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LIBERIAN WOMEN IN  
ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL  
POSITIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The thesis centres on a discussion of Liberian women who are in higher administrative and managerial positions in Liberia and are employed in the private and public sectors in Monrovia.

A statistical analysis of Liberian women's proportion in such positions, based on census results, throws light on their special situation. The thesis explores the historical development of the Liberian social structure which led to this situation.

It is suggested that the rule of the settler minority elite, which had lasted over a century, resulted in more women, especially those of settler origin but also those of coastal tribes origin (who were earlier exposed to Western education and to the norms and values of the settler group) being recruited to positions in government employment, i.e. the public sector.

The easy access women have been given to higher positions in the public sector is seen as a 'survival policy' of the minority elite, intended to prevent aspiring tribal males from reaching these positions. The women were perceived as less of a threat to the minority rule.

A comparison of the employment structure of the two sectors revealed indeed a preponderance of women of settler origin in the public sector, especially in the highest positions, while the private sector, over which the minority elite had no control, exhibited a marked preponderance of women of the interior tribal origin.

An analysis of the power motivation of Liberian women in administrative and managerial positions, within the framework of a discussion of women's status theories, and the relationship between status and decision-making power, reveals that these women, despite being in high positions, have low power motivation.

A comparison of the public sector, to which women had easy access and where they were needed and in demand, and the private sector, to which women did not have easy access, and where they were not needed and in demand, reveals differences and similarities in job motivation, experience, satisfaction and commitment. It also reveals differences and similarities in age and marriage patterns, church membership, education and the self-perception of the women.

## CHAPTER I

### WOMEN'S STATUS AND POSITION IN THE WORLD OF WORK

"With man there is no break between public and private life; the more he confirms his grasp on the world, in action and in work, the more virile he seems to be ... Whereas woman's independent successes are in contradiction with her femininity ..."

Simone de Beauvoir

The individuals we are concerned with in this work are women in managerial and administrative positions in the city of Monrovia, Liberia. Such positions have complex functions, call for extensive training, involve knowledge and highly developed mental skills, and generally yield greater authority in the work situation. However, position and status may not necessarily converge, and the intention of the study presented here is to analyse the relationship between the two, as evidenced in the particular situations of these Liberian women. This discussion will concentrate on the interplay of their ethnic, sex and occupational position as status determinants. We shall begin therefore with few notes on the concept of status.

Status distinctions are universal. In all societies people's positions are evaluated by themselves and by others interacting with them, resulting in the assignment of the rewards of esteem, honour and prestige in a ranked order to these positions. Status distinctions reflect the allocation of honour and prestige, and represent the social evaluation of the individual or the group to which he belongs.

Since social prestige is the reward, status is therefore the position occupied by a person or a group, relative to others, in the social system, on the basis of which rights, duties, behaviour and relationship patterns are determined. All individuals and groups in society can be seen as living in status situations which entail testing, validation and legitimization of a given level of social prestige. This is inevitable in any human society, in which social actors follow norms in order to gain social approval.



Weber perceived the reward, social prestige, as based on occupation, consumption and style of life, its source being social honour in pre-capitalist societies, enjoyed by the scholarly professions and high officials. Status groups in the Weberian sense enjoy different levels of consumption, follow distinct life styles and confine social intercourse to themselves.

There have been many other attempts to identify the bases for status determination: age, sex, occupation, education and cultural characteristics have been mentioned more frequently than others. There is no doubt though that in the determination of status there is an interplay of factors, and an individual's total standing in society is based on a combination of these.

Weber conceived a hierarchical continuum of statuses and status groups, the relationship between them being that of competition and emulation and not conflict. If our understanding of Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions is to be meaningful, we have to determine at first, in general terms, the social indicators which establish this status hierarchy. Only when we have achieved a general understanding of the ranking of statuses shall we be able to gain insight into the social indicators which determine specifically the position and status of Liberian women in high positions.

Status theories have been developed often as conceptual tools for the analysis of western industrial society, yet being abstract tools, they are applicable to the analysis of all societies. Status is problematic where roles are vaguely or ambiguously defined, a situation clearly applicable to women who are affected by the rapidity of social change.

We shall start therefore from Buvinic's definition of Women's status as "the ranking, in terms of prestige, power or esteem, accorded to the position of 'women' in comparison with, or relative to, the ranking- also in terms of prestige, power or esteem - given to the position of 'men'."<sup>1</sup> The others, referred to in our definition of status above in saying that "status is ... the position occupied by a person or a group, relative to others...", are therefore the men. This analysis represents basically a two-tier status ranking system, based on the position of 'man' vs. 'women'. (position being defined as the person's place in the social structure.)

Various indicators have been suggested as playing a role in establishing the ranking of women versus men. Buvinic mentions three of these indicators: the proportion of women in the labour force in relation to men, the enrollment in high educational level institutions in relation to men, and the political/economic power of women in relation to men as indicated in political and economic participation. None of these indicators can be considered sufficiently universalistic. Buvinic herself notes that some societies offer better child care mechanisms, for example through the extended family system, thus, enabling more women to participate in the labour force. There is no guarantee that such labour force participation will place women higher in the status hierarchy than men, since they may be filling mainly unskilled or semi-skilled positions. Similarly, the ratio of women to men in higher educational levels may not be applicable to traditional societies where the majority of the members are illiterate. The political participation of women and their involvement in women's solidarity groups as an indicator of status ranking, as suggested by Sanday<sup>2</sup>, is again not fully applicable to societies where the male and female spheres are almost completely separated, as is the case in most West African societies, and where all women participate in special women's societies which play a political role (e.g. the Liberian Sande Society).

1. BUVINIC, M. Women and World Development. Praeger Publishers. 1976  
p. 225

2. SANDAY, P. "Female Status in the Public Domain" in ROZALDO, Z. Michelle, et al. Women, Culture and Society. Sanford University Press. 1974.  
pp. 189-206

Also, political participation alone does not guarantee position entailing decision-making power. Indicators referring to the economic power of women refer to participation in the process of production, or to placement in high prestigious occupations. The first however does not guarantee control over the process of production and distribution, while the second may not take into consideration differences in occupational prestige scales between societies.

Consequently, while in all societies women's status can be conceptualized as their position in relation to men, as a Weberian hierarchy, the indicators of women's status are particularistic rather than universalistic. In every society there are particular status indicators which are applicable to women in that society. Consequently, it is necessary for us to understand the social, economic and political background of the society in question in order to determine the salient status indicators.

Whatever particular status indicators are decided upon, the correlation between the various status positions should be discussed and clarified first. Is there a correlation between specific political, economic, legal and moral positions? <sup>1</sup> Does the attainment of a high economic status in a particular society enable the individual or group to attain a political status? Does it entail a certain legal status, or moral status, i.e. are the individual or the group held in high esteem by the rest of the community due to their economic status?

1. "Political" is defined as the measure of the power and influence held by the individual or the group, i.e. their formal or informal authority to control others. "Economic" is defined as the measure of control over wealth and its disposal, 'legal' as the rights and obligations tied to obligations between superior and submissive, and 'moral' as the following of specific codes of etiquette and morality by groups or individuals.

The approach used in this study is the 'economic' approach.<sup>1</sup> women's economic roles can be studied under this approach in various ways: by observing variations in sex roles in relation to models of subsistence and production prevalent in hunting, gathering or horticulture societies (e.g. Friedl<sup>2</sup>), by observing sexual differentiation of economic roles in relation to adaptive advantages, within an ecological orientation (e.g. Sanday<sup>3</sup>), or by observing changes in women's political and economic status in relation to the changes in the modes of production or control over the factors of production. The first represents a structural-functional model, while the last is a historical-dialectical model.

Although it has been assumed in the past that social status depends on the control of wealth, there are a few methodological considerations which must be taken into account before attempting to tie women's economic roles<sup>4</sup> with their political status. The first consideration concerns the model used. Because of the process of 'modernization', and urbanization, which is not an evolutionary process of values inherent already in the society, but the adoption of completely foreign, implanted values, a historical-dialectical model of comparing past versus present in African economies and politics is somewhat futile. Contemporary African economic and governments are based on western value systems. Consequently, any discussion of gains and losses of African women's status between the past and present is futile as well, since between past and present African women have stepped from one economic and political value system - the 'traditional'<sup>5</sup> into another - the 'modern'.

1. TIFFANY, S. "Models and the Social Anthropology of Women". In Man, Vol.13, No. 1, 1978. pp.34-51
2. FRIEDL, E. Women and Men. 1975
3. SANDAY, p. op. cit.
4. By 'economic roles' we mean involvement in the production and distribution of good and services, in the formal or informal sectors.
5. The term 'traditional' is used here to denote a pattern of social relations, attitudes and practices which is a part of observed indigenous culture, and are historically transmitted and shared by a social group. The term 'modern' is used here to refer to those patterns which are not observed as part of the indigenous culture.

This represents an ongoing process rather than a dichotomy, with new situations emerging, with coexistence of 'traditioanl' and 'modern' systems, and the blending of various 'traditional' and 'modern' aspects within institutions. In this context, 'traditional society' is not an aggregation of individuals, but a situation in which attributes which are characterised as traditional dominate. This situation may be compatible with, though not necessary limited to, a social group. This approach implies that different values affect the status of women when they participate in situations characterised by 'traditional' attributes, or when they participate in situations characterised by 'modern' attributes. When female economic and political participation is characterised by the demands of bureaucratic organizations, their status should be judged accordingly. A historical-dialectical model can hardly escape using western cultural values as basis for the analysis of 'traditional societies. A structural-functional approach, applied in a cross-cultural analysis, though not totally satisfactory, seems more in place here. On this basis we can examine the nature of women's statuses in both 'traditional' and 'modern' situations by studying the structural differences between the modern and traditional economic and political participation patterns, and consequently statuses, without reference to the question whether one status was higher than the other. The last seems an irrelevant question in a situation where the 'traditional' and the 'modern' coexist, yet the latter did not evolve from the first. In other words, our approach is based on discussion of variations in sex roles, which are consequences of participation in 'traditional' or 'modern' situations rather than changes in the sex role and its attached status. We assume that this variation depends on the ability to control production and distribution within 'traditional' or 'modern' economic role as a status indicator.

To test the assumption that a correlation exists between economic roles and political status, we need to return to the question of status indicators. This is essential in order to determine whether a high, or low, prestige associated with women's work roles, (as exhibited by the relative degree of control over the economic organization, wealth and the disposal of wealth), corresponds with, and is a parameter of, the measure of political power and influence available to women. In other words, will power and influence in the prestige/political sector be available to the women when they can claim a high economic status?

In attempting to identify the indicators of economic status, we may begin by looking at the allocation of economic roles to women, which in particular societies is determined by reproduction, ecology and various external factors. Reproduction, or child bearing, care and rearing activities, may limit the range of economic roles women can perform in a given society. Rosaldo<sup>1</sup> suggests that in most traditional societies "a good part of a woman's adult life is spent giving birth to and raising children", which not only limits her political and economic activities, but also leads to differentiation of the public from the domestic spheres. The roles of warriors, or long distance traders, are fairly incompatible with child care activities, and will only be taken over by women if the society provides adaptive mechanisms, e.g. alternatives in the form of relatives who care for children while their mothers are away. This is found to be the case among Yoruba women, some of whom are long distance traders. In fact, in most West African societies it is accepted that child caring and rearing is not the responsibility of the mother alone. One of the earliest obligations young children are entrusted with is the care of their younger brother or sister.

1. ROSALDO, M. "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview". In M.Z. ROZALDO and L. LAMPHERE, Women, Culture and Society. Stanford, 1974. p. 23

Older female members of the extended family will always care for the child of the woman who leaves home in order to farm or trade. It is interesting to note also that it is quite acceptable for mothers to give away at least one of their children to a childless kin, usually a sister. Child socialization is done by members of the extended family, not by the mother alone. Despite all that, it is clear that reproduction remains a limiting factor in considering the scope of economic roles available to West African women. In some instances, reproduction determines the almost total absence of women from the political sphere. Bisillia<sup>1</sup> noted that among the Songhay people "a woman's only source of power lies in swelling the number of the male line, in bringing children into the world, in reproducing society." Her only source of esteem is therefore the role of the mother. This is more so when the regulation of economic activity becomes centralized to a degree that most mothers of reproductive age will find it difficult to participate in such activity, as is the case in the 'western' system of production prevalent in the urban areas.

Ecological factors determine women's economic roles as well. When the ecological conditions favour horticulture, women usually perform many of the subsistence economic roles. As noted frequently in <sup>the</sup> literature<sup>2</sup>, in subsistence family production each sex specializes in a production of particular types of goods and services. In most West African societies practicing shifting cultivation, there are specific economic roles for men and women. Among the Tiv in Nigeria, both men and women are engaged in grass pulling and planting the yams, planting cassava and harvesting millet, although they use different methods for performing the same jobs.

1. BISILLIA T, J. "The Feminine Sphere in the Institutions of the Songhay-Zarma". In C. OPPONG, *Female and Male in West Africa*. 1983, p. 99
2. See for example E.R. Fapohunda, "Female and Male Work Profile", in C. OPPONG, *op. cit.*

Weeding, yam harvesting, planting and harvesting third year crops in the crop rotation system, planting and harvesting groundnuts, and drying and preserving the vegetable food are all jobs performed only by women<sup>1</sup>. The Tiv men lay the yam <sup>or</sup> farms and make the yam mounds, plant millet and beniseed, plant and harvest the rice.

When draught animals are introduced, men usually take over subsistence activities, while women's role is limited to growing garden vegetables and dealing in petty trade. A similar phenomenon occurs where very intensive agriculture is introduced, as evident among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> The Hausa practice intensive agriculture on manured farms, with crops grown for both subsistence and cash. Because of shortage of manured cultivated land, men tend to pursue also non-farming occupations also. Women on the other hand almost never take part in subsistence agricultural production and are kept in seclusion. They do increase their house trading activities, perhaps in order to compensate for their loss of ability to participate in agricultural production, selling grains produced by their husbands and processed food stuffs.

