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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
Faculty of Humanities
Department of International Relations



Master of Arts Research Report

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LIBERIAN NATIONAL POLICE'S RESPONSIVENESS AND MECHANISMS REGARDING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN LIBERIA: 2003 - 2017

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree

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Abstract

The prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence against women has continued to plague Liberia since the end of the 14-year civil war. The reconstruction of Liberia's national security sector is of paramount importance to ensuring justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. This research paper assessed the evolution of the Liberian National Police's (LNP) responsiveness and mechanisms towards sexual and gender-based violence over the duration of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This research was conducted by making using of process tracing and content analysis as well as a combination of inductive and deductive research design. This was beneficial to reach the paper's results as it looked at the outcome and intervening variables in the data analysis as well as deducing the final argument as it related to the hypothesis in the research design and methodological application of the paper. These findings and methodology were set out on the foundation of utilising the Theory of Gender and War, which provided the lens of analysis.

Qualitative and quantitative research gathered found that the presence of UNMIL made the LNP more accountable and reliable to the public but over the years, the SGBV mechanisms in place and responses to SGBV cases had not sufficiently improved and the trajectory without UNMIL's presence does not see SGBV being reduced in the country. The overall assessment of the research problem of sexual and gender-based violence found that the national police's primary impediments (outside of financial and accessibility barriers) are connected to the general societal response to violence against women in Liberia. It is imperative to address entrenched societal behaviour that stigmatises victims of gender-based violence in order for the LNP to show more sustainable improvement. The recommendations that have been suggested look at not only improving the identified deficits of the LNP by expanding their presence, but also to work on the link between codified law and traditional justice to gain a better scope of those accessing redress for SGBV incidences. In addition, the recommendations also engage with the youth at a community level, to begin the process of eradicating the harmful way that patriarchal hegemony and discrimination against women and girls determines the gender dynamics in the country which includes SGBV and the openness with which the LNP can be approached regarding SGBV crimes.

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Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIVPOL	Civil Police
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
DV	Dependent Variable
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESP	Education Support Programme
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGL	International Contact Group on Liberia
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IIAG	Ibrahim Index for African Governance
IV	Independent Variable
LIFLEA	Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association
LNP	Liberian National Police
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
ODI	Overseas Development Institute

RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCD	Sexual Crimes Division
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SGBVCU	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Crimes Unit
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Women's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOHCR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WACPS	Women and Children Protection Services
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chapter One: Introduction

This paper will carry out an assessment of the Liberian National Police's (LNP) responsiveness and mechanisms regarding sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) from 2003-2017. The first chapter will provide the foundational basis of this research, including the background on the topic, a problem statement, the primary and subsidiary research questions (and what each refers to), identifying and operationalising the independent and dependent variables, and the relevance of this topic to the International Relations field.

Sexual and gender-based violence takes a variety of forms but it is broadly defined as: "any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships" (UN Refugee Agency 2019). Different language and phrasing is used, but many international groups agree on this definition of SGBV: that SGBV takes multiple forms "…rape, sexual abuse, forced pregnancies/sterilisation/abortion/prostitution/nudity, trafficking, sexual enslavement and female genital mutilation" (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2014; World Health Organisation 2019) as well as physical, emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse (Ott 2017); and that the gendered target of SGBV is, in most cases, women and is rooted in gender inequality (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in The Humanitarian 2004; European Institute for Gender Equality 2019).

Rape and SGBV mostly affects women and there is ongoing discussion globally around increasing the awareness and illegality of SGBV. Movements such as "Me Too" have created a platform from which discussing SGBV and rape culture as a problematic and serious characteristic of our society has become more prominent. "Rape culture" refers to environments in which SGBV at large is prevalent and normalised in everyday life and contexts by the media, pop-culture and traditional or stereotypical narratives that seek to blame victims for the SGBV they have experienced (Marshall University 2019; Mosiana 2017; University of New Hampshire 2019). This culture continues to prevail globally due to the objectification of women, impunity for SGBV occurrences and the archaic prevalence of establishing power and control over women's bodies (Marshall University 2019; Mosiana 2017; University of New Hampshire 2019). This culture of trivialising SGBV is one that is prevalent the world over, and

international and local community group have sought to address this ongoing disease of society at all levels.

In terms of wartime contexts, SGBV is not just prevalent as a cultural norm but as a weaponised action. It is noted that rape in war is weaponised for several reasons: it is a "spoil of war" as victorious soldiers rape the women associated with the men they have fought; to gain tradeable and survival commodities such as food and land; it is a way to torment and psychologically break down opposing factions and their communities; in the chaos and haze of war (including the influence of narcotics, in some instances), soldiers rape and abuse women just because they can- there is a lack of accountability in this context; and it is a way to establish dominance over men and women who have been fought (Thomas & Ralph 1994; Baaz & Stern 2009; Wolfe 2014). Rape as a weapon of war is as inevitable as any other consequence of war and is not isolated to specific regions. Just at a glance of historical accounts of war, the prevalence of weaponised rape and SGBV is present in the Democratic Republic of Congo, World War II, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bosnia, Peru, Kenya, India, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and, the main focus of this case study, Liberia (Thomas & Ralph 1994; Baaz & Stern 2009).

Similarly, in Liberia, SGBV was weaponised repeatedly and the result is that it became a character trait of gender relations in Liberia after the conflict (Stop Rape Now 2012). SGBV did not die down in Liberia after the conflict. If anything, the prevalence of SGBV during the conflict has caused SGBV to become a systemic issue in the country that needs serious post-conflict redress, much like all the other consequences of war that destabilise and fracture a nation. It is evident that SGBV is such a problem as rape is still the most reported serious crime in Liberia (Stop Rape Now 2012). SGBV was so widespread after the conflict that it gained the attention of the UN as an issue that needed to be addressed in post-conflict reconstruction in the country. With the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN has provisions in place to not only protect innocent civilians during war, but to actively work towards combating violence against women in any context.

Background

Political and ethnic instability in Liberia broke out in 1980, when Sergeant Samuel Doe (of the Krahn tribe) seized power over the incumbent administration and executed President Tolbert

in a military coup (Gberie 2004; Peace Insight 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014). The First Liberian Civil War broke out after rebels (the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, invaded Liberia against the dictatorship of Doe in December 1989 (Swiss et. al 1998; Gberie 2004; Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). Doe's retaliation resulted in an attack on Liberian civilians, which drove many of the country's youth to the NPFL, which subsequently grew in strength (Peacebuilding Data 2011).

In this NPFL surge, Taylor split from his ally, Prince Johnson, and killed high-level educated and political figures leaving no viable alternative to a Taylor administration (Peacebuilding Data 2011). Shortly afterwards, in 1990, both Taylor and Johnson led separate sieges on Monrovia (Liberia's capital) and Doe was captured and killed (Swiss et. al 1998; Peace Insight 2011; Peacebuilding Data 2011; BBC World News 2018). Intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its armed wing monitoring group, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), prevented Taylor from capturing Monrovia at this time (Human Rights Watch 1993; Gberie 2004; Peace Insight 2011; Global Security 2018).

Following Doe's execution, Amos Sawyer replaced the executed former dictator (Peacebuilding Data 2011) in a government of national unity sponsored by ECOWAS (Peace Insight 2011; Global Security 2018). Taylor refused to work with this new government.

Due to factional tensions, Sawyer's interim government did not extend beyond Monrovia and was entirely dependent on ECOMOG peacekeeping forces for protection (Peacebuilding Data 2011). Outside Monrovia, Taylor controlled the rest of the country with a parallel, rebel government set up in Bong County (Peacebuilding Data 2011; Peace Insight 2011). From Bong, Taylor was able to control the country's natural resources, the profits of which financed the war and guaranteed loyalty to Taylor from his commanders (Peacebuilding Data 2011).

In 1991, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) – formed by the Krahn and Mandingo tribes, who were groups favoured by former president Doe – challenged Taylor's control of territory (Human Rights Watch 1993; Gberie 2004; Peacebuilding Data 2011). In 1992, Taylor's NPFL rebels attacked ECOMOG peacekeepers in Monrovia (Human Rights Watch 1993; Maier 1993; Peace Insight 2011). Krahn and Mandingo refugees residing

in Sierra Leone banded together to form a faction of ULIMO which returned to Liberia and assisted ECOMOG peacekeeping forces to prevent Taylor's latest attempt through his NPFL rebels to take over Monrovia (Global Security 2018).

However, the Liberian Council State, formed under the Abuja Peace Accord in 1995, broke down due to power struggles and fighting resumed in Monrovia in April 1996 (Gberie 2004; Global Security 2018). Nigeria and other West African states intervened, and a ceasefire and peace accord were announced in August of that same year (Global Security 2018) signalling the waning of the first civil war in the country.

Elections that were held the following year showed Taylor as victorious, with 75% of the vote (Swiss et. al 1998; Gberie 2004; Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Peacebuilding Data 2011; Peace Insight 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014; Global Security 2018). In his presidency, President Taylor attempted to reconcile Liberians to his administration by giving opposition and rebel leaders high-profile government positions in exchange for the dissolution of their factions (Peacebuilding Data 2011). It is suggested that President Taylor received majority votes out of the fear of continued war had he lost the national election (Global Security 2018).

In addition, President Taylor involved Liberia in neighbouring Sierra Leone's civil war by supporting rebels responsible for exploiting people and trading in blood diamonds (Momodu 2017; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). This will be elaborated on in the next chapter. However, in 1999, soon after this involvement by President Taylor, tensions arose between ethnic groups and President Taylor's dictatorship practices saw a resumption of internal conflict (Peacebuilding Data 2011; 28 Too Many 2014). By 2000, this spilled over into Liberia's next period of civil conflict after the government reported first attacks by rebels (BBC World News 2018).

The rebellion against President Taylor's administration was led by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) based in Guinea at Liberia's northern border, and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) who attacked from the eastern border at Cote d'Ivoire (Gberie 2004; Peacebuilding Data 2011; 28 Too Many 2014; Global Security 2018). LURD assumed control of much of west and northwest Liberia and were supported by Guinea

and Sierra Leone. The group, however, was disorganised and this resulted in practices and implementation of strategies (if any) that were very violent (Peacebuilding Data 2011).

President Taylor's support of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in the Sierra Leone civil war contributed to intensifying the already unstable Liberian environment (Peacebuilding Data 2011; BBC World News 2018). President Taylor supported the RUF through the supply of arms and funds in exchange for illegal diamonds, the latter being at the heart of the conflict (Osborn and MacAskill 2000; Momodu 2017; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). The international community, such as the European Union (EU) in 2000, responded to this by imposing sanctions and seizing aid to Liberia (Osborn and MacAskill 2000; 28 Too Many 2014; Global Security 2018). A year later, similarly, the United States imposed a travel ban on senior Liberian officials (Global Security 2018). The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) also imposed an arms embargo on Liberia in dissent of Taylor's unsavoury trade relationship with the rebels in Sierra Leone (BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018).

UN peacekeepers attempted to assist Sierra Leone in its civil unrest and, in so doing, hopefully bring some stability to the region. However, these efforts were halted when hundreds of the peacekeepers were taken hostage by the RUF (Global Security 2018). Active intervention by Taylor saw the peacekeepers released. Taylor's continued closeness to the RUF and knowledge of affairs in Sierra Leone increased suspicions and accusations against Taylor for being actively involved in the supply of arms to Sierra Leone and the purchasing of conflict diamonds (Global Security 2018). He was accused of being the source of the prolonged conflict in the country (Global Security 2018).

In light of this knowledge, with the urgency to abate the situation in Sierra Leone, the international community, including the United Kingdom, the USA and various NGOs, began a campaign to isolate Liberia, where civil war continued (Gberie 2004; Global Security 2018).

By early 2002, as rebel groups continued to advance on Monrovia, Taylor announced a state of emergency in order to cut off the rebels from external support (Peace Insight 2011; BBC World News 2018). In other parts of the country, chaos continued with the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) clashing violently with LURD in Lofa County in northern Liberia (Global Security 2018). Recruitment was relentless by the rebel groups, especially among young boys, indicating that Liberia's instability was far from over. In August 2002, Taylor launched a

national peace and reconciliation conference in Monrovia, with no attendance by major opposition leaders (Global Security 2018). By October, however, fighting became widespread with Taylor's administration re-occupying counties outside the country's capital city (Global Security 2018).

In early 2003, MODEL incursions took place from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire (Peacebuilding Data 2011; Global Security 2018). International relief agencies estimated nearly 130 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Liberia, and approximately 230 000 refugees in neighbouring countries (Global Security 2018).

The International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) levelled a clear path to stability for the country. In March 2003, however, the ICGL concluded that conditions in Liberia were not conducive to facilitating free and fair elections (Global Security 2018) and that a comprehensive peace process and talks of rebuilding Liberia's institutions would take place from 2 June 2003 in Accra, Ghana (The Inquirer 2003).

Unfortunately, the unrest continued with Liberia's security situation countrywide being at its worst in May 2003 since the first insurgency in 1999 (Global Security 2018). At this time, the US called for all major parties – the Liberian government, LURD, and MODEL rebels – to halt the violent campaigns against each other (Global Security 2018), but clashes between government and rebels continued into the next month.

In early June 2003, a court in Sierra Leone with UN-backing announced the indictment of President Taylor for war crimes with an international arrest warrant, overshadowing the Accra peace talks (BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). After months of increased tensions and violence over President Taylor's continued presence in Liberia's government following his international indictment, Taylor was removed from office on 11 August 2003, sought asylum in Nigeria, and was replaced by his second-in-command, Moses Blah (Peacebuilding Data 2011; Peace Insight 2011; BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018). A week after Taylor's removal, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in Accra which formally signalled the end of the conflict and the start of the reconstruction process (Refugees International 2003; United Nations Security Council 2003; Gberie 2004; Jaye 2009; Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Peacebuilding Data 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014; UNMILTV 2018).

Between September and October 2003, US troops withdrew from Liberia and were replaced by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as per UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1509, tasked with the demobilisation and overseeing the reconstruction of Liberia (Gberie 2004; Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Peace Insight 2011; BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018). UNMIL also took over the peacekeeping role played by ECOMOG (UNMILTV 2018).

The years that followed saw the rebuilding Liberian institutions and the rule of law; the ban of illegal trade in natural resources; and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Jaye 2009; Peace Insight 2011; UNMILTV 2018). The first, democratic, post-war presidential and legislative elections were held in Liberia in October 2005, overseen by UNMIL to ensure safety and security of the 75% voter turnout (UNMILTV 2018). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected as the first female head of state (Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014; BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018).

In the years of President Sirleaf's administration, UNMIL and the UNSC continued their presence: monitoring resource and weapons resolutions and the progress of state institutions to prevent civil conflict of such magnitude from re-erupting. Part of this process was the TRC investigation of human rights abuses from 1979-2003, which spanned from February 2006 to December 2009 (Peace Insight 2011; UNMILTV 2018). Charles Taylor's high-profile trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) also overlapped with this time – from June 2007 to April 2012 (Peace Insight 2011; BBC World News 2018). When he was eventually found guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and for aiding and directing rebels in Sierra Leone, the dictator was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment (BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018).

Despite the finding in the TRC, that she (allegedly mistakenly) supported Taylor at the launch of what would become 14 years of civil war in 1989, Johnson Sirleaf was both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and re-elected as Liberia's head of state in 2011 (Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018).

Even with this progress, Liberia has had a tumultuous season as a country in recent years. 2014 saw the outbreak of the globally-documented Ebola virus, which required an emergency

response from the Liberian government and international assistance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US government (BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018). After over a year, in which Liberia experienced a state of emergency and quarantine, the WHO declared that Liberia was Ebola-free in April 2015 (BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018). Nearly five thousand Liberians lost their lives, with thousands more having been infected or losing parents (BBC World News 2018; UNMILTV 2018).

A review by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2015 expressed concern over Liberia's implementation deficits, especially concerning female genital mutilation, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and efforts to strengthen the justice and security sectors (UNMILTV 2018).

Despite this, however, in June 2016, UNMIL handed over the responsibility for state security back to the Liberian army and police, after years of post-conflict training and re-establishment (BBC World News; UNMILTV 2018). By August 2016, the Liberian National Police was recorded as having 951 women out of 5 106 officers, and 751 women out of 2 596 officers in the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation (UNMILTV 2018). UNMIL seemed to be reducing its presence and impact in Liberian institutions, as the country made more democratic strides.

In October 2017, faced new changes with former senator and international football player, George Weah, securing the majority vote in presidential elections (UNMILTV 2018). President Weah's inauguration in January 2018 signalled the first peaceful transfer of power in Liberia since 1944 (UNMILTV 2018). Signalling the end of an era was the withdrawal of UNMIL troops on 30 March after 14 years of constant presence in Liberia and thus the successful implementation of the UNSC's mandate (United Nations Security Council 2018; UNMILTV 2018).

In the time since the UNMIL withdrawal from Liberia, the country has experienced stability, but is not without problems. Since September 2018, the national government has been investigating an American-founded charity More Than Me, based in Monrovia, after a local staff member of the charity was accused of raping several girls while they were under the care of the organisation (Associated Press 2018). Liberia still suffers from the scourge of prevalent SGBV. Charles Taylor's ex-wife, Agnes Taylor, is also facing trial in January 2019 on eight

counts of torture from nearly 20 years ago while in her official capacity as First Lady in Liberia (Cornish 2018). In addition, Agnes Taylor is also charged with conspiring to use rape as a form of torture against women.

Despite these negative spotlights on Liberia, a more positive focus comes from the International SHEROES Foundation of Africa which has recently described Liberia as the "star" of the 2018 SHEROES Forum – that the country is also hosting (Geterminah 2018). The forum, with the theme of "Advancing Women's Participation in Leadership", is expected to be greatly benefitted by Liberian women such as former president Johnson Sirleaf, current first lady, Clar Marie Weah, and one of Liberia's current vice presidents, Jewel Howard-Taylor (Geterminah 2018).

In spite of the ways in which Liberia can be criticised, especially after such an extensive UN mandate, the country still stands out as an African beacon for women in leadership and the post-conflict leadership transition states can make.

Liberian Women During the War

The Liberian civil wars caused devastation at all levels. Women felt the consequences of war the most. They were left to be single mothers and uphold communities in a patriarchal society, as husbands and sons played their part in the civil war. Apart from this, women were also subjected to participation in the war as combatants, sexual slaves and army wives. Sexual violence against women was used as a weapon of the war to destabilise morale and community cohesion. The problem of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is still considered endemic in post-conflict Liberia.

It was found that the Liberian TRC reported more than 70% of all sexual-based violence reports were female victims who appeared to be targeted because of their gender (Swiss et. al 1998; Government of Liberia UN Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013). According to the Women's Media Centre, a UN report has a record of some 40 000 women being raped during the conflict (Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013). SGBV was weaponised during the civil conflict, but its prevalence has persisted in a post-conflict context to the extent that rape is the most frequently reported serious crime in the

country (Government of Liberia UN Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013).

In the broader scope of SGBV, rape is not the only form of abuse against women that has become a legacy of Liberia's civil wars. Domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and socio-cultural disempowerment of women are common practice in Liberia (Government of Liberia UN Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2011). The disempowerment of women due to cultural beliefs and practices is a substantial contributor to the prolonged suffering of SGBV for the majority of women in Liberia. A Demographic and Health Survey for Liberia in 2008 found that 18% of Liberian women had experienced a form of SGBV in their lifetime (Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013).

Additionally, the Women and Child Protection Unit of the LNP reported that it received at least one case of child rape a week in 2013 (Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013). The information provided above indicates that SGBV was a severe consequence of the civil conflict, but it has translated into the post-conflict Liberia as a highly prevalent epidemic which is yet to be solved.

In 2003, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued Resolution 1509 which put into place the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). UNMIL was established to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the post-conflict peace process. UNMIL's role included supporting human rights and humanitarian activities, assisting with national security reform and Liberian National Police (LNP) training.

Liberian National Police

War brings the destruction of infrastructure and social cohesion. Where Liberia's state police are concerned, this effect of war applied as the national security officers were responsible for inflicting torture during clashes (Liebling-Kalifani et. al 2011; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013). Police officers were not a symbol of protection and safety for most Liberians, especially women needing to be guarded against SGBV.

In Liberia's reconstruction, a priority part of the reform was dedicated to the security sector, which includes the national police (Liebling-Kalifani 2011). Reform looked to address the reputation and violent conduct of the police force during the war (Liebling-Kalifani 2011). This

priority aligns with UNMIL's role as well as the function of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Despite reform, which included recruiting new officers and SGBV sensitisation, corruption and infrastructural deficits plague the police force's capabilities and efficacy (De Carvalho & Schia 2009; Government of Liberia UN Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2011; Liebling-Kalifani 2011).

In 2016, UNMIL completed the transfer of security responsibilities to Liberian authorities and in March 2018, successfully completed its mandate, leaving the country for the first time in 15 years. During UNMIL's presence, SGBV against women continued to be a problem. Simultaneously, however, Liberia also had the first democratically-elected female president in Africa – Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – who aimed to prioritise many things including addressing SGBV.

UNMIL's prolonged role in LNP reform and training creates the expectation that SGBV response by the LNP will have steadily improved given the UN's strong international standards regarding human rights.

Problem Statement

Pre-war data on the Liberian National Police's (LNP) response to SGBV is not measurable enough to create a strong comparative analysis, as data from the early 1980s is needed. Even during the war and Charles Taylor's presidency, instability rendered data accumulation not as important as achieving peace. This research will analyse the mechanisms used by the Liberian police in handling SGBV. This will be done in the context of UNMIL's presence in Liberia.

Post-conflict, SGBV continues to be endemic in Liberian society, and it is the job of the restructured security sector, namely the police, to address this issue for victims. The UN has also highlighted the seriousness of the SGBV problem in Liberia. Even before the conflict, patriarchy was deeply rooted in Liberian society, and this affected the way SGBV was defined and handled, often to the detriment of the victims. Given the weaponisation of SGBV during the Liberian civil wars, the treatment of women, and the perceptions around SGBV (which include stigmatisation and victim-shaming), this continues to be a persistent problem post-

conflict. This systemic issue was noted by the UN and is the reason why UNMIL was mandated to train the LNP – especially regarding the role of the LNP and SGBV.

As of the March 2018 UNMIL withdrawal from Liberia, making now the first time since the comprehensive peace agreement that was signed in 2003 that Liberia will not have the supervision of UN peacekeepers, it is essential to observe how the LNP has responded to SGBV in Liberia from the start of UNMIL to its end.

Given that UNMIL has withdrawn less than a year ago (March 2018), data will be compared from 2003-2017. However, any data that does exist from 2018 may be used in the analysis to consider the trajectory of results in UNMIL's absence. In post-conflict Liberia, there have been reports from as recently as 2016 that note the prevalence and endemic nature of SGBV. It is imperative to assess whether or not the LNP is using the training provided by UNMIL in responding to SGBV.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to assess the LNP's response to SGBV in the period of the UN mission in Liberia from 2003 – 2017. To achieve this objective, the assessment will be looked at by investigating the LNP from three facets. Firstly, by the SGBV-related mechanisms and policies established during the rebuilding of the LNP in the presence of UNMIL. Secondly, by looking at the role of women in police reform as well as their role in the application of SGBV-related mechanisms. Lastly, the research objective will be assessed by the evolution of the enforcement of SGBV-related mechanisms from 2003-2017.

The aim of this research is to investigate the trajectory of the LNP regarding SGBV in the years of post-conflict reconstruction; how it will evolve and implement SGBV-related mechanisms as an independent executor of the law, without the oversight and assistance of the UN. It is paramount for branches of government and society to be able to function stably without constant international intervention. The objective of international intervention is to guide countries to this level of functionality after civil conflict.

Research Question

Has the Liberian National Police's response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence been improving in the period of the United Nations Mission in Liberia deployment?

This main question will be answered by assessing the results of three auxiliary questions, looking at the post-conflict period from 2003-2017:

1. ***What mechanisms and policies relating to SGBV were established during the rebuilding of the LNP with the presence of UNMIL?***
   (This question aims to observe the laws, UN policies, and domestic initiatives put in place with the specific task of catering to SGBV-related cases and events.)
2. ***What was the role of women in police reform and what is their role in the application of mechanisms to resolve sexual and gender-based violence?***
   (This question aims to acknowledge the complexities of sexual and gender-based violence and the necessity of women's involvement in addressing an issue inherently experienced by women. This includes looking at the employment of women in this field.)
3. ***How has the enforcement of SGBV-related mechanisms evolved from 2003 to 2017?***
   (This question aims to assess the measurable aspects of SGBV as it relates to the LNP. This would include the SGBV cases reported to the police and the number that reach prosecution and the employment of women in and by the LNP. All of this is within the scope of UNMIL from 2003 to 2017.)

Identifying the Independent and Dependent Variables

The independent variable (IV) of this research question is identified to be *the Liberian National Police (LNP)*. The LNP is being assessed in the context of implementing UNMIL resolutions, training, and domestic laws. An assessment of the LNP in this regard has a direct impact on the DV.

The dependent variable (DV) of this research question is identified to be *sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Liberia*. The increase, reduction, proliferation or elimination of SGBV is largely dependent on the LNP's implementation and adherence to its reformation standards and policies.

