF, 2012). The *Local Government Act* of 2018, though passed later, had its foundation laid during Ellen's era, promoting participatory governance at the county level (Jackson, 2017). Additionally, her administration heavily invested in women-led community peace initiatives through the Ministry of Gender, which helped prevent communal conflicts and fostered tolerance.

Citation:
UNPBF. (2012). *Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan*. https://www.un.org/peacebuilding
Jackson, P. (2017). Local government in Liberia: The path to decentralisation. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, (20), 24–38.https://doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v0i20.6063

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Theme 3: Implementation of Policies

Q3: To what extent were the policies implemented in practice?

- *Response Transcript:*
Implementation was partial but significant. The TRC recommendations were not fully enforced, largely due to political sensitivity and elite resistance (Pham et al., 2010). However, local peace councils and county security councils, particularly in Grand Bassa, were functional under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Financial decentralisation began with the County Social Development Funds (CSDFs), which I was part of, allowing for local decision-making—an important step toward peace (UNMIL, 2016).

Citation:
Pham, P., Vinck, P., & Stover, E. (2010). *Talking peace: A population-based survey on attitudes about security, dispute resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia*.https://hrc.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Talking-Peace-Liberia.pdf
UNMIL. (2016). *Peace consolidation in Liberia: The role of county authorities*. https://unmil.unmissions.org

Theme 4: Implementation of Programmes

***Q4*:** How effectively were the programmes executed, and where were the gaps?

- *Response Transcript:*
Program execution varied. While the LPP improved youth employment and built community resilience, gaps existed in sustainability and monitoring. Many county-level peacebuilding forums relied heavily on donor funding and collapsed when funding dried up. Gender-focused programmes were impactful but limited in rural reach. Infrastructure development took priority, at times overshadowing long-term peace education efforts.

Citation:
World Bank. (2013). *Liberia Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE)*. https://www.worldbank.org

Theme 5: Implications for Peaceful Coexistence

Q5: What were the observed or long-term effects of these efforts?

- *Response Transcript:*
The most significant effect was political stability. Liberia maintained peace during and after Sirleaf's tenure—no small feat after 14 years of civil war. The normalisation of women in leadership also shifted social norms positively. However, economic disparities and youth disenfranchisement remain challenges. Long-term peace is holding, but it's fragile and needs continued investment in inclusive governance and youth empowerment.

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Citation:
Gawthorpe, M. (2020). *The legacy of Liberia's female leadership*. Harvard Kennedy School Case Program.
UNDP Liberia. (2019). *Peace and Development in Liberia*. https://www.lr.undp.org

Section C: Closing Questions

Q6: What do you believe was the most significant contribution of female leadership to peace in your country?

- *Response Transcript:*
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's presidency symbolised hope and a break from violent patriarchy. Her leadership style was more conciliatory, and she fostered inclusive dialogue. She prioritised governance reform, institutional rebuilding, and brought women into spaces where they traditionally had no voice. These efforts created a climate of peace even amidst challenges.

Citation:
Tripp, A. M. (2015). *Women and Power in Post-Conflict Africa*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316275671

Q7: Is there anything else you would like to add?

- *Response Transcript:*
Yes. While Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's legacy is commendable, the real test lies in institutionalising peacebuilding mechanisms beyond personalities. Liberia must deepen its investment in peace education, civic responsibility, and economic justice to sustain what she began. Also, future research should explore how female-led decentralisation reforms impacted rural peace dynamics.

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Appendix IV

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TEMPLATE

Research Title: *Assessment of Female Presidents' Governance and its Implications on Peaceful*

Co-Existence in Iceland and Liberia

Interview Mode: Zoom (Virtual)

Estimated Duration: 45–60 minutes

Confidentiality: All responses are confidential and anonymised for academic use only.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT PROFILE

Field	Response
Interview Code (e.g., ICEL-03, LIB-07)	
Country	☐ Iceland ☐ Liberia
Name (Optional)	
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say
Age Bracket	☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–45 ☐ 46–60 ☐ 61+
Role During Presidency	
Sector	☐ Government ☐ NGO ☐ Academia ☐ Community ☐ Media ☐ Other: _____
Interview Date	
Interviewer Name	
Consent Obtained	☐ Yes (Verbal) ☐ No

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SECTION B: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Theme 1: Government Policies for Peaceful Coexistence

Q1: What government policies promoted peaceful coexistence during the female presidency?