In societies where cash crops are introduced, men usually take over this economic activity, although in some cases where the crop was not considered a cash crop from the beginning, women may have a role to play.<sup>3</sup> Among the Tiv, men took over the production of rice once it became a cash crop, while in Liberia, men took over the growing of cocoa, coffee and rubber while the women retained their important role in the production of rice.<sup>4</sup>

Under 'modern' urban conditions, where the stress is on production and distribution of services rather than goods, men tend to take over a disproportionate share of the work roles. They tend to have more occupational opportunities, in higher paying positions.

1. BOHANNAN, P. Tiv Economy. Longmans, 1968
2. HILL, P. Rural Hausa, Cambridge, 1972
3. An example is the cassave which is grown now by Tiv women as cash crop.
4. It should be noted however that where rice is grown commercially and on a large scale as a cash crop, its production, and especially distribution, is controlled by men.



External factors, e.g. warfare or forced migration, may either prevent or encourage women to take over some economic roles, or offer men and women new venues of economic activities - e.g. favourable political atmosphere for trading, or the opening of external markets for cash crops: Kru women on the West African coast were not traders in the past although nowadays trading is a common economic activity among them. Frequently however the introduction of large scale cash crops had an adverse effect on the women. Fapohunda reports Clignet's findings from the Ivory Coast, in which the colonial authorities encouraged commercial farming by the importation of unskilled male labour from the northern part of the country. The disappearance of the immigrant labourers from their home production cycle increased the agricultural work load of the women. Similarly, the operations of large scale European-owned plantations forced male migration. Generally, "the males were encouraged by their colonial rulers to produce cash crops and were given advice and agricultural extension assistance, while the women were relegated to the less profitable subsistence farming"<sup>1</sup>. The colonial period in Africa brought with it a need for manpower for construction, road building etc. Taxes were levied in order to force men to migrate to earn money, which left women in charge of subsistence agriculture, as evident in Tanzania. On the other hand, the pacification brought to West Africa by colonialism enabled women to increase their traditional trading activities, as happened among the Yoruba or the Ibo in Nigeria. Among the Afikpo Ibo, described by Ottenberg,<sup>2</sup> a new crop, the cassava, was introduced, grown in the traditional way and marketed for profit. Yoruba women also serve as intermediaries between the subsistence and the externally introduced commercial sectors.<sup>3</sup>

1. PAFOHUNDA, E.R. op.cit., p. 34

2. OTTENBERG, S. Cultures and Societies of Africa, 1969

3. It is interesting to note that within the bounds of the new venues for economic activities, these women continue to base their activities on traditional social claims, e.g. husband's support for initial investment, and on traditional methods of labour, e.g. utilization of free kin labour.

With the administrative demands of 'modern' urban areas, both women and men had to assume new economic roles, as clerks, nurses, teachers etc., specializing in activities outside the household.

It is evident that in the case of Liberian women the important role they play in food production cannot be discounted. Carter comments that "Liberian women provide the majority of the labour in food production, make most of the decisions regarding food production, and control the allocation of the food, whether it be for home consumption or for market sale".<sup>1</sup> Within the Liberian system of shifting cultivation of rice the women plant, weed and harvest, and the men are dependent on them therefore for the production of the subsistence crop. By virtue of their role in this process of production the women's access and right to farm land is customarily guaranteed through membership in kin groups, though only few of them can afford or are able to purchase their farm land legally, as private property. Though the site of the farm is usually selected by the head of the household, women are consulted. Additionally, the farm is "under the control of the head wife who supervises all those tasks for which women are responsible and who controls the allocation of the rice from the farm".<sup>2</sup> The control over the distribution of the rice is achieved through a control of the granary, enabling women not only to feed their families, but also to give gifts to relatives, and more importantly, sell surplus rice on the market. In addition to their work on the communal rice farms, many Liberian women cultivate their personal farms, aided by two mechanisms: cooperative female work groups, and the use of hired male labourers. Women also produce and control the allocation of cassave in Liberia, it being an especially popular cash crop for women in the urban area.

1. CARTER, J. Liberian Women, Their Role in Food Production. University of Liberia, 1982, p. 33
2. CARTER, J. op cit. p. 62

They also engage in the production and distribution of other fruits and vegetable crops. The cultivation of cash crops though is dominated by men.

Liberian women are also engaged in entrepreneurial activities: they sell processed food and operate small shops. Marketing is especially common among women who are divorced or unmarried, or whose husbands are unemployed or earning a salary which is below poverty level.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming that under certain reproductive, ecological and external conditions women perform economic roles in subsistence, cash crop growing, trading, administration etc., does this performance give them more control over resources? Does the fulfillment of these economic/work roles outside the domestic sphere afford the women only economic power<sup>2</sup>, or does it also give them political power and authority<sup>3</sup>?

In reference to this question, Rosaldo<sup>4</sup> suggests that women's status will be highest where they are able to enter the public sphere. Accordingly, she defines the domestic, with which women are identified, as "minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children", while the public, with which men are identified, consists of "activities, institutions, and forms of associations that link, rank, organize, or subsume particular mother-child groups".<sup>5</sup>

1. KABA, B. *Liberian Women in the Market Place*. University of Liberia, 1982, p. 33
2. Power is defined as the ability to impose one's will on others.
3. Political authority may be defined as the public legitimation of power. See Weber, e.g. H. GERTH and C. MILLS. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. 1946, or, S. TIFFANY, op. cit. p. 43. The relationship between economic and political power was investigated in non-African societies as well, e.g. Judith Brown's account of the Iroquois women in R. REITER, *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, 1975. Brown concludes that the political power of the Iroquois women, or Matrons, who could raise and depose the ruling elders, conduct wars and establish treaties, was not based necessarily on their contribution to production, but rather on their control over the economic organization of the tribe.
4. ROSALDO, op cit.
5. Rosaldo, op. cit. p. 23

Sanday indentifies the domestic domain as including "activities performed within the realm of the localized family unit", while the public domain includes "political and economic activities that take place or have impact beyond the localized family unit and relate to control of persons or control of things".<sup>1</sup> Rosaldo sees women's economic activities as relatively more individual and particularistic than those of the men in traditional society. Men's economic activities are more public, and require formal organization, e.g. hunting. Egalitarian societies according to Rosaldo are therefore those in which the public and domestic spheres are only weakly differentiated, and where neither sex claims much authority.

Mullings<sup>2</sup> offers the theory that women's status depend on their labour being social and not just domestic. Sanday<sup>3</sup> states that only when the female contribution to subsistence is equal to that of the male's, women's status is high, and power and authority are shared. Sandy suggests that when women have all the economic roles, they depend on men for other things, e.g. defence, which enable men to control power and authority. Similarly, when men have all the economic roles, women are relegated to the domestic sphere, enabling men to control the public sphere as well and have power and authority. Sanday does not distinguish however between societies where <sup>w</sup>omen and men perform equally important, but different economic activities, as in West Africa agricultural societies, and societies where men and women perform the same type of economic activities, in the context of competetion. It is in the latter case that men can displace women from various economic activities.

1. SANDAY, op. cit., p. 190

2. MULLINGS, LEITH. "Women and Economic Change in Afric". In N. Hafkin and E. Bay, Eds., Women in Africa, 1976, pp. 239-264

3. SANDAY, P. op. cit.

In West African traditional societies men and women do not share the same economic activities: the majority of such activities are allocated either to men or women. Similarly, men and women in these societies do not share all power venues, whether formal or informal. This is not to say that women in traditional West African societies lack power and authority. Rather, the West African female political power has its own public sphere, distinguished from that of the men, yet complementary to it. This possibility was considered by Rosaldo as well when she stated that though women may comply with cultural definitions of their status forced upon them by the men, they may at the same time gain power by establishing a public sphere of their own. She noted that in West Africa women have created fully articulated social hierarchies of their own. In his description of the Akan traditional political and military systems, Arhin<sup>1</sup> describes a formal hierarchy of female roles complementary to the male roles, involving female rulers who were part of ruling councils and thus responsible for women's affairs. Their decision-making power extended to legal, military and economic affairs, ensuring the peace and stability of the community. This traditional political system of male - female interdependence was complementary yet balanced.

Okonjo<sup>2</sup> describes the traditional political roles reserved for men and women in three Nigerian societies: the Hausa, especially during the pre-Islamic period, the Yoruba and the Igbo. Among the 15th century Hausa, women held high political offices, as exemplified by Queen Amina of Zaria. Their loss of political influence occurred with the increased seclusion prescribed by Islam, which curtailed to a certain degree their economic activities and consequently their formal political roles. Yoruba women contributed to the functioning of the political machinery in their official political capacity, e.g. as priestesses or the Queen-Mother.

1. ARHIN, K. "The Political and Military Roles of Akan Women", in C. Oppong, op. cit., p. 73
2. OKONJO, K. "Sex Roles in Nigerian Politics", in C. Oppong, op.cit. p. 211

Similarly, Igbo women had the right to manage their affairs in traditional society, and were considered by various writers as "the equal of Igbo men". They evolved their own separate formal political institutions for running their own affairs, e.g. the Inyemedi, wives of a lineage, or the Ikporo-Ami, a village group.

Ettiene<sup>1</sup> describes the economic autonomy of Baule women in the Ivory Coast, noting that both sexes could enter the competition for economic and political power. The Baule women participated freely in the decision-making process in affairs concerning the village, and acted collectively to defend the interest of women and the community at large.

Within their own public sphere West African women hold a considerable degree of formal political authority over the other females in the society. The Sande society, common in Liberia, is a strong political organization within the traditional context, affecting and controlling almost every aspect of the women's lives, from birth to death. The Nimm society of the Ekoi in southern Nigeria is a similar one. Kaberry<sup>2</sup> mentioned the women's societies in Bamenda, Cameroon, through which women were able to gain positions of authority and responsibility.<sup>3</sup> Ndongko describes the positions of the Mafo, the mother of the chief, in the Cameroon. The Mafo is regarded by the whole Bamiliki tribe as being equal to the chief himself and exercises authority in some spheres in which the chief, the Fong, does not interfere. She directs all feminine activities, and takes part in the deliberations of the Kamve, the administrative council, "where she takes precedence over the chief himself".

1. ETTIENE, M. "Gender Relations and Conjugalilty Among the Baule", in C. OPPONG, op cit., p. 287
2. KABERRY, P. Women of the Grasslands. London, 1952
3. NDONGKO, T. "Tradition and the Role of Women in Africa", Presence Africane, Vol. 99, 1976. pp. 143-154

She also heads all women's societies and belongs to those of the men. Among other Cameroonian tribes women may act as village chiefs. In some of the villages women have their own councils which are responsible for the regulation of all agricultural tasks and ceremonies and have the power to impose sanctions against those who contravene their decisions.

The Ibo women's associations also manifested themselves as strong political organizations. According to Henderson<sup>1</sup>, the leader (among the Ibo) of the organization called 'The Women of Onitsha' had a role parallel to that of the Onitsha king, and she is therefore called the 'queen'. She and women councilors are regarded as prophets, and directly control the activities in the great market, judge certain disputes and receive tributes from the women traders. The queen's palace is a sanctuary, and she has a decision-making capacity in communal affairs. The Aba riots of 1929 proved the measure of political power in the hands of Ibo women within their own public sphere: up to 2,000,000 women were said to be mobilized then in protest against taxes on women's property. The political power of such female market associations is however largely informal: they serve as a neutral ground, where disputes are arbitrated and peace pacts made. Though informal, such important political functions should not be overlooked.

Consequently, it is possible to grasp the fulfillment of separate economic roles in agriculture and trade by women in West African societies as compatible with the development of their own separate public sphere, within which female status is measured and ranked.

Lancaster<sup>2</sup> and others noted that when men are able to take over from women certain economic activities, these activities become part of the prestige economy.

1. HENDERSON, R. *The King in Every Man*. 1972
2. LANCASTER, C. S. "Women, Horticulture and Society in Sub-Saharan Africa". In American Anthropologist, Vol. 78, No. 3, 1976, pp.539-564

However, Lancaster himself says about the Goba women of Central Africa that they "strongly influence behaviour within the localized descent group... determining the selection of local headmen...chiefs. Wealth and social position pass through a matriline and women practice de-jure and de-facto controls over the fruits of the land and in a sense control the land itself, through their usufructory rights of tillage in the plots of communally held land". Despite Lancaster's contention that this does not constitute control over the entire economic organization, it does seem to suggest the existence of female economic power, and a coexisting informal power within a prestige sphere complementary to that of the men. The informal modes of power available to women, as described by Lancaster, are not the only manifestation of the women as political actors. Rather, as seen above, they represent an additional mode of power to which women have access in some traditional societies, and which operates sometimes to link the formal political power available to the women in their own public sphere with that of the male political structure.

The holders of the highest political authority ranks within the female public sphere do interact and cooperate with their counterparts in the male public sphere. Leaders of the Sande society in Liberia not only cooperate with the equivalent male society, the Poro, but also participate in many of the male society's activities.

Accentuating the link between the phenomenon of separate economic roles and separate public spheres is the fact that in many traditional West African societies husbands and wives remain two distinct economic units. Fapohunda<sup>1</sup> notes that "West African women of both agricultural and pastoral traditions cannot expect to be completely supported by their husbands, especially in polygynous societies, and must find independent ways to support themselves and their children".

1. FAPOHUNDA, E. op. cit., p. 33



Katherine Abu<sup>1</sup> describes the separate nature of husband and wife resources among the Ashanti, Ghana, where husband and wives exchange goods and services. She comments that "the separation of spouses' financial responsibilities is closely connected with their retention of their separate individual economic interests at marriage".