Operationalisation

The IV – the LNP – can be operationalised through reports on the formation, mandate and SGBV results of the police force. These reports are accessible via the AU, UNICEF, Relief Web, and the UNDP, among others. The LNP can also be operationalised through progress reports provided by UNMIL over the years of the mission.

The DV – SGBV – can be operationalised through statistics on reported incidences, cases that go to court and cases that are prosecuted or thrown out of court. The DV can be operationalised whilst bearing in mind that reported cases are not indicative of all incidences that take place. These statistics will be available from the Ministry of Justice of the Liberia government, academics who specialise in post-conflict Liberia or SGBV, and regular UNMIL progress reports.

Relevance to International Relations

The prevalent international law highlights the need to prioritise gender equality. This research is relevant as it aims to assess the effectiveness of post-conflict state police regarding SGBV, with consideration to UN involvement.

The LNP's response to SGBV can be related to the presence of UNMIL and the use of UNSCR 1325 in the rebuilding of Liberia. This paper will be valuable research regarding the impact of UN missions in a post-conflict society, especially as their influence relates to SGBV and police reform. In addition, observing adherence to and recognition of UN mandates in the post-conflict reconstruction of the security sector is important where the security sector was previously marred by civil war.

This would be relevant research to international relations in terms of the way post-conflict police reform is handled by UN missions that could even translate into increasing levels of gender equality and women's empowerment. UNMIL's extended presence in Liberia provides insight into the impact of the UN in post-conflict contexts.

The chapters that will follow will explore the literature review, methodology, findings and data analysis, and conclusions and recommendations. The literature review in chapter two will look at conflict in Africa as well as existing literature on the Liberian conflict in order to discern

gaps in literature where this paper will fill in. The methodology in chapter three will explain the methodological and theoretical application that will be used in this paper. Chapter four, findings and data analysis, will break down the research question and analyse the findings presented. Finally, the recommendations in chapter five will consist of concluding comments and recommendations that may be beneficial to the problem identified.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The way SGBV and post-conflict security is addressed around Africa will be included in this literature review and will precede the existing literature on Liberia's civil war and post-conflict reconstruction. The African examples looked at are Sierra Leone and Rwanda. This assessment will provide an indication of what women experience during civil war, how they are positioned in a country's reconstruction, and if/how women are present in the country's post-conflict society in various ways. In addition, the post-conflict response to and occurrence of SGBV will be briefly looked at.

This endeavour will aid in the analysis of Liberia – where there are obvious gaps in the literature – and exploration of the country as compared to its international counterparts, and if there are anomalies in post-conflict reconstruction or SGBV mechanisms that are worth noting. Any gaps in the literature or areas where exploration has not reached will seek to further justify the analysis and investigation of this paper. Given that Liberia is the case study for this research paper, the exploratory case studies of Sierra Leone and Rwanda will not be as detailed as that of Liberia, as focus should not be shifted from the primary case study of this paper.

Before this, however, a global perspective on SGBV will be explored as reported by major authors in the field. The intention of this is to account for the global issue of SGBV and to bear in mind that this topic is not one isolated to the case of Liberia. From here, the global outlook will narrow down to the wars in Africa, followed by a closer look at the case of Liberia. This will allow for a comprehensive understanding of SGBV from a wide lens before taking a microscope to the state security sector of Liberia.

A Global Perspective on SGBV

Most major international organisations note that approximately 35% of women globally will experience a form of SGBV in their lifetime and that SGBV is one of the most prevalent human rights violations worldwide (World Health Organisation 2017; World Bank 2018; UN Population Fund 2019; UN Women 2019). The acknowledgement of this specific form of violence is not only that it is widespread, but also that it constitutes major human rights violations and health implications for women and girls globally (Heise 1994; Watts & Zimmerman 2002; UN Population Fund 2019). The human rights violations are worsened –

and perpetuated - in areas where women are not being accommodated by a combination of strong legal protection and societal acceptance of SGBV crimes. Similarly, the health implications are detrimental – often deadly – for SGBV victims in areas that lack healthcare infrastructure or the knowledge on adequately handling women's health issues.

In addition to this, the World Bank also notes that SGBV perpetration causes victims to be unable to work, for psychological or physiological reasons. Given the widespread prevalence of SGBV, lack of productivity due to this crime also has an economic impact on countries, costing 1.2%-3.7% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (World Bank 2018).

Given the widespread nature of SGBV, analysis has been done on the generally observed root causes of violence against women in global society. In the most basic summation, the prevalence and continuation of global SGBV perpetration are deduced as the normalised and systematic discrimination of women at all levels of society (Watts & Zimmerman 2002; Davies & True 2015).

Upon deeper inspection, the root cause of SGBV is identified by a multitude of factors and are not limited to: childhood exposure to violence; a community accepting of violence; gender constructed roles of women; ideologies around male entitlement; women having lower comparative status and general community attitudes that either accept the occurrence of SGBV or insist on silence and impunity (Heise 1994; Watts & Zimmerman 2002; World Health Organisation 2017; UN Development Programme 2019; UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2019; UN Population Fund 2019).

Additionally, SGBV perpetration is also found to be encouraged by weak legal and judicial institutions that would ordinarily protect victims (World Health Organisation 2017; UN Development Programme 2019). The combination of weak security and a culture of stigmatisation understandably leaves victims in a position of weakness. This goes far in explaining why reported incidences of SGBV are not a true reflection of actual incidences that occur.

In terms of global efforts, international organisations have many initiatives and mechanisms in place that specifically look at SGBV response and prevention. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) SGBV programmes offer psychosocial and medical treatment, rape counselling and

work towards the promotion of women and girls' rights to freedom and security (UN Population Fund 2019). The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports on multiple levels of response and prevention: from low-resource female economic empowerment, home visitations to reduce intimate partner violence, to high-level enactment and enforcement of gender-equality legislation (World Health Organisation 2017). The UN Development Programme (UNDP) assists in the national development of SGBV-combative policies (UN Development Programme 2019). These are policies that aim to improve justice for survivors through addressing impunity and providing multi-sectoral support and services for survivors (UN Development Programme 2019).

Similarly, the World Bank (WB) is working through regional and local collaborations in order to combat and prevent SGBV. Since 2003, the WB has supported over US$ 300 million in development projects that look to analyse and implement more effective prevention programmes and knowledge-sharing on SGBV risks, rights and conduct (World Bank 2018).

Even the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is mandated to protect refugees, is working on SGBV prevention. "Safe from the Start" is the UNHCR's initiative that engages multiple sectors in countries to reduce the occurrence of SGBV through collaboration with country partners in displaced communities (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2019).

As the data analysis in the chapter below will reveal, however, a lot of these efforts are hampered by a lack of individual desire to carry them out as well as a lack of meaningful address of the cultural root causes of SGBV. The research above accounts for the root causes of SGBV at a global level. Central to the global scope of the cause of SGBV is the entrenched subjugation of women via practices steeped in patriarchal hegemony. This is also a central argument in the analysis of the data on Liberia. It is essential for these root causes to be directly addressed in each specific societal context in a sustainable manner in order for the global issue of SGBV to be eventually eradicated.

Findings on the global prevalence of SGBV have come from many facets of analysis: international affairs, sociology and politics (UN agencies and academics), economics and finance (the World Bank), as well as a healthcare perspective (the World Health Organisation and academics). This is a substantial marker of the length and breadth of the impact of SGBV: SGBV incidences are not isolated to economic or social status (World Bank 2019), nor does

the impact of the occurrence begin and end with individuals. Not only does SGBV effect health and wellbeing, economic capabilities and employment, but the stigma attached to SGBV affects communities, relationships, the general functioning of society, and gender relations.

Sexual and Gender-based violence in Conflict Situations

The following assessment of literature looks at the experience of civil unrest in other countries. On the continent, the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Rwanda will be briefly outlined as well as the roles of women both during the conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction. In both cases, the plight and role of women during the conflicts as well as the consequences of wartime SGBV in a post-conflict context will be expanded upon. This will provide the link between SGBV in conflict and the need to assess the reform of those mechanisms and processes that protect against SGBV in post-conflict contexts.

In the case of Sierra Leone, Charles Taylor supported the Sierra Leonean Rebel United Front's (RUF) attempt to overthrow Joseph Momah's national administration in March 1991 (Momodu 2017; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). The 11-year civil conflict resulted in over fifty thousand deaths and approximately half a million displaced people in a country with a total population of four million at the time (Momodu 2017; Global Security 2018).

What exacerbated this conflict was the use of blood diamonds: their trade funded the war and also involved the exploitation of thousands of local people (Momodu 2017; Global Security 2018). After just over a decade of rebel fighting and attempts to overthrow newly established governments in 1996 and 1999, a second ceasefire and peace agreement was signed between the RUF and the Sierra Leonean government, led by President Ahmed Kabbah in Abuja, Nigeria (Momodu 2017; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018).

Similar to the situation in Liberia, the UNSC established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1999 (BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). After the signing of the second Abuja agreement in 2001, the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process of ex-combatants and displaced persons began (Momodu 2017; BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). By 2002, the British mission began to withdraw from the country in order to leave behind only the necessary manpower to professionalise the country's domestic arm (BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018). In addition, UNAMSIL also began a

gradual retraction in the same year which was followed by the complete withdrawal of the mission once it had reached its formal mandate conclusion in December 2005 (BBC World News 2018; Global Security 2018).

It was during this time in 2002 that the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) was established. The SCSL was set up at the request of former president Kabbah to the UNSC as support to the country from the UN and the international community (Jalloh 2011; Oosterveld 2015; Global Policy Form 2018; Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone 2018). The SCSL's objective was to address the serious crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers during the civil war (Jalloh 2011; Global Policy Form 2018; Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone 2018). The SCSL was seen as both an example of a learning curve (in terms of jurisdiction, time frames and enforcement powers) and a triumph where international hybrid criminal tribunals are concerned (Jalloh 2011; Global Policy Form 2018; Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone 2018).

For Rwanda, the war was an ethnic contest between the predominant groups in the country – the Hutus and Tutsis (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). Prior to this, during its colonial period, Tutsis were considered to have higher status than Hutus in the region's social hierarchy (Global Security 2016; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

However, in 1962, Rwanda received its independence and had in place a new Hutu king, Gregoire Kayibanda (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). From this time (the early 1960s to early 1990s) leading up to the infamous 1994 genocide, Rwanda experienced several notable flares of tensions between Hutu and Tutsi groups over repatriation and political power-sharing (BBC World News 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda was formed, in 1988, by refugees (some of the half a million living outside Rwanda) who sought repatriation and power sharing in their home country (Global Security 2016; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). Most RPF members and those in leadership were Tutsi

refugees, who were also angered by the influx of some 50 000 Hutu refugees into Rwanda from Burundi in the same year (BBC World News 2018).

In October 1990, the RPF rebels launched their first attack on Rwanda (BBC World News 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). This conflict went on for two years until a peace accord was signed in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 1992 (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

Fighting resumed and evolved into an extreme genocide in 1994 after an aircraft carrying President Habyarimana and the Burundi President was shot down close to Kigali (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; History.com Editors 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). Immediately after the crash, the massacre began, and thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; History.com Editors 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

After the assassination of the Rwandan Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and the Belgian peacekeepers assigned to her security, Belgian peacekeeping forces withdrew entirely (Global Security 2016; History.com Editors 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), which had been stationed in the country since late 1993, also reduced its presence from 2 165 troops to 260 (Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

The RPF eventually took control of the presidential palace and Kigali and successfully won control of Rwanda, ending the war in July 1994 (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; History.com Editors 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

Despite the Rwandan conflict and genocide only lasting 100 days, nearly a million Rwandans were killed and approximately two million people sought refuge in neighbouring countries (Global Security 2016; BBC World News 2018; History.com Editors 2018; Rosenberg 2018; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018). The UN maintained its presence in Rwanda until March 1996 and the international community

responded to the end of the war with one of the largest humanitarian relief initiatives (Global Security 2016). The UNSC also established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in November 1994 to investigate the atrocities committed over the 100 days of the genocide (Global Security 2016; Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations 2018).

The effects of civil war on women are often so severe as a result of harmful patriarchal culture. The treatment and perception of women in this way become entrenched and systemic in post-conflict contexts. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 is the acknowledgement of this and the need to rectify the treatment of women and women's issues in a country's reconstruction process.

The women in Sierra Leone were not immune to abuses of varying nature during the country's turmoil. Authors note the exploitation and abuse of women in many ways during Sierra Leone's civil war: kidnap and enslavement by rebels; bearing arms under duress; sexual abuse ranging from rape (and children as a result) to forced marriage; physical abuse; and participating in rebel looting and raids under duress (Walker 2006; Friedman-Rudovsky 2013; John-Langba et al. 2013; Interactions for Gender Justice 2016; Ladum & Haaken 2017).

Despite this, women mobilised to better their lives and for the benefit of their country. Women's mobilisation was so successful that it catalysed the 1996 multiparty elections (Ladum & Haaken 2017). After the elections, however, women's promotion of legislative reform and advancement in business and politics were ignored due to the 1997 military coup. Women were relegated to the margins of leadership in government and peace processes, despite their efforts to bring about peace and an elected government (Ladum & Haaken 2017).

Women's involvement in the reconstructive processes in Sierra Leone are essential- in legislation and execution- given the continued prevalence of SGBV in the country after the conclusion of the conflict (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). According to the UN Women's Global Database on Violence Against Women, in 2013, 45% of women in the country between the ages of 15 and 49 had experienced lifetime physical or sexual intimate partner violence (UN Women 2019). 29% of these women experienced SGBV by an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the database being recorded (UN Women 2019). In terms of child marriage in Sierra Leone, 39% of women between the ages of 20 and 24 were in their first marriage/union before the age of 18 (UN Women 2019). Finally, according to the database,

90% of women in Sierra Leone aged 15 to 49 have experienced female genital mutilation (FGM) (UN Women 2019).

The SGBV experiences during the conflict was instrumental in shaping post-conflict SGBV experiences for women in the country (Schroven 2006 in Denney & Ibrahim 2012). After the conflict, SGBV cases have been increasingly reported although this has been attributed to an increase in reporting of incidents and not an increase of occurrence (Foglesong 2012 in Denney & Ibrahim 2012). The issue of SGBV remains systemic in Sierra Leone, a country steeped in patriarchal traditions to the extent that the legal definition of sexual violence is trumped by the community perception which determines the parameters of rape (Denney & Ibrahim 2012). It is imperative to continue the assessment, evaluation and improvement of the mechanisms in place in countries like Sierra Leone, where tradition still outweighs the impact of legislation.

In the case of Rwanda, not only did women endure the horror of experiencing the mass terror of genocide, but also traumas that many women face during the civil war: rape, abuse, abduction, and sexual slavery among other traumas (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000; Williamson 2012; Berry 2015). Abuses were so extensive that the total number of women and girls raped in Rwanda during the time of the war and genocide is unknown (Hamilton 2000). Women experienced the war and genocide differently as women were targeted for their gender (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000). The systematic use of rape as a weapon of war to inflict terror will have lasting and damaging effects on Rwandan society and communities (Nowrojee 1996).

In addition to the gender-based abuses inflicted on women, women also participated in perpetuating the genocide, either actively or under duress by militia groups (Hamilton 2000; Adler & Loyle 2007). In 1997, it was recorded by UNICEF that 5% of the total prison population (5 500) was comprised by women who had been accused of crimes of genocides (UNICEF 1997 in Hamilton 2000; Adler & Loyle 2007). Many women – those who experienced rape, abduction and very personal impacts of the genocide – suffered severe post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, anxiety disorders among other long-term psychological burdens (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000; Williamson 2012; Rieder & Elbert 2013). Aside from the consequences of rape and sexual traumas, a lot of women were left as single mothers or widows, unable to remarry (while men could remarry) and left to fend for their families (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000).

SGBV-related mechanisms brought about during post-conflict reconstruction

In Sierra Leone, to address the harsh legacy of SGBV after the war, legislative and policy frameworks were developed: the Domestic Violence Act (2007), the Devolution of Estates Act (2007), the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2007), and the Sexual Offenses Act (2012) – which aimed to address the entrenched injustice of impunity for SGBV crimes (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). Other policy mechanisms were also established to address SGBV, with the National Policy on the Advancement of Women and the National Gender Mainstreaming Policies developed in 2000, before the end of the conflict (Denney & Ibrahim 2016). Almost a decade later, SGBV was still a focus of policy construction as violence against women was prioritised: the Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2008 noted the need for specific focus on and response to violence against women. In the same year, a National Action Plan (NAP) was developed to effect UNSCRs 1325 and 1820. The National Committee on Gender-based Violence (NAC GBV) was established in 2009 and included collaboration between the national government, donors, local and international NGOs (who focus on violence against women) (Denney & Ibrahim 2016).

Where women's issues are concerned, Rwanda has had laws against GBV since 2009 and a national policy on GBV since 2011 (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011; Care Nederland 2017). The National Gender Policy's central objectives concerned prevention, response, and monitoring while the National Action Plan (2009-2012) and National Gender Policy Strategic Plan aimed to combat SGBV whilst within consideration of UNSCR 1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011; Care Nederland 2017). The government has also set up the National Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) to show its commitment to challenging GBV (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011; Care Nederland 2017). The GMO, the National Women's Council, and the Ministry of Gender and Family Protection were also established as "gender machineries" to reaffirm the country's commitment to combating SGBV (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011). In addition to these efforts, SGBV prevention incorporated several legislative provisions: Law 59/2008 – Prevention and Punishment of Gender-based Violence; Law 27/2001 – Rights and Protection of Children Against Violence, among other relating to land distributions and marriage regimes (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011).

Compared to the results from the same data on Sierra Leone, Rwanda's violence against women statistics reflects a community- from the level of administration- that has taken on board the improvement and prioritisation of women's rights. The Global Database on Violence Against Women records that 34% of Rwandan women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced lifetime physical or sexual intimate partner violence (UN Women 2019). Of these women, 21% have experienced a form of SGBV in the last 12 months (UN Women 2019). With regards to child marriage, 7% of Rwandan women aged 20 to 24 years were in their first marriage or union at 18 years old (UN Women 2019).

The improvement of the mechanisms and responsiveness related to SGBV is essential to monitor as SGBV is a core element of women's societal experiences. Despite the administration level prioritisation of women's rights, a report by USAID observed that women's presence in national government has not translated into agency and empowerment for women at a societal level (USAID 2015). Even with all the progress that has been made, Rwanda, like Sierra Leone, has gender relations which still exist in patriarchal and oppressive ways (USAID 2015). This is reflected in Rwanda's Penal Code which, by 2015, did not provide legal definitions for most acts of SGBV (rape and spousal rape, for example) (USAID 2015). The result of this was the allowance for judicial discretion, which is not often consistent or just, proving to be extremely disadvantageous to women who were brave enough to report their experiences (USAID 2015).

The role of women in post-conflict reconstruction

In terms of civil conflict peacebuilding, it has been analysed that Sierra Leonean women bring a facilitative nature, that considers necessary socio-political and socio-economic agency, to processes (Hudson 2009 in Ladum & Haaken 2017). These perspectives that women bring come from the point of view of women's rights movements; women who have lost children and therefore advocate for the rehabilitation of child soldiers; women who have suffered physical and sexual traumas from conflict who then support the prioritisation of education and health services as a means to reclaim agency and humanity in post-conflict society; and among many others (Anderlini 2007 in Ladum & Haaken 2017). While it is the case that women advocate for issues that affect them, this is not to say that these issues should be categorised solely as "women's issues". It is often the case that the social, political and economic agency

for which women advocate will be to the benefit of society in general – not just the female population (Ladum & Haaken 2017). In Sierra Leone, for example, women did not just demand peace during a time of civil unrest but engaged the public sphere on national issues such as illiteracy, healthcare, and legislative reform (Ladum & Haaken 2017).

The activism of women during peace negotiations maintained momentum and purpose into the post-conflict reconstruction with women continuing to promote peace, democracy, and good governance (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). This social engagement by women resulted in engagement with varying post-conflict human security issues: food insufficiency, SGBV, and health and education systems' deficiencies (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). Aware that the responsibility of SGBV does not only lie with women (which is a toxic concept consequent of victim-blaming), social activist organisations have also engaged men and boys in sensitisation activities to improve efforts to hamstring the perpetuation of intolerance and impunity (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016).

In the case of women's roles in post-conflict Rwanda, women made up more of the Rwandan population that survived, making women largely responsible for the reconstruction of the country (Nowrojee 1996; Adler & Loyle 2007; Williamson 2012; Berry 2015; Amour-Levar 2018). Single mothers and rape victims were all at a serious disadvantage in post-war Rwanda due to patriarchal stereotypes and gender inequalities in law and traditional practice (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000; Williamson 2012). From these places of destitution and trauma, women created groups amongst themselves to share their grief and experiences, in order to grow and move forward after the war (Nowrojee 1996; Hamilton 2000; Berry 2015). Women had to mobilise their agency and take up new positions in society in order to survive and allow the country to prosper.

The scarcity of men in Rwanda after the civil war was evident. In addition to heading single-parent homes, women took up the mantle in areas of community business, organisations and local government staffing (Williamson 2012; Berry 2015). This also evolved into women emerging as community and country leaders (Williamson 2012; Berry 2015). In assisting with the reconstruction of Rwanda, women formed cooperatives and organisations that were of aid to the national government (such as the Ministry of Family, Gender, and Social Affairs) and international assistance groups (USAID and the UN) (Hamilton 2000). Women's groups assisted with the return of IDPs, counselled those traumatised by the events of the genocide,

and firmly tabled women's needs on the national agenda of post-genocide Rwanda's concerns (Hamilton 2000).

Even though social gender dynamics (as they relate to SGBV) seem to be archaic in Rwanda, Kagame has been heralded for his political progressiveness when it comes to the inclusivity of women. In 2003, the new constitution at the time decreed that at least 30% of Rwanda's parliamentary seats be taken by women (Amour-Levar 2018). It did not take long for this minimum requirement to be rendered unnecessary as President Kagame recently slimmed down his cabinet and revamped it almost entirely to introduce a gender-balanced cabinet in which women make up half the parliamentarians (The East African 2017; Amour-Levar 2018; Miya 2018; Ssuuna 2018). Rwanda has joined Ethiopia and a handful of European countries in having a gender-balanced parliamentary cabinet (Ssuuna 2018). In addition, Rwanda can celebrate over 50% of the country's Supreme Court justices being women (Hunt 2014). To all of this, and especially regarding his new cabinet, Kagame notes the importance of having women in positions of leadership in order to address gender-based issues (Ssuuna 2018).

The evolution of enforcement of SGBV mechanisms since the end of the civil conflict

Despite legislative efforts in 2007 and 2012 to combat SGBV, Sierra Leone has not yet outrun its wartime legacy of SGBV in its post-war era, as SGBV continues to be highly prevalent (Oosterveld 2015; Denney & Ibrahim 2016). While there is emphasis on highlighting abusive experiences of women during civil conflict, there is less focus on the extent of post-conflict SGBV in Sierra Leone and how the country has transitioned to address this problem in a post-conflict context (John-Langba et al. 2013). Authors note the seriousness of the SGBV problem in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Rape, domestic violence, assault, school-related abuses and female genital mutilation (FGM) are all prevalent and contribute to the country's SGBV issues after the war (McKay 2004; Park 2006; Shaw 2007; McFerson 2011; Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). It has been found that, despite the presence of policy and legal frameworks to address SGBV in post-conflict Sierra Leone, the state of enforcing SGBV legislation is dismal due to dilapidated infrastructure and under-resourcing from the war (Swaine 2012; Oosterveld 2015; Denney & Ibrahim 2016; Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). The infrastructure deficiencies limit legislations' effect especially in terms of law enforcement and prosecution.

A study by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) reported that lack of resources and capacity have contributed to hindering women's access to SGBV justice (Denney & Ibrahim 2012). In addition to these shortages, the study shows that women often report SGBV crimes to the police as a last resorting, opting rather to use informal mechanisms of justice such as reporting to family members, community leaders and human rights organisations (Denney & Ibrahim 2012).

The SCSL, mentioned earlier, was positioned in the transitional period between post-conflict negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. In relation to women, this criminal tribunal has been applauded for being the first of its kind to convict sexual slavery as a crime against humanity as well investigate the criminality of forced marriage ("conjugal slavery") (Oosterveld 2015). The post-war impact of the SCSL can be traced to the enactment of domestic laws in Sierra Leone, particularly relating to gender issues and the establishment of courts with the specific task of addressing rape cases (Oosterveld 2015).

Other sectors of Sierra Leonean government emphasise the attitudinal issue at the core of SGBV epidemics that dozens of security sector and legislative amendments will not be entirely successful in addressing. For example, political parties campaigned for elections in recent years using narratives which promoted constructive, heteronormative gender roles and even violence against women (Denney & Ibrahim 2016). The same patriarchal values which dictate social behaviour and dynamics at a grassroots level are present at a national political level (Denney & Ibrahim 2016). This indicates that SGBV prevalence is not just a law enforcement and state security pressure point, but a nationwide, multi-level, issue still linked to traditional beliefs and practices.