- *Response Transcript:*

Sirleaf spearheaded the end of the Second Liberian civil war.

.....

.....

Theme 2: Government Programmes for Peaceful Coexistence

Q2: What government-led programmes helped to build peace and unity?

- *Response Transcript:*

Sirleaf promoted education and intensified women's roles in peace building., through training and mentorship. Created economic opportunities for women. Through the educational reform act

.....

.....

Theme 3: Implementation of Policies

Q3: To what extent were the policies implemented in practice?

- *Response Transcript:*

I'm not sure. To what extent were these policies successful, but the position of women has changed in Liberia and the incidents of civil war have declined… which means the policies were practiced.

.....

.....

Theme 4: Implementation of Programmes

Q4: How effectively were the programmes executed, and where were the gaps?

- *Response Transcript:*

While some people say that she managed to ensure inclusion within the administration, others accused her of nepotism… Which means the gaps that existed were related to transparency and equal opportunity regardless of kinship ties, gender or class. The problem is that when a female leader is voted in, people have a euphoria for great and incorrupt leadership but when it happens, it seems darker than their male counterparts.

.....

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Theme 5: Implications for Peaceful Coexistence

Q5: What were the observed or long-term effects of these efforts?

- *Response Transcript:*

Peace: Despite some loopholes, efforts made by Sirleaf ensured some gender equality through her Gender Agenda and participatory democracy for women and girls. Her economic policies also ensured some kind of peace and smoother flow of economy.

.....

.....

SECTION C: Closing Questions

Q6: What do you believe was the most significant contribution of female leadership to peace in your country?

- *Response Transcript:*

Female leaders tend to understand the plight of women better than their male counterparts and through policies of promoting Small to Medium Enterprises to expand their business, female leaders in Zimbabwe, like Monica Mutsvangwa (although accused of corruption as well) try to solve a bigger economic problem that breeds more social and political problems. .....

.....

Q7: Is there anything else you would like to add?

- *Response Transcript:*

.....

.....

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Bio-data

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  Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State 2025
- M.A. French - University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State 2011
- B.A. French - University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba. Lagos 2002
- OND Secretarial Studies - Civil Service Training Schl., Secretariat
  Ibadan (Now Simeon Adebo Staff Dev. Centre) 1989
- WASC - St. John's Catholic Grammar Schl., Iseyin 1985
- Primary School Leaving Certificate –
  Methodist Primary School, Ago-Ijio, Iseyin 1980

C. Working Experience with Dates:

- GES 108 Tutor, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. 2017 -Till Date
- French Teacher, Baptist Grammar Schl, Agbowo 2009-2010

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- French Teacher, Living Word Academic Sec., Aba 2007-2008
- French Teacher, City of Wisdom Int'l Schl, Aba. 2006
- Lecturer, Women Training Centre, NBTS, Ogbomoso 2002-2004
- Secretary, IAL Nigeria Limited, Apapa, Lagos. 2002
- Secretary, Providence Consult, Apapa, Lagos 2000
- Admin. Sec., University of Lagos, Lagos 1993-1997
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D Awards and Fellowships (If Any)

Nil

E. Membership

Nil

F Publications

1. Modupe Albert (PhD) & Abosede Abiodun Adeleke, *Equality and Inclusivity Policy as a Catalyst for Promoting Peaceful Co-Existence and Democratic Governance in Liberia,* International Journal of Religions and Peacebuilding INJOREP, Vol.2(3), 2025.

2. Modupe Albert (PhD) & Adeleke A.A., *Education and Gender Training As a Tool for Peaceful Coexistence: A Study of Iceland's Policy Implementation 1980-1990.* International Journal of Religions and Peacebuilding INJOREP, Vol. 3(1), 2025.

3. French Literature for Primary and Secondary Schools
4. Adeleke Abosede Abiodun – La Fille A Papa (Daddy's Girl), 2017
5. Adeleke Abosede Abiodun – Erica, La Fille Orguilleuse (Erica, the Proud Girl), 2017

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The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that this Thesis was written by Abosede Abiodun ADELEKE with matriculation number LCU/PG/002100 in the Department of Politics and International Relations of the Faculty of Management & Social Science, Lead City University, Ibadan and is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

Signature **Date**

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