The Yoruba woman's earnings from her trading activities, the Hausa woman's house-trading income, the Ibo woman's profits from cassava sales, or the Kpelle woman's profit from the sales of garden vegetables, all remain largely their own. Women, like men, are responsible for certain household expenses, e.g. food or children's clothing, but their economic activities remain separate from those of their husbands. The Yoruba man is responsible for supplying his family with enough yams for subsistence, but there his obligation ends. Marshall's<sup>2</sup> findings point to the fact that there is no common household budget among the Yoruba, and to women's responsibilities for feeding and education. Among the Tiv, women have rights in farms and they own and control the produce grown. Though they are obliged to feed their husbands and children from the produce, they can sell the surplus and keep the profits for themselves. Hill reports that Hausa women sell grain to their husbands and stresses the fact that through housetrading (the 'honeycomb market') secluded Hausa wives can become much richer than their husbands. In fact, the economic separation is marked to such a degree, that some husbands have to buy their own cooked meals from their wives.

1. ABU, K., "The Separateness of Spouses: Conjugal Resources in an Ashanti Town". In C. Opong. op. cit., p. 162
2. In Mintz, S. "Men, Women and Trade", in Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1971
3. HILL, P. op.cit.

Hill compares the situation of a man whose wife assists him with money to that of "a man who has helpful friends - except that his wife is more likely to abandon him.<sup>1</sup> Also, any loan the wife gives to her husband is recoverable in court.

Pollet and Winter<sup>2</sup> report that once the Soninke woman has been loaned the use of the plot by her husband, she "cultivates it alone and is the sole owner of the products of her labour. She thus disposes of it freely to her own advantage, consuming it, selling it - be it to her husband - as she likes. Whether the members of her residential Kā benefit from it free depends on her own agreement".

According to Oppong, women in traditional Akan society did not depend on their husbands. The use of their agricultural produce and profits from trade could not be subjected to control by the husbands. They had family houses and farmland for themselves. They had the right to dissolve the marriage if their husbands did not in their opinion fulfil their obligations satisfactorily.<sup>3</sup>

Even among the Bororo of Niger, studied by Dupire,<sup>4</sup> the husband's only responsibility was to give his wife a few milking cows. Otherwise, she was expected to fend economically for herself. She milked the cows and sold the milk and butter. She also looked after and sold the sheep and goats that belonged to her. The husband gave her millet and paid the taxes. Dupire commented that "in this allocation of work between the sexes there is no idea whatsoever of inferiority of status being associated with those tasks normally assigned to women".<sup>5</sup>

1. HILL, P. op. cit., p. 247

2. POLLET, E. and G. WINTER. "The Social Organization of Agricultural Labour Among the Soninke". In D. Seddon. ed. Relations of Production. 1978, p. 346

3. OPPONG, C. "Domestic Budgeting Among Some Salaried Urban Couples". In C. Oppong, ed. Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana 1974

4. DUPIRE, M. "The Position of Women in Pastoral Society".

5. Dupire, op. cit. p. 77

Sacks also stressed that men's and women's role can be sharply segregated, yet seen as equal, as is the case in traditional non-state societies: "It is erroneous to assume that if men and women play different roles, one sex must be socially dominant".<sup>1</sup>

Structurally, women's status in modern urban West Africa is different in its basic economic and political factors: women share the public domain with men, and with it comes the struggle for equal share in the same power and authority structure. Economically, men and women in modern West African societies perform the same roles, not different complementary roles. Husband and wife are considered as one economic unit, build as an economic partnership. But within this structure, the husbands become the main providers for the family, taking over many economic roles. Western society, which serves as a value model to modern African urban society, is geared towards the provision of almost all the household budget needs by one partner in the economic union, the male, at least ideally. Even where wives do earn <sup>a</sup> an income as wage earners, their economic independence cannot be preserved any more. As Mintz<sup>2</sup> pointed out, salaried employment for women may enable men to take over their wives' income without endangering future income. Previously, where the wives were traditionally self-employed farmers or traders, their profits were their future investment and could not be mixed up with the men's income or be tampered with, thus preserving her existence as an independent economic unit.

1. SACKS, K. "State Bias and Women's Status". In American Anthropologist 1978, 3, 1976. p. 565
2. MINTZ, op. cit.

Clearly, women find themselves at a disadvantage in modern West Africa. The adoption of western ideology, especially in the urban areas, means that many modern occupations are largely reserved for men. Modern urban African lacks the traditional adaptive mechanisms which were intended to allow women more freedom of movement despite child caring activities. Modern factory 'work by the clock' is unsuitable for women because these adaptive mechanisms have not been replaced yet by other alternatives, such as nurseries, day care centers, or husbands sharing child care and other chores. A more eminent factor in the disadvantageous situation in which women find themselves is the fact that they do not possess the educational level and technical knowledge demanded in many modern work roles. Colonial governments and missionaries perpetuated a western pattern by teaching mainly home-economics to girls, which could qualify them for hardly anything more than a domestic role. In her Ghanaian study referred to earlier, Oppong found that Akan women who were married to senior civil servants were totally dependent, economically and otherwise, on their husbands, because the majority of them did not possess the level of education which would have enabled them to get an occupational status equivalent to that of their husbands.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that modern West African societies offer women more economic opportunities in the urban areas than the rural areas, as expressed in the spectrum of available work roles. Presently, agricultural roles in the rural areas are assumed more and more by men, mainly due to transplanted western ideology brought by western agricultural advisors who neglected to see the important role women played in traditional agriculture.

1. The situation described above is not only typical to West Africa. In her report from Guatamala, Chinchila attacked the assumption that women were traditionally restricted to domestic production in the home, and asserted that 'modernization' may have brought greater restrictions on the ability of women to contribute directly to the family economic: Industrial growth took Guatamalan women away from artisen industries, but failed to absorb them back into manufacturing, reserving such jobs for the men. CHINCHILA, N. "Industrialization, Monopoly, Capitalism and Women's work". In Women and National Development, Walesly Editorial Committee

This process, based on false assumptions concerning the agricultural roles of African females, began early in the colonial period. Large scale cash crop production, introduced as part of the colonial development strategy, was organized around male labour under the assumption that males were more suitable for agricultural roles.<sup>1</sup> Mintz suggests that although the Afikpo Ibo women may seem at first glance to benefit from growing the new cash crop, the cassava, this is not really so. "In fact, the apparent inability of these women to move into long range marketing, their continued commitment to agricultural production, and the lack of full-time women traders, are facts that suggest the failure of marketing activities to serve as a major ladder of economic mobility for females"<sup>2</sup>. Import-export trade, largely controlled during the colonial period by British and French firms, was also dominated by strong male preferences compatible with the societies of the colonial masters. Cultural preferences for dealing with males in the business arena have prevailed. Economic opportunities in agricultural trading may be presently restricted for Yoruba women because of their inability to deal in export cash crop marketing, which became dominated by men. Men control in addition direct importing into the rural and urban areas. The ideology of the colonial masters was also evident in male preference in administrative roles. The British for example, did not train any women for junior level administrative posts within the colonial government structure. The 'privilege' was reserved for males. On the whole, the colonial employment structure required adult males rather than females, based on western perceptions defining the role of the woman as a 'home-maker' and a 'house-keeper'.

1. In a related discussion, Mona Ettiene describes the transfer of the production of cotton from women to men. She notes that the colonial administration introduced commercially produced cotton, previously a 'Woman's crop', into the Ivory Coast, making it, under the surveillance of male-oriented technical experts, the province of men. See M.ETTIENE, op.cit.
2. MINTZ, op. cit. p. 252

Women's inability to participate fully in the market economy, forces them to rely heavily on the only traditional economic activity which they can still easily pursue -- trading. Because they are further restricted by the large foreign trading companies, especially in the urban areas, women are mainly petty traders. The availability of other, new occupational roles for women in the modern urban areas, e.g. nursing, teaching and the secretarial professions, should not distract our attention from the fact that these are not matched by the much larger range of occupational opportunities opened to men in the urban areas. Data from Dakar showed that three-fourth of the female wage earners were domestics, and self-employed female petty traders were of an equal number to wage earners.<sup>1</sup>

The unequal access to occupational roles within the modern West African societies is similar to the one reflected in the unequal sharing of power and authority. Unlike traditional societies, in modern societies the separate female public sphere is lacking, and women must compete with men for the sharing of political authority within one and the same public sphere. Under these conditions women may lose their access to power and their possible informal role in the authority structure. Again, West African women are found to be at a disadvantage. Colonial governments recognized the men's political organizations as the only legitimate political authority holders, especially within the policy of indirect rule, annihilating female political authority. Among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria the British colonial policy of indirect rule permitted the further expansion of Islam, and confirmed therefore the increased domination of the political sphere by males. In other societies as well the traditional political systems were replaced by Western-oriented systems stressing male participation.

1. MINTZ, op. cit.

Okonjo<sup>1</sup> notes that the British colonial masters, "conditioned by their experience to seek in their newly acquired territories for a social organism which would evolve into the Western European type of nation-state" misunderstood the Igbo democratic political system. They proceeded accordingly to initiate their own warrant chief and native administration system, appointing male warrant chiefs without consulting the Igbo. Igbo women were not integrated into the male-dominated colonial framework of politics. Okonjo observes further that the current male-dominated nature of Nigerian national politics exhibits only slight modifications of the imported prototype of the Western representative government model. Consequently, women's participation in Nigerian politics is continuously stifled. In his discussion of the political and military role of Akan women, Arhin laments that "Women were not recognized on the colonial chief-<sup>b</sup> lists, as members of the Native Authority Councils and courts. They had no officially recognized shares in the stool treasurers. It is extremely unlikely that the colonial authorities would have recognize a woman as an occupant of a major male stool".<sup>2</sup>

Western values were introduced to African societies not only through economic institutions, as evident in the cash crop production system, and political institutions, but also through educational institutions. Since the colonial employment market demanded educated males, female education suffered. Not only were more boys educated than girls, but there was also a marked difference in the subjects studied. Western values concerning the unsuitability of females to technical subjects resulted in the offering of technical courses teaching marketable career-oriented skills to males.

1. OKONJO, op. cit., p. 219
2. ARHIN, op. cit. p. 73

Brydon<sup>1</sup> cites an example from the early years of the 20th century in the German colony of Togoland: most of those who benefited from the missionary education at the time were boys, who were taught in addition to reading and writing, masonry, carpentry and smithing. Girls were taught by the missionaries' wives cooking, sewing and European housecraft. Colonial legislature also introduced Western values in the support it gave to the monogamous marital bond rather to the lineage bonds. Such values were further supported by the various Christian churches.

African governments today are build on various western political patterns in which men and women share the same political authority structure. African women however find that their lack of educational qualifications as compared with the men is a stumbling block in achieving high positions within this structure. Naturally, being put first in government posts by the colonial rulers, men are a step ahead of the women, allowing women to fill the lower posts vacated by them while they climb the political administrative ladder. Men are also better able to use their political positions to accumulate wealth, which in turn again will strengthen their political power. While decision-making power was available to the women in the past through their own organizations, such decision-making power is annulled in modern political organizations. It is important to bear in mind that this power was compatible with decision-making power within the economic role: where women had in the past the power to make decisions concerning the production and distribution of goods they were found also to hold power and authority within their own political/public sphere. Where economic decision-making power was absent, participation in political decision-making seemed to be absent as well.

1. BRYDON, LYNNE, "Avatime Women and Men, 1900-80". In C. Oppong, op. cit. pp. 320-329



A case in point are the Songhay women described by Bissilant<sup>1</sup>; though the women had participated actively in agricultural tasks, they had no right of ownership in the harvest, and had no opportunities therefore for accumulation of capital. Not surprisingly, Songhay men play the public and legal roles in the society's institutions.

Similarly, the Hausa women engaged in the 'hidden trade' as described by Schildkrout<sup>2</sup>, "are unable to gain control over significant areas of production and they remain dependent on manipulating the limited resources that men give them for subsistence". Their limited ability to gain further control over the economic system of production and distribution is accompanied by lack of participation in the male dominated areas of political life. Such economic conditions limit the perceptions women themselves have of their power and decision-making ability, and curtail their attempts to play meaningful informal roles in the political structure. These cases suggest that decision-making power is commensurate with contribution to socially necessary labour and lack of dependence of the wife on the husband.<sup>3</sup> It cannot be stressed enough that no claim is made here to a cause and effect relationship between contribution to the process of production and control over it, and political and leadership power. The relationship is rather that of co-existence and compatibility between the two.

Should such a relationship hold also in the urban area? Should we expect women who hold economic decision-making power in the urban area to have also political decision-making power? In looking at these questions in the context of the present work, women's decision-making power is perceived as one of the indicators of their status.

1. BISSILANT, op. cit p. 105
2. SCHILDKROUT, E. "Dependence and Autonomy: the Economic Activities of Secluded Hausa Women in Kano". In C. Oppong, p. cit. p. 125
3. See also Webster, P. "Matriarchy: a Vision of Power". In R. Reiter, Ibid.

A similar conceptualization is used by Sanday, who sees power and authority as a parameter of status, and therefore defines status as "the degree to which women have de facto or recognized decision-making power that affects activities at the economic and/or the political level".<sup>1</sup> However, while Sanday suggests judging decision-making power by a combination of the level of female material control, the demand for female produce, the political participation in influencing policies affecting people out of the domestic unit, and the existence of female solidarity groups devoted to female political and economic interests, in this work judgement of decision-making power will be limited by definition to the perceptions of the women of their level of power motivation: their perceptions of themselves as social and political actors. This approach is considered more suitable, since demand for female produce, or control over produce does not necessarily result in women actually exercising more decision-making power, though they may facilitate it. But where such favourable conditions exist, the individual's motivation to exercise decision-making power will be a crucial factor. Such motivation is taken to reflect the norms of society regarding the decision-making level which women in any particular society will be permitted to achieve.

Our estimation of the economic decision-making power of women in modern occupations in African urban areas should be based on a descriptive analysis of such occupations. A historiographic look at the components of female work role in western societies will throw light on the position and status of women in modern occupations in African societies. Sheila Lewenhak<sup>2</sup> comments rightly that "women have worked, constantly, continuously, always and everywhere, in every type of society in every part of the world since the beginning of human time."