Despite the establishment of the SCSL at the end of the civil conflict, SGBV incidences in Sierra Leone are still a major concern (Moriba 2017; Tarawallie 2017). Police enforcement related to SGBV is also, at best, inconsistent and unreliable for women at as some forms of SGBV – like domestic violence and spousal rape – are not considered police jurisdiction (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). By ignoring forms of SGBV in public spaces, especially in areas of law enforcement (where victims are supposed to find protection and justice), victims of SGBV across the board are discouraged when it comes to seeking punitive justice. A disturbing factor in post-conflict SGBV cases, which worsens the severity of the ongoing problem, is that perpetrators are often known to the victim – spouses, family members,

colleagues and friends (Moriba 2017). Statistics from 2016 recorded 11 362 cases SGBV across Sierra Leone: 9 135 of these were cases of domestic violence (Moriba 2017; Tarawallie 2017). The study by the ODI (2016) shows that justice remained relatively inaccessible to victims of SGBV for a variety of reasons that have been functional pressure points since the end of the war: accessibility to central areas from rural and semi-rural communities; affordability; legal knowledge impacting perception of accessibility to legal avenues; social stigmatisation of victims; and deficits in staffing, equipment, and resources (Denney & Ibrahim 2016).

In a country recovering from civil war, the UN Development Programme and others note that continued prevalence of SGBV is a challenge not only to women's rights and progress in communities but also to peace consolidation in the fabric of a rebuilding society (Moriba 2017; United Nations Development Programme, 2018). In addition, a lack of resources and funding stymies the attempts by women's activist groups to make a consistent and tangible difference in society (Interactions for Gender Justice 2016). Given the ties of reporting and charging of SGBV cases to patriarchal and cultural practices, efforts made – whether through legislation or social activism – need constant support in order to make an unwavering attitude change in society. When resources and funding are bottlenecked, enthusiasm and awareness wane, making true the saying "one step forward, two steps back".

On the other hand, Rwanda is celebrated for its gender sensitivity at a policy level and practice of gender equality is visible at a leadership level. Under the administration of President Paul Kagame, Rwanda has seen much growth, perhaps not out of the spectrum of poor nations, but under the pillars of healthcare and environmental awareness (Amour-Levar 2018; Devoss 2018). Despite the existence of protective policies, such as the National GBV Policy mentioned above, women and girls are still at risk of frequently experiencing SGBV. This largely has to do with limited capacity by the government when there are many priorities competing for capacity (Ministry of Gender and Family Protection 2011; Care Nederland 2017).

Additionally, persistence of SGBV can also be attributed to accepted social values and gender norms which are still deeply entrenched in patriarchal practices and gender discrimination (Care Nederland 2017). Even in recent years, disabled women and minor refugees within Rwanda have been targeted as victims of SGBV given their impairments and isolation from a sense of community and family members (Marshall & Barrett 2017).

Reporting on and documenting SGBV in Rwanda does not seem to be as accessible compared to the analysis of Sierra Leone and Liberia. However, there still seems to be reports which state that SGBV is prevalent in post-conflict Rwanda. A report by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion of Rwanda in 2011 showed a comparison over 2009 and 2010 between the types of SGBV cases reported to the police: women beaten by husbands, 388 (2009) and 430 (2010); women murdered by their partners, 38 (2009) and 83 (2010); women who committed suicide because of their husbands, 9 (2009) and 20 (2010) (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011).

From these statistics, it can be seen that reports are on the increase meaning one of two things: either there is growing confidence and safety in Rwanda's official legal avenues, or that there is an increase in SGBV perpetration. Despite the progress made with President Kagame at the helm, Rwanda still struggles with SGBV prevention and response due to a variety of factors (according to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion): knowledge limitations of SGBV prevention and laws; financial dependence on perpetrators by victims, creating reluctance to report; a shortage of human and financial resources to address cases; a lack of coordination between branches of response mechanisms; and the continued presence of stigmatised and negative cultural beliefs around SGBV (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011).

Given the continued prevalence of SGBV in Rwanda, it has been suggested that SGBV sensitisation should start at a community and school level in order to combat the patriarchal practices rooted in Rwanda culture and practice (Therese 2018). For the most part, the African community can look to Rwanda as a guide on how to self-correct in a democratic and peaceful context. The country is not without its post-conflict issues, but President Paul Kagame looks to be making changes that are visibly positive that will hopefully translate into improved experiences for Rwandan women.

Liberia

The background to the Liberian civil conflict is detailed in the first chapter above, in the contextual background.

SGBV-related mechanisms brought about during post-conflict reconstruction

The Liberian police had to rebuild their reputation as they were known for their incompetence, brutality, and perpetration of rape and murder during the war (UNIFEM 2007; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Centre for Public Impact 2016). Reconstruction of the LNP involved a deactivation of all standing officers in order for all officers (both re-applying and new) to undergo a more stringent vetting process (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015; Centre for Public Impact 2016). Working with UNMIL, the LNP focused on reforming its ranks to change its reputation and efficiency with two primary initiatives: to improve the employment of women in the LNP to 20% women in police service by 2014 (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Becker 2012; Bacon 2015) and to enhance the LNP's responsiveness to SGBV nationwide (Bacon 2015). SGBV responsiveness has been linked to the representation (or lack thereof) of women in security forces (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015).

From a legislative platform, amendments were made to various legal provisions to create wider-scope protection for women from SGBV. The Rape Law was established in 2005, and it expanded the definition and scope of SGBV in the country to be gender-neutral, created loophole provisions which could criminalise spousal rape, gang rape, and increased the age of consent to 18 years old and the punishment for first degree rape to life imprisonment (28 Too Many 2014; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of the United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). Additionally, the national legislature established the Ministry of Gender and Development in 2001 and received more support after 2003 (Bacon 2015). The National Action Plan for the Prevention and Management of Gender-based Violence in Liberia was set up between 2004 and 2006 by the Ministry of Gender and Development in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other local ministries (Bacon 2015). The national plan also established the Gender-based Violence (GBV) Taskforce which was comprised of representatives from the police, ministries, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders (Stop Rape Now 2012; Bacon 2015).

The LNP in collaboration with UNICEF, UNMIL and civilian police (CIVPOL) established Women and Children Protection Services (WACPS) in 2005 to give vulnerable groups special recourse to justice institutions (UNICEF 2005; Schia & De Carvalho 2009; Schia & De Carvalho 2009). The WACPS was designed to respond to reports of domestic violence, sexual assault, and crimes against children (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). WACPS was modelled on the unit of a similar design in neighbouring Sierra Leone, known as

the Family Support Units (Bacon 2015). WACPS was essential for basic access to rights and the protection as many Liberians were not aware that rape was a criminal offence that could be reported to the police (Bacon 2015). Despite these steps, however, the WACPS is not fully effective as it is hamstrung by a variety of factors including: case backlog in the judicial system; a lack of consistent infrastructure, resources, and capacity; incoherency between departments involved in the WACPS process (such as the courts and LNP WACPS officials); and the stigma attached to SGBV crimes which proves to be a hindrance to victims approaching the LNP as a first port of call for justice (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016).

The government also established Criminal Court E and the SGBV Crimes Unit in February and April 2009 respectively (Bowah & Salahub 2011; 28 Too Many 2014; Bacon 2015). Criminal Court E had a singular jurisdiction of rape and SGBV cases to present faster relief and justice to victims (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Much like the WACPS, however, backlogs cripple Criminal Court E (Stop Rape Now 2012; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016) and not many cases reached the court system from the LNP. The SGBV Crimes Unit was hamstrung by a lack of financial capacity (Abdulai 2010; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). From its inception in 2009 until July 2011, the SGBV Crimes Unit only managed to lead 16 out of an approximate 200 cases to Criminal Court E, with eight of the 16 reaching convictions (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

The role of women in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction

Women have been largely absent from the LNP for a long time during the war. SGBV sensitisation and elimination would be aided by the recruitment of female LNP members as most victims preferred reporting to female officers (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; UN Women 2016). In 2005, however, only 2% of LNP officers were women (Bacon 2013). Supported by President Sirleaf and UNMIL, Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy team set a goal of 20% of recruited female officers in the LNP by 2014 (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; McHugh 2016). Enhancing this was appointing women into positions of leadership within the LNP such as Beatrice Munah Sieh, and Asatu Bah-Kenneth (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013). UNMIL women were also involved in recruitment reforms. An all-female Indian police unit within

UNMIL served as role models alongside Liberian women in power (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; McHugh 2016; Pruitt 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Their presence resulted in the number of women involved in the security sector increasing from 6% to 17% from 2007-2017 (Pruitt 2016; UN Women 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

A lack of high school education impeded the recruitment of female officers (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015). An Education Support Programme (ESP) was established for women between 18 and 35 years old to receive a high-school degree equivalent in order to qualify for police training (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). The ESP initiative worked by increasing female enrolment: between 2007 and 2008, female enrolment in LNP training surged from 5% to 12% (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). By 2013, the LNP successfully employed almost 17.5% female officers (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

The Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association (LIFLEA) was established in 2000 and grew after the war. LIFLEA consists of female LNP officers who advocate for equal rights, participation and treatment in their roles as LNP officers (WIPSEN-Africa 2009; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Montgomery 2011; Becker 2012; Kollie 2016). LIFLEA's membership of 500 officers served as a collective of role models for Liberian women aspiring to increase their agency in the security sector (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Montgomery 2011; Kollie 2016)
Much like the accessibility challenges faced by the SGBV Crimes Unit and WACPS, the membership of LIFLEA was easiest to access from Monrovia (Becker 2012).

The evolution of enforcement of SGBV mechanisms since the end of Liberia's civil conflict

Many academic reports such as 28 Too Many and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) note the inconsistency between gender progress in the policy arena that does not translate into progress in general human development indicators for women (28 Too Many 2014; Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017). This incoherence between gender progress and the practice of it in society is also evident in the justice system for women who come forward with cases of SGBV. The judicial system is closely linked to the LNP in this case, with the former being the first step of receiving formal redress for victims. For example, the Women and Children Protection Services (WACPS) handled 2352 criminal cases in 2008. Of the 2352, 707 were SGBV-related, of which 272 were sent to court. Eventually, 200/707 cases were withdrawn (Schia & De Carvalho 2009). This is especially significant considering the

constancy of UNMIL in this time: if the LNP does not improve from this point with UNMIL present, the fear is that state security and judicial records such as this will worsen in UNMIL's absence. This problem is largely due to victims having to bear onus of proof at a police and judicial level and the issue is exacerbated when considering the nature of victim-shaming, SGBV stigmatisation, and the overall subjugation of women in society.

Liberian provisions in 2005 and 2008 established rape as gender-neutral and provided for the creation of Criminal Court E and national Sexual Crimes Divisions (SCDs), respectively (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016). As far as implementation is concerned, however, by 2016 it had been eight years since the provision for the SCDs to be created and none were yet established (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016). The country is obligated to ensure all implementation measures are taken to: prevent rape; provide adequate sanctions for rape in law and practice; and ensure reparations for victims (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016). These measures can be found in the national policies aimed at, in whole or in part, addressing SGBV such as: the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2009); the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2010); the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-based Violence in Liberia (2011-2015); and the National Gender Policy (2012) (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2016).

UNMIL Mandate

The UN noted the need to involve broader elements of Liberian civil society in reconciliatory processes but was itself largely absent from commitments to protect human rights in the country during the war (Human Rights Watch 1993). However, a month after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) in August 2003, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1509, establishing the peacekeeping UN Mission in Liberia: UNMIL (Gberie 2004; Peace Insight 2011). UNMIL was mandated to take over from ECOWAS and lead the disarmament and demobilisation of warring factions and overseeing the reform of Liberia (Refugees International 2003; Amnesty International 2009; Jaye 2009; Peace Insight 2011). In March 2018, UNMIL concluded its peacekeeping mission in the country, ending 15 years of involvement in Liberia's policy development, national frameworks and peacekeeping (UN News 2018).

UNMIL's programs were to address women's issues in particular (Refugees International 2003), as women during the conflict were subjected to a multitude of traumatic roles as combatants, sex slaves, and victims of mass sexual violence with the latter being extremely weaponised during the conflict (Refugees International 2003; Amnesty International 2009; Jaye 2009; Tarnaala 2016). In the 14 years of conflict, it is reported that up to 75% of Liberian women were raped (Toral 2012).

UNMIL was established by the UNSC in 2003 with the purpose of containing the tensions post-signing of the peace agreement, as well as aiding in reconstructing Liberia to an autonomous, and peaceful state (UN News 2018; Brosig & Sempijja 2018). It has been deemed that UNMIL has successfully completed its mandate and has officially withdrawn its mission as of March 2018 (UNMIL 2018).

Academic Findings and Gaps in Literature

In terms of the literature on Liberia, authors acknowledge that patriarchal hegemony and unfair, gendered practices have been the basis for the stigmatisation of post-conflict SGBV victims (Sieder & Sierra 2010; Isser & Chopra 2011) as well as the lack of support to these victims by the Liberian judicial system – the latter being a gendered issue highlighted by former president Sirleaf (Sirleaf 2007). Institutional reform is required to support women in Liberia (The Advocates for Human Rights; African Partnership Forum & the NEPAD Secretariat 2007, Toral 2012, Stop Rape Now 2012, & 28 Too Many 2014).

Women are eager to be included through women-led groups and initiatives; it is evident that women have made spaces to include themselves in Liberia's peace process and state-building (Tavaana; The Advocates for Human Rights; Bekoe & Parajon 2007; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; 28 Too Many 2014). The gap in the literature allows space for women to be more than child-raisers and the epitome of peace and vulnerability during war. Women in the context of post-conflict are considered as either peaceful or victims; women are not entirely recognised for their capacity to enact social, political and economic change. Despite the prevalence of women in leadership such as former president Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee, this limitation to the perception of women's agency speaks to a larger societal attitude that is still inherently patriarchal.

The UNMIL mandate acknowledged that an accountable and disciplined police force is essential to functioning democracy (UNMIL 2006). Additionally, the mission had to recognise in 2009 that, despite efforts, SGBV against women and children was still a primary reality in Liberia (Schia & De Carvalho 2009). UNMIL's recognition of the importance of the LNP as well as the continued prevalence of SGBV highlights the need to assess how the LNP responds to SGBV issues. Academics note that integrating gender/women into state and peacebuilding processes is essential to effective development of institutions, increasing inclusivity and adhering to international commitments (Schia & De Carvalho 2009; Domingo & Holmes 2013). Authors also recognise that there is currently a favourable international climate for gender-responsive approaches in fragile and conflict-affected areas according to international norms and commitments (UN Women 2012; Castillejo 2013; OECD 2013).

Literature on UNMIL and the rebuilding of Liberia is extensive, but it is valuable to contribute to the existing literature in a way that looks at a single aspect of the country (the LNP). The major gaps highlighted in the body of literature on the topic is the emphasised focus on the UN mission's prolonged presence in Liberia without sufficiently addressing whether or not the construction overseen has been successful in terms of state institutions, like the LNP, implementing new mechanisms. Additionally, the literature does not adequately address whether the police in particular have transformed over the reconstruction period to become a safe pillar of security for women experiencing SGBV. All that is repeated is the persistence of SGBV in post-conflict Liberia.

Looking at all three case studies explored in the literature review, similarities among them can be deduced. There are six such similarities that make the combination of these African states a sensible collection of literature for the themes of this research.

Firstly, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Liberia have all experienced an intense civil conflict that underwent peace negotiations or early post-conflict state reconstruction at the turn of the century. Secondly, in all three civil conflicts, SGBV was specifically weaponised to damage the fabric of communities by violating women and children. Thirdly, as a result of the previous factor, these affected countries are pained by the legacy of SGBV in their post-conflict societies and communities, with SGBV being committed against women by their partners, family members and people who are known to them. Fourthly, UN intervention and post-conflict

assistance were present in these countries. Fifthly, the establishment of "special post-conflict services" came about in different ways in order to remedy the atrocities of the war in order to reconstruct these countries in the most peaceful and stable way possible: in Sierra Leone, the Special Court of Sierra Leone; in Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and in Liberia, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Lastly, in a post-conflict SGBV context, authors who have studied these countries all acknowledge the limitations in government capacity, infrastructure and services in providing redress and protection for SGBV victims.

An important contrast in Rwandan literature is that authors acknowledge the patriarchal social norms and practices that contribute to SGBV issues. The biggest commonality in literature is an emphasis on issues that persist relating to the topic of SGBV. This similarity across countries' literature also highlights a major gap in studies of SGBV in post-conflict states. What is more needed than highlighting a problem is proposing solutions. While some studies provide solutions, they are neither the focus of the paper nor inherently linked to rooting out SGBV in its entirety more than addressing a specific niche of the problem. More clear links need to be made between the larger societal problem of community attitude and conduct and the niches into which studies often focus.

As this case study adopts a similar approach of retrospective analysis, a deviation it will take – which seems to be substantially lacking in other like studies – is a presentation of some practical recommendations that consider the broader, societal issue which is the root cause of, in this case, the conduct of the LNP. The LNP's responsiveness to SGBV is merely a symptom of a more entrenched country/societal attitude.

Apart from the complex linkages between branches of government, ministries, levels of national administration and other actors, the link also needs to be established that the way in which government departments conduct themselves regarding SGBV can be mirrored in the attitudes toward SGBV victims and crimes in communities. Simply put, the link between grassroots level community attitudes and greater state security practices cannot be severed.

Hopefully, the more authors, commentators and policy writers/implementers consider this, the more likely it will be that the focus of SGBV reform turns to consistent attention to attitudinal, policy and practical reconstructive harmony.

In conclusion, the analysis and subsequent recommendations and conclusion will take into account the literature presented in this chapter, to look at the way in which SGBV and state security are currently written about Africa – not just Liberia. Using the gaps in the literature stated above, the recommendations, limitations and conclusion of the paper will be considerably more comprehensive when combined with the findings and data analysis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Methods

This paper utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methods in data retrieval. The use of a mixed method for data collection is a unique form in which to carry out a study, as, usually, studies adopt a single methodological structure: either quantitative or qualitative. Both quantitative and qualitative types of research have their benefits and combining the methods in this study allowed more substantial research gaps to be found across both forms of data which further advocated for this study being conducted.

Mixed method research strengthened the arguments posed and data analysis presented at the end of the research paper. Correlations in quantitative and qualitative data strengthened the concluding assessment, while a lack of correlation between the quantitative and qualitative data was easier to substantiate given the knowledge of all forms of data relating to the topic.

Methodological Application

The methodological application in this paper used theory-building process tracing. Process tracing is a tool used for analysis which allows descriptive and causal mechanisms to be gathered from evidence (Collier 2011). Process tracing works closely with case studies and allows for substantial and decisive contributions to be derived from a diverse range of research objectives such as: “identifying novel political and social phenomena and describing them”; “evaluating prior explanatory hypotheses, discovering new hypotheses and assessing these new causal claims”; “gaining insight into causal mechanisms”; and “providing alternative means of addressing challenging problems” (Collier 2011).

In this paper, process tracing was effective in being able to identify social phenomena- the patriarchal hegemony which is the foundation of SGBV-related interaction at a community level and even in terms of police and judicial agency. Process tracing was also effective in discovering a new hypothesis and assessing the causal claim (the explanation of this is below). With regards to gaining insight into causal mechanisms, the causal claim below is a summary of the broader explanation of the causal mechanism of patriarchal hegemony and tradition that inhibits the progress of SGBV responsiveness and mechanisms outlined in chapter four. Finally, the recommendations in the final chapter of this paper showed the alternative means by which to address the problem of this paper, as is the benefit of process tracing.

In addition to this, according to Collier (2011), qualitative tools can add further substance to quantitative analysis. This was useful and most effective in this paper as it adopted a combination of inductive and deductive methodologies, or a mixed methods approach. Theory-building process tracing was used because both the IV and DV were known. Specifically, version one of theory-building process tracing was applied because the IV and DV were known, but a causal link needed to be established between the two. This link was established by assuming that either:

> The process of reconstructing the LNP after the civil conflict under the mandate of UNMIL has resulted in the LNP's response to SGBV improving during the years of the mission. Liberia is hailed for having gender-sensitive post-conflict policies, overseen by UNMIL, and this hypothesis will assume the policy mechanisms are used. Or:

> The LNP has not improved its response to SGBV over the years of the mission as UNMIL mandates/mechanisms have been overruled by traditionally hegemonic and patriarchal practices, beliefs and habits where SGBV is concerned. It may also be the case that UNMIL is not as effective as was hoped due to state independence and sovereignty, if the LNP shows no signs of increasing improvement in responding to SGBV.

Through using theory-building process tracing, either one of the links above could be established between the IV and DV as the paper looked to process trace the responsiveness and mechanisms of the LNP over the time of the UNMIL intervention. The latter link, however, was found to be the causal link between the presented IV and DV. Process tracing also allowed space to account for causal mechanisms and intervening variables that linked the two main variables. A causal mechanism considered was the second auxiliary research question: the involvement or consideration of women in the reform of the LNP. The outcome of this causal mechanism was informative to the outcome of the analysis. One of the main intervening variables noted was the Ebola outbreak in 2014, which redirected not only funding but primary security concerns for Liberia. Another intervening variable considered was Liberia's adoption of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan in 2009.

Research Design

Like the research methodology, the research design of this paper also incorporated a mixed methods approach. In its combined deductive and inductive design, the paper made use of both qualitative and quantitative tools to present the outcome, intervening and primary variables. The inductive research approach was used as observations were made from the research first. Thereafter, the theory used was applied. The deductive research aspect of this paper was based on using the applied theory of the paper to develop a hypothesis/hypotheses which are then tested. In this paper, the hypotheses are mentioned above in explaining the process tracing application. As it was mentioned above, one of the casual links between the independent and dependent variables proved to be the correct hypothesis. Furthermore, the deductive approach was used to deduce conclusions from the analysis of the paper. It is the deduction of this conclusion that allowed the recommendations to be set out, as the problem was diagnosed and identified in the analysis. Conclusions and generalisations were drawn based on the research provided in the findings and data analysis chapter. Utilising a mixed methods approach in the design of this research accommodated a much more comprehensive view of the research which developed a theory and recommendations from the outcome.

In order to draw out results in the most efficient and coherent manner from this research design, thematic content analysis will be used to analysis the collected data. Thematic content analysis was used to categorise qualitative data into common themes within the research (Anderson 1997). Content analysis was used to make deductions and "inferences about the characteristics or experiences of persons or social groups" (Smith 1992). This was most effective for this research as it looked at developing diagnoses (and potential solutions) to the experiences of Liberian women in social and judicial context.

The categorisation of data took place in collecting research and analysing its worth for contribution to the research. In chapter four of the report, the thematic content analysis was effective as the data analysed was categorised based on the three sub-questions explained in chapter one. Furthermore, within each theme, the analysis was broken down in chronological order. This was done as the best way to assess the evolution of responsiveness and mechanisms- as stipulated in the research title. In sorting data chronologically as well, a further level of thematic content analysis was included in this research. The use of thematic content analysis simplifies the presentation of the findings- more easily digestible and coherent.

Engagement with Theory (development or testing)

This paper adopted an inductive research design and theory development. The title of the paper relates to the IV, which suggests that this paper is inductive, i.e., the outcome was explained first and then the paper looked at the relation of the outcome to the DV.

Theory-building was applied in this paper because the claims could be generalised and be applied to many states, especially considering the common way women are treated and used during civil conflict. At the same time, the theory developed could form a narrow scope condition for its application because the research related directly/specifically to national police forces in post-conflict contexts. In other words, a general theory could be formulated regarding police in post-conflict security.

Theoretical Application

Feminist Theory of Gender and War

Authors on the Feminist Theory of Gender and War assert that rape and SGBV against women as a weapon of war has become a common narrative in war strategies and practices, to the extent that SGBV in post-conflict society is only conceptualised through analysing patriarchy and gender disparities in society (Sjoberg 2013 in Rinehart 2015; Meger 2018). Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and post-conflict SGBV are understood differently but should both be viewed within sexual politics (Meger 2018). Utilising the lens of sexual politics enhanced the understanding that the concept of power as it relates to gender dynamics is not isolated to CRSV but is also inherent in peacetime societies (Meger 2018).

Policy makers and academics in the field agree that the shared experiences of women and their ability to contribute to both war and peace are underutilised (Haleh & Eade 2004). Cynthia Enloe, a feminist author, explains that "where women are", in terms of their role in society, is not in conventional spaces considered in global politics: "are women's roles as secretaries, clerical workers, domestic servants, and diplomats' wives relevant to the business of domestic or international politics?" (Enloe 1989 in Tickner & Sjoberg 2013). Questions such as this highlight not just the relevance of feminist theories, but the need for them. Women are generally on the margins of politics (domestic and global) and considered to exist in the

"private sphere" of caregiving which renders them invisible in the "public sphere", where real agency can be found (Tickner & Sjoberg 2013).

Feminist theory is of particularly appropriate use in this paper as it has been noted that in times of war, militaries and civilians rely on the existence and support of women, specifically *as women*, i.e., the role they are traditionally set up to fill in society: as caregivers, food providers, domestic beings that cement communities together and, when necessary, objects for male sexual satisfaction and child-rearing (Enloe in Tickner & Sjoberg 2013).