1. SANDAY, P.P. op. cit., p. 192

2. LEWENHAK, SHEILA. Women and Work. William Collins and Sons. 1980: p. 9

Stone Age women worked as gatherers, weavers, chemists, potters and herbalists. Later women became farmers and traders, innovated building techniques as constructors of shelters and processed food. Lewenhak maintains that within settled agricultural and urban communities women's work has not altered in essence as much as their economic status. While women were not excluded from work within the family enterprise, they began to work mainly for their husbands, who owned their labour. Women's work in 17th century Europe was "frankly labelled infamous and dishonest, i.e. not respectable... For a man to keep his wife idle was a sign of genteel status".<sup>1</sup> such ideology was retained throughout the period of the Industrial Revolution, though the need for female labour favoured the opening of many occupations to women. A similar need for labour power during the post-war labour shortage enabled many women to establish themselves as top level professionals. Despite all that, only few women were found to hold the highest posts which entail decesion-making power. Fogarty et al<sup>2</sup> commented that in Britain there seems to be a stagnation in the number of women who penetrate such posts. Most reach to posts just below the top, but rarely to top positions. "Study after study in recent years has pointed out that women generally, quite apart from the question of promotion to top jobs, tend not to be offered the same chances of training for skilled work or promotion as men, nor to be motivated by their education or work environment to take them; that they tend to be segregated into 'women's work', devalued by unequal pay, treated as lacking in commitment to their work and as unsuitable to be in authority over men, and trained and encouraged not merely to accept these conditions, but to think them as right".<sup>3</sup>

1. LEWEN, S. op. cit. p, 119

2. FOGARTY, M., RAPOPORT, R. and RAPOPORT, R. Sex, Career and Family. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971

3. FOGARTY, M. op. cit., p. 25

Women managers in Britain tended to congregate in occupations where a high proportion of women was employed: education, medical services, hotel catering etc., all predominantly female occupations. Fogarty et al also found them to be in support jobs rather than in general management, and more likely to be specialists. On the whole, British women in high posts were seen as untypical. The few women who have reached top level positions did so through personal pioneering, political pressure or labour market shortage. Their participation in such economic roles which entail decision-making power cannot alter to a great extent women's political decision-making capacity as long as the value system has not changed, and consequently does not greatly affect women's status. The majority of the roles in which women dominate today are in actual fact extensions of the female domestic role. e.g. nursing or teaching.

Considering the disadvantageous situation described above, which African urban women are faced with, and the effect of these transplanted western values on their status, the position of African women who do manage to reach to top posts is interesting. They work and are active in societies where two structurally different status systems exist and where values of traditional society have not disappeared altogether, due to the economic necessity to preserve women's traditional pattern of independent economic roles. (This economic necessity is the result of high rate of male unemployment, large gap in earnings between the elite and the rest of the community, and the lack of social security programs). Yet, their own economic participation is far removed from the traditional context.

Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions are no exception. By virtue of their work roles they have removed themselves from the still existing traditional status system, and a discussion of their status within the work context is therefore amenable to the criteria of western value systems. In their occupational positions they are awarded a certain degree of economic decision-making power. However, the social structure in which they operate may be different from that of other West African countries. This is due to the special historical circumstances surrounding the rise and development of "Africa's oldest republic". The most pertinent question in the consideration of the status of these Liberian women according to the criteria described above is whether their high positions have enabled them to achieve similar power and authority to men, within the same public sphere, or whether they have internalized ideologies perpetuating the assignment of formal political power and authority to the men, as represented in political decision-making power, in spite of their positions. The answer serves as the main assumption underlying the study of these women and furnishes the basis for our hypothesis.

In the following chapters we shall attempt to show that though the women have reached high positions, they lack political decision-making power, the crucial indicator in judging their status, and have assimilated an ideology according to which they do not perceive themselves as the holders of decision-making power.. The specific historic, socio-economic and political conditions which have prevailed in the Liberian society have helped to manouver the women into positions in administration and management, without a commensurate political power and authority.

The next chapter will present the hypothesis, operational definitions, and a discussion of the methodology used in the study of Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions. The chapter includes a short statistical analysis of Liberian women, indicating their proportion in managerial and administrative positions according to census results. The chapter will also refer to distinctions between the private and the public sectors which play an important role in the ensuing discussion.

The third chapter introduces the analysis of the historical development of the Liberian social structure, and includes a discussion of pre-colonization Liberia, the colonization period, the settlement period, the evolution of class structure and recent developments affecting the social structure. This entails discussion of changes in ideologies and power relations, as evident in the moves from mulatto rule in the 19th century, to black rule, to assimilated wards and finally to tribal African rule. It also touches upon the consequences of changes due to the appearance of an incipient middle class, and changes in the role structure due to the appearance of highly educated professionals within a plurality of roles. An understanding of the Liberian social structure is considered an important and intergal part in the understanding of the penetration of the Liberian women to higher positions. The discussion of the social structure will offer an explanation to the position in which the women in our study find themselves and the factors which facilitated their entry into the modern labour force in such positions.

The next chapters are based on analysis of data collected in a survey of women in Monrovia and are also documented by case studies and comparisons to results obtained in an all-male survey:

Chapter four presents the Liberian administrator/manager as a supportive mechanism within the Liberian social structure and discusses the reasons for the preponderance of women of settler origin in the highest positions in the public sector.

Chapter five discusses the political/power motivation of the Liberian female administrators and managers, in relation to their status. This chapter is crucial to the analysis, in that it presents the perception of the women of their identity as political actors, as evident in the level of decision-making power they believe is appropriate for them.

Chapter six presents a portrait of the Liberian female administrator/manager: her job characteristics, career patterns, job mobility, job motivation, job experience, job satisfaction and job commitment - all in the framework of a comparison between public and private sector employees.

Chapter seven <sup>ze</sup> analysis the personal characteristics of the women: their age, marriage patterns, church membership, urban living and education among others.

Chapter eight discusses the images and self perception of the women, and the possible sources of these self-perceptions as depicted in various cultural stereotypes concerning their economic/occupational roles.

The present chapter deals with women's position in the world of work, commencing with a discussion of women's status in relation to economic roles, i.e. their contribution to production, and proceeding with a discussion of the relationship between economic and political statuses.

We shall proceed further now by narrowing our discussion to the specific group this study is concerned with - Liberian women in administrative and managerial positions.

C H A P T E R I I

HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY



In assessing the role of women in specific occupational groups two possible comparisons may be used: one involves the ratio of male to female within the occupational group, and the other the comparative penetration of that occupational group by females in different countries. A comprehensive assessment will entail a combination of the two methods of comparison.

Unfortunately, such statistical assessment has its pitfalls: labour statistics available for West African countries are at best scanty. Censuses are not conducted on a regular basis in all countries, periodic economic surveys suffer a similar fate, and the interval of time between censuses and surveys may be too long. Additionally, census definitions are largely unstandardized, and consequently comparisons between census results in different countries can become inaccurate. This is especially so in definitions of work status and occupational group in the "informal sector", in non-wage work. In fact, many official surveys do not recognize the importance of women's work, and work performed within the confines of the home, or involvement in different kinds of work simultaneously, may go unrecorded.

The most frequently used statistical comparison concerns women's contribution to production as expressed in their labour force participation. The crude labour force participation rate for females is defined as the ratio of the total economically active female population to the total female population of all ages. Economically active women are defined as those who are either employed or unemployed,

1. Multiplicity of economic activities, a necessity for survival in developing countries, tends to characterize the "informal sector".

the unemployed being those who are seeking work for pay or profit. These definitions may not be comparable internationally, due to differences in definitions of economic activities such as definitions of unpaid family workers: the 1974 census in Liberia considered a person to be economically active if "he or she did any work for pay or profit during the past 12 months. It was not necessary for the person to have received any money if the person (a) worked in an establishment, farm or business operated by his family members, or (b) was a servant working for his food, clothing or schooling, etc." Unpaid family workers were classified therefore as those working for a related member of the household, without financial compensation except room and board or allowance.

The Liberian census defined the status of 'self-employed' as attached to a person who worked for himself/herself for fees, or to the farmer who worked on his or her own plot and did not hire any one. It is not clear here how ownership of the plot is determined, since most farming land in the interior of Liberia is not privately owned but falls in the category of 'tribal land'. It is not clear also whether a wife working with her husband on a plot is considered self-employed as well. The 'paid employee' in the Liberian census included also those who receive payments in kind, i.e. persons not related to the head of the household who worked for their room or board.

1. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, 1974 Population and Housing Census. Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia, Liberia, 1977, p. 12

1  
 Boulding's data on women provides international comparison of crude labour force participation (the mean year being 1968); Liberia ranks 47 among 124 countries for which the crude labour force statistics were provided, presenting a higher rate of female labour force participation than countries like France, Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, Israel or Ireland. When comparing Liberia however to other African countries, the position is not that favourable.

TABLE II.1 ← LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY COUNTRY (percent)

COUNTRY	FEMALE	MALE
Mali	51.7	58.5
Upper Volta	50.2	58.4
Ivory Coast	45.5	57.7
Gambia	44.3	56.1
Benin	41.6	53.4
Guinea	36.6	55.8
Togo	34.3	50.9
Senegal	33.8	53.0
Nigeria	31.0	47.4
Ghana	31.0	44.3
Sierra Leone	26.5	51.0
Liberia	24.4	52.6
Niger	6.3	57.5
Mauritania	2.6	59.9
Guinea Bissau	2.3	61.3

Source: INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION. Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1978, pp. 18-24

1. BOULDING, E., NUSS S, et al. Handbook of International Data on Women. New York, 1976

According to Table II.1, Liberia is preceded by Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Guinea, Benin, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Mali, all West African countries with a higher female labour force participation rate than Liberia.

Crude labour force participation rate is however a poor indicator of the actual role played by women in the economic life of any country. It does not reveal to us the occupational distribution among those who participate in the labour force, and may in fact mask the participation of a large proportion of women in agriculture, or in low-paid occupations, such as marketing. The United Nation's data for women's commercial activities revealed for example that the participation of women in marketing amounted to 41% in Zambia (late 1950's), 60% in the Senegal (1959), 66% in Brazzaville (1963), 70% in Nigeria (1963), 84% in Ghana (1960), and 89% in Dahomey (Benin, 1967).<sup>1</sup>

In addition to activities which are clearly commercial, women in various countries are engaged in ploughing, sowing, upkeep of farms, transportation of produce, water carrying, preparation and transport of firewood, beer making and so on. Despite the tremendous amount of time, effort and energy output which are being invested in these activities, censuses and labour surveys tend to ignore them and classify the women as "housewives". As pointed out by Boserup,<sup>2</sup> women in the rural areas of developing countries "would spend little time on domestic work in the narrow sense of cooking, house cleaning and child care and much more on

1. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA. "Women and National Development: Some Profound Contradictions". African Studies Review, Vol. XVIII, 3, 1975, pp. 47-70
2. BOSERUP, E. "Employment of Women in Developing Countries". Paper presented at the International Population Conference, Liege, 1973

providing the types of goods and services which are bought for money in industrialized countries, such as food production, provision of water and fuel, etc." These women should not be classified therefore as housewives.

Wage employment on the other hand lends itself more freely to statistical comparisons cross-culturally. For a meaningful analysis we must turn therefore to data concerning not only the work status, but also occupational structure. Boulding offered internationally comparable data based on calculations of indices of femaleness of occupations and distribution of occupations. The occupational distribution index was constructed by dividing the number of females in an occupation by the total number of females in all occupations. Table II.2 presents a comparable data of occupational distribution of females in Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the U.K.

TABLE II.2 OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES (percent)

Occupation	Liberia	Ghana	Nigeria	S. Leone	U.K.
Professional/tech.	1.37	1.19	1.87	0.89	10.93
Administrative/man.	0.13	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.69
Clerical	0.39	0.32	0.62	0.34	27.48
Sales	2.64	28.61	48.21	6.65	13.82
Service	0.69	1.63	6.53	0.28	25.48
Agriculture	93.74	58.23	27.89	89.68	1.24
Production	1.02	20.75	14.81	2.10	20.24
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Boulding, Op. Cit.

Differences are immediately evident: while women in Britain are more evenly distributed among clerical, service, production and professional occupations, more than 90% of the women in Liberia were found in the agricultural sector. The participation of Liberian women in the modern labour sector, in administrative, managerial, clerical and service occupations is negligible. Liberia has also the smallest number of females participating in sales and production occupations. The only category in which it can compare favourably with other African countries is that of administrative and managerial occupations, in which 0.13% of the economically active Liberian females fall. This finding is also confirmed in smaller scale studies: Hinderink<sup>1</sup> found for example that the percentage of females among administrators and executives in Ghana was well below 1%, though they constituted 38% of the professional workers, 16.7% of the clerical workers, and 35% of all service workers.

Boulding provided also an index of femaleness of economic activities by dividing the number of females reported to be economically active in an occupation by the total number of persons, males and females, who are economically active in that occupation. This index provides a measure of the proportion of females among the economically active population in specific occupations.

A United Nations publication<sup>2</sup> states that "women's participation in salaried employment has hardly increased, especially in manufacturing, trade, commerce and the service industries. The only increase is shown among women who had higher education, in professions like teaching, nursing, social work and clerical work."

1. HINDERINK, J, and STERKENBURG, J. Anatomy of an African Town. Utrecht, 1975, p. 208
2. UNITED NATIONS, HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION. "Women: the Neglected Human Resource for African Development". Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, 2, 1972, p. 364

Table II.3 presents the ratio of males to females in occupational categories in selected West African countries.

TABLE II.3 - PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES IN OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Liberia	S. Leone	Nigeria	Ghana	U.K.
Professional/tech,	26.59	26.61	14.88	19.72	38.84
Administrative/man.	9.12	8.89	6.77	3.11	7.47
Clerical	12.81	15.98	9.59	7.35	67.30
Sales	35.14	46.64	60.30	80.35	48.30
Service	12.75	6.47	26.32	29.14	70.98
Agriculture	42.64	42.43	9.66	36.93	13.69
Production	3.20	5.51	20.94	21.92	16.92

Source: BOULDING, op. cit.

Liberian women constitute more than a quarter of all those in professional and technical occupations, and about one-eighth of those in clerical occupations. These ratios compare favourably with other West African countries, and also with East African countries not represented in the table above. In Tanzania, Shields<sup>1</sup> found a concentration of females in occupations like hotel/bar waiter and porter, nursing and social work, clerical and sales. She further stressed that there "are no women managers or technical staff."

1. SHEILDS, op. cit. , p. 45

Interestingly, the proportion of women among administrators and managers in Liberia is greater not only than that found in other African countries, but also greater than that found according to Boulding in Britain, where women constituted only 7.47% of those in this category. This finding becomes even more significant when the racial factor is taken into consideration. Among the 1,149 administrators and managers reported in the 1974 census in Liberia, only 694 (60.4%) declared Liberia as their country of birth, and only an additional 80 were born in other African countries. A total of 375 (32.6%) administrators and managers on the other hand hailed from non-African countries. The majority of those can be assumed to be caucasians and therefore 'expatriates'. In fact, the 1978 economic survey of Liberia<sup>1</sup> concluded that out of 256 managing owners and managers of large enterprises 174, or 68%, were expatriates, while 1,606 of the 4,227 owners and managers of smaller business enterprises (38%) were expatriates as well. These findings point to a clear domination of the managerial sector by expatriates. In Liberia, the majority of the expatriates in the wage sector are males and not females, especially so in higher positions. We can safely assume then that if the proportion of male to female in administrative and managerial positions was limited to calculations applicable to Liberians only, the percentage of females among all those in such occupations would be greatly increased.

1. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA. Economic Survey of Liberia, 1976. Monrovia, 1978



Statistics concerning the quasi-public sector in Liberia reveal that among the total of 63 expatriates employed in that sector, 61 were males and two were females, i.e. 97% of the expatriates were males.<sup>1</sup> The situation seems to be the reverse in other African countries.<sup>2</sup> Clignet noted that women in the Cameroon and the Ivory Coast have to compete with expatriate women, who hold the majority of supervisory and executive positions held by women.

Further more, there is evidence in Liberia of differentials in earnings between males and females, with females in wage employment concentrated at the upper hand of the salary scale. Table II.4 presents as an example a comparison of male/female employees in the Liberian quasi-public sector.

TABLE II.4 - MALE/FEMALE EARNINGS IN THE QUASI-PUBLIC SECTOR (percent)

Income group (US\$)	MALE	FEMALE
1 - 199	71.0	32.5
200 - 399	20.3	41.6
400 - 699	5.3	19.6
700 and above	3.4	6.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA. Public and Quasi-public Sector Employment in Liberia, 1978

1. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA. Public and Quasi-Public Sector Employment in Liberia, Monrovia, 1978
2. CLIGNET, R. "Social Change and Sexual Differentiation in the Cameroon and the Ivory Coast". In Wellesley Editorial Committee, Women and National Development: the Complexities of Change. Chicago, 1977, pp. 244-260

Though more males than females are employed in the quasi-public sector as a whole, female earnings are consistently higher: while three-fourth of the males earn below 200 dollars a month, more than a quarter of the females earn above 400 dollars a month, and only a third of them earn below 200 dollars. In this case we assume salary to be partly indicative of the distribution of positions. This situation again seems to be the reverse in other African countries. Flanagan<sup>1</sup> noted that in Tanzania 48% of the females earn wages below 199 shs. a month, while only 10% of the males fell in that category. Tanzanian men in wage employment consistently earn more than women in all other income categories above 200 shs. a month.

Though proportionally very small in number, the penetration of African women in general, and Liberian women in particular, into the modern labour sector is significant, yet very little studied. Such penetration is indicative of the relative investment in female education, and women's ability to combine their activities within the home, as wives and mothers, with activities outside the home. Moreover, studies have<sup>2</sup> shown that even where various factors affecting employment will favour women, e.e. where educational and skills attainment opportunities exist, where there are no pay or promotion discrimination, and where cultural constraints and family responsibilities do not limit women's employment to a great extent, the level and form of female employment will be determined mostly by the demand for female labour.

1. FLANAGAN, W. G. The Extended Family as an Agent in Urbanization: A Survey of Men and Women Working in Dar-es-Salaam. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1977
2. YOUSEF, N. "Women in Development: Urban-Life and Labour". In I. Tinker and M. B. Bramsen. eds. Women and World Development. Overseas Development Council, 1976, pp. 70-77

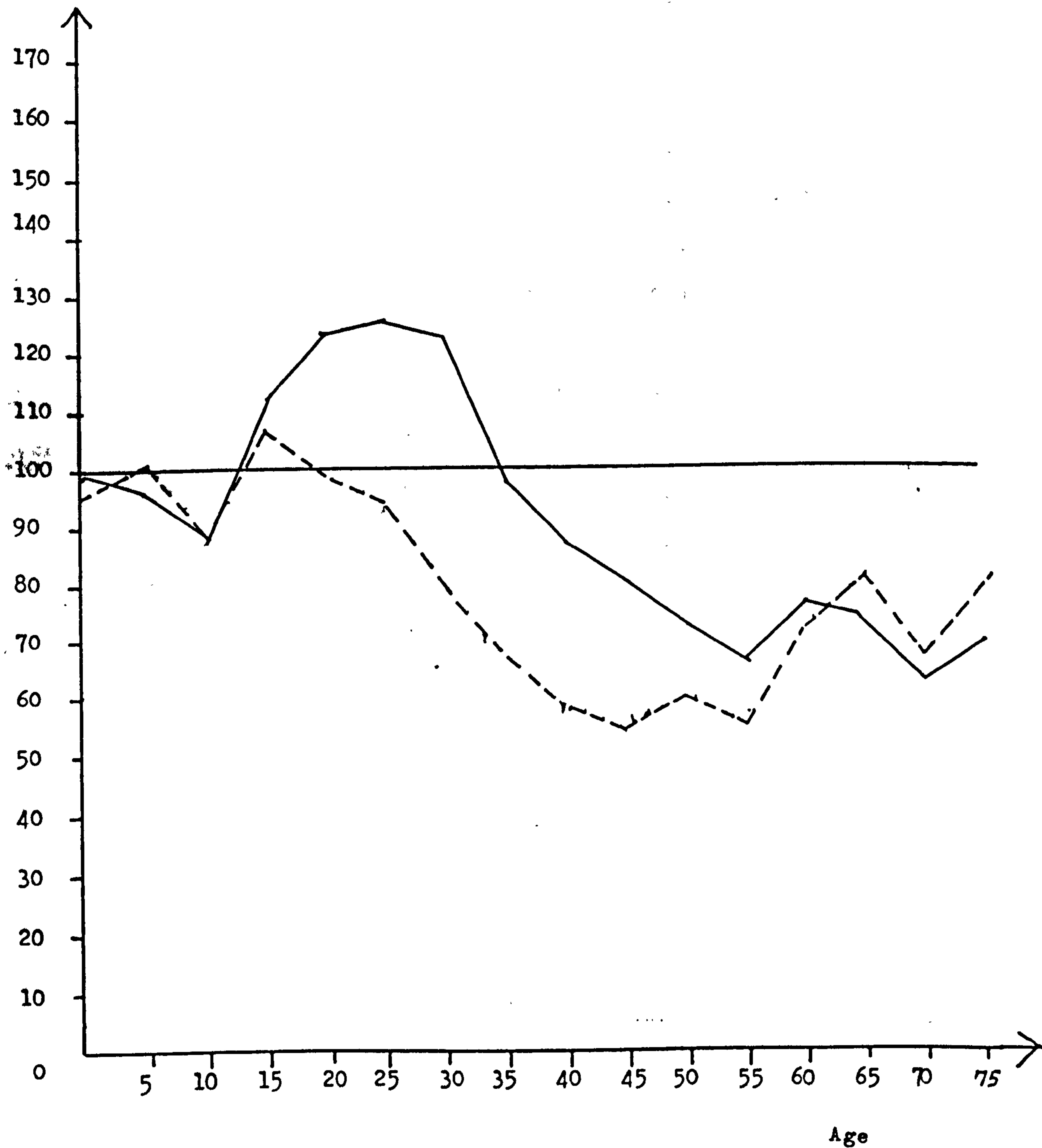
Where the demand does not exist, other factors will have but little influence.

The information available on the characteristics of the women in the modern labour sector in Africa, who are the spearhead in a process of social change, is severely limited. This is especially so in relation to studies concerning African women at the top end of the scale - in managerial and administrative positions. The comparative success of Liberian women, or their ratio to men in such occupations, indicates that a demand exists for their participation at such level, and this demand in itself warrants an investigation: the nature of the demand, its historical source and its effects should be studied. Such an investigation would rightly begin with a broader look at the situation of Liberian women.

Sex ratio data in Liberia indicates the presence of more males than females in the age group 1-15 and the age groups above 35 (see Figure II.1). There are more females than males between the ages 15 to 35. The ethnic composition of the Liberian population is presented in Table II.5. The largest tribal group in Liberia is the Kpelle, who form 19.9% of the population. Liberians of no ethnic affiliation, i.e. members of the settler group and descendents of the freed slaves who arrived to Liberia in the 19th century and earlier 20th century, constitute only 3.2% of the male population and 2.5% of the female population. The majority of them are in the urban areas.

FIGURE II.1 - SEX RATIO BY AGE

Ratio: Females  
per 100 Males



Liberia: Total —————

Liberia: Urban - - - - -

Source: 1974 Population and Housing Census

TABLE II.5 - ETHNIC AFFILIATION BY AREA AND SEX (percent)

Area	Liberia: total		Urban area	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bassa	14.3	14.2	17.8	18.8
Belle	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3
Dey	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Gbandi	2.5	2.7	1.8	1.5
Gio	8.5	8.8	4.3	4.3
Gola	4.5	4.5	3.4	3.4
Grebo	7.8	8.2	9.0	9.9
Kpelle	19.9	19.9	10.5	9.3
Kissi	3.6	3.2	3.6	3.1
Krahn	4.6	4.9	3.8	3.9
Kru	8.0	8.1	12.0	13.3
Loma	5.8	6.0	6.8	6.7
Mandingo	4.1	3.7	5.3	5.2
Mano	7.2	7.6	5.0	5.1
Mende	1.7	1.5	0.8	0.7
Vai	3.3	3.3	4.4	4.4
Other Liberian	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Fante	0.5	0.4	1.3	1.4
Other African	0.7	0.4	1.5	1.2
No ethnic affiliation	3.2	2.5	7.7	6.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA. 1974 Population Census

About three-quarters of all Liberian women age 20 and above are married. There are more single and divorced women in the urban areas, 12.4% and 6.3% of the female urban population respectively, and more widowed women in the rural areas (9.2%).

TABLE II.6 - HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED (age 9 and over) BY SEX (percent)

Grade	Liberia: total		Liberia: urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No grade completed	72.3	87.6	50.3	70.6
Primary school	19.8	9.7	30.5	21.0
High school	6.7	2.3	15.8	6.9
College	1.3	0.5	3.5	1.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 1974 Population and Housing Census, Liberia.

School enrollment statistics show a preponderance of males in all grades. In 1980, there were 178,591 boys enrolled in schools in Liberia, but only 100,516 girls. In Monrovia itself, 35,704 boys were enrolled in school, yet only 26,248 girls<sup>1</sup>. Table II.6 provides information on the educational attainment of males and females in Liberia. As expected, more females than males are illiterate. In urban areas, about half of the total males, and 70% of the total females are illiterate. These differences are maintained at all educational levels, with males consistently more numerous than the females.

1. CARTER, J. Liberian Women: Their Role in Food Production and Their Educational and Legal Status. University of Liberia, 1982, p. 139

The principal activity of the population is presented in Table II.7.

TABLE II,7 - PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY OF THE POPULATION BY SEX (age 10 and over, percent)

Activity	Liberia; total		Liberia; urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Working	59,9	22,2	53,6	11,6
Not working	40,1	77,8	46,4	88,4
House keeping	1,3	43,4	1,2	47,0
Students	17,3	8,1	25,9	17,5
Retired	2,2	3,0	1,4	1,2
Others	19,3	23,3	18,0	22,7
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: 1974 Population and Housing Census, Liberia

The differences between the percentages of the males and females in Liberia who are not working is striking. In the urban areas, 88,4% of the female population age 10 and above are classified as not working, and only 17,5% of those are enrolled in school. Employment rate in general, for both males and females, is low. This may indicate a support to the often suggested thesis that in developing countries the wide-spread unemployment and underemployment severely restrict employment opportunities for women, especially in the modern labour sector, where their activities are seen as competing with the men's (especially where the ability of governments in developing countries to create more employment opportunities in the modern sector is limited).

Even in the Liberian rural areas, where the majority of the women are supposedly farmers, about three-quarters were classified as not working, which may raise some doubts as to the applicability of international work status definitions to women in the African rural areas. It is possible that the women may not perceive themselves as "working" when they are engaged in farming or market trading, and that enumerators may succumb to the same mistake. Consequently, women's agricultural production may be under-reported, and so is their role in food distribution.

TABLE II.8 - OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF URBAN WORKING POPULATION AGE 10 AND OVER BY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND SEX (percent)

Occupational group	Male				Female			
	Paid emp.	Employer	Self emp.	Unpaid family worker	Paid emp.	Employer	Self emp.	Unpaid family worker
Adminis./manag.	83.3	3.4	3.1	0.4	8.6	0.1	0.3	0.1
Prof./tech.	66.1	0.3	4.5	1.0	26.5	0.1	0.6	0.4
Clerical	76.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	21.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Sales	24.7	1.4	41.5	1.9	2.6	0.1	24.4	3.1
Service	85.1	0.4	1.7	0.9	7.0	0.0	0.9	3.6
Agriculture	38.2	0.3	34.2	5.0	1.7	0.0	12.8	7.0
Production	79.7	0.9	16.4	1.2	1.3	0.0	0.7	0.1
Unidentified	61.2	0.5	11.8	8.5	8.7	0.2	3.4	5.3

Source: 1974 Population and Housing Census, Liberia



Table II.8 presents the distribution by status within various occupations. The majority of the urban sales workers are self-employed. Those among the women who are in agricultural and related occupations are mostly self-employed or unpaid family workers. The percentage of unpaid family workers is also high relatively among those in service occupations. Most men and women in professional, technical, administrative, managerial and clerical work are obviously paid employees, many apparently working within the government sector, the government being the largest single employer in the country.