Additionally, war and peace are dichotomised as war is seen to be the business of men and peace is the business of women (Wylie 2017). The Feminist Theory of War, as it is referred to by Laura Sjoberg (2013), brings to the forefront, the gendered aspect of war that is many things: non-binary, inclusive, and left on the back burner in many considerations of women's positioning in war and peacetime (Sjoberg 2013 in Rinehart 2015). Gender and war theory extends women's agency and participation (Meger 2018), and by doing so, also extends women's post-war agency and abilities (Haleh & Eade 2004).

The Theory of Gender and War was applicable to this research as the theory overtly addresses CRSV and SGBV, which are the foundational problems on which this research was based. This research will be able to contribute to the Theory of Gender and War by creating a dialogue within the theory that regards post-conflict state security development in relation to SGBV as an extension of the lack of security and use of CRSV. Liberian women's agency is extensive, as is reflected by leading figures such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee, among others.

Contributing to this theory will reinforce women's extensive role in their own post-conflict security, the continuation of the cultural narrative of patriarchy as it relates to SGBV, and conduct at a civilian and state police level. In addition, the scope condition of the presence of UNMIL was significant in contributing to this niche of feminist theory, as it looked at international standards, and international intervention by the UN and whether or not the latter was beneficial to women's access to post-conflict state security. This assessed SGBV in a multidimensional – and not binary – manner. Using this theory in assessing the subsidiary questions allowed women to be assessed in a more inclusive post-conflict context, in terms of their inclusion and roles in LNP reform.

Data Collection

The sources utilised for this research paper consisted of a mixed typologies approach. The analysis was based on quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. These sources were from academics in the field as well as official reports by international organisations such as: AU Women, UNICEF, UN monthly mission reports, records of state progress by the UN Secretary-General, UN Peacekeeping reports, the UNMIL official site and resolutions, and the Government of Liberia's Ministry of Justice reports on SGBV. These sources provided an analysis of recent data regarding the LNP's response to SGBV reports and cases, and the UN's observations in its facilitating capacity.

Where quantitative data was concerned, the Ibrahim Index for African Governance (IIAG), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the Liberian government's joint programme with the UN on SGBV were the sources of useful numerical data. The data obtained from these sources were extremely beneficial once converted into graphical material for analysis.

In terms of qualitative data, the majority of reliable research was obtained from organisations such as Human Rights Watch as well as government reports by the United States' Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour. These sites provided annual human rights reports on the state of Liberia. By relying on consistent annual reports, research was more easily comparable. In addition to this, many academics in the field and international research groups such as the Centre for Public Impact, UNMIL, and the Stimson Centre, were used as contributors to quantitative analysis.

The use of quantitative and qualitative data, as mentioned earlier, was beneficial in reaching a reliable conclusion. However, this research primarily used qualitative resources but was backed up by quantitative data collected.

Evaluation of data collected was a combined approach of thematic analysis and content analysis. However, given the nature of the research questions and problem presented in the first chapter, there was a greater reliance on/use of content analysis when the data was explored.

Research Process

In order to answer the research questions presented, appropriate data needed to be collected and analysed. As a start, the history of the Liberian conflict was documented for contextual background. Following this was an analysis of the evolution of UNMIL's mandate from 2003 until their departure in early 2018. This involved collecting UNSC resolutions, UN reports and articles that look at the work of UNMIL peacekeepers in Liberia. This aided in finding out what policies and mechanisms relating to SGBV came about as a result of the post-conflict rebuilding of Liberia under the UNMIL mandate.

The role of women also needed to be assessed: first in how women aided the peace process which eventually led to Liberia reaching post-conflict status, and second in how women were included in Liberia's reconstruction, with especial consideration of the country's national police reform regarding SGBV. These roles were assessed through recounting the historical part women played in Liberia's peace process, as documented in qualitative form, and also through analysing the employment of women in Liberia's reconstructed police force. The latter was achieved by acquiring research of a qualitative nature which reported on Liberia's reconstruction as well as of a quantitative nature which supplied data on the employment of women in the LNP.

Using the research gathered, an analysis was conducted on the evolution of the LNP during the UNMIL mandate, especially as it related to the LNP's response to SGBV. Thereafter, recommendations have been developed to better the situation that considered the facts presented from the research and analysis. The methodological and theoretical approaches explained above were implemented in the following chapter, which looked at the findings and data analysis necessary to the research scope and research question breakdown illustrated.

Chapter Four: Data Findings and Analysis

This chapter answers the research question in a detailed and comprehensive manner. The broad research question is: “has the LNP’s response to SGBV been improving in the period of UNMIL deployment?”. Given the complexity of the number of factors that would contribute to formulating a response to this research question, the engagement with the material to develop a response will be broken down into 3 sub-questions.

The sub-questions of the broader research scope will establish a foundational milieu to the investigation. These sub-sections of the data analysis will be broken down by answering the following questions: “what mechanisms and policies relating to SGBV were established during the rebuilding of the LNP with the presence of UNMIL?”; “what was the role of women in police reform and in the application of mechanisms to address SGBV?”; and, finally, “how has the enforcement of SGBV-related mechanisms evolved from 2003-2017?”.

From here, the analysed data will be used to draw conclusions in order to develop a holistic response to the broad scope of this investigation. Conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the results of the use (or lack thereof) of the mechanisms in place to suggest ways the LNP can focus on bettering SGBV response.

In conclusion, the findings of this chapter show that, from an international and domestic standpoint, SGBV issues were a centrality to reformation especially considering the suffering of women during the war. SGBV considerations extended to new policies based on international standards as well as the awareness that women had to be involved in reformation processes. Beyond that, women needed to be more included in all facets of reconstruction. Provisions were made in national policy such as the Rape Law and the establishment of the SGBV Taskforce to implement SGBV concerns in a specialised manner. Quantitative data courtesy of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2017) showed that Liberian policies intended to protect women against GBV have been stable and improving in post-conflict. It is deduced, however, that the high continued prevalence of rape and SGBV show that the policies do not reflect in a shift in improved behaviour regarding SGBV perpetration.

As far as the involvement of women is concerned, the findings of the paper show that a target of 20% female recruits was set for the LNP. In light of this, initiatives were implemented to encourage and bolster women's recruitment and training programmes for the police force. This paper finds, however, based on quantitative data depicting women's representation in the LNP's force and leadership that it seems women's involvement in the LNP is a tick-box exercise to meet a reform quota. Women have not been elevated into LNP leadership as much as men, and it appears that, in the greater scheme of things, women's employment and involvement in the post-conflict LNP is an obligation more than a tool to be utilised to its maximum effect.

Regarding the evolution of the LNP's responsiveness and mechanisms at hand, several annual human rights reports, detailed below, show that the LNP's impediments to full efficiency are much the same in 2017/2018 as they were in 2006. Corruption, a lack of financial and miscellaneous resources, and capacity deficiencies have all hindered the LNP's effectiveness. The findings also show that general societal culture, that is steeped in patriarchal values and practices, has been a major determining factor in the way SGBV victims have been received by their communities and LNP officers as well.

Within the LNP, this societal attitude manifested as SGBV victims expressed hesitation to approach LNP officers. This is because victims are met with pressure by police to not place a report, fuelling the stigmatisation of victims. Some of the quantitative data in this chapter shows that most cases that are received at health care facilities do not reach LNP offices. Due to victim-shaming and stigmatisation, this chapter also accounts for the popularity of out-of-court settlements that are conducted within communities, that prevent victims from facing a harsh state security process and justice system that often does not provide them with the justice they deserve.

Furthermore, this chapter also finds the linkages between the case study and the Feminist Theory of Gender and War which is important to note given the prevalence of civil conflict and the plight of women in a post-Cold War era. This paper also offers a contribution to this theory as it includes the dynamic of international intervention and international gender equality/human rights standards in the pursuit of women's rights and security in post-conflict society. International standards and the lack of adherence to them (in practice) due to patriarchal belief systems that determine societal attitudes can be moulded into a niche tenet of

the gender and war theory that looks at women in the context of post-conflict involvement and experience.

What mechanisms and policies relating to SGBV were established during the rebuilding of the LNP with the presence of UNMIL?

In the aftermath of Liberian civil war, once the peace agreement was established in 2003, the country was in a fragile state: attempting to withdraw all concerns of another conflict while rebuilding the country in a safe and stable manner without using force or exacerbating tension – an environment which had not existed for decades. This is the milieu on which the importance and scale of UNMIL is understood. UNMIL maintained a presence in Liberia for 15 years, starting in 2003, and is the biggest peacekeeping mission deployment in UN history (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

While UNMIL had a wide scope of maintaining overall peace and stability while assisting with the rebuilding of Liberia, the mission's primary area of focus concerned security: not only the disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants, but to also focus on the larger epidemic of the culture of violence against women and girls that became culturally entrenched in the country (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015; Centre for Public Impact 2016). In addition to this, a primary element of the UNMIL mandate was to have 3500 trained LNP officers by 2007 (Centre for Public Impact 2016). Armed robbery and SGBV are the most prominent post-conflict security pressure points in Liberia (Bacon 2015) which not only further justifies the investigation of this paper but validates the spotlight of concern that has been poured onto the issue of SGBV in Liberia.

After the war, Liberian police had to work to rebuild their reputation and gain the trust of citizens as they were known for their incompetence, brutality, and perpetration of rape and murder (UNIFEM 2007; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Centre for Public Impact 2016). However, the environment in the country looked promising to turn these fears about the LNP around in favour of gender-sensitive policies dictating the way forward. Four contextual circumstances paved the way for gender-sensitivity to be a centralised focus.

Firstly, women's involvement in hastening the end of the war was not only prominent but has been widely celebrated (Bacon 2015): through peaceful insistence, Liberian women forced their way into a seat at the negotiating table, at which they fought for peace and the signing of the CPA in 2003 (Bacon 2015). Secondly, Liberia marked its post-conflict legacy with the first democratic election of a female president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Bacon 2015), who vowed to support women's causes and move Liberia into a new age. Thirdly, the years leading to the end of the civil war as well as the early stages of the rebuilding process in Liberia were characterised by gender-sensitive reforms from both local and international sources. Fourthly, Liberia had sufficient support to receive ample guidance and assistance through the process of drafting and enacting gender-sensitive policies (Bacon 2015). The most visible of these external supporters was UNMIL, mandated with the specific duty of assisting Liberia's post-war reconstruction and stability (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of the United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016).

Liberia's signatory status on international standards paved the way to localised gender-sensitive policies. The first of these international standards was UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, passed in 2000, focused directly on women, peace, and security, and how women have been treated in situations of conflict and the importance of their prioritisation and inclusion (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015). UNSC Rs 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960 shortly followed UNSCR 1325 and they also provide a call of urgency to women's security issues, women's representation in the security sector and the needs for special measures to combat SGBV (UNIFEM 2007; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015).

Liberia is also a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which means the country has legally-binding commitments to ensure the prevention of rape, other forms of SGBV, and abuses against women (UNIFEM 2007; Human Rights and Protection Services of the United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). UNMIL worked with the Ministries of Justice and Defence to focus on rebuilding the police, justice institutions and the national security policies in the country (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). This agenda would also focus on increasing SGBV security (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

In acknowledgment of the severity of women's issues (in particular, SGBV) in Liberia, in 2005/early 2006, the country's legislature established the Rape Law (Deen 2007; Bacon 2015).

This law expanded the definition and scope of SGBV in the country to be gender-neutral, created loophole provisions which criminalised spousal rape, gang rape, and increased the age of consent to 18 years old and the punishment for first degree rape to life imprisonment (28 Too Many 2014; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of the United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016).

In addition, further domestic gender-sensitive reform could be found in various sectors: the national legislature established the Ministry of Gender and Development in 2001 during the conflict and received more support after 2003; and the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Management of Gender-based Violence in Liberia was set up between 2004 and 2006 by the Ministry of Gender and Development in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other local ministries (Bacon 2015). The national plan also established the Gender-based Violence (GBV) Taskforce which was comprised of representatives from the police, ministries, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders (Bacon 2015). The taskforce shared data and met regularly to discuss the status of, and progress with, combatting SGBV.

In terms of reforming the LNP, the reconstruction of Liberia allowed for the country's security sectors to undergo a complete overhaul, meaning all standing officers at the time of the war were deactivated and required to reapply to the force in order to go through a vetting system (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015; Centre for Public Impact 2016). This was to ensure that those officers who were inefficient, unqualified, or lacking the skills to be members of the LNP were not tasked with that responsibility after the conflict. The ambition of this mechanism was to not only change the efficiency of the police force but to recreate the culture within the LNP – which was associated with criminal and wayward behaviour during the war.

Working with UNMIL, the LNP focused on reforming its ranks to change its reputation and efficiency. The two primary initiatives that focused on gender-sensitisation within the LNP were, firstly, to improve the employment of women in the LNP to 20% women in police service by 2014 (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Becker 2012; Bacon 2015), and secondly, to enhance the LNP's responsiveness to SGBV nationwide (Bacon 2015). These two central focuses were inherently linked as SGBV responsiveness has been linked to the representation (or lack thereof) of women in security forces (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015).

Apart from recruitment, the LNP worked with UNMIL to also improve SGBV responsiveness. This sparked the creation of the Women and Children's Protection Section (WACPS) in 2005, which was designed to specifically respond to reports of domestic violence, sexual assault, and crimes against children (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). WACPS was modelled on the unit of a similar design in neighbouring Sierra Leone, known as the Family Support Units (Bacon 2015). Police officers from Sierra Leone who were partly responsible for the establishment of the Family Support Units arrived in Liberia in 2005 to train the first two groups of LNP WACPS officers and to guide future trainers for upcoming sessions (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

The WACPS was made up of three departments: the Sexual Assault Unit, the Juvenile Unit, and the Domestic Violence unit (Bacon 2015). The WACPS officially sprung into operation in September 2005, and it was essential for the units to be extremely thorough in their data capturing in compilation, as monthly reports were sent to the GBV Taskforce mentioned earlier (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015). Working closely with public cooperation and engagement, the WACPS required public knowledge to be used to its full effect. To achieve this, UNICEF, UNMIL, and WACPS launched awareness campaigns and utilised multimedia platforms to create publicisation in community spaces (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). This group also interacted with the community and other police units, including representatives from the LNP's Gender Unit, Personnel Unit, and the Traffic Patrol Unit (Bacon 2015).

These wide-scope engagements scheduled by the WACPS aimed to educated communities on how to report crimes, preserve evidence and follow procedures in order to better educate communities on the correct protocol to use their security services (Bacon 2015). Services provided by the WACPS were essential for basic access to rights and the protection that comes with them as many Liberians were not aware that rape was a criminal offence that could be reported to the police (Bacon 2015). By May 2013, the WACPS, which had started with 25 trainees, had grown to have over 300 trained officers (Bacon 2015). Positively, almost one-third of active WACPS officers were female and stationed in 52 police stations across all Liberia's counties (Bacon 2015).

Despite these efforts, however, the reform of the LNP alongside gender-sensitive policy upgrades, and the policies and mechanisms instated were not as effective as desired due to the complex nature of the factors that affect functionality. This can be attributed to the fact that the

overhaul of the LNP meant that while the new force was well-vetted, it also resulted in a lack of experience and "institutional memory" regarding the operation of the police force (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015). This lack of experience in the deactivation of former officers was an inefficiency that was only exacerbated by the lack of infrastructure and funding (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015) to fully resource and equip the LNP with the necessary training and equipment to function at the level initially envisioned.

Even if there was infrastructure and funding in place to train and equip the new LNP, the induction and training process would have been severely impaired by the legacy of the war which left most Liberians uneducated (Bacon 2015) and lacking the capacity to perform the duties required of them.

Concerning the WACPS, even though this branch of the LNP made strident efforts to publicise the illegality of rape and SGBV, multiple factors once again play a role in the success or failure of anti-SGBV initiatives in the country. Despite the LNP's best efforts with the education and awareness provided by the WACPS, judicial obstacles have prevailed as a consistent challenge. One of the impediments to justice through formal avenues is the backlog in caseloads. This was partly because more people began reporting incidences of SGBV when they were educated to know that SGBV crimes are reportable offences (Bacon 2015). The backlog in the courts is also indicative of a slow-moving justice system, in which there is no consistent and efficient coordination between the various moving parts that relate to the judicial system: between police and prosecutors; a joint lack of capacity between security and judicial bodies; the absence of evidence collecting and securing mechanisms; and a general lack of stable infrastructure to support mechanisms (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016).

Additionally, inabilities between the LNP and the judicial system became a hindrance to the effectiveness of the WACPS. Capacity was also a substantial concern to the success of the WACPS. Despite the enhanced awareness and positivity with which the WACPS was regarded by UNMIL and other external actors present in Liberia, increased capacity building and training was imperative to WACPS officers attaining the skills needed to help victims (Bacon 2015). Capacity building was also hindered by resource constraints which prevented the wide-scope presence that WACPS needed to have. A lack of transport and communication tools

meant that the WACPS's operating scope and accessibility to the majority of Liberians outside main areas was extremely narrowed (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

Resource constraints also stretched to the extent of income: there was not enough money to incentivise officers for their specialised training after joining the WACPS, even though the initiative was prioritised by local and external support (Bacon 2015). Exacerbating these pressure points is the entrenched, inescapable patriarchal nature of victim-shaming SGBV survivors, who were often made to feel culpable in their attack by trained WACPS officers (Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). An inefficient judicial system has been one of the largest impediments (Bowah & Salahub 2011) not just to the success of the WACPS but also to the protection of victims and survivors of SGBV across Liberia.

In an effort to rectify the judicial challenges faced by the LNP, the Ministry of Justice set up two mechanisms: Criminal Court E and the SGBV Crimes Unit (SGBVCU) in February and April 2009 respectively (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015). Criminal Court E was designed to work around the issue of backlogged SGBV cases in regular circuit courts and had a singular jurisdiction of rape and SGBV cases to present faster relief and justice to victims (Bowah & Salahub 2011; 28 Too Many 2014; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). This court also accommodated on-camera hearings which protected the victim and witnesses whilst not compromising on receiving their testimonies (Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016).

Establishing the court once again indicated the Liberian government's sincerity in aiming to achieve gender sensitivity, especially related to SGBV as a central national priority. Similarly, the SGBV Crimes Unit was formed to assist the operation of Criminal Court E by not only supervising prosecutions within the special court, but also providing holistic care for victims (Abdulai 2010; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Professionals within the SGBV Crimes Unit included: four case liaison officials; two social workers; administrative, and financial staff (Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). With this array of expertise, the Crimes Unit was set up to assist victims with legal, medical, protective, and psychosocial services (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

Unfortunately, backlogs and a lack of justice continued in Criminal Court E (Stop Rape Now 2012; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016) and not many cases reached the court system from the LNP. It was recorded in the August 2015 term that only one out of 137 SGBV cases that were in the special court's docket went to trial that month (Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Overall in 2015, only two cases reached conviction. From its inception in 2009 until 2014, only 38 rape cases went to trial in Criminal Court E, with 24 of those reaching convictions and the remaining 14 reaching 'not guilty' verdicts (Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

In the very same period of time mentioned above, over 280 rape cases were dismissed on grounds of *nolle prosequi*, meaning the court dropped these cases for varying, often vague, reasons (lack of evidence, 'compromising' cases – which were settled traditionally outside judicial confines or bribery by perpetrators – or a general lack of will and/or diligence by police and prosecutors to follow through with cases) (Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Both competence for SGBV cases and capacity served as impediments to the functioning of Criminal Court E. From its establishment until mid-2015, the special court had one out of two mandated sitting court judges (Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). The low number of sitting judges decreased the number of cases that could be heard concurrently, worsening the existing problem of SGBV case backlog. Even within trial proceedings, the process was further delayed by unqualified staff. It has been noted that the typist for the special court was not a trained stenographer (Bacon 2015) which slowed down the pace of trials and skewed the testimonies given based on incompetence.

Like Criminal Court E, the SGBV Crimes Unit was crippled by a lack of financial capacity, with the Ministry of Justice not allocating enough budget to the unit which only made this mechanism less accessible to those who desperately needed its services (Abdulai 2010; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). Even with the guidance, training, and technical support of UNMIL, the LNP and the national government was not able to capitalise on the innovations they planned to implement. From its inception in 2009 until July 2011, the SGBV Crimes Unit only managed to lead 16 out of an approximate 200

cases to Criminal Court E, with eight of the 16 reaching convictions (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). The procedure for criminal trials has become a deterrent to survivors seeking formal justice. While 280 cases were dropped due to insufficient evidence in 2013, another 100 accused of rape clogged up correctional facilities whilst awaiting trial – all the while, accusers wait for justice to move forward with their lives (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015).

Despite the efforts to rebuild Liberia's police reforms that were heralded as innovative, the results have not been as positive in their implementation (UNIFEM 2007; Bowah & Salahub 2011). One of those that will be elaborated on in the second aspect of the research question is how the recruitment of more female police officers showed ambition, but surrounding procedural elements hindered the desired impact (Bacon 2015). The positive outcomes that have been noted include the timing with which conscious rebuilding of gender-sensitive policies and the use of extensive foreign assistance (Bacon 2015).

Even towards the end of UNMIL's deployment in the country, the mission was dedicated to pursuing improvements on its mandate concerning SGBV. In 2016, UNMIL advocated for and supported the Senior Leadership Conference on Gender and Security (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Here, the Ministry the Justice joined the National Defence and Gender ministries in establishing a Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce to create gender offices in all national security institutions (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). The task force is a landmark innovation to find ways to implement UNSCR 1325 and the inclusion of women in the security sector (UNIFEM 2007; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). The second of these conferences was held in December 2017 and it tabled the discussion of how to increase women's participation in security sector reform processes (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). In an attempt to ensure gender inclusion in the security sector was understood and continuously considered, the government collaborated with the University of Liberia in launching a course on Women, Peace, and Security Studies (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). In early 2018, this led to the establishment of the first Women, Peace, and Security Studies library in the country (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

These efforts, that have continued more than 15 years after post-conflict reconstruction began, show that UNMIL and Liberia are aware that the prioritisation of SGBV and women in the security cannot be slowed down. With all that has been set up in relation to this agenda, there

is still the acknowledgement that more needs to be done to improve work in the security sector for women (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

Even with the presence and guidance of UNMIL, there are gaping cracks in the operation of the mechanisms used by the LNP and departments related to the LNP, all of which contribute to the lack of effective responsiveness to SGBV reports. These deficits in operation are largely identified as: consistent incapacity; lacking infrastructural and training opportunities; an ineffective and unfair judicial system that is not supportive of SGBV victims. Most especially, there is still an entrenched patriarchal system which not only determines traditional/community response to SGBV crimes and victims but has not been fully removed from the systemic way security officials and trained members of the LNP respond to SGBV victims and their experiences.

Despite the acknowledgement that SGBV efforts, responses and mechanisms require improvement and constant review, the developments that have occurred in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction are a stark improvement from previous contexts. There is little to no record of SGBV policies before instability began in 1980 and, as expected, institutions and strong political foundations such as the rule of law disintegrated in the 14-year civil conflict (De Carvalho & Schia 2011).

Considering the above, it is clear that Liberia has come a long way in its policy and mechanism development in their reconstructive efforts. It can also be argued that international presence and influence (like the UN) had an impact on the innovations such as the SGBV Taskforce, SGBVCU and Criminal Court E. This shows that Liberia's policies are in alignment with new standards of viewing war, especially in a post-Cold War era in which intrastate conflict is more common than interstate war. This alignment of policies to the current nature of war can be attributed to the presence of international standards in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction.

With reflection on the gender and war theory, the link between the application of feminist theory to the Liberian conflict and subsequent reconstruction can be established. In the most simplified way, feminist theory can be seen in action in the development of Liberia's SGBV policies and mechanisms through the prioritisation of SGBV issues in policy drafting, the update of the Rape Law to accommodate a greater spectrum of the dynamics of rape, and the establishment of niche of services that cater specifically to SGBV issues.

Authors, Sjoberg (2013), Rinehart (2015) and Meger (2018), who have written on the Theory of Gender and War observe "that rape and SGBV against women as a weapon of war has become a common narrative in war strategies and practices, to the extent that SGBV in post-conflict society is only conceptualised through analysing patriarchy and gender disparities in society". The literature review (chapter two) above recounts the weaponisation of SGBV during the war by combatants (Tavaana; Jaye 2009; The Advocates for Human Rights; Toral 2012; Stop Rape Now 2012), while the analysis above has (and the continuation below will) also conceptualised post-conflict SGBV around patriarchal culture and the general, societal disparities between men and women (see GII graph below).

The theory encourages the utilisation of sexual politics as an alternative lens by which to view conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and post-conflict SGBV (Meger 2018). Briefly explained, sexual politics is the power discrepancies between men and women in society (Millet 1969; Collins Dictionary 2018). Gender and war theory encourages the use of sexual politics when analysing GBV as it can be applied to the gender dynamics that exist during war and CRSV and is also present in peacetime society (Meger 2018). This applies to the paper as the use of CRSV has already been mentioned as desiring the effect of destabilising opposition factions during the war.

Upon analysis, it can be deduced that the impact of the weaponisation of SGBV is only possible because of the position women take up in society – not only because of the abhorrence of violating a person. Women are seen as fragile, symbolic of peace and detached from war. By subjecting women and girls to CRSV, perpetrators exercise power and control over their victims, thereby displaying a wartime-version of sexual politics. Even in post-conflict, "peacetime" context, women and girls are still violated through SGBV, often by their partners or people they know. This shows why the extension of the gender and war theory to include gender dynamics in a post-conflict context – especially during reconstruction – is important.

What was the role of women in police reform and what is their role in the application of mechanisms to resolve SGBV?

The Liberian government had committed to increasing the inclusion of women in the operation and leadership of the country, and the presence of UNMIL further encouraged the agenda of women in post-conflict peacebuilding (UNIFEM 2007; Stimson Center 2012). UNMIL's gender advisory office also took this agenda to a domestic level by advocating for the adoption of a national gender policy (Stimson Center 2012). Using UNSCR 1325 as a starting point for reconstruction, UNMIL and the government of Liberia established gender units in all national security branches (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

In terms of the reform of the LNP, the prioritisation was clear in the initiatives to enhance SGBV awareness and responsiveness in the police force and employ more female police officers (UNIFEM 2007; Stimson Center 2012; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of the United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016). The recruitment of female officers would be essential to the goal of SGBV sensitisation and elimination, as most victims preferred reporting to female officers (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; UN Women 2016). In 2005, however, only 2% of LNP officers were women (Bacon 2013).

Given the absence of women in the LNP for many decades, the first port of call for LNP reform was identified as the recruitment of more female officers into the force. This was a very direct way in which women were involved in LNP reform. With support from UNMIL, President Sirleaf and Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy team set a target of 20% of female officers in the LNP by 2014 (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015; McHugh 2016). President Sirleaf supported this initiative and enhanced the sincerity of the representation of women by appointing women into positions of leadership within the LNP: Beatrice Munah Sieh as the country's first female inspector general in 2006 and Asatu Bah-Kenneth (who was the founder of the WACPS in 2005) (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013) as the LNP's deputy inspector general in the following year (Bacon 2015), and Vera Manly, who was in the LNP's inaugural group of post-war trainees, as the leader of the WACPS from 2010 (Bacon 2013).

These appointments were a clear indication from the Liberian administration at the time that representation matters especially at leadership levels, where women can see fellow women in

power in male-dominated spaces. Looking to regional neighbours such as Ghana and Sierra Leone, reform in the LNP became enlightened to ways that women could be targeted for recruitment: through public events at schools and universities, and incentives including training and salaries (Bacon 2013).

The women in LNP leadership were vital to the recruitment process as they inspired other women from their positions of authority and agency. UNMIL women were also involved in recruitment reforms. An all-female Indian police unit who were a part of the UNMIL mission (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; McHugh 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018) engaged with young women in rural Liberia and served as role models alongside the leaders of their own country. Their influence and involvement in security sector reform resulted in the number of women involved in the security sector increasing from 6% to 17% in the time of the Indian police unit's presence (2007-2017) (UN Women 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Sadatu Reeves, the current Assistant Police Director for Administration, was appointed in 2016 and is one of the LNP's top commissioners but the only female director (UN Women 2016; Liberia National Police 2017). Officer Reeves believes that the continued recruitment of female police officers will only increase the LNP's inclusivity and responsiveness in the future (Bowah & Salahub 2011; UN Women 2016).

By early 2007, however, only 5% of the LNP was made up by women (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015), which was a distance away from the goal set for 2014. This deficit was found to be caused by a lack of high-school education (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2015), which was a legacy of the war, but also of traditionally entrenched patriarchy in which women were not educated in the same way as men (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013).

To remedy this disparity, an Education Support Programme (ESP) was established for women between 18 and 35 years old, who had already completed up to Grade nine, to receive a high-school degree-equivalent in order to qualify for police training (UNIFEM 2007; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). Aptitude tests were conducted in order to determine those women who would be able to complete the intense learning of 11 school subjects and final examinations over three months (Bacon 2013). After this fast-tracked learning process, candidates would be inducted into basic police training in the LNP academy (Bacon 2013).

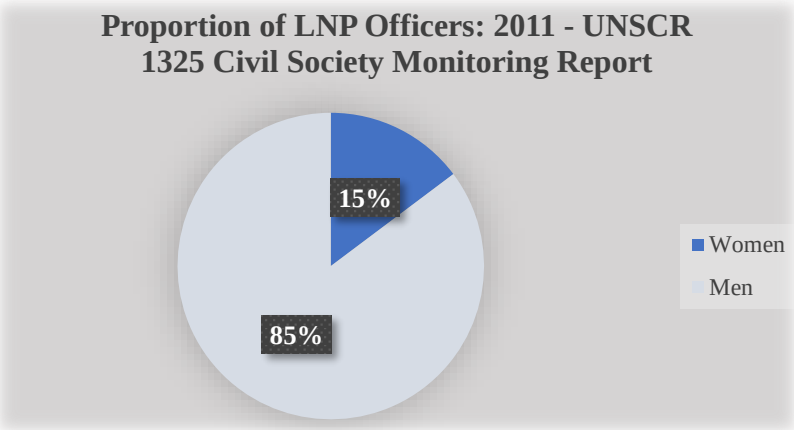
The programme above is another example of how gender sensitivity and development is required at all national levels for the LNP's restructuring to be efficient. The ESP initiative worked remarkably in increasing female enrolment: between 2007 and 2008, when the problem was identified, and the ESP established, female enrolment in LNP training surged from 5% to 12% (Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). Dubbed as the "multiplier effect" by UNMIL, more women began to apply for the ESP process as more women were recruited to the LNP academy through the system (Bacon 2013). By 2013, the LNP successfully employed almost 17.5% female officers (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon 2015). When the critique of the ESP is assessed, it is evident, however, why the initiative was met with mixed reviews as a tick-box exercise.

Despite these recruitment successes at a surface level, issues lay deeper in terms of women's representation. Firstly, it has been noted that women have been recruited as basic members of the LNP and there are few women represented in high-level positions or trained for specialised and elite forces of the LNP (Bacon 2013). Secondly, women were not substantially deployed outside Monrovia to become accessible to victims and accusers outside of Liberia's capital (Bacon 2013). Thirdly, the LNP does not have any record-keeping database in place to keep track of the progress of officers, in order to determine whether female officers are being retained, trained or promoted comparatively to their male colleagues (Bacon 2013).

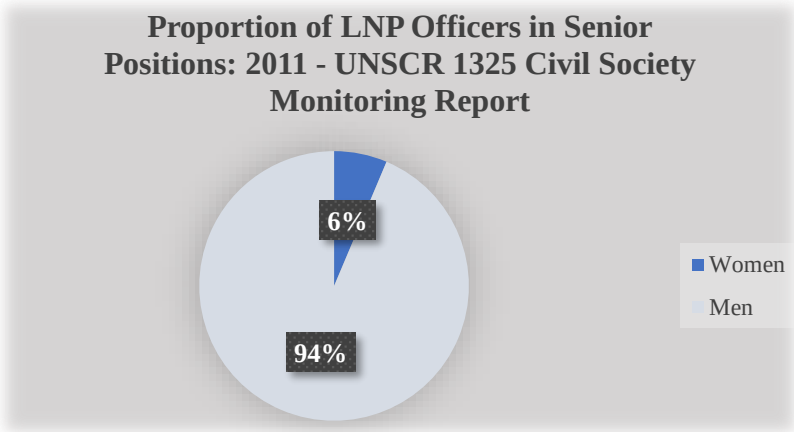
The observations above show that, despite the increased recruitment of women, the critiques of the ESP suggest that the initiative was a fast-track process simply to achieve the 20% goal by 2014 and not to ensure that women were substantially involved in SGBV processes (Bacon 2013). Essentially, the negative remarks on the ESP imply that the programme was instated to secure a number of female recruits to reflect reform, and not to establish quality female officers who are prioritised to protect and promote SGBV rights.

The UNSCR 1325's 2011 Civil Society Monitoring Report tells of the gender-sensitive training that has been included in the LNP's training academy process (Luppino & Webbe 2011). This training included a monthly workshop and review of the academy's curriculum- particularly SGBV responsiveness (Luppino & Webbe 2011). By March 2011, 620 women had been processed through the academy and the Accelerated Learning Programme was established to ensure more women were educated and could be enrolled as well (Luppino & Webbe 2011). Like the LNP, however, the training academy suffered as a result of poor equipment, logistical

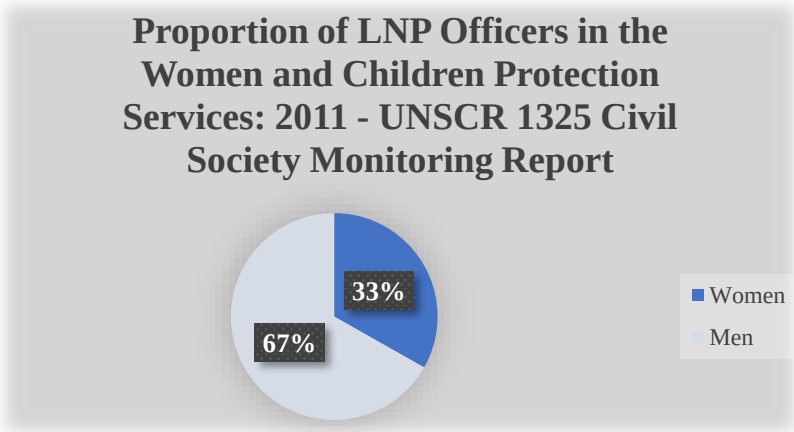
resources and training facilities (Luppino & Webbe 2011). There was also data gathered in this year that allows for a review of the status of women's representation in the LNP:



Data Source: Luppino & Webbe 2011



Data Source: Luppino & Webbe 2011



Data Source: Luppino & Webbe 2011

A monitoring report on the adherence to UNSCR 1325 was carried out in 2011 and, among other things, assessed the progress in the employment of women in the LNP, according to the goals set during reconstruction planning (Luppino & Webbe 2011). These statistics show improvements since the end of the war, but also reveal that there is still much to do in the way of creating an equal footing for women in the LNP. All the data presented by the monitoring group on the employment of women in the LNP shows that women fall behind in all areas of representation in the police, most especially in senior positions.

The graphical data shows that women have made the most ground in representation in the WACPS division, making up one-third of the unit. This progress can be attributed to the fact that the WACPS was set up after the war, when the prioritisation of women's involvement in the security sector was tabled. The other data can be perceived as more telling as the general employment of women, as well as their representation in senior positions, have been spaces for occupation since before the war. The low levels of women in these two fields indicate that there is more room for improvement than there has been progress made since the end of the war. The fact that, by 2011, only 6% of senior positions in the LNP were taken up by women shows that the recruitment of women has been to fulfil the requirement of 20% employment, and not to create substantial and meaningful change within the LNP. If that were the case, more women would be in leadership and senior roles.

The recruitment of women in the security sector is about gender equality, representation of the country's demographics in the LNP and providing better outlets for survivors of SGBV to utilise for their protection (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). By April 2018, initiatives to recruit women were still moving forward with a recorded 18.6% female officers in the LNP (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

In addition to their responsibilities to the state, female LNP officers have taken the initiative to stand up for their position in the security sector. The Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association (LIFLEA) is made up of female LNP officers who have banded together to advocate for equal rights, participation, and treatment in their roles as LNP officers (WIPSEN-Africa 2009; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Montgomery 2011; Becker 2012; Kollie 2016). LIFLEA's membership stood at approximately 500 female officers and served as a collective

of role models for Liberian women aspiring to increase their agency in the security sector (Bowah & Salahub 2011; Montgomery 2011; Kollie 2016).

LIFLEA was established in 2000 and predominantly lead by the previously-mentioned Beatrice Munah Sieh. The inception of LIFLEA before the end of the war, and its continued existence in post-conflict Liberia (Montgomery 2011; Becker 2012; Kollie 2016), indicate that the issue of women's protection – even as employees of the security sector – has been an identifiable pressure point in Liberia: that it is a legacy of the war that still needs to be addressed. LIFLEA notes that progressive policies that seem to benefit women's rights should only be considered effective when they are consistently put into action – not merely drafted into existence (Montgomery 2011).

In addition, the association also highlights the critical importance of access to consistent expertise, skills in fundraising capabilities and mobilising resources in the successful development of such a collective (Montgomery 2011; Becker 2012). Multiple rejuvenations, specifically in 2008 and 2010, of LIFLEA had to take place since its inception according to its 2010 Strategic Planning Workshop (Montgomery 2011). The revitalisation of the association has been necessitated because, over the ten years of its existence, the same problems persisted, and these handicaps created a cycle of being unable to address the same handicaps impeding LIFLEA's success (WIPSEN-Africa 2009; Montgomery 2011).

These issues have been of a structural and political nature which have decreased the association's inherent aim of supporting Liberian women in the security sector (WIPSEN-Africa 2009). Structurally, LIFLEA suffered from operational constraints, challenges to meeting strategic objectives, and the membership process (WIPSEN-Africa 2009). Politically, what started off as a non-partisan group (a huge element of its appeal) became hampered by its own politicisation in post-conflict Liberia (WIPSEN-Africa 2009; Becker 2012).

Even from a leadership perspective, it has been noted that LIFLEA shares a common problem with other emerging, progressive groups: the success and guidance of the association are placed in a singular figurehead or lead police officer and duties are not shared (Becker 2012). Much like the accessibility challenges faced by the SGBV Crimes Unit and WACPS, the membership of LIFLEA was easiest to access from Monrovia (Becker 2012). This was a disadvantage to civilians who could have benefitted from access to female officers as well as to female LNP

officers outside Monrovia who could have contributed and profited from membership. LIFLEA and LNPWA have been key ways in which women have been involved in the reform processes in Liberia. These groups can be heralded as evidence of women fighting for equal rights in the security sector (Becker 2012).

More recently, in 2016, the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) launched the LNP Professional Development Fund which consisted of over 40 female LNP officers (IDLO 2016). The Development Fund offices will receive skills training that aims to increase accessibility of justice and security to Liberians affected by SGBV (IDLO 2016). The fund allows women to access higher-ranking positions within the LNP (IDLO 2016), something that was not being achieved by the ESP exercise. This programme was designed to be competitive and merit-based in order to achieve the best results and to be of invaluable benefit to the women who are accepted into it (IDLO 2016). Professional skills courses related to their positions and careers in the LNP/greater security sector, to be studied in tertiary institutions in Liberia, are made available to female LNP officers with a minimum of two years' experience (IDLO 2016).

When brought back into the LNP working environment, these skills and knowledge will prove to be beneficial to the communities these officers serve (IDLO 2016). Officer Lucy Dukuly notes first-hand how the Professional Development Fund has given her managerial skills and policy knowledge to develop monitoring and evaluation capabilities within the LNP (IDLO 2017). In receiving funding from the programme, Dukuly has been able to study Public Health and glean more insight into the capacity required to be fully accessible for SGBV cases (IDLO 2017).

Similarly, Superintendent Irene Giddings-Cole received the bursary and is learning skills related to designing and implementing policy (IDLO 2017). Knowing the scarcity of resources available to the LNP, Superintendent Giddings-Cole aims to use her additional education to serve as an administrator of the LNP in order to manage and guide future LNP officers (IDLO 2017). The diversification of qualifications, skills, and expertise boosts the confidence of women in the security sector and makes them invaluable and irreplaceable to the LNP.

The tables that follow are a summation of the quantitative data assessed in this section of the research report. This will be followed by an assessment of the data as it relates to the theory of

gender and war. The collation of data below is a coherent recall of the major qualitative findings.

The number of female LNP officers recruited from 2005 – 2018:

Year:	Percentage of LNP officers made up by women:
2005	2%
2007	5%
2013	17.5%
2018	18.6%

The impact of the all women Indian police presence in Liberia from 2007 – 2017 as it pertains to influencing Liberian women to increase their involvement in the security sector:

Year:	Percentage of women involved in Liberia's security sector:
2007	6%
2017	17%

The Education Support Programme's impact on the surge of women's enrolment in LNP training during the year of its initiation, 2007 – 2008:

Year:	Percentage of women enrolment in LNP training:
2007	5%
2008	12%

Proportion of LNP officers in 2011:

Women:	15%
Men:	85%

Proportion of LNP officers in senior positions in 2011:

Women:	6%
Men:	94%

Proportion of LNP officers in the WACPS:

Women:	33%
Men:	67%

In terms of applying the gender and war theory, this aspect of the case study is especially linked to the theory as it looks at the involvement of women in Liberia's LNP reconstruction. Mentioned earlier, the act of post-conflict SGBV has no weaponised purpose (this does not justify the use of SGBV as a weapon of war) and can, therefore, be related to the power perpetrators have over their victims that "allows" them to violate the bodily integrity of another. Using the tools recommended by authors on the Theory of Gender and War, this provides understanding into how post-conflict SGBV can be viewed with a lens of sexual politics.

Authors in this field (Haleh & Eade 2004; Wylie 2017) also note that women's agency and participation is not fully utilised in times of both war and peace and that these two periods have been dichotomised – war is associated with men and peace with women, although women are still not fully utilised in the latter. The research presented on Liberia affirms these assertions: most literature on war refers to the violence committed by male combatants, and female soldiers and participants in civil conflict are often regarded as anomalies (Tarnaala 2016).

Despite this, however, the fact that women are accounted for as participants in the Liberian civil conflict speaks to the fact that both men and women's roles and times of war and peace are non-binary which is the observation made by feminist theory of war author, Laura Sjoberg (2013). Expanding this, the Theory of Gender and War aims to extend women's agency and participation in times of conflict and do the same for women's post-conflict abilities and agency (Haleh & Eade 2004; Meger 2018). This theory comes to life in the example of Liberia as, mentioned above, women were active, and not observers, in the conflict, and that men and women have been present in post-conflict reconstruction (but it can be argued from this paper that women are still not meaningfully included in post-conflict reconstruction).

However, the recruitment of female LNP officers, and the lack of growing female leadership suggests that the exercise of increasing the number of female LNP officers is a tick-box task to match the goals set with no intention of creating meaningful reform. This speaks to the elements

of theory which hold women as bastions of peace, but the reality is not that women are heavily involved in the continuation of peace. The interpretation of this theoretical notion from this aspect of the research can suggest that women being perceived as "peaceful" rather refers to women being more uninvolved in perpetrating violence and therefore peaceful. This can be taken to the extent that women are seen as passive, not peaceful. This perception can be confirmed by the research that especially accounts for the importance of women in the LNP, but the graphical data reflecting the contrary with women being all but invisible in LNP leadership.

This theory aims to extend the perception of women's role in wartime and post-conflict society to more than passive observation. In a post-conflict context, the case study of Liberia adds to this theory as it shows the impact women's participation had on the engagement of other women in Liberian society. The example of this in the case study is the all-female UNMIL troop from India, and how these women served as role models to aspiring female LNP recruits and the desire from civilians to report SGBV crimes to female LNP officers more than their male counterparts.

In the answering of the research question above, it is seen that the awareness of women's involvement in state reconstruction is growing. With the lack of female leadership in the LNP, for a start, it is clear that women are not effectively involved in the application of the LNP's established SGBV mechanisms. This relates to the Theory of Gender and War as it shows that there is a differentiation between post-conflict reconstruction and a state of peace as women are not as involved in Liberia's current state as the theory would suggest, with women being representative of peace.

How has the enforcement of SGBV-related mechanisms evolved from 2003 to 2017?

The UNMIL mandate closed recently, in March 2018 (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Observing an overview of the evolution of the LNP as it relates to SGBV over the period of the UNMIL mandate provides the opportunity to ascertain the LNP's current weaknesses and strengths, and how to improve these outside UNMIL's presence and influence. This will provide insights into the progress that can be expected from the LNP as a self-sustaining security institution after the UNMIL mandate.

In 2003, at the cusp of post-conflict reconstruction, Liberia had a lot of room for progress (International Legal Assistance Consortium 2011) given the fragmentation of institutions during the war. In the opening stage of rebuilding, it was found that those accused of perpetrating crimes in Liberia would be able to bribe/pay a gratuity to officials involved in their correctional process to guarantee lenient/dismissive rulings (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). LNP officers were privy to these bribes as arresting officers and the first officials responsible for processing criminal charges (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). Given the lack of resources and structure, the LNP lacked financial and infrastructure capabilities to investigate crimes (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003).

In addition to this, and the normality of corruption with the department, the LNP also lacked the training and expertise to investigate. This bred further corruption as perpetrators who were released by courts due to insufficient evidence were arrested again by the LNP on false charges (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). From a general human rights perspective, Liberia's record remained extremely poor in the aftermath of the civil war: ethnic killings defined the first half of 2003, and security forces were frequently responsible for the violation of human rights (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003).

Observing SGBV in 2003, domestic violence was harshly extensive but had not yet been addressed by the government or courts as a prevailing and serious problem (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). SGBV attacks were a weapon of the civil war and continued afterwards, as displaced women were raped by demobilised militia gunmen (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). The security sector in Liberia was not able to bring justice to victims as attackers were not just opportunistic, but also came from within security forces after the war (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). At this point, advocates for the promotion and protection of women's rights came predominantly from NGOs such as the Mano River Women's Peace Network and private, professional individuals (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2003). The government and the LNP did not prominently feature yet in protection from SGBV in the early days of post-conflict reconstruction.

A study of Liberian women in the aftermath of the civil war was conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in 2004. Still categorised as internally displaced persons (IDPs), women in IDP camps experienced extreme SGBV incidences even in the post-conflict

reconstruction stage: by members of fighting forces; domestic violence within the IDP camps; sexual exploitation by men with authority withholding resources; and young girls being pushed into forced marriages by their parents (Omanyondo 2005).

Approximately 81% of women were subjected to or experienced acts of SGBV in the period of internal displacement (Human Rights Watch 2005; Omanyondo 2005) in the latter part of the war and after its end (Omanyondo 2005). At this time, home was not a safe place for Liberian women as it was more often than not the site of their abuses (Omanyondo 2005). Reporting SGBV was not really an available option as women were not only discouraged by community stigma but also by the fact that LNP officers were often responsible for attacks on women and girls during and in these early stages after the war (Omanyondo 2005). It was also during this time in 2004 that UNMIL extended its mandate for another year in order to further assist the country, especially in the context of upcoming national elections (United Nations Security Council 2004).

For Liberians outside urban areas, UNMIL's primary reach was inaccessible to them and they were more vulnerable to attack (Human Rights Watch 2005). Reports on the LNP's use of SGBV mechanisms are rare, even non-existent, at this early stage of reconstruction as the primary focus regarding the LNP was to rebuild and train a new set of forces (Human Rights Watch 2005). SGBV mechanisms had not yet been established. What was certain at this time, however, was that victims of SGBV were fearful of the LNP and did not perceive the national police as a place to receive protection.

In 2005, Liberia found itself still recovering from the structural, institutional and societal destruction of the war with the assistance of external peacekeepers (Omanyondo 2005). LNP reform commenced, with a goal to increase women's recruitment and police responsiveness to SGBV (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009; Bacon 2013). This recruitment process, mentioned earlier in the data analysis, aims to be equal and inclusive of female LNP officers, promoting responsiveness to SGBV crimes and victims, and to rebuild the trust of the LNP within communities (Bacon 2013).

At the beginning of this reform process, the LNP was made up of only 5% of women in 2005, and women officers were preferred by SGBV victims (Bacon 2013). This is hampered by societal gender norms which position roles in the security sector as male-dominated (Bacon

2013). These societal dynamics resulted in the establishment of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy target of 20% female LNP officers by 2014 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009; Bacon 2013). By late 2005, funding and support for LNP reform had grown and gained external investment particularly on its gender-mainstreaming efforts (Bacon 2013).

In the wake of this external support, especially the presence of the all-female Indian UN troop, female applicants to the LNP tripled (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009). Furthering the SGBV initiatives in April 2005 was the creation of the WACPS of the LNP (UNICEF 2005; Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009). LNP officers were specifically trained to join the WACPS and within three years (2008), there was a WACPS branch of the LNP in every county capital in Liberia (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009).

Mentioned earlier, part of LNP reform was the recruitment of new officers who were not responsible for perpetrating human rights violations during the war (Human Rights Watch 2006; Bacon 2013). The Human Rights Watch overview of 2005 found that these new, inexperienced officers were responsible for corrupt conduct such as extortion (Human Rights Watch 2006).

2006 can be highlighted as a significant year for Liberia. Firstly, in January 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated into office as the first democratically-elected female president in Africa (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006). Secondly, the government launched a national action plan (NAP) to combat SGBV with provisions to strengthen the justice system and enhance health care for survivors (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006; Liebling-Kalifani et al 2011; UN Women 2016). The government notes that previous combative efforts have been disjointed and wasteful as a result of their lack of coordination and subsequent repetition which is unsuccessful (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006).

Based on this, the government set up the NAP with a variety of coordinated agents: the ministries of Gender and Development, Health, Justice, and Internal Affairs, international actors, and local NGOs (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006). Part of the NAP's objectives was to minimise SGBV by 2011 by establishing: a stronger criminal justice

system wherein SGBV cases are decided quickly while offering victims due judicial process, and a cohesive and integrated national protection system with protection and responsiveness capacities (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006; UN Women 2016).

The NAP had in place key strategies to achieve its objectives. They reflected a multifaceted, broad approach: research, youth and male involvement, sensitisation programmes, the elimination of negative cultural practices that influence SGBV, and enhancing education to name a few key avenues of implementation (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006; Abdulai 2010). For all except one (related to negative cultural practices), however, these plans did not make up for the core issues which relate to victims' fear of rejection and stigmatisation when they verbalise their experiences and the lack of confidence in the justice system to protect women's rights (Liebling-Kalifani et al 2011). This protection was increasingly needed as women were not finding it within the security sector.