According to the 1978 economic survey of Liberia, 75.6% of the population was engaged in agriculture and 8.7% in industry, manufacturing or craft. Of the remaining 15.6% in the service sector, nearly half were employed by the government (in all, 6.5% of the total population).

Table II.9 presents the distribution of the employed in Monrovia, by sex and class of worker: about a quarter of both males and females in the survey were found to be employed by government. The private sector however employed by far more males than females, while more than a third of all the females were market traders and sellers.

When looking at the distribution of males and females in occupation groups by ethnic affiliation, an interesting picture emerges: women of no tribal affiliation, i.e. of settler origin, comprise only 2.5% of the total female population of the country, yet they make up almost half of the total of women in administrative and managerial occupations. (47.9%). They also make up 29.6% of the women in professional and technical occupations, and 22.5% of the women in clerical occupations.

TABLE II.9 - EMPLOYED PERSONS BY SEX AND CLASS OF WORKERS (percent)

Class	Male	Female	Total
Private sector	50,2	15,8	42,4
Public sector	23,6	22,8	23,2
Self employed	13,7	16,1	14,1
Makes market	5,0	35,8	11,7
Unpaid family worker	7,4	9,0	7,7
N/A	0,1	0,5	1,8
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, Public and Quasi-Public Employment in Liberia, 1977

In these three categories they surpass men of no tribal affiliation. Of special interest to us is of course their extraordinarily large share in administrative and managerial occupations. A comparison to the situation of the Creoles in Sierra Leone cannot be avoided in this case: in his study of occupational stratification in Freetown Harbach<sup>1</sup> noted that the percentage of females in wage employment in the modern sector was by far higher among the Creoles (40% of the females) than among the Mende (14%), the Temne (13%) and other ethnic groups. In all, 80% of the female respondents in his survey of the modern labour sector of Freetown were Creole women. He found Creole women to be overrepresented in all occupational groups in this sector and noted that their proportion "increases with the amount of formal qualification required by an occupational category."

1. HARBACH, H. "Occupational Stratification in Freetown". In Africana Research Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 1, 1973, p. 7

The position of the settler women in Liberia is somewhat similar. The explanation of this phenomenon entails however a preliminary look at the economic structure of Liberia.

Liberia's economy is mostly export oriented and controlled by large foreign-owned concessions. During the 19th century, people of the interior tribes of Liberia were engaged in growing subsistence rice crops, while the settlers who had arrived at the time were engaged in trading, with few of them becoming "landed aristocracy" as owners of large farms and plantations. Some of the early settlers, who became known as Americo-Liberians, were successful merchants and owned large fleets of ships. However, competition with European traders and merchants forced many of the Americo-Liberians to abandon trading and retreat to government, politics and law. As they established themselves more firmly as a ruling class, they began to dominate and staff most available government positions. A period of economic decline set in thereafter, created mostly by the falling prices of the commodities which Liberia exported, especially agricultural commodities. After a period of stagnation during the post World War I years, Liberia's economy was boosted by the establishment in 1926 of the Firestone Plantation, the largest rubber plantation in the world (see Figure II.1). This has earned Liberia the nickname of "Firestone country", and its economy the nickname of "economy on rubber wheels".

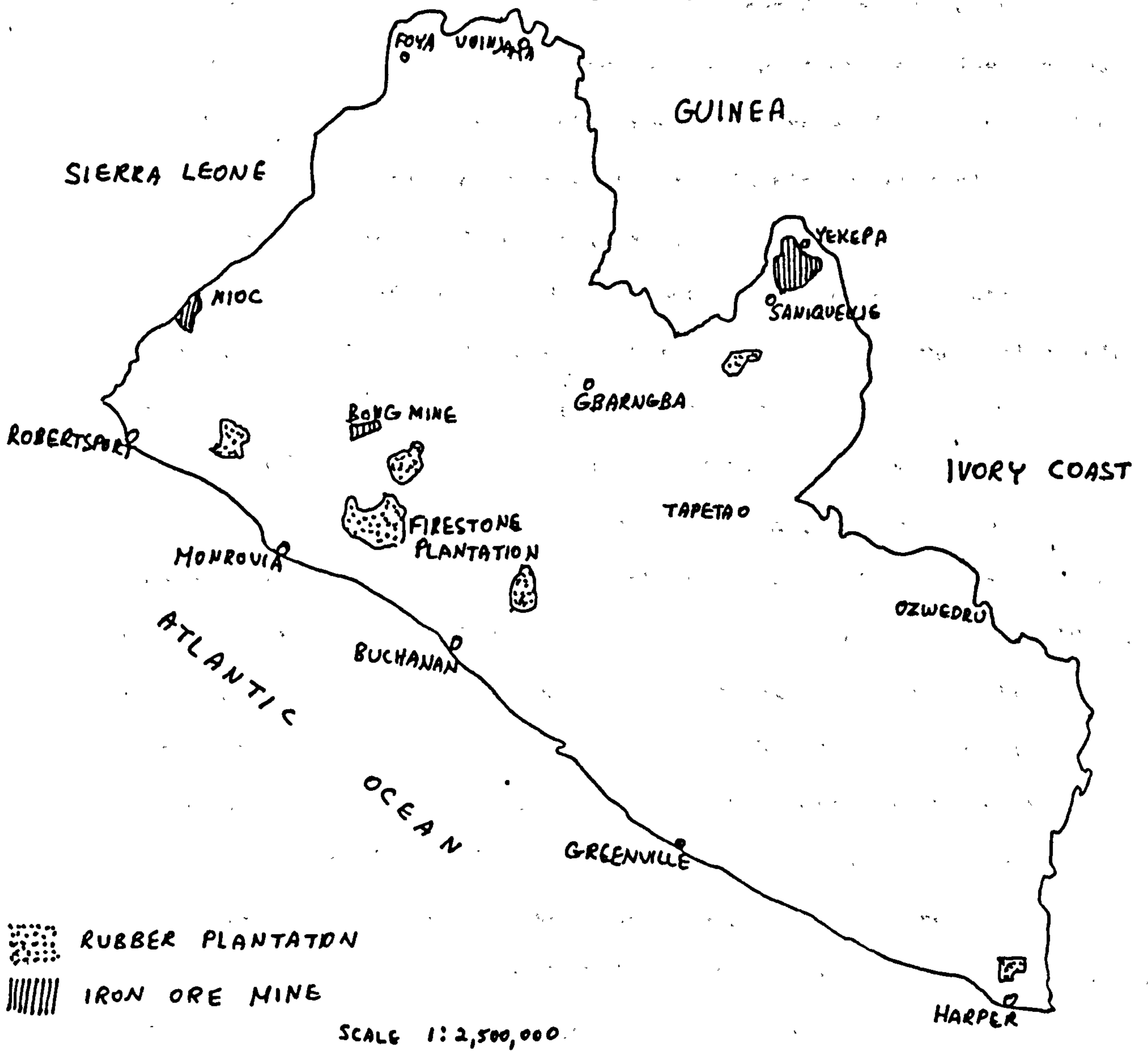
Though by the early 1940's rubber had become the major export, the subsistence sector embraced at the time "no less than 90% of the... population, with an extremely low per capita cash income and with few

indigenous products entering the world economy." <sup>1</sup> While the settlers and their descendents retained their control over government posts, law and political occupations, trade and commerce, tribal Liberians remained subsistence farmers or manual labourers.

Another boost to the economy was the construction of the Free Port of Monrovia and the Robertsfield airport during the years of World War II. In the late 1940's, President Tubman inaugurated the "Open Door Policy", which was aimed at providing incentives to foreign investors. Consequently, the Bomi Hills iron ore mine opened in 1951, and followed later by the Bong Mine, Lamco Mine and the Mano River Mine (NIOC). A second policy initiated by President Tubman, the "Unification Policy", called for equality between the descendents of the settler group and the tribal people. This in effect meant a recognition of political unity, and accordingly Executive Councils were held in the interior of the country, tribal culture was encouraged, and some roads, schools and hospitals were built in the interior. Although the tribal Liberians were still subjected to certain inequalities, e.g. payment of the hut-tax or possible recruitment into the Frontier Force, Dorjahn <sup>2</sup> notes that "the policy resulted in sufficient social and political improvements to make possible a sizable transfer of labour from the subsistence sector to the concessions", involving an accelerated migration rate.

1. DORJAHN, V. "The Economies of Sierra Leone and Liberia". In V. Dorjahn and B. Isaac, eds. *Essays of the Economic Anthropology of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. Philadelphia: 1979, pp. 1-26
2. DORJAHN, V. *op. cit.*, p. 6

FIGURE II.2 - MAP OF LIBERIA SHOWING IRON ORE MINES AND RUBBER CONCESSIONS



Liberian farmers play only a minor role in growing rubber. They do however engage in cash crop production of coffee, cocoa and palm kernels as export crops marketed through the Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation. The local demand for fish is supplied largely through local fishermen, many of them of the Fanti tribe from Ghana, while the Mesurado Fishing Company, lately joined by few other companies, engages in fishing also for export. Timber resources are exploited by foreign concessions. The manufacturing sector in Liberia is yet small and produces mainly for the domestic market.

This pattern of economic development has led to the creation of "islands of developments"<sup>1</sup>, one of them being Monrovia, the capital city. Employment opportunities in Monrovia have always been the strongest "pull factor" resulting in net in-migration. Employment in the Free Port of Monrovia and the number of manufacturing, commercial and construction companies was added to the attraction of opportunities in government employment.<sup>2</sup> Fraenkel noted that up to the end of the 1930's Monrovia's economic structure was characterized by government being virtually the only source of employment for the educated (the descendants of the settler group and those assimilated by them), while the tribal people worked mainly for foreign companies or as domestic servants. Though sources of employment have increased, Fraenkel found in 1959 22% of her male sample survey in Monrovia to be in government employment, and was led therefore to state that "one in five of the males was

1. DORJAHN, V. op. cit. , p. 13

2. FRAENKEL, M. Tribe and Class in Monrovia, 1959

on government payroll"<sup>1</sup> and that "Monrovia has by far the largest concentration in the republic of skilled and administrative personnel," over half of which were working for government. Fraenkel estimated that at the time government and private companies in Monrovia employed an equal number of workers, about 5,000 each.

The emerging picture is that of a relatively balanced dichotomy of the public and the private sectors of the economy in terms of absolute numbers of employed individuals. Within this dichotomy there are several differences emanating from the peculiar social structure of Liberia, including a preponderance of expatriates in managerial positions in the private sector, and a preponderance of females of settler origin among those in managerial and administrative positions, as the data presented above shows.

The finding of a numerical balance in Monrovia between the public and the private sectors of employment, coupled with these noted preponderance differentials, give rise to certain theoretical possibilities: while it is obvious that the distribution of 'expatriates' and Liberians will show a heavy segregation of Liberians in managerial positions in the public sector, and expatriates in managerial positions in the private sector, we may wonder whether the form of distribution of 'Liberians of settler origin' and 'Liberians of tribal origin' will show evidence of segregation by sector as well. If such segregation can be proven, the ramifications are many: limiting ourselves to women and their occupational status, it is suggested here that such a segregation exists, and it manifests itself in a preponderance of

1. FRAENKEL, M. op. cit., p. 39

women of settler origin in managerial and administrative positions in the public sector, and a preponderance of women of tribal origin in managerial and administrative positions in the private sector of employment. It is further suggested that this segregation by sector is the outcome of the process of the development of the social structure of Liberia, which placed one group, that of 'Liberians of settler origin', in ruling positions, and therefore in control of the allocation of government positions. It is also assumed that certain qualities are demanded of a person placed in an administrative or managerial position, including education and training, and that whatever the distribution of these qualities/variables among the population, they should have equally affected women of tribal and settler origin in both sectors. Differences in the ratio of settler women to tribal women between the private and the public sector indicate the presence of intervening variables which affect the ascent of women of these two groups to administrative and managerial positions.

The hypothesis presented here is that THE POSITION OF THE LIBERIAN FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER IS A FUNCTION OF THE POLITICAL STAND OF THE AMERICO-LIBERIAN/SETTLER GROUP, WHO, BEING A MINORITY RULING GROUP WHO PERCEIVED WOMEN AS LESS OF A POLITICAL THREAT, UTILISED THE WOMEN FULLY.



Four assumptions resulting from the hypothesis are to be tested here. They are:

a. THAT A HIGHER NUMBER OF THE WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL POSITIONS COME FROM AMONG THE SETTLER GROUP, AND SHARE SIMILAR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS,

b. THAT A LARGER PROPORTION OF THE SETTLER WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL POSITIONS ARE FOUND IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, NOT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

c. THAT THE LIBERIAN WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL POSITIONS DO NOT HAVE POLITICAL POWER AMBITIONS, AND DID NOT REACH TO THESE POSITIONS BECAUSE OF MOTIVATION TO BE POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL OR SUCCESSFUL.

d. THAT WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL POSITIONS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR ARE THEREFORE MORE COMMITTED TO, AND MORE MOTIVATED TO SUCCEED, IN THEIR JOBS.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The first stage of the study entailed extensive documentary research into the role of women in work. The second stage involved an exploratory study intended to assist in identifying meaningful attributes of women in high positions in Monrovia, to clarify concepts used in the study, to check the validity of the assumptions resulting from the hypothesis, and to establish operational definitions,

During the stage of exploratory study, twenty prominent women in Monrovia were interviewed at length. They were from both the private and the public sectors, and included a judge, deputy ministers and company

managers among others. The interviews not only provided the study with relevant variables to be used in questionnaire construction, but also provided information on the effects of non-conscious ideologies on the women, historical and social occupational structure determinants, and the effects of educational opportunities and legislature on the position of Liberian women.

During the next phase, the questionnaire was constructed, based on variables obtained in the exploratory study, and assumed therefore to be valid. Where applicable, questions in the questionnaire were taken from similar studies conducted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and therefore assumed to be valid as well.<sup>2</sup>

The next step involved a test of the reliability of the questionnaire. The Civil Service Agency in Monrovia was chosen as a suitable venue for a pilot study conducted for that purpose. Due to the small number of its female employees, no sample was necessary, and all females working in the agency were interviewed. Twenty five respondents in all answered the questionnaire during the pilot study. The questionnaire schedule was found to be reliable, and only minor clarifications were needed.

The questionnaire contained mostly multiple choice questions, with only a few open-end questions, and was constructed in six parts:

Part I of the questionnaire analyzed job characteristics, job distribution within the private and public sectors, and the nature and scale of positions.

1. See Fogarty et al, Sex, Career and the Family. London, 1971
2. See Appendix for a sample of the questionnaire

Part II analyzed career patterns and job experience, including promotion patterns and career motivation.

Part III contained questions concerning career motivation, including differences in priorities during different stages of the life cycle.

Part IV contained questions concerning job satisfaction and job commitment, examining variables like delegation of responsibilities, work/social/family priorities, and reactions to job transfers.

Part V dealt with personal and social characteristics, including variables concerning marriage patterns.

Part VI contained questions concerning female role perceptions and images.

All parts of the questionnaire contained various check questions, intended as a further test of the validity of the questions and the respondents' answers.

After the completion of the pilot study, the actual survey sample was picked. Complete lists of all government civil servants were obtained, based on official lists of government payroll records for the 1981/1982 fiscal year. All public corporations, as part of the quasi-public sector, were visited as well, and lists of female employees were obtained. The public and quasi-public lists were combined, and all women in positions of executive secretary and above who were earning above \$6,000 a year were extricated in order to form the sampling frame. The figure of \$6,000 a year as a cut-off point was determined after consultations with the Director of the Civil Service Agency. Using systematic sampling methods, every 4th name on the sampling frame list

was chosen. The final sample size for the public sector was 101.

In order to construct a sampling frame for the private sector, a list of private companies operating within the Monrovia area was obtained from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. All the companies listed were visited, and a list of women in positions of executive secretary and above was prepared. Since private companies were reluctant to reveal salary figures, salary guidelines could not be used in the private sector. Therefore, job description was requested when in doubt, and for all those in executive secretary position, in order to determine whether the position merited inclusion in the survey, i.e., whether it carried any administrative or managerial powers. Since the total number of women in higher positions in the private sector of Monrovia was only 98, no sample was chosen, and all listed women were interviewed.

Only a few problems were encountered during the administration of the questionnaire. The apparent length of the questionnaire did not seem to be a deterrent factor. Though perhaps apprehensive at first, most women were very willing, and even enthusiastic, in their responses. The average interview lasted about two hours, with quite a few lasting several hours each.

The response rate was good. Out of the 199 interviews, there were only four refusals. Considering the tense atmosphere of post-coup Liberia, such refusal rate is low. In addition, four of the respondents were out of the country with no set return date, ten were transferred or fired, and replaced by males in the period between the sample selection and the actual administration of the questionnaire,

eight were found to be non-Liberians and therefore omitted, and two were found to be repeats (i.e. recorded twice, in different sections of the company).

Taking into consideration that occupational titles may be arbitrary in some instances, and that many public sector jobs are inadequately defined, our sample was in fact found to be surprisingly accurate. However, government employees who are studying abroad are usually included in the payroll without an indication of their absence from the country. Also, government payroll records do not indicate nationality and the hence the number of non-Liberians included in the original sample. All female non-Liberians were found to be 'other Africans', mostly from other West African countries. At the completion of the survey there were therefore 169 completed questionnaires.

As a further check on the validity of the questionnaire, a small sample of 38 males in administrative and managerial positions in the public and quasi-public sectors were chosen and interviewed. They included males employed in the National Police Force and in the Free Port of Monrovia. A much shorter version of the questionnaire administered to the women was given to the men, and their answers were compared with those of the women. Though statistically perhaps insignificant, the male survey provided useful illumination concerning the differences between males and females in relation to some of the variables being studied.

As the following chapters will show, the hypothesis has been largely verified. The detailed discussion of the survey results which

is presented in them is preceded in the next chapter by an introductory analysis of the Liberian social structure, an analysis which is considered essential to the understanding of the position of Liberian women in managerial and administrative occupations.

CHAPTER III - THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBERIAN SOCIAL  
STRUCTURE

"The ruling class is always a minority of the population. It maintains itself in several ways. In the first place it is always highly organized and thus enjoys a great advantage in its relations with the unorganized majority. Second, to some degree most ruling classes drain off the potential leadership of inferior classes by accepting the most talented members of these classes into their own ranks. Third, through... 'political formulae', or theories justifying social inequality, the masses are led to accept their lot as rightful and... inevitable".

Mosca

The most pertinent factor to a discussion of the social structure of Liberia within the framework of this thesis is the evolution of a social differentiation system.

The term social differentiation implies social inequality, which may be based on characteristics such as age, ethnic affiliation, wealth, standard of living, occupation, sex, etc. It usually implies exclusion from access to strategic economic resources.

Social stratification is institutionalized social inequality, implying the existence of strata within the society which are hierarchically arranged. Lenski<sup>1</sup> defines social stratification as "the distributive process in human societies-- the process by which scarce values are distributed". Such scarce values may mean political, economic and religious powers allocated to different strata. In addition, Tuden and Plotnicov<sup>2</sup> mention cultural distinctions, social distance and a rationale-producing ideology which distinguish members of different strata.

Two basic approaches are evident in stratification theory: functionalist and conflict theories. The functionalist approach stems from the conservative view of social inequality, as represented by Mosca, Talcott Parsons or Kingsley Davis. It emphasizes common interests and consensus. According to Mosca, inequality in power is a necessity in society and there will always be "a class that rules and a class that is ruled", that which rules also having economic privileges.<sup>3</sup>

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1. LENSKI, GERHARD. Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification. New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1966
  2. TUDEN, ARTHUR and PLOTNICOV, LEONARD, Eds. Social Stratification in Africa. New York: The Free Press, 1970
  3. GAETANO MOSCA. The Ruling Class. In Lenski, op. cit. p.14



According to Davis, social inequality is a device "by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons".<sup>1</sup> Parsons similarly stated that the rewards enjoyed by people in various positions are a function of their qualities and performance. The number of roles in society, and the number of qualified people to fill them is limited. Society will motivate qualified people, who are relatively scarce, to fill certain positions essential to societal survival by rewarding them highly. According to the functional approach, societies are looked at holistically as systems composed of interrelated parts, as systems in dynamic equilibrium which allow adjustive responses to outside changes.<sup>2</sup> The mechanism of adjustment evident in these adjustive responses maintains stability and indicates the tendency towards perfect equilibrium, i.e. societies show a tendency towards stability, equilibrium and consensus.

The difficulties encountered in functional analysis are partly due to the fact that change may affect only subgroups, rather than the total system. Criticisms leveled against the functionalist approach also stress that society is never perfectly integrated and that not every element of the social system is functional or essential. Van den Berghe pointed out that the dynamic equilibrium model used in the functional approach cannot account for the fact that reaction to extra-systemic change is not always adjustive, or that change can be revolutionary. It also cannot account for the fact that the social structure itself can generate change through internal conflicts.

1. KINGSLEY DAVIS, Human Societies. In Lenski, op. cit. p.15
2. PIERRE L. VAN DEN BERGHE, "Dialectic and Functionalism: Toward A Theoretical Synthesis", American Sociological Review. 1963 pp. 695-705

The later criticism was especially voiced by Dahrendorf,<sup>1</sup> who noted that "The notion that wherever there is social life there is conflict may be unpleasant and disturbing. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to our understanding of social problems".

Conflict theories stem from the radical approach, best exemplified by Marxist theory, stressing struggle for power and privilege, exploitation and domination. Marx perceived class struggle to be a vital force in history, a prerequisite to progress, based on relations to the means of production. Marx noted that the domination of capital has created for the mass of workers a common situation with common interests. In its struggle, the mass of workers unites, and thereafter constitute a class for itself. The modern bourgeoisie, as well as the modern working class, owe their historical existence to the struggle that they conducted against other classes and strata. The conflict of interests between the groups, originating from within the system, is a historical necessity which will lead to a fundamental change of the economic system. The struggle it entails will ultimately lead to the disappearance of the existing system of social classes. The struggle in itself implies scarcity of valued goods and services. Marx's concern with the concept of 'class' is therefore economic. Later conflict theories deviated from the radical Marxist approach. Dahrendorf analyzed conflict in terms of a pluralistic society, i.e. contemporary industrial society, concluding that conflict may be between a number of dominant groups, who have a similar position in society, or may be aborted all together with the appearance of collective bargaining and the "affluent worker".

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1. RALF DAHRNDORF, "Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis". In *Essays in the Theory of Society*. Stanford University Press, 1968

Dahrendorf stressed that there can be many conflict groups other than 'classes'. The struggle between them is linked to the unequal distribution of authority, rather than to relations to production. His perception of society is that of a multiplicity of "class-pairs" based on dichotomous distribution of authority. Dahrendorf's approach was criticised by Van Den Berghe, who noted that although authority is an important dimension of conflict, it is not necessarily an overriding one, and may be just as important as control of the means of production, power, prestige or material rewards as sources of conflict. Van Den Berghe noted that conflict models based on one single factor are untenable, and so is the notion that oppositions in a conflict are dualistic. Conflict can be related to the means of production, exercise of power, age differences, etc.

Functionalism and conflict models cannot account very clearly for ethnic divisions in African societies, especially in relation to class differentiation. Class and ethnic group interests do not necessarily converge, while ethnic groupings which cut across class do not permit the use of homogeneity and value consensus as determinants of class. In other words, the plurality of African societies may result in the coexistence of functionally unrelated structures: ethnic and class structure. The lack of interdependence between these two structures cannot be adequately explained by functionalism, and the lack of clearly defined class interests, due to criss-crossing ethnic ties, defies the Marxist's conflict approach.

Since both the functionalist and the radical approaches may have their shortcomings in dealing with contemporary African society, several models which merge the two are useful. These were developed by various social scientists, including Weber, Pareto, Sorokin, Van Den Berghe and Lenski.

Van Den Berghe creates a synthesis of conflict and consensus by stressing the integrative effects of conflicts and the disintegrative effects of consensus: the interdependence of conflict groups unifies the whole society, while a consensus can be seen as a function of dissension between groups. Moreover, he noted that both functionalism and conflict models postulate long-range tendency towards integration. He therefore suggests that each body of theory raises difficulties which can be resolved, yet functionalism and conflict models are complementary views of reality.

Lenski concedes that men are unequally endowed by nature, while at the same time mostly motivated by self-interest. However, the interests of the society cannot logically be consistent with the interests of all individuals or groups within it. It follows therefore that the distribution of privileges within the society can be consistent only with the interests of a fraction in it. Such privileges are the "possession or control of a portion of the surplus<sup>1</sup> produced by society"<sup>2</sup> The distribution of the surplus is determined by power distribution, which in turn depends on the values and goals of the dominant group in the society. The occupancy of key positions in the society is based on heredity or force, and motivated by self-interest rather than the good of society. Lenski sees therefore political power<sup>3</sup> as the key variable in a discussion of social stratification, in the context of struggle for control of surplus.

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1. Surplus may be defined as the part of the product of man's labour which is in excess to the amount required to insure survival, i.e. it is an economic resource.

2. Lenski, op. cit. p.45

3. Power can be defined after Weber as the probability of persons or groups carrying out their will even when opposed by others.

Groups which have gained power, and consequently the control over surplus will retain it through ideologies which will legitimize their authority and maintain the status quo. Weber noted that "All ruling power...may be considered as variation of certain pure types. These types are constructed by searching for the basis of legitimacy, which the ruling power claims."<sup>1</sup> Such views are echoed by Tuden and Plotnicov,<sup>2</sup> who state that "where there are great discrepancies in the rewards offered by political control and economic power, the ideologies supporting the stratified groups and validating the inequities within the social structure will be strong and clear. All strata will be incorporated in the value structure, for it is impossible to maintain a hierarchical society by force alone."<sup>3</sup>

These conflict models, approaching inequality from the standpoint of individuals and subgroups struggling for advantages and power to control surplus, seem to be more relevant for the present study than the functionalist model, which deals with the society as a whole rather than its factions.

Since in stratified societies certain groups are excluded from access to power and therefore to privilege, or strategic economic resources, while others have such access, the nature of these groups must be clarified as well. A distinction between three concepts is essential to this study: caste, class and elite group.

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1. WEBER, MAX. Essays in Sociology. Ed. by H. H. GERTH and C. W. MILLS, p. 224

2. Tuden and Plotnicov, op. cit.

3. Tuden and Plotnicov, op. cit., p. 9

The definition of caste depends on various criteria, the most important among them are: endogamy, ascriptive membership, clear ranking regulated by the concept of ritual pollution, restricted mobility, and occupation specialization of the groups. A pure caste system is rooted therefore in a religious order, such as the classical Hindu system of India. The concept of caste has been borrowed in sociological literature in description of societies in which the characteristics mentioned above exist to a certain degree, though the norms upon which such a distinction of ranking exists by no means may be accepted by the whole society, and may not have even religious or ritual implications. Examples of such use of the concept of caste are in literature describing slave society in Northern America, and contemporary South African society.<sup>1</sup> Although the use of the concept of caste in these cases is controversial, this study will make use of the concept 'caste-like', to delineate a group ranking which is not in essence a real caste system, but which follows closely some of the important characteristics of such a system. Such use of the concept was also made by Fraenkel<sup>2</sup> in her study of the Liberian society, in which she states that until the 1940's "Monrovia's social structure was based on a caste-like system, in which the Americo-Liberians were the upper caste, the tribespeople the lower"<sup>3</sup>. At that stage of development of Liberian society, intermarriage between the Americo-Liberian and tribal groups was restricted, though not ritually prohibited. Membership was ascriptive. Though it was possible to penetrate the Americo-Liberian group through various mechanisms, which will be discussed later, the "real" Americo-Liberians were always known.