Contributing to the insecurity of women – in addition to a weak judicial system and social stigmas – is the inexperience of the new LNP recruits (Liebling-Kalifani et al 2011) and the LNP's own challenges around resources and capacity. LNP training and capacity building was one of the objectives of the SGBV NAP (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006). The deficits within the LNP – and security/justice services in general – were exacerbated by the public perception that those responsible for administering security services for SGBV crimes displayed insensitivity toward victims (Gender-based Violence Interagency Taskforce 2006; Abdulai 2010). This speaks to the broader community stigmatisation of SGBV victims which only further perpetuates the hesitation expressed by victims to come forward to receive formal redress.

A 2006 global survey by the UN showed that Liberia had just over 100 LNP officers for every 100 000 people (Human Rights Watch 2013). This ratio of officers to people was lower in Liberia than both the global and African averages: 300 officers per 100 000 people and 187 officers per 100 000 people respectively (Human Rights Watch 2013). In this year, UNMIL also re-launched efforts to recruit more qualified women to the LNP as part of revised police reform (UN News 2006). Since May 2004 until early 2006, over 1 600 LNP officers had undergone training and the new reform targeted approximately 1 300 trained recruits (UN News 2006). By September 2006, almost all of the 2 400 former LNP officers who did not get

recruited through the reformed system had been retired and given a severance pay-out (Amnesty International 2007).

Despite the efforts made to reform and restructure the LNP at this stage, Amnesty International's annual report on Liberia observed that there was still a high level of violent crime being carried out by former combatants of the conflict (Amnesty International 2007). The report also records that rape suspects were regularly released on bail and/or settled cases outside formal avenues of justice for victims (Amnesty International 2007). Amnesty International's overview of 2006 only records one successful rape prosecution in that year (Amnesty International 2007). The UN and women's rights groups continued to highlight the lack of priority given to SGBV cases.

Even with the presence of approximately 15 000 UN peacekeepers and an additional 1 200 international civilian police members, the prevalence of violent crime such as rape continued to escalate in 2007 (Human Rights Watch 2008). The LNP was limited by a lack of funding for transportation, communication and forensic equipment (Human Rights Watch 2008). These hindrances are felt most in rural areas, as there is little priority/attention placed on locations outside Monrovia, even from UNMIL (Human Rights Watch 2008). Within the LNP, there was still a frequency of unethical conduct by LNP officers: extortion, bribery and excessive use of force (Human Rights Watch 2008). Reports even note that LNP officers were responsible for abusing and raping detainees who were awaiting trial (Human Rights Watch 2008).

In terms of the rape of women, government statistics have a record of 1 000 incidences in 2007, which is an increase from 568 in 2006 (Human Rights Watch 2008). It seems as though the 2006 amendments, mentioned earlier, which expanded the scope of rape and its punishment, did not have the desired effect immediately. This year's rape statistics contributed to the instalment of the LNP SGBVCU as well as Criminal Court E. As a part of the SGBV NAP reform from 2006, the GBV Secretariat was established and, through the Ministry of Gender and Development, organised SGBV sensitisation workshops and seminars (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009).

Speaking to the broader societal problem of patriarchal conduct which provokes SGBV is the conduct of peacekeepers. In 2008, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services in collaboration with the UNMIL Conduct and Discipline Unit investigated eight cases of SGBV

by UNMIL staff and peacekeepers (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). By the end of the year, two of the eight had been substantiated while the remaining six continued to be investigated (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). Continuing from 2007, the LNP continued to investigate allegations of police misconduct and corruption (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). As a result, several LNP officers were dismissed based on investigations (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009).

In addition to this, reports found that the LNP's response time is slow to criminal activity, making them ineffective in providing instantaneous civilian protection and response (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). This lacklustre LNP energy can be partly attributed to a lack of incentive, as officers' salaries are low and not always paid on schedule (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). This leads to decreased motivation and increased corruption. In response to the presence of SGBV, the Gender and Sexually Based Violence Bill was signed into law in August 2008, which provided for the conception of Criminal Court E and an increased sentence for convicted rapists (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009).

It has been found, however, that the SGBV bill was not adequately enforced. The WACPS unit stated that an estimated 275 cases of rape were reported to the unit in 2008: 202 of these were prosecuted, resulting in 21 convictions and 181 pending judgement (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). This was a far cry from the estimated 400 cases of rape reported the year before (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). The stigma attached to SGBV continued to steer victims toward out-of-court settlements with attackers and their families (UN Mission in Liberia 2008; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009).

As an initial part of LNP training, officers received training on the scope of sexual offences (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). FGM is also categorised as an aspect of SGBV, and it was observed that no laws yet existed in 2008 to prohibit FGM and that there was no evidence of the government taking action against it during the year, including LNP training (UN Mission in Liberia 2008; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009).

In an effort to create SGBV reform that is widespread at a community level as well, the government and media worked together to publicise the prominent issue of domestic violence and its criminal liability as an effort to ensure abused women and girls had knowledge of their rights (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2009). Further efforts were pursued with the advent of the UN Joint Programme for prevention and response to SGBV between the government of Liberia and the UN (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009).

The Joint Programme mentioned above came about as a result of the pervasiveness of SGBV in Liberia and its acceptance as a dynamic in gender relations (UN in Liberia 2017; UN Women 2017). The programme was set up for the Liberian government to collaborate with the UN system to reduce SGBV by 80% by 2020 through a series of phased initiatives (UN in Liberia 2017). The first phase of the SGBV Joint Programme ran from 2008-2010 and was responsible for the conception of Criminal Court E (UN in Liberia 2017). The programme included six UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNHCR, and UNMIL), and liaised with the Liberian Ministries of: Gender, Children and Social Protection; Education; Information; Internal Affairs; and Justice (UN in Liberia 2017).

Having an aim of formulating community solutions based in a community approach, the Joint Programme had the right aim to eradicate SGBV at a grassroots level while looking at multiple levels of organisation. The programme worked on five pillars regarding SGBV: prevention, response, advocation for and mobilisation of funds, national and sub-national SGBV coordination, and strengthening of institutions (UN in Liberia 2017). The LNP and the general security sector was an institutional focus of the programme, as the graphical data in the previous research question highlighted the joint programme's observation of women's employment in the LNP in 2011. The joint programme will be referred to again later in this chapter.

In 2009, Liberia became the third African country to launch a national action plan based on UNSCR 1325 and aimed to increase women's equal participation in peace and security initiatives (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009; Liebling-Kalifani et al 2011; Luppino & Webbe 2011; Women's International League of Peace and Freedom 2016). The NAP implementation period was from 2009-2013 and urged improved prosecution for crimes against women and additional protection for victims (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009; Liebling-Kalifani et al 2011; Miller, Pournik & Swaine 2014; Women's International League of Peace and Freedom 2016).

In terms of SGBV, the NAP outlined several strategic issues: government-provided psycho-social and trauma counselling for victims; protecting rights and strengthening security for women and girls; access to better healthcare for women and girls; SGBV prevention; prioritising girls and women's involvement in peacebuilding and conflict prevention; women's empowerment through access to, and increasing of, environmental management; and capacity building in the institutions responsible for the implementation of the NAP (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009).

As far as the LNP is concerned, the NAP looked at: the increase of women working in GBV prevention, response, and specialised units in both law enforcement and security; and training and capacity building in the LNP (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009). January 2009 also saw the graduation of 150 female recruits to the LNP, which was 40 more female officers than 2005 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009). At the release of the NAP, women made up the majority of recruits (Ministry of Gender and Development 2009). At the same time of the graduations, it was recorded that over 2 800 of the 3 800 LNP officers were trained according to WACPS services (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces 2009).

Referring to the Joint Programme mentioned above, the most prolific mechanisms set up in 2009 were Criminal Court E and the SGBVCU which, described earlier, sought to streamline redress and assistance to victims of SGBV (Abdulai 2010; Bowah & Salahub 2011; Medie 2013; 28 Too Many 2014; Bacon 2015; Human Rights and Protection Services of United Nations Mission in Liberia 2016; United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

2009 also saw the development of the Sexual Assault and Police Handbook, by the Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia (AFELL) in association with the Ministry of Justice (Medie 2013). This handbook was created as an accessible training guideline for LNP officers in response to SGBV incidences (Medie 2013). It was noted in 2009 that the number of rape cases being withdrawn from court was decreasing, relative to prior years and other forms of SGBV: between January and December 2009, the LNP referred 40% of reported rape cases to court, withdrew 4%, transferred 3% to other agencies and left the remaining 53% as pending (Medie 2013). The training that accompanied the handbook mentioned above aimed to further sensitise LNP officers to SGBV crimes and how they perceive and respond to them (Medie 2013).

The country reports on human rights practices in Liberia for 2010 showed a further increase in LNP recruits: 293 LNP officers were recruited, trained and deployed to Monrovia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). The report recorded just over 4 000 LNP officers by the end of 2010, with over 1 200 of these recruits deployed outside Monrovia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). Concerning the WACPS, 45 offices were established by 2010, with 21 of these outside the main county, Montserrado (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011).

Infrastructurally, the report observed that, by this stage, the LNP was still poorly equipped (impacting their efficacy), and slow in their response to criminal activity (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). These limitations within the LNP were still found in the areas of constant concern: transport, logistics, communication and forensic abilities (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). The limitations, when combined with low salaries, created an environment that allowed corruption to continue in the police force (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011).

In terms of SGBV, the WACPS has a record of approximately 277 rape cases being reported to them over the year, with 114 of these reaching prosecution (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). According to an August 2010 UNMIL report, approximately 70% of rape victims were children under 16 years old in the six months prior to the report (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). Additionally, out of 95 reports of statutory rape in the year, 46 of them were taken to court (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011).

Rape and SGBV continued to be a widespread plague in Liberia, but the government noted that reporting by victims was increasing. This was attributed to a greater understanding of rape by communities, based on the government and NGO's efforts to create further awareness of the dynamics and legalities around SGBV incidences (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). Criminal Court E prosecuted six SGBV cases and won two convictions out of those, gaining 10- and 15-year sentences for them (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). Within the Ministry of Justice, the SGBVCU continued its sensitisation efforts (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). The Ministry of Gender and

Development also joined these efforts by scheduling workshops and sensitisation seminars (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011).

Regarding domestic violence, the legal prohibition of the offence did not stymy its prevalence. As a result, the GBV Secretariat reviewed its NAP for domestic violence in September 2010 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). The report concludes that women have still yet to recover from the hurdles and setbacks established by the war in almost all facets of life (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2011). The war exacerbated many problems faced by women and all of these can be attributed to the discrimination of women in varying ways.

A 2011 study on security sector reform in Liberia showed that the LNP continued to struggle with the limitations brought on by corruption eight years after the end of the war (Search for Common Ground 2011). Bribes, a lack of armed equipment and consequent fear of armed criminals have hampered the LNP and contributed to inconsistency and corruption (Search for Common Ground 2011Search for Common Ground 2011). Public perception of the WACPS section of the LNP is that it is still necessary and successful in clamping down on SGBV perpetrators (Search for Common Ground 2011). A focus group comprised of women, however, felt that the LNP was unreliable and that UNMIL troops were dependable for communities (Search for Common Ground 2011). Even in the event of a woman attempting to report a case of sexual harassment, the victim was required to pay 3 000 Liberian dollars upfront to receive LNP services (Search for Common Ground 2011).

Compared to the focus group made up of young people and men, the women in Liberia have a negative perception of the WACPS (Search for Common Ground 2011). Contributing to this impression was the fact that at the time of the study, there was only one female WACPS LNP officer in the area (Voinjama) and she was not forward in her community presence (Search for Common Ground 2011). In Nimba County, international NGOs have been financially supporting the WACPS. From a conduct level, however, the community has been unhappy with the WACPS as LNP officers in the section behave unethically by dissuading women from laying charges of various forms of SGBV against their partners (Search for Common Ground 2011).

From women's point of view, the LNP collective under Samuel Doe's administration (prior to the conflict) was better trained and more effective than the LNP troops that followed it, under Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Search for Common Ground 2011). Recommendations by communities regarding the LNP's effectiveness went as far as to suggest that some of the officers dismissed after the war as part of the LNP overhaul and vetting process should be reinstated (Search for Common Ground 2011; Brosig & Sempijja 2018).

The differing opinions on the WACPS are interesting to note: men found little wrong with the WACPS presence and effectiveness while women were generally unhappy with the Section's performance (Search for Common Ground 2011). This shows that, perhaps, to men, women are being catered to by the LNP, but women confirm that their experiences with what the LNP has provided have been insufficient. The existence of the WACPS indicates a knowledge of the important need to address SGBV, but community response shows that the WACPS as it is currently is insufficient.

Another interesting public observation to note is the assessment by communities that LNP showed no signs of improvement in the absence of UNMIL guidance but showed behavioural improvements especially in UNMIL's presence (Search for Common Ground 2011; Brosig & Sempijja 2018). This may be telling to the LNP's future in the UNMIL mandate's withdrawal.

The 2012 Liberia Human Rights Report observes the performance appraisals conducted by the LNP in order to better identify pressure points for improvement (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012). This process led to the retrenchment of three officers in July who were found guilty of harassment and assault of a woman (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012).

A survey by Human Rights Watch in 2012 revealed that Liberians perceived the LNP as the most corrupt state institution in the country (Human Rights Watch 2013). Police corruption has been a deterrent to not only reporting crimes committed by officers but crimes in general, as confidence in the institution dwindles (Human Rights Watch 2013).

In terms of providing state security, the LNP took on increased responsibility, with approximately 1 200 UNMIL troops withdrawing within the year (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012; Human Rights Watch 2013). Much like 2011, the

impediments to LNP in 2012 remained in areas of infrastructure, training, capacity and slow response – all of these aggravating rampant corruption in the LNP (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012; Human Rights Watch 2013). International donors, however, have aided on some of these fronts (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012).

In the case of SGBV, the LNP detailed that approximately 369 rape cases were reported to the WACPS and 125 of these were processed to court (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012). Only six of the cases that went to court were prosecuted, with five convictions and one acquittal (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012). Not only is the final number for which redress is received discouragingly low, but the number of incidences reported to the LNP (via the WACPS or otherwise) is also only a shadow of the true prevalence of rape and SGBV in Liberia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012). The report also acknowledges that the 38 reported cases of statutory rape in 2012 was only a fraction of actual incidences in which girls under the age of 18 are sexually exploited (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012).

The pie chart under research question b, which depicts the recruitment of women officers within the WACPS as one-third of the unit has maintained consistency into 2012 as female WACPS officers still take up this proportion (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012). It seems, despite extensive efforts to promote reporting SGBV crimes, there is a greater hindrance to victims coming forward. This can be attributed to the entrenched attitude toward SGBV and the lack of true effect sensitisation programmes are having on cultural beliefs and social stigmas. Out-of-court-settlements are still attractive to victims outside Montserrado County, who are burdened with the stigma of their experience (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2012).

In terms of police capacity, UNMIL suggested that the LNP will have to roughly double its current force number – to reach approximately 8 000 officers – in order for the institution to fulfil its duties once UNMIL departs (Human Rights Watch 2013). This will be difficult as financial and training resources are already limited for the approximately 4 000 officers in place.

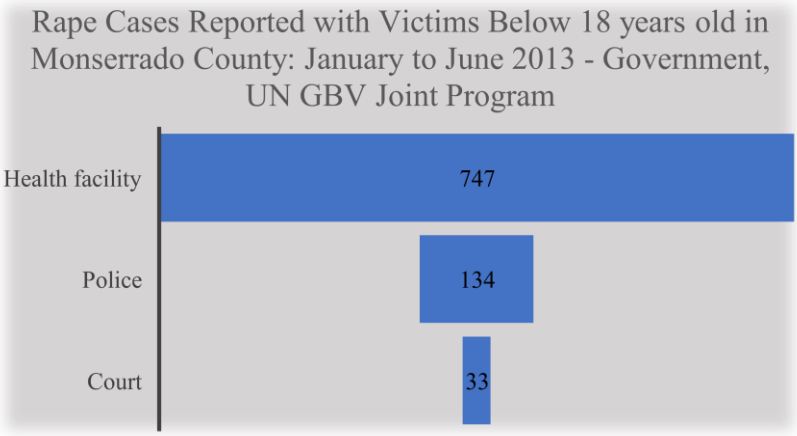
The report by Human Rights Watch provided some enlightenment to the attitude of LNP officers toward their civic duties and responsibilities in 2013. “Justice is not for the poor” is

the concern of citizens who require access to police services (Human Rights Watch 2013). This perception is based on the corrupt way members of the LNP attempt to extort those who come in to make reports by forcing payments for registering a complaint, transport to crime scenes and bribes to be released from detention (Human Rights Watch 2013).

Having said that, however, there has been some progress noted in the behaviour of the LNP since the end of the war: torture and abuse of detainees, a longstanding problem, has decreased and officers are now more inclined to report abusive behaviour of others (Human Rights Watch 2013). This may speak to a shift in attitude regarding stigmas around abuse in Liberia, even though the milieu of LNP practices at this time seems to be defined by corruption (Human Rights Watch 2013). The human rights report for 2013 also mentions an incident in which an LNP officer raped a woman at a police station (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). This further emphasises the hesitation with which SGBV victims approach the LNP: not only do victims carry the burden of being stigmatised, but they also have to fear their safety with officers.

In terms of rape cases, the WACPS received 280 reports in 2013, of which 87 were forwarded to Criminal Court E (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). An additional 37 cases were forwarded to other courts (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). Eventually, only four rape cases were prosecuted from those taken to court: one case reached conviction, one was acquitted and two were pending decision by the time of the report (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). The Joint Program on SGBV report stated that in an instance of 40 cases being received by Criminal Court E in 2013, only two were tried (Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013).

The graph below shows the number of rape cases in which the victim was below 18 years old and how many of these incidences that started in health facilities reached the LNP and eventually the court system:



Data Source: Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013

The data indicates that victims will access healthcare facilities (if possible) to receive the medical help they need but will not reach out to the LNP for the judicial and protective help they require and deserve (Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013). This can be attributed to a variety and combination of factors: young girls who are attacked may be pressurised by their family and community not to come forward with reports, for fear of the community dysfunction it will cause; the victim's own internal shame and awareness of the stigma attached to what they have experienced; financial constraints of legal fees; a fear of police officers who may either attack them as well or shame them for their report; a lack of knowledge on the criminality of the attack suffered, and not knowing their own rights; and a lack of access to police stations or officers outside city centres (Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013; Bernath 2014).

The proportion of female officers within the WACPS remained at one-third of the unit (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). While consistency can be applauded, it should not be mistaken for progress. Outside of the LNP, however, efforts are being made to make SGBV awareness more holistic. UN Women, for example, took 120 men and boys in six communities and educated/trained them as SGBV "role models" to disseminate teachings on reporting and awareness of SGBV cases to the LNP (Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013). These men have formed Men Forum Groups that are linked to the GBV Task Force at a county level. The importance of this kind of initiative cannot be emphasised enough: the burden of suffering and preventing SGBV should not be shouldered by women. There is also space that men and boys can occupy in helping to eradicate the stigma of suffering SGBV, and

to change the fabric of societal attitudes when it comes to perpetrating and responding to SGBV incidence.

In the year that followed, SGBV was not at the forefront of Liberian national priorities due to what can only be referred to as an international health crisis. The outbreak of the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa sent shockwaves globally. For Liberia, the deadliest epidemic of Ebola was of highest priority as President Sirleaf declared a 90-day state of emergency (ending on November 12) in the country (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). By late November, over 7 000 Liberians had succumbed to the virus and, despite international assistance, the epidemic put immense pressure on the country's already limited technical, human, and financial capacity (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014).

As a result of the focus on this medical disaster, Liberia's other problem areas, such as domestic violence, rape and corruption, worsened (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). As far as state security is concerned, UNMIL continued its gradual withdrawal, with the extraction of approximately 1 500 UNMIL personnel (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). This was not before UNMIL officers were accused of sexually exploiting and abusing Liberian women, with 85 cases of sexual exploitation and abuse were lodged against UNMIL officers between 2008 and 2014 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015).

In the same year, the UN Police (UNPOL) ended joint patrols with LNP officers in March, when the Ebola crisis began (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). Because the epidemic required high priority attention, the LNP's deficits in resources, equipment and capacity only deepened in this year (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). The government and NGOs have made efforts to expand the general population's awareness of the dynamics of SGBV the legal definitions of rape and abuse (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). They claim an increase in reporting SGBV incidences is due to these efforts.

Human rights groups, however, state that despite the increase in reporting, the occurrence of rape is still on the rise, because more people are afraid to come forward than those who do (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). In 2014, the WACPS investigated 188 reported cases of rape, of which 43 were referred to Criminal Court E (Bureau of

Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). Seven out of these reached prosecutions, and all seven resulted in conviction, which is an achievement (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014).

The WACPS also increased its offices, from 45 to 58 countrywide, 31 of these outside Monrovia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). As an improvement from 2013, more than one-third of the 210 WACPS officers were female (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014).

Still recovering from the impact of the Ebola outbreak on the holistic functioning of the country, the Human Rights Report on Liberia for 2015 listed corruption by public officials, violence against women and children, and disrupted access to medical care as just a few of the deficiencies that were of note (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015).

Regarding SGBV, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services recognised that UNMIL officers had many allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse racking up against them (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015). Countrywide, the report records 188 investigated cases of rape received by the WACPS, with 59 of these having been referred to Criminal Court E. Out of the 59, eight cases reached prosecution and, much like the previous year, all eight prosecutions resulted in convictions and sentences ranging from one to seven years' imprisonment (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015). The SGBVCU has also improved its case management and increased its sexual offence indictments from 16 in 2014 to 147 in 2015 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015).

Regarding domestic violence, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) organised sensitisation and awareness workshops in an effort to specifically combat domestic violence, which is illegal yet rampant in Liberia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2015).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 33% of married women reported experiencing domestic violence (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014). While legislation prohibits domestic violence, the maximum penalty for it is only six months' imprisonment and remains a hugely prevalent issue (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2014).

Apart from initial sexual offences training, the report makes no mention of efforts made by the LNP that would make police more accessible to communities on SGBV issues. This would be useful as an assessment by UNMIL and the UNOHCR revealed that many Liberian communities not only inflict (gang) rape as punishment on women, but that they also opt to address the issues within their traditional scope, outside the avenues of legislated recourse (UNMIL 2015). As long as formal justice and traditional justice are parallel to each other without coexisting in a cooperative manner, this will be a large contributing factor to SGBV victims not coming forward to the LNP.

Progress by 2016 was still hampered largely by the societal cultures which determined SGBV victim stigmatisation and fear to speak out as a woman (IDLO 2016). This hesitation to rely on the system is evident in the SGBV victims who approach the LNP: only a quarter of approximately 1 500 women who sought assistance at various SGBV one-stop centres went to LNP offices to report their attacks (IDLO 2016). In addition to this, UNMIL reports for this year also recorded that out of 2 596 LNP officers, 951 were female, making women's representation in the LNP just over 18% (UNMIL TV 2018). Not only is this reflective of inequality within the LNP, but it also shows that the LNP had not yet reached its target of 20% female recruitment.

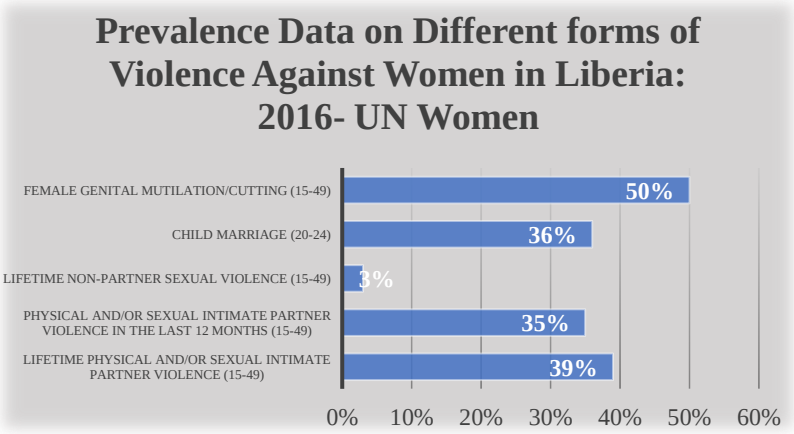
Linking the LNP to the court systems, another hampering factor to the effective use of SGBV mechanisms is the backlog in the justice system as alleged perpetrators spend up to three to four years in prison as pre-trial detainees (IDLO 2016). The International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) brought together the various parties involved in the court system in March 2016 – this included the LNP. It was found that these different contributing cogs in the justice mechanism do not often communicate with each other: each department is so focused on itself that there is an unspoken forgotten duty to have the whole mechanism work efficiently, effectively, and constantly improving (IDLO 2016).

From January to August 2016, the WACPS received 264 reports of rape, which is an increase from previous years (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2016). From 264 reports, 161 were pending investigation at the time of the report and 114 were referred to Criminal Court E (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2016). The grand jury

was forwarded 98 of these cases and 89 of those submitted to the grand jury resulted in indictment (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2016).

In relation to statutory rape, 22 out of 102 prosecuted cases resulted in conviction (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2016). Furthermore, the report states that 290 people were arrested for sexual offences (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2016). In response to claims of UNMIL peacekeepers perpetrating SGBV, from July 2015 to June 2016, over 5 000 UNMIL personnel received training on the UN's "Zero Tolerance Policy" regarding sexual exploitation and abuse (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). In addition, UNMIL established a new standard operating procedure on reporting and investigating sexual exploitation and abuse allegations in order to combat any further occurrences (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017).

Like every other statistic related to SGBV, however, the disclaimer by human rights groups is that all these figures are a pale reflection of the true account of SGBV crime in Liberia. The graph below is the quantifiable data gathered by UN Women on the types of SGBV experienced by women in specific age groups in 2016:



Data Source: Global Database on Violence Against Women 2016

Taken from the Global Database on Violence against Women by the UN, the data on the prevalence of violence against women in Liberia reflects the legacy of SGBV from the civil conflict and its persistence. The data indicates that 39% of all Liberian women between 15-49 have experienced sexual and/or sexual intimate partner violence at least once in their lives.

Additionally, 35% of women within the same age group have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in the 12 months preceding the study. 3% of women aged 15-49 have been victims of a form of SGBV at the hands of someone other than an intimate partner at least once in their lives. In a group of women in the study, aged between 20-24, 36% of them had been forced into marriage as child brides before the age of 18. The nature of child marriage also includes the experience of SGBV and teenage pregnancies, which severely affect women's health. Finally, in the larger 15-49-year-old age group, half of Liberia's women have experienced FGM (UN Women 2016).

Much like statistics on women who report SGBV crimes, this study still will not be a precise reflection of all SGBV that Liberian women endure. Having said that, however, it is still a good foundation from which to ascertain the level of SGBV prevalence that exists in recent years.

In a human rights report released by the Liberian government overviewing 2017, a note prominently made was the use of force and abuse by some LNP members – at least one member of the LNP was convicted of the rape of a person who sought police protection (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). In addition, there was at least another count of an officer being tried and found guilty of statutory rape of a minor seeking protection in Bong County (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017).

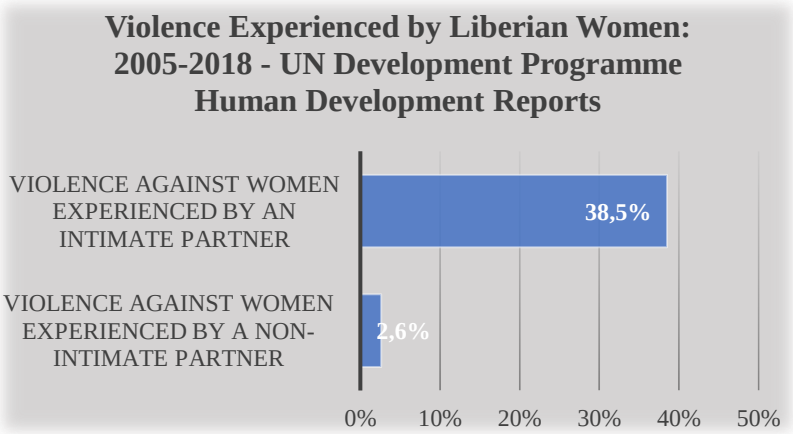
While abuse of a minor is an abhorrent act, progress from this incident can be gleaned from the outcry and agitation with which the community in Bong County responded (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). This community response sparked a swift arrest, trial by jury, conviction and a 20-year imprisonment sentence (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). The reaction from the community that aimed to seek justice instead of stigmatising a child in favour of police protection is a move forward in an attitude change around SGBV.

In September 2017, the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR) dismissed ten officers, demoted one, and banned a health ministry worker from BCR facilities after investigation found that these parties were responsible for the perpetration and attempted coverup of the rape and impregnation of a female inmate (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017; Amnesty International 2018). Even though the woman who was attacked did not file criminal charges, these were the actions taken against the security officers (Bureau of Democracy,

Human Rights and Labour 2017). Again, this speaks to the seriousness with which SGBV is being regarded, but it is still being perpetrated at very high rates, and – disturbingly – by the LNP in places where civilians come to seek protection (Amnesty International 2018).

Amnesty International's 2017/2018 report on Liberia records that many 2009 recommendations from the country's TRC had not yet been implemented (Amnesty International 2018). Furthermore, the report confirms the human rights report above in the observation that impunity for SGBV crimes, and the occurrence of these incidences were still largely prevalent in the country over 2017 (Amnesty International 2018).

An element of SGBV that is still taboo is domestic violence, as LNP officers, and community members, believe that domestic violence is a "home issue" and should not be brought for legal redress. The graph below shows the type of violence women have experienced from 2005 to 2018 and reflects a necessity to address domestic violence as a crucial niche of SGBV:



Data Source: UNDP 2018

This data presented by the UNDP shows a percentage of the Liberian female population from the age of 15-years-old onward and the violence they have experienced since 2005. This data supports reports on post-conflict Liberia that the SGBV experienced by women is largely perpetrated by people known to the victims. This data also confirms the prevalence of domestic violence between partners. Again, these statistics will not be entirely accurate given that some victims are hesitant to speak out about their experiences, even in informal, non-litigious environments. This speaks to the stigma that is associated with SGBV crimes, and the particular way in which traditional practice and patriarchal culture does not perceive domestic violence as a criminal offence- despite what legislation may provide.

In terms of mechanisms from the state, a domestic violence bill was passed by legislation in July 2017 and was awaiting the President's signature at the end of the year (Amnesty International 2018). On 19 January 2018, President Sirleaf issued an Executive Order (valid for one year) on domestic violence, shortly before her step down from office (Goitom 2018). The bill, which aims to address the niches of SGBV such as emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, dowry-related violence and FGM, was yet to be passed into law by August 2018 (Koinyeneh 2018).

Much like the campaigns of the past, the awareness of this bill has seen women's groups such as the Women's Law Caucus of Liberia at the helm (Koinyeneh 2018). This goes to show that not much has changed in the mindset and attitude of Liberian society as it seems that women are still relatively alone in their advocation for gender-sensitive mechanisms and responses in national security and legal sectors.

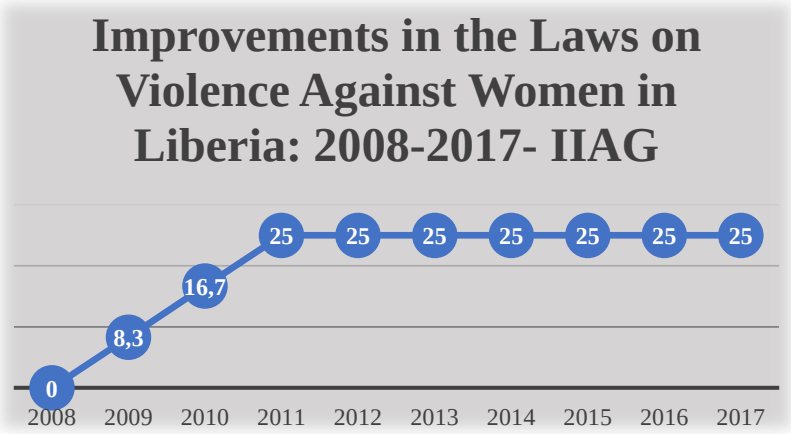
Even with collaborative work with MOGCSP – in which UNMIL made use of the ministry's SGBV processes – sexual exploitation and abuse incidences were still prevalent (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017; Amnesty International 2018). Allegations had decreased by 2016 and 2017 to only a handful of reports, but the CDU was aware that exploitation was continuous and often unreported (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). There was an awareness of the hesitation to report incidence by victims, especially where perpetrators hold some form of authority over them.

As far as SGBV crimes are concerned, it has been found that arrests for these offences have been the fastest-growing category of pre-trial detention since August 2017 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). This can be attributed to two factors: either the prevalence of SGBV is increasing, the LNP is making more arrests (showing improvement in the use of SGBV mechanisms), or a combination of both. The government opened shelters for SGBV victims, and with NGOs started the Sexual Pathways Referral Programme, both of which aimed to assist victims medically, legally, psychosocially and protectively (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017).

Even with light sentencing, domestic violence law is not effectively enforced; according to the Report, the WACPS of the LNP received 560 domestic violence cases between January and

July but this is number is not nearly reflective of the commonplace presence of domestic violence (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). Within Criminal Court E in 2017, 117 of the 121 SGBV cases submitted to the grand jury for prosecution resulted in indictment (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017). It is still believed by experts, however, that the number reported in LNP offices or taken to court is not an accurate depiction of the state of SGBV crimes in Liberia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2017).

Despite the emergence of a female president, there are still disparities between men and women's political participation and access to resources (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). This is attributed to the permanence of patriarchal culture which dictates all forms of dynamics in Liberian. Even now, there is still a culture of submissiveness of women to men at every level of society, which impacts the positive impact of equal and progressive policies and ideas (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). The Ibrahim Index of African Governance has assessed and measured Liberia's progress as it relates to laws on violence against women. The graph below indicates the improvements made in these policies from 2008 to 2017:



Data Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017

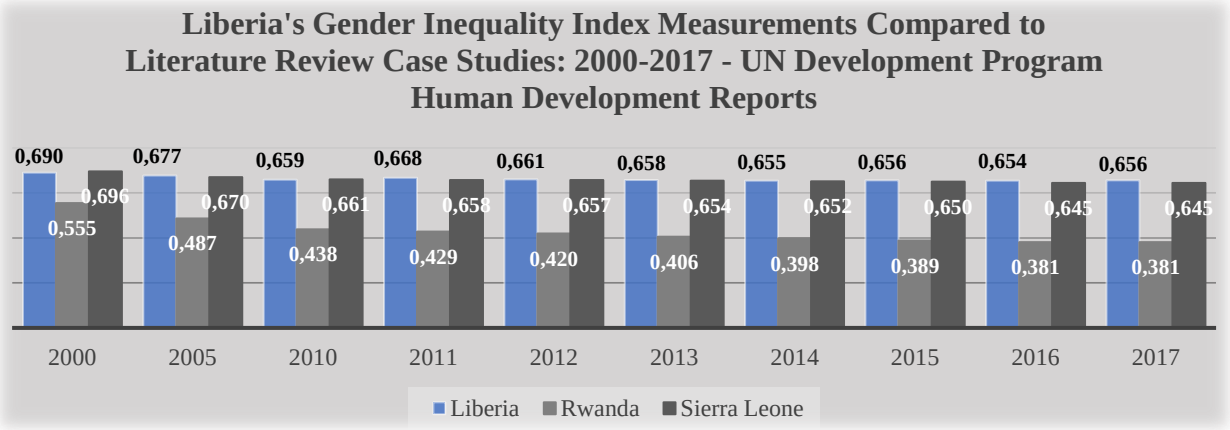
The measurement of laws on violence against women in Liberia according to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) assesses and reflects on the existence of women's legal protection (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017). The more the indicator increases (i.e., closer to 100), the greater the improvement in legislative provisions. In other words, elevated figures are desirable. The marker of zero units in 2008 indicates a lack of improvement in these laws (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017). From 2009 to 2011, however, a big jump can be seen as the

legislation measured improved from a score of 8.3 to 25, the latter of which is the consistent measurement until 2017 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017).

The database's measurement indicators, however, do not assess the success or implementation of these provisions. This indicates how the presence of progressive laws can be misleading. It also shows that law reform is not the issue for SGBV victims but rather something to do with the implementation of legislation and processes, which can be linked to a greater community attitude toward SGBV.

Although this paper takes a streamlined look at the LNP and any SGBV-related progress over the years of UNMIL presence, the inherent argument to be found within this analysis is that SGBV will persist if not for a change in the larger society – not necessarily a focus just on state security. The graph below shows the Gender Inequality Index (GII), conducted and published annually by the UNDP.

The GII is a measurement assessment produced annually by the UNDP as part of its Human Development Reports. The GII specifically looks at the inequality in achievement between men and women in three sectors: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market (UNDP 2018):



Data Source: UNDP 2018

To properly read the data from the GII, it is useful to note that the aim is to achieve the lowest possible score when measured; a lower score indicates a smaller rate of inequality present between men and women in these sectors. In addition to this, it would be difficult to fully

ascertain Liberia's progress in GII measurement without having a yardstick from which to compare it.

For this reason, the same data from the GII has been extracted on the two case study countries briefly assessed the in the literature review: Sierra Leone and Rwanda. These countries have been selected for this brief comparison as their recent histories share many similarities with Liberia, to the point that they can also still be considered as post-conflict with SGBV issues.

Examining the progress made by these countries, it can be seen that Liberia's gender inequality has not been improving as much as is possible (visible in the progress made by Rwanda), despite the prevalence of progressive legislation (as indicated by the IIAG). Both Rwanda and Liberia have been heralded as gender progressive states- especially considering the election of President Sirleaf- but where Rwanda has decreased gender inequality by 0.174 from 2000 to 2017 on the GII, Liberia has only improved by 0.034. It is also important to note that in the time of President Sirleaf's term (see 2005-2010 on the graph), GII noted a 0.009 increase in gender inequality.

While this graph does not relate directly to either the LNP or SGBV incidence, it does speak to the argument of the more inherent problem in the country which results in the disrespect of women and the continued presence of patriarchal behaviour. This data further proves that the issues within the LNP regarding SGBV in Liberia is another symptom of a larger problem that has permeated all facets of Liberian society and conduct.

While the contributions and efforts made in the time of the UNMIL can be applauded, they cannot be deemed as successful as national protection and capacity are still weak (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). Until resources, capacity and consistent implementation are addressed with sustainable improvements, the LNP (and the security sector in general) as it relates to SGBV will not be highly effective. Mechanisms may have been planned since formal state reconstruction began – and they are still being worked on – but responsiveness remains an impediment to the success of these mechanisms (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

The issues around the LNP’s SGBV responsiveness (or lack thereof) seem to be a repetition of the issues that have plagued the sector since the end of the war. These are largely centred around commonplace patriarchal practices and stigmas that have been an underlying factor across

Liberian society (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018). This problem affects the LNP from the way victims are received by officers when they report incidences to the way perpetrators are met with impunity for their actions (UNIFEM 2007). These are systemic issues that policies cannot fix if they are a part of societal thinking.

Upon UNMIL's departure in March 2018, the UN mandate has been met with mixed emotions in critique. It cannot be disputed, especially by those within Liberia, that UNMIL was instrumental in saving thousands of Liberian lives (News24 2018; UN News 2018). Civil society leader, Eugene Farkollie, celebrates on behalf of Liberians that UNMIL's presence ensured safe passage back to Liberia for refugees and the positive impact the mandate had in the security sector and immigration reform (News24 2018; UN News 2018). Liberian security expert, Samuel Smith, observes that the rollout of peaceful, democratic elections in 2017 is evidence of UNMIL's achievements and the independence of the national security forces (News 24 2018; UN News 2018).

UN experts, however, agree that more needs to be done in Liberia – even in the mandate's absence – to address the lingering effects and roots of the war still plague the country's functioning in a myriad of ways (News 24 2018). Chief of Human Rights Protection Services and Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia, Marcel Akpovo, observes that UNMIL could have done more with its impressive budget and political influence in the country to achieve sustainable criminal accountability and an attitude of justice (United Nations Mission in Liberia 2018).

It can be gathered from the overall tone and themes of the literature and data presented above that the research, in some ways, adds to the literature presented in chapter two and in other ways, departs from it. The addition that this research brings in is the confirmation that post-conflict SGBV remains a severe pressure point and its prevention is something with which the Government of Liberia still struggles. The research presented in this analysis confirms authors' assertions that rape and other forms of SGBV are a legacy of the country's conflict (Government of Liberia UN Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2011; Montgomery 2011; Becker 2012; Scully, Karim & Bernstein 2013; Global Database on Violence Against Women 2016; Kollie 2016).

In addition to this, the research presented above confirms the challenges that have remained in responding to SGBV, showing that the capacity, training and resource impediments that have been present since the end of the year are still a handicap to efficiency in recent years (2017). The reputation of the LNP has also been confirmed in the research, with annual human rights reports consistently noting the presence of corruption. This gives further understanding of the reputation the LNP had during the war (of being dangerous and unreliable), why the reform was necessary and why constant, annual evaluation of the institution is essential.

Where this research departs from literature is the focus on the greater Liberian context, which is argued to be the premise on which SGBV is perpetrated. While the paper focuses in on state security and any growth/evolution by the LNP, the argument for this lack of growth is not just a lack of resources and capacity but the general mindset with which SGBV is still regarded as a result of the continuation of beliefs and practices entrenched in traditional patriarchy.

There is also an element of the analysis that qualifies as both an addition to existing literature and a departure from it: while the intense prevalence of rape and SGBV in post-conflict Liberia confirms the legacy of the war, the nature of the perpetration of SGBV indicates as evolution and substantiates the argument of the need to address a societal attitude.

Literature on war tells of how SGBV is used as a weapon of war (Refugees International 2003; Amnesty International 2009; Jaye 2009; Sjoberg 2013 in Rinehart 2015; Tarnaala 2016; Meger 2018) in order to fragment, destabilise and humiliate communities/factions through the violation of their women (who represent peace and a sense of home in communities). This was committed by combatants who did not personally know their victims. In post-conflict Liberia, however, research and data have shown that most victims of SGBV know their perpetrators, often in a familial or intimate way.

The above indicates that the nature of committing SGBV is no longer motivated by the aims of the war, but is a manifestation of patriarchal power, the subjugation of women and girls and the continued marginalisation and suppression of them. The departure from existing literature in this paper is coming to this conclusion from the research presented, and aiming to address the issue head-on, as opposed to recommending only LNP reform when the root cause of the problem stretches far beyond administrative and institutional deficiencies. The quantitative data presented in the graphs in this paper are not necessarily linked to the LNP.

What these collections of data show, however, is that this is not an issue isolated to the structures of the LNP institution. Rather, this data departs from a single focal point in that it shows that the LNP suffers as a result of a greater societal ill that must be addressed at individual, community, and national levels in a consistent manner in order for change to be meaningful and stable.

The victim-shaming and onus that lies with those who have suffered an SGBV attack speaks to the patriarchal cultural narrative with which women who have been violated are received. This is another example of sexual politics at play, which is exacerbated by the fact that victims are hesitant to report cases to the LNP due to how they will be received. Not only is this a confirmation of the Theory of Gender and War – that women have less social power – but it is also a contributing factor in explaining why the number of SGBV incidences reported to the LNP is not an accurate reflection of the prevalence of these types of crimes in Liberia.

Mentioned earlier in chapter three, the scope condition of UNMIL's presence can be a useful tool which contributes to the Theory of Gender and War. The international assistance provided by UNMIL was found to be useful by observers of the country's post-conflict reconstruction (Search for Common Ground 2011). It was also found that Liberian citizens found that UNMIL's presence had a positive influence on LNP officers and that the latter were less reliable when UNMIL troops were not present (Search for Common Ground 2011). This shows that, at a civilian, grassroots level, international intervention had an impact on women's feeling of safety and security.

In some instances, however, UNMIL officers were responsible for perpetrating SGBV attacks, which lessened women's sense of safety and security (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Liberty 2016). This speaks to the notion mentioned in chapter two that SGBV is a global issue. Furthermore, perpetration by peacekeepers strengthens the argument that SGBV is a matter concerning the attitude toward and beliefs around women's bodies, agency, equality and sexual politics. While it was found, overall, that UNMIL could have done more, the general sentiment at the end of UNMIL was that the mission was successful in assisting Liberia to rebuild after the war.

It can be deduced from this mixed response to UNMIL, that does not negate the mission's positive impact, that the LNP and gender sensitivity in Liberia would be in a worse state without the presence of the UNMIL mandate. This contributes to the Theory of Gender and War in a modern way as it shows that international intervention can be used as a tool through which to increase women's agency and participation in post-conflict society. International intervention is a normality in conflict since the inception of the UN, which makes this observation helpful moving forward and in broadening the tenets and application of the Gender and War theory.

It is essential, however, to ensure that the international standards brought into conflict-ridden countries by the UN can also be upheld by the individual countries in the UN's absence. Like in the case of Liberia, this can only be done with confidence with a societal change that takes women's participation, agency and issues seriously at all levels of interaction. The IIAG measurement shows us that at a national, legislative level, violence against women has been considered as a focal point (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017).

From graphical data presented, the representation of women in the LNP (Luppino & Webbe 2011) as well as the number of SGBV cases of victims below 18 years old that reach the LNP (Government UN GBV Joint Program 2013) shows at an institutional and security level that legislative priorities have not yet translated into visible practice in the country. This is due to the fact that SGBV victims still do not have enough certainty that they will be assisted by the system. Finally, the data presented by the Global Database on Violence Against Women (2016) and the UNDP (2018) show that, at a community level, neither the legislation nor presence of state security has been felt as SGBV in varying forms still rampantly occurs. The tabulated data below is a summation of the main data presented in this section of the paper over the annual data as well as the graphical presentation mentioned above. The final analysis of the section will follow and allow for a more coherent understanding of the general findings with the data presented below.

Rape statistics over the years reported via the WACPS:

Year	Number of rapes reported	Number of cases processed	Results
2006	568 (government statistics)		
2007	1000 (government statistics)		
2008	275 (WACPS)	202 prosecutions	21 convictions 181 pending judgements
2009		40% of cases referred to court	4% withdrawn 3% transferred to other courts 53% pending
2010	277 (WACPS) 95 reports of statutory rape	114 reached prosecution	
2012	369 (WACPS) 38 reports of statutory rape	125 sent to court	6 prosecuted 5 convictions 1 acquittal
2013	280 (WACPS)	87 forwarded to Criminal Court E 37 referred to other courts	4 reached conviction
2014	188 (WACPS)	43 referred to Criminal Court E	7 prosecutions 7 convictions
2015	188 (WACPS)	59 referred to Criminal Court E	8 prosecutions 8 convictions
2016	264 (WACPS) 102 reports of statutory rape	114 referred to Criminal Court E and 161 pending investigation 22 statutory rape cases prosecuted	 22 convictions
2017	121 (WACPS)	117 referred to Criminal Court E	117 resulted in indictment

Average ratio of police officers to people, 2006:

Liberia	100 : 100 000
Africa	187 : 100 000
Global	300 : 100 000

Female recruits graduated to the LNP, 2008-2010:

2008	110
2009	150
2010	295

Rape cases reported with victims under 18 years old in Monserrado County, January-June 2013:

Health facility	747
Police	134/747
Court	33/747

Prevalence data on different forms of violence against women in Liberia 2016:

Female genital mutilation (15-49 years old)	50%
Child marriage (20-24 years old)	36%
Lifetime non-partner sexual violence (15-49 years old)	3%
Physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in the last 12 months (15-49 years old)	35%
Lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (15-49 years old)	39%

Violence experienced by Liberian women 2005-2018:

Violence against women experienced by an intimate partner	38.5%
Violence against women experienced by a non-intimate partner	2.6%

The observations from this research show that the gender and war theory is still relevant and applicable to 21st century civil conflict. They also reveal that it could be useful to include provisions regarding international intervention within the theory: that international interventions and standards are helpful, but it is important for these standards to translate into maintainable civilian and societal education for these standards to have any impact on a country's SGBV and gender equality progress.

In the case of Liberia, the data analysis indicates that from a policy-building perspective, provisions have been put in place to account for the prevalence of SGBV. LNP training systems and coordinated judicial mechanisms were put in place in order to accommodate more SGBV awareness in formal systems. International standards such as UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW influenced Liberia's domestic laws and highlighted the need to increase inclusivity of women in post-conflict reconstructive efforts.

In the analysis, however, it was found that the involvement of women in the LNP and their subsequent roles in state security (SGBV prevention particularly) was not meaningful. Rather, the observations made in this chapter found that women's roles in the LNP were in fulfilment of goals set for women's representation and a "tick-box" exercise. There are still many roles women in the LNP ought to be filling- especially in leadership- in order to be considered as having a meaningful role and voice within the LNP.

Finally, from the presentation of research in the data analysis, it was found that victims still do not often approach LNP officers for protection and assistance for SGBV-related crimes. The assessment of the years since the end of the civil conflict (2003-2017) shows that SGBV crimes reported to the LNP are still not reflective of the actual incidences that occur in Liberia. While this is attributed in part to the lack of resources and experience of LNP officers, a larger contributor to the LNP's shortcomings can be linked to the greater societal attitude toward SGBV. It is this attitude that has resulted in many women being violated (during and after the war) and why women are convinced by family, communities and even LNP officers not to report the crimes committed against them. It is the unspoken foundation of gender dynamics that allows society to victim-blame-and-shame those who have suffered SGBV.

Although this research paper has been a microscopic examination of the situation in Liberia, SGBV crises are global. Evidence of this is the fact that UNMIL peacekeepers have been

responsible for perpetrating SGBV against Liberian women and girls. SGBV is a worldwide issue but it can be resolved by angling reconstructive processes correctly. It is important to acknowledge that SGBV is not only a state security issue, but a community and societal one. From there, countries like Liberia can move forward in addressing the root cause of SGBV instead of attempting to remedy symptoms of larger societal beliefs and practices.

Chapter Five: Recommendations, Limitations and Conclusion

At an international level, SGBV is a priority due to the widespread nature of violence against women. The literature review in chapter two provided an international and regional scope to SGBV. This is confirmation that Liberia is not an isolated case of a country struggling to improve prevention of and response to SGBV. Global SGBV policies and strategies aim to address this prevalence through prevention and response initiatives. It is the responsibility of member states to these initiatives to ensure the implementation of these international efforts at a national level are given the full opportunity to succeed.

Overall, the three research questions answered above provided a thematic and in-depth exploration of the greater research question which assessed whether or not the LNP's SGBV responsiveness has improved over the duration of UNMIL's intervention. Analysis of the presented research and data from each sub-research question provided valuable and comprehensive contributions to the analysis of the LNP post-conflict reconstruction as it relates to SGBV.

The first two aspects of the research questions above explored the SGBV-related mechanisms and policies established post-conflict as well as the inclusion of women in the LNP's reconstruction and application of these SGBV provisions. The analyses, however, reached the conclusion that while these mechanisms were of sound intent and had greater consideration for SGBV, their implementation has been hindered by judicial, training and financial impediments.

Similarly, in the LNP, the analysis observed that women were being prioritised in LNP recruitment but have not been utilised effectively in SGBV prevention and response. The final aspect of the research question analysed reports and data provided on the LNP and SGBV on an annual basis over the period of UNMIL's presence (2003-2017). This research found that SGBV policy implementation as well as the response by the LNP were also hindered by similar impediments mentioned above, but with the addition of community stigmatisation of SGBV victims.

Considering the conclusions from the data analysis and findings above, it can be ascertained that the LNP's SGBV response has only minimally improved and has not improved adequately

in relation to the strength of the SGBV provisions and mechanisms in place. Reports in the analysis above also indicate that UNMIL peacekeepers have been responsible for the perpetration of SGBV crimes. Not only does this impact the success of the UNMIL mandate but also negatively reflects on the standard being left for the LNP regarding SGBV. It has been mentioned, however, that Liberians felt safer with the presence of UNMIL as opposed to the unreliable community perception of the LNP. Based on the societal beliefs around SGBV and gender dynamics, the LNP's response to SGBV has not improved dramatically in post-conflict Liberia, despite the presence of some celebrated and protective SGBV provisions.

It is important to consider that SGBV policies can only be successful if they are implemented thoroughly and consistently at national levels. International standards on SGBV and gender equality have come about due to the extreme prevalence of women's marginalisation and abuse worldwide. It is beneficial for states to hold their domestic policies up to an international standard, but it is even more beneficial for these policies to hold up at a practical and grassroots level in communities. In order to combat the entrenched patriarchal belief systems that influence SGBV perpetration, consistent sensitisation and awareness of SGBV policies is extremely necessary.

While the analysis above indicated that more could be done for the LNP's SGBV responsiveness and mechanisms, the recommendations that follow aim to provide a new way to look at solutions for Liberia's SGBV issue. What will follow these recommendations is a brief discussion of the limitations to conducting this research and how these were overcome. Finally, concluding remarks will look at this research paper as a whole and reflect on the way forward for Liberia.

Recommendations

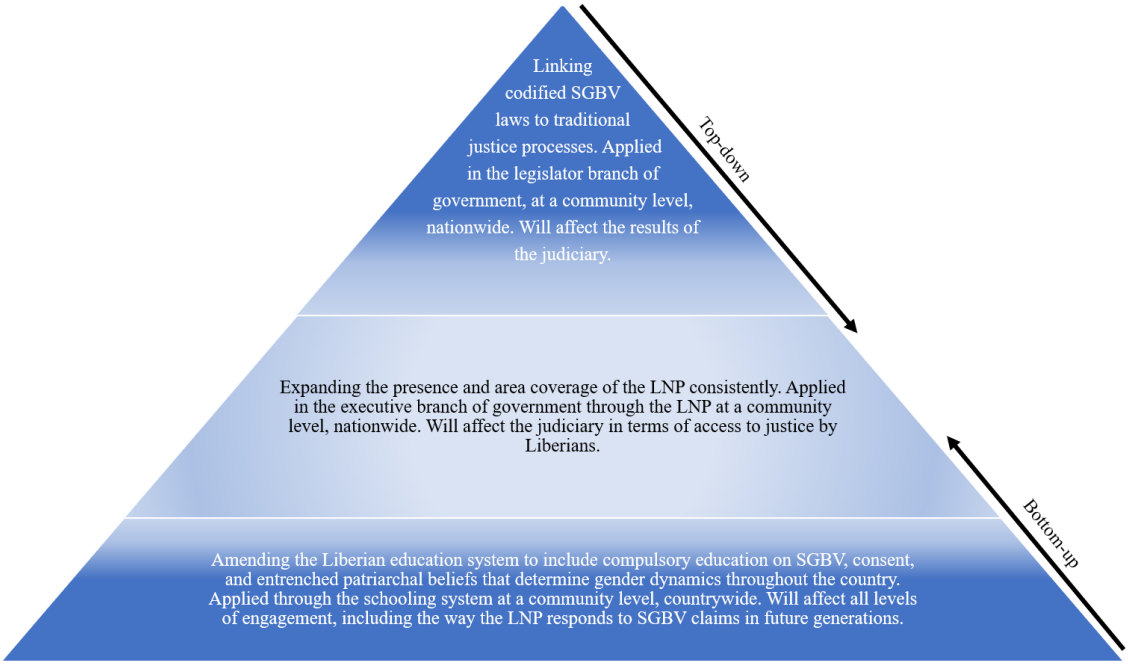
The recommendations presented below aim to be practical suggestions that will address the problem stated in this paper. The purpose of these recommendations will be to address the subject of this paper – the LNP – and the problem of this paper – SGBV – and the root cause of the LNP's deficiencies as it relates to SGBV responsiveness and mechanisms: the broader societal perception of women's agency and SGBV. As has been mentioned in the paper, it is essential to provide macroscopic recommendations, despite having looked at a microscopic element of the issue of SGBV. This is because the niche problems regarding SGBV may never

be adequately addressed if not first – or concurrently – tackled in a holistic, multifaceted manner.

The recommendations that follow look to holistically better the way SGBV is perceived by society and received by the LNP. Although this paper looked specifically at the LNP's responsiveness and mechanisms regarding SGBV, the LNP is not the only point at which change is necessary. Even with sound mechanisms in place that have become more gender progressive since the end of the civil conflict, society has not been changed enough for these mechanisms to ever be justly and consistently used by the LNP. Therefore, in order for the LNP's responsiveness and mechanisms to improve, the society by which the LNP is surrounded needs to be changed at all levels. Ultimately, the LNP can have a faultless LNP system leading to justice, but if traditional patriarchy and SGBV stigmatisation continue to determine the conduct of society at all levels- from law implementers to civilians- the LNP will not increase its SGBV-related results.

Therefore, the recommendations that follow are a combination of top-down and bottom-up implementation. The first recommendation looks to amend legislation and its implementation in order to implement a countrywide norm- a top-down initiative. The second recommendation is aimed at expanding the reach and experience of the LNP. This recommendation is top-down in the sense that it will be implemented countrywide from the executive branch of government, but it can be implemented at a community level, where the impact will be tangible and visible. The final recommendation mobilises communities and seeks to permanently remedy the systemic issue of stigmatisation and the general, patriarchal responses to SGBV and women's bodies. This recommendation can be the mostly widely implemented as it concerns all communities and engages Liberia's youth. The final recommendation will be a bottom-up implementation as the effects will be seen at grassroots, community level and will go on to benefit the LNP and higher levels of societal engagement as it will seek to address the perceptions and reception of and attitudes towards SGBV.

The diagram below seeks to illustrate the rationale for the order in which these recommendations are presented, based on the explanation above:



Even though the civil war ended almost two decades ago, the avenues SGBV victims use for settlement and resolution indicate the need to include traditional justice in LNP mechanisms. Given that progressive policies are being hindered partly by the nature of the Liberian justice system, accusers still utilise traditional and community avenues of "justice".

Community and traditional justice, however, does not completely benefit the victim and is steeped in patriarchal victim-shaming and stigmatisation. It is the guise of redress for the victim, without the shame on their family and the financial toil of the legal system. Not to mention, it limits the prosecution and serving punishment by the perpetrators, with the appearance of having addressed the situation through an out-of-court settlement. Newly formulated policies on and attempted practices against SGBV, even within the LNP, work in contention with traditional and community norms. This friction also has the milieu of a justice system that is not effectively aiding SGBV victims. A possible resolution at this impasse would be to link formal security processes to traditional and community justice that is being carried out. This can be done in conjunction with the second recommendation which looks to make the LNP more accessible in more places throughout the country.

It is imperative to note that in reforming responsiveness and mechanisms that address SGBV, the aim is not to launch offensives at standing traditional practices. What can be done, however, is eliminate elements of these practices that go against human rights and impunity (United

Nations Mission in Liberia 2018) and incorporate the other practices into official address of SGBV.

In creating a joint space in which traditional practices and formal avenues intersect, communities are more likely to take on the new attitude toward SGBV. For victims, it also creates added protection that they are still receiving redress from a formal avenue without having to find resources to approach the LNP, which is often an expensive and, sometimes, fruitless process for them.

A way in which this can be achieved is by creating an administrative and communicative link between traditional and community leaders and local government. On a monthly basis, information can be collected on cases reviewed in the community, in these out-of-court settlements, and given to local government departments. Within these departments, the data provided by the LNP and communities regarding SGBV cases reported and addressed in the month can be assessed.

These statistics can be compared and analysed to gauge a more accurate depiction of the reality of SGBV occurrences in Liberia. This can be assessed at a county level, to identify if there are any connections between the specific resource and capacity limitations in counties and the statistics from LNP offices and communities.

Due to the frequency with which informal avenues of "justice" are used, it is essential not to block these platforms but rather enhance them to a level where they can be utilised and measured, for the sake of the victims who see traditional justice as their only hope. From this point, it will also be useful to provide training and education at community levels. This is essential so that, eventually, the link between the LNP and traditional justice can be solidified and evolve into a mechanism that can be paralleled to the desired effect of the LNP. Community sensitisation is an incorporation of another recommendation that will be elaborated on further in this chapter.

At a county level, the next recommendation is important to make given the problems with accessibility of the LNP to victims. Research in the previous chapter accounts for the fact that there is a high concentration of LNP officers within Monrovia. While the civil conflict involved the siege of the capital city of the country, post-conflict stability requires that security be more

distributed countrywide. Monrovia is no longer under threat as during conflict, and Liberians around the country also require major accessibility to the LNP. The UN also suggested that the LNP would have to double its officer headcount to approximately 8 000 in order to have full efficacy countrywide.

While it is important to bear in mind that the LNP already struggles with financial constraints – which hinders motivation and incentive to pursue justice – it is possible to look at the expansion of the LNP's presence around the country. This can be done through the training academy. In the same way that students of special training (medicine and physical therapy, for example) are mandated to perform community service in rural areas as part of their qualifying training in countries such as South Africa, the same can become a requirement for LNP trainees. This will require capacity building and financial infrastructure in rural areas which can be obtained through international support, guidance and assistance.

This can be introduced as a new LNP reform, in the same way the vetting process took effect during post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia. A community service engagement for LNP trainees close to induction will be beneficial to new police officers, who will be able to gain on-the-ground experience in administrative, reporting, and investigative skills.

For the communities into which these officers are placed, they will have access to LNP officers who will be placed with the intention of providing services and access to state security that was previously limited to those outside the reach of Monrovia and other city centres. Given that training happens regularly, this can ensure a continuous flow of new officers being present in rural areas on an annual basis. This recommendation will also be beneficial in increasing the ratio of LNP officers per 100 000 people, which, as shown in a table and graph in the chapter above, is currently below the continental and global averages. By disseminating more LNP officers into the wider, more rural areas of Liberia, the average can be increased from 100 LNP per 100 000 people. Trainees can be sent to various counties and rural areas proportionately based on the density of the population in those areas. However, training, financial and infrastructural deficits have remained an impediment to the LNP's efficiency throughout post-conflict rebuilding.

By introducing this new aspect of LNP reform, that will benefit both new recruits and citizens in rural Liberia, international and regional financial and structural support may be more

motivated and the desire to invest in the LNP may improve. In order to attract foreign investment, there needs to be excitement surrounding initiatives in which international actors would find worth investing. New development aid will not be attracted by already-existing mechanisms that are unsuccessful or have plateaued.

When framed with the multitude of benefits (to rural communities and to new police recruits) that addresses an existing problem (the lack of accessibility of many Liberians to state security), investment to build up this program can be proposed more certainly. This recommendation not only benefits the LNP in the form of streamlining new recruits to be better officers, and positioning officers in areas that have been neglected, but the investment into this initiative will also overcome one of the LNP's greater post-conflict challenges of financial restriction. At least for the areas in which implementation takes place, the financial injection will hopefully allow the programme to begin with the correct infrastructure and be sustained in this manner.

The final recommendation presented looks to create a link between national policy and community awareness in a meaningful way. Continuous community and grassroots engagement is necessary for SGBV crimes and sensitisation to be taken seriously at all community levels. This is because SGBV has been, for so long, disregarded as a punishable crime and the presence of civil conflict only intensified the severity of this message in a post-conflict context.

Unfortunately, being a major legacy of civil war, SGBV in post-conflict society has worsened and reached the fabric of communities: perpetrators live with, and around, the victims they attack. This is evident from the graphical data in the previous chapter which shows that more violence experienced by women is by an intimate partner as opposed to a stranger. This emphasises the necessitation of constant community engagement with SGBV sensitisation. It is only then that behavioural change may be seen.

While the research has noted that the government and NGOs make efforts toward initiating SGBV awareness campaigns and seminars, the prevalence of SGBV indicates that a different approach needs to be taken. Awareness campaigns, seminars and the like are tools that can be used, but they may not engage the community or individuals as well as other methods.

Having identified that the LNP's lacklustre response to SGBV and the mechanisms not being used to capacity as a symptom of a greater societal ill, it is essential to address the root cause of the attitudes to SGBV in a professional manner. For example, the human rights reports noted almost annually that the government and NGOs have been implementing SGBV campaigns. These efforts, of course, require resources in the form of manpower, financial input for transport, and knowledge on SGBV dynamics and laws.

The proposal of this recommendation is to have these resources used in a way that may generate more sustainable results, community relationships and a greater understanding of the damage of SGBV. For example, it is possible to introduce a format of this awareness campaign into schools as part of a Life Skills or Life Orientation curriculum, which is often a compulsory class for students throughout their schooling career. The awareness programme can take place as a part of their sexual education, by practitioners qualified to educate children on sexual relations and SGBV, such as psychologists.

It would be useful to make use of professionals such as psychologists who have the ability to create meaningful relationships with young children, and report on the entrenched ways of thinking of SGBV and women's rights with which young people are instilled in their homes and communities. These reports would be extremely valuable in focusing on the root of patriarchal attitudes and the persistent prevalence of SGBV. More so, building a foundation of behavioural change from as young an age as possible is crucial to SGBV prevention, and to raise a generation of young men and women who are able to talk about SGBV not as a taboo, but with understanding.

An example of the recommendation outlined above can be found in Kenya. No Means No Worldwide, a global organisation aiming to prevent rape, has introduced consent classes in Nairobi and the concepts being taught in the classroom show visible results in the community. The approach this programme takes is to teach mutual respect between young boys and girls (Parker 2018; No Means No Worldwide 2019). According to the group's website, so far, approximately 300 000 girls and boys in Uganda and Kenya have utilised the skills imparted by No Means No contribute to a rape-free society (No Means No Worldwide 2019).

Instead of focusing on the narrative of toxic masculinity and the consequent impunity for actions, the programme rather focuses on building up conversations and practices around

respect for women and standing up for them (Parker 2018). Instead of focusing on how a girl's attire is the cause for her experiences causing her to feel shame, this programme aims to equip young girls and women with the ability to say "no" to uncomfortable advances and to defend themselves (Apolitical 2017; Parker 2018; No Means No Worldwide 2019).

The idea of this programme being run in school with young children is to ensure that good values and beliefs are instilled from a young age, to ensure that these foundations determine their actions in the future (Apolitical 2017; Parker 2018; Global Innovation Fund 2019; No Means No Worldwide 2019). No Means No Worldwide trained instructors and placed them in high-risk schools in Kenya, where students between the ages of 10 and 20 are taught the core value needed to end the rape and SGBV epidemic plaguing societies: mutual respect (Parker 2018).

This value is taught to boys and girls in different ways. Girls are educated on how to identify a risky situation, say "no", attempt to talk their way out of a predicament and if their verbal cues are not respected, use alternative physical defensive skills (Parker 2018). Boys are encouraged to challenge myths around rape, to confirm and ask for consent, accept rejection, provide intervention in situations they can now see are predatory, and learn the general disposition attached to positive masculinity (Apolitical 2017; Parker 2018).

This programme has proved to be successful as, prior to its implementation, one in every four girls in Nairobi was raped annually (Parker 2018). Since the introduction of No Means No in the high-risk schools, the country has seen a 51% drop in incidence of rape, 46% decrease in pregnancy-related school dropout, and situations in which 50% of girls stopped a rapist a year after her training and approximately 76% of boys engaged in assault prevention through intervention (Apolitical 2017; Singh 2017; Parker 2018).

The same programme and consent classes are also present in Malawi and have shown positive results (Singh 2017; Parker 2018; Warren 2018); a study in Malawi found that more than 50% of a group of 522 girls between the ages of 14 and 21 utilised their self-defence skills to avoid attack in the year after training (Warren 2018). The negative aspect of this programme is that it shows how necessary it is for women and girls to be equipped to such levels to avoid attack. The positive, however, is that the young boys and men of communities are also experiencing

benefit from the programme, and this will eventually also reflect in statistics, when fewer attempted attacks take place.

Programmes such as this are a perfect example of what is needed in Liberia at a community level from a young age. This is the way forward in preventing SGBV, not only through police reform. When communities become more receptive of the reality of SGBV and the need for mutual respect, this will alter beliefs and traditional practices to the extent that it will impact state institutions through the individuals who run them.

This speaks to how legislation can be used in another way – education and compulsory teaching – but also how essential public engagement is at all levels of society. Even outside of SGBV prevention, learning the value of mutual respect from a young age will be to the benefit of so many areas of Liberia. In terms of this research topic alone, the benefits of mutual respect would be greatly felt within the LNP especially if female LNP officers are given the same opportunities as their male counterparts to progress up the ranks of the institution. Mutual respect as a value has a massive space to take up in the tenets of every society but is especially needed where gender inequality continues to thrive in many areas of country engagement.

One aspect of state operation cannot be criticised for an issue with which the rest of the country has not yet sufficiently dealt. The recommendations indicate reform at multiple levels of state interaction, showing that improvement in Liberia's SGBV reform will not be found only at a single point for address.

The first recommendation looks to connect the LNP's engagement with the community with the use of traditional justice and out-of-court-settlements for SGBV cases. This recommendation links policy at a national level (the standard operating procedure [SOP] of the LNP) with local government administrative processes and the informal, community leaders.

The second recommendation looks at placing LNP trainees on the cusp of induction into rural parts of Liberia to perform compulsory community service while also providing access to state security to Liberians living outside state and county capitals. This recommendation creates a link between national LNP SOPs and local government.

The final recommendation looks at revising community engagement and SGBV awareness initiatives. This recommendation addresses the argument posited in the paper that the root cause of LNP inefficiencies (not including its resource and financial impediments) is the general attitude of Liberians to SGBV. This recommendation links governmental SGBV efforts, engagement with non-governmental actors, the international community, local communities and, most especially, young Liberians.

Only by committing to reform and address of a holistic nature can progress in microscopic elements of Liberian society and operation be seen. The nature of the link between the LNP's SGBV mechanisms/responsiveness and wider societal practices and beliefs can be likened to the old saying, "you are only as strong as your weakest link". In this case, the societal attitude toward SGBV is the link which weakens all other attempts to address widespread SGBV in the country. This needs to take up majority of the focus of SGBV reform in order for other aspects of the state, such as the police force, to benefit from the change in entrenched mindset and the institution's own reform.

Research Limitations

The methodology of this paper was outlined in chapter three and specified the use of a mixed method which involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative research. Despite the stipulation that there would be primary utilisation of qualitative data and substantiation with quantitative data, access to the latter proved a challenge to fulfilling the intended desire of the research at its conception.

Unfortunately, the challenge faced was that quantitative data is not consistently available on an annual basis on statistics such as the number of women in the LNP or the number of reported SGBV crimes outside of rape. This made quantifying the problem at hand challenging and limited the way in which the research conduct was planned.

This limitation was overcome, however, using quantitative data that was accessible and interpreted in a way that cohesively connected the data to the problem of this research. Utilising data presented by reputable sources such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the UN and its Joint Programme with the Liberian government, allowed quantitative data to be used to back up the arguments posited by qualitative research.

The data collected from these sites confirmed the strength of gender-sensitive SGBV policies, further proving that the issue lies in practice/implementation and the greater community rather than with legal provisions. This data also quantified the qualitative data which reported that victims were hesitant to approach the LNP, that women were not adequately or effectively represented in the LNP (despite reform efforts), and the severity of the presence of SGBV in post-conflict Liberia.

While the availability of quantitative data in certain aspects was a limitation to conducting this research, the challenge was overcome, and the data found was useful and did not lessen the strength of the arguments presented. What this limitation shows, however, is there is still a lot of space open for further research in Liberia. Research mechanisms can be put into place by interested international organisations, government institutions or academics to keep a more consistent, annual record of data on LNP recruitment/staff and their gender representation, as well as the number of reported crimes that can be categorised within SGBV, and not just the report of rape.

Fortunately, this limitation has revealed that there is still a lot of research to be conducted in Liberia. For a country whose civil conflict and subsequent reconstruction has been widely documented, there is still room to better populate a niche of research in the field of state security building in the country.

Conclusion

It has been over one and a half decades since the end of Liberia's civil war, and nearly a year since the departure of UNMIL from the country. There is still a long way to go to build up the country's national institutions and state security. The problems that plague the LNP have been consistent impediments to the institution's operation. Despite the consistency of these problems, they should not be downplayed and worked around, but rather looked at from different angles to bring about sustainable solution. The recommendations provided above are a small contribution to improving the efforts that have been put in place from a legislative point of view.

In terms of SGBV, it can be said that Liberia has a lot more work to do now than it did in 2003. This is because, from now on, efforts to combat SGBV and improve the LNP's responsiveness will be without the input and influence of UNMIL. This is an opportunity for the country to show its independence and ability to operate (successfully) without permanent international presence. This paper shows that LNP improvement is directly related to grassroots attitude towards women's safety and SGBV. SGBV still needs to be a prioritised as national pressure point to address and the recommendations provided above look to address SGBV in ways that link national legislation to the LNP's engagement with traditions and community practice, the LNP and rural Liberia, and legislative efforts to community engagement and discourse.

From a policy and mechanism perspective, the LNP has shown an evolution from 2003 to 2017, with the establishment of mechanisms such as the Joint Programme, Criminal Court E and prioritised inclusion of women in LNP forces. From a practical point of view, evolution has been less successful. This has been attributed to a consistent lack of financial and training resources. This paper also argues that this lack of effective use of mechanisms can also be attributed to the greater societal attitude to SGBV which permeates all national institutions from a community level. As long as this societal issue of archaic, patriarchal values and practices remains, Liberia's strong, gender-sensitive national and institutional policies will not reach full effectiveness.

Although the subject of the problem stated in this paper is the LNP, the research conducted has come to the conclusion that the LNP's mechanisms and responsiveness will not evolve/improve from its current point without the proper social redress and reconstruction. It is for this reason that the recommendations set out above aim to reach beyond the LNP and look to change the way Liberians perceive SGBV and alter victim stigmatisation in order for victims to feel safe within their communities.

Apart from issues of accessibility to the LNP, victims would come forward more freely if they felt assured that they would be met with security, empathy and professionalism. The importance of this paper is not to repetitively report on the impediments to the LNP's effectiveness, but rather to identify the root cause of these challenges and look to address the greater issue and not just the LNP, which is a symptom of a larger challenge for Liberia.

In connecting the root issue to the problems around the LNP, the recommendations above indicate the way in which multiple levels of society are linked. The recommendations also show how a ripple effect from community to national response does not only have to be a negative connection but can be worked on to create a holistically gender-sensitive Liberian society.

This study assessed if improvements have been made by the LNP in terms of responsiveness to SGBV. In breaking down the study into three categories, it is seen that Liberia has strong SGBV policies in place. It is further deduced from analysis the lack of sound and consistent SGBV improvement lies in the implementation of policies and provisions- not in the lack of legislative protection.

In addition to reaching this conclusion, the analysis of the data and research above has also made clear that patriarchal beliefs and practices determine the response to SGBV by the LNP and Liberian society in general. It is this foundation of Liberian society that is the premise of gender relations, gender dynamics and perceptions of SGBV that seem to 'validate' the discrimination of females- in society and within the LNP. By addressing this foundational ill in Liberian society, there will be marked improvements in the LNP's responsiveness to SGBV and an indication of respect for and adherence to the gender-sensitivity for which Liberia worked hard to achieve in the aftermath of crisis.

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