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1. See VAN DEN BERGHE, PIERRE. "Race, Class and Ethnicity in South Africa". In A. TUDEN and L. PLOTNICOV, *Social Stratification in Africa*, pp. 345-371

2. FRAENKEL, MERRAN. *Tribe and Class in Monrovia*. Oxford University Press

3. FRAENKEL, *op. cit.*

Hlophe observed that "the sharing of an elite family name did not automatically qualify such an individual into an established urban family. He had to be a known member".<sup>1</sup> Mobility was restricted to a degree. The Americo-Liberian group had a monopoly over educational opportunities, especially higher education depending on government scholarships. They held the majority of government post, effectively preventing at the time the penetration of tribal Liberians to middle and high level administrative posts. Occupational specialization was quite noticeable. Fraenkel<sup>2</sup>, who grouped most Americo-Liberians under the heading "professional and clerical occupations", states emphatically of the Americo-Liberians: "I have never heard of one who was a manual labourer".<sup>3</sup> Hence, though the Liberian society was evidently not a caste society, the concept of 'caste-like' society seems quite useful for its analysis.

The definition of class implies lack of barriers to mobility. It has been defined by various authors as a category of people who have in common political, economic or social positions in society, or a group of people who "have in common a special casual component of their life chances, in so far as this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income".<sup>4</sup> In this case, classes are not necessarily a base for communal action. For Karl Marx however, classes are based on communal action. He distinguishes therefore between 'class in itself', which is determined by the outside observer, and 'class for itself' which depends on the awareness and actions of the members, i.e., class consciousness.

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1. HLOPHE, STEPHEN, Class, Ethnicity and Politics in Liberia, 1944-75. Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1979. p. 169

2. Fraenkel, Ibid

3. Fraenkel, Ibid, p.224

4. MAX WEBER. Essays in Sociology.p.181

A class in the Marxist sense is a group of people sharing the same relationship of ownership or non-ownership to the means of production and the capacity to engage in political struggle. They are economic or political interest groups. Weber's discussion of social class leads us to his distinction between class and status group. While a class situation is "the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions, and personal life experiences, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order",<sup>1</sup> a status group is defined by a specific "social estimation of honour". There is a specific style of life which can be expected "from all those who wish to belong to the circle", and a degree of endogamy.<sup>2</sup> In other words, a class situation to Weber is purely economic in nature.

Yet, class and status distinctions are linked, since property, the basis for class distinction, is often a factor in status qualification. The concepts of class and status are often used interchangeably in literature, especially when status groups are referred to as "socio-economic classes". In his study of social stratification in Bornu, Roland Cohen refers to social class as resulting from "status distinctions" ... "a large grouping of people within a society, divided into socially recognized...category possessing a common style of life and supposedly sharing a similar range of status".<sup>3</sup> Classes are perceived by Cohen as hierarchical status groups, defined by status characteristics such as income or life style.

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1. WEBER, MAX "Class, Status, Party". In R. BENDIX and S.M. LIPSET, Class, Status and Power. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953.
  2. MAX WEBER. Essays in Sociology, p. 188
  3. COHEN, ROLAND. "Social Stratification in Bornu". In A. TUDEN and PLOTNICOV Social Stratification in Africa, 1970



In this study, status groups are seen as a more useful concept to the present analysis than class, since economic factors alone cannot determine group ranking in Liberia, and since class consciousness is yet to appear. However, since status measurement results in the categorization of people into hierarchical groups, the term 'class' will be used interchangeably with 'status group', always denoting a status group in the Weberian sense, rather than a class in the pure economic sense. The relevancy of pure class concepts to the analysis of African societies, especially Marxist class analysis, has been questioned many times. Some of the arguments against the utilization of such concepts are based on the non-existence of clear distinction between property owning and non-owning groups as class in African societies: land rights are traditional, and are possessed by many urban wage earners. Industry and commerce may be largely controlled by foreigners.

The definition of the elite again implies openness in society. According to Lloyd,<sup>1</sup> who defined the elite as "superior persons in the society", "an imitable body of persons" who "influence the behaviour of the masses", and acts as a reference group, embodying societal norms, "One could say that the more socially mobile a society is, the more appropriate is the use of the term 'elite' to designate its superior members"<sup>2</sup>. The elite can also be seen as a minority group characterised by cohesion. In this sense it is an exclusive group, clearly definable, and aware of its group character and its high status. This does not imply though "class consciousness". Thus, elite members share common

1. LLOYD. P.C. ed. The New Elites of Tropical Africa. London: Oxford University Press, 1966
2. LLOYD, op. cit. p.50

social background, attitudes and values, interact and know each other, utilize family contacts between members, and are recruited as power, or ruling, elite to top positions in the military, economic and political institutions.

C. W. Mills' perception of the ruling elite as a power elite involves the interpretation of power as a facility which the group who holds the power has for getting its wants by preventing another group from getting what it wants.<sup>1</sup> Power is therefore ascribed to those who can influence the conduct of others even against their will. This is done by the elite, legitimizing its power through assigning to it the attributes of "justice", "morality" and other cultural values. The power elite to which Mills attributed the dominant positions in society comprises a close association between heads of business corporations, the top military and the political elite. This power elite shares similar values, outlooks and interests. Its members are all drawn from the same upper stratum in society and freely interchange between top positions in business, the military and politics, establishing therefore structural links between property and politics. Mills perception is based therefore on the combination of three different elite groups into one entity called the 'power elite', which is similar to the concept of 'ruling elite'. The concept of ruling elite is different from the Marxist concept of dominant class in that ruling elite is seen as relying on non-elite for the preservation of its power, through the recruitment of non-elite members into the ranks of the elite. Also, the elite is not perceived as a pure economic entity.

1. In Talcott Parsons, "The Distribution of Power in American Society" World Politics, 10, 1957, p.139

Like any other status group, it is determined by a variety of factors which serve as its power base. Plotnicov<sup>1</sup> states that the modern<sup>2</sup> African elite in Jos is distinguished for its power, wealth, knowledge, modern sophistication, Western education and cultural traits, all of which create a sense of corporateness and solidarity.

Unlike 'class', the concept of 'elite' is less problematic in the analysis of contemporary <sup>African</sup> societies, in that it integrates both the idea of common interests used in class theory, be it economic, political or other interests, and the integrative effects of ethnic ties.

The concept of elite is a useful tool in the analysis of changing African societies, especially where a clear class system has not yet developed. It is therefore referred to sometimes as the "incipient class", assuming that the elite will develop fully into a class where its members have common interests they wish strongly to protect, and when lower classes, with economic interests, will crystallize as well. Plotnicov in fact distinguishes in Jos, Nigeria, the development of an incipient middle class, which includes junior civil servants, school teachers, nurses etc., who "seek to identify with the modern African elite and strive to be accepted into its ranks"<sup>3</sup>. Lloyd refers to a 'sub-elite' who are less educated, but strive to enter the elite.

1. PLOTNICOV, LEONARD. "The Modern African Elite of Jos, Nigeria".  
In TUDEN and PLOTNICOV, Social Stratification In Africa.  
pp. 269-302
2. 'modern' is used here to denote a pattern of social relations, attitudes and practices which is not a part of observed indigenous culture, but rather of Euro-American origin.
3. PLOTNICOV, LEONARD. "The Modern African Elite of Jos Nigeria".  
p. 292

They are the executive clerks, or the primary school teachers, who may become politically discontent if they fail to enter the elite group.<sup>1</sup> In Liberia as well, despite the lack of a crystallized class system, grouping were clear enough to allow Fraenkel to analyze a ranking order, headed by a group she termed 'the Elite'<sup>2</sup>. The "civilized" in her model are similar to Plotnicov's "incipient middle class".

The elite is therefore a segment, the highest ranking segment, within the differentiation system of society. It may at times, as the case has been stated for African countries in recent years, serve as the first class to appear within the system, incorporating government officials, lawyers, doctors, teachers, businessmen, clergy and others. Plotnicov argues that "despite the absence of lower classes, the modern elite do form a social class and... they do show corporate political behaviour as a class".<sup>3</sup> In this study, Liberian elite will be perceived as such a class. The point of departure for the discussion of the elite in Liberia will be the control over power, which is the prerequisite to privilege and prestige, and the process of power retention through ideological legitimization. Within this framework, the changing sources of power available to the Liberian elite will be discussed: wealth, occupations, ethnicity, political activity and education are different sources utilized by the elite at various stages of historical development. This obviously implies that there have been changes in the stratification system of Liberia.

1. LLOYD, P.C. The New Elite of Tropical Africa.
2. FRAENKEL, M. Tribe and Class in Monrovia. p. 199
3. PLOTNICOV, op. cit. p.274

Within the conceptual framework of 'caste-like' status/class group and the elite group, the following discussion will trace the historical development of the Liberian social structure, with particular emphasis on the following: the change in ideology from a colonial/civilizing ideology to a unification ideology, the change in power relations from mulatto rule, to black rule, to assimilated wards and to tribal African rule during the post-coup period, the change in wealth distribution with the rise of a group with a moderate income, and the change in role structure with the appearance of highly educated professionals, i.e., the change from a society of farmers vs. merchants/politicians/lawyers, to a society with a plurality of roles.

The ethnic groups inhabiting Liberia today originated probably in the Sudan savanna. Their migration south may have been due to pressure of Western Sudan states, movement of Berber tribes who were evading Arab invasions, and the increased warfare due to the collapse of the ancient Kingdom of Ghana.<sup>1</sup> Later migrations were further precipitated by search for a source of salt, secure unclaimed land, and possibility of trade contacts with Europeans who visited the coast periodically.

The first groups to arrive and settle in Liberia were the KWA-Bassa and Belleh, and the West Atlantic/Mel speakers - Gola and Kissi. They arrived between 1000 and 1400 A.D. In 1424, the Vai people moved south, and in 1560 established the Kingdom of Qouja. Between 1515 and 1530, the Mano people established the Kingdom of Mane. The Bandi and the Loma probably arrived into Liberia during that period as well.

1. SCHULZ, WILLI. A New Geography of Liberia. London: Longman, 1973

The Kpelle arrived before 1600 and settled in the area known today as Bong County. The Kru migrated to the coast after 1550. Certain tribes, like the Krahn and the Grebo, were formed through intermarriage between different groups. The Malinke/Mandingo arrived into Liberia during the 18th century, and towards the end of the century the Kru began to migrate along the coast. All these tribes practiced patrilineal descent and had decentralized political systems. One of the most important features of some of these societies is the prevalence of the Poro/male and Sande/female societies, through which young people learn the economic, political and religious structures of their societies. A large percentage of the tribal population gains its living even today from subsistence agriculture based on shifting cultivation of rice. A large portion of the land is still communally held.

The freed slaves who made Liberia their home in the 19th century were therefore the last in a long chain of migrations, and met upon their arrival a well established African population, totally different in its culture.

The first blacks were brought as slaves into the southern colonies of America at the beginning of the 17th century. The number of slaves increased appreciably with the introduction of cotton into the southern plantations, reaching 4,000,000 in 1869, the condition of these slaves and their status depended largely on the tasks they had to perform, resulting in a very clear, almost 'caste-like' distinction between slaves. The most privileged ones were those in domestic service, who constituted the 'elite'. Although the slaves were not permitted to learn reading or writing, many learnt marketable skills such as masonry, carpentry etc. These formed the middle category. The least privileged group were the slaves working on the plantations-- the field workers. As will be seen later, the same 'caste-like' society was transformed into Liberia.

Though the antislavery movement started in the North American colonies long before independence, slavery was finally abolished only in 1865 at the end of the Civil War. During that period, a slow manumission process took place, resulting in an increased number of freed slaves moving to the urban areas, where anonymity could be achieved. The number of freed slaves swelled up especially during the American Revolution era, since freedom was promised and given by both the British and the American colonist masters as a reward for fighting on their side.

Many of the freed slaves who moved into the urban areas had training as artisans and craftsmen. In the cities they enjoyed greater mobility and better living conditions. They assimilated many aspects of Euro-American culture, and a high percentage of them had in fact Euro-American ancestry. However, in political, religious and social life they were considered second class citizens. They had no right to vote, could not travel freely, and were restricted to certain occupations.<sup>1</sup> To maintain group solidarity they created their own benevolent societies and fraternal orders, which served as a social security system. They established their own separatist churches<sup>2</sup> and educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

The establishment of the American Colonization Society in 1816 was partly in reaction to the growing number of slaves that were freed. Emancipatio

1. SULLIVAN, JO MARY. Settlers in Sinoe County, Liberia, and Their Relations With the Kru, 1835-1920. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Boston University, 1978
2. SHICK, TOM WING. The Social and Economic History of Afro Americans in Liberia, 1820-1900. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. The University of Wisconsin, 1976 p. 33
3. SULLIVAN, J.M. op. cit. p.82

of slaves was perceived as a threat to American culture and stability by many. They were joined by those who denounced the institution of slavery and saw the colonization plan as a solution to the problem of slavery.

The American Colonization Society's plans became a reality when in January 1820 the ELIZABETH sailed with 86 freed Afro Americans aboard, more than half of them women and children.<sup>1</sup> They settled, unsuccessfully, on Sherbo Island. A second group of settlers arrived a year later to settle in Cape Mesurado. Despite the hardship, new groups of immigrants continued to arrive. Survival was difficult and the death rate high. The immigrants settled at various points along the Liberian coast. The Maryland State Colonization Society established in 1833 a 200 member settlement in Harper: "Maryland in Africa". In 1835 the Youngmen Colonization Society of Pennsylvania established a colony at the mouth of the St. John River, at Bassa Cove, and later the City of Buchanan. In 1838 the Mississippi Colonization Society established "Mississippi in Africa", later named Greenville.<sup>2</sup> Between 1822 and 1867, 6,000 immigrants came to Liberia, mostly from southern U.S.<sup>3</sup>. These can be divided into two distinct groups: those who came prior to 1827 formed the occupational and educational elite, while those who came later were the artisans, semi-skilled and unskilled. In 1843, the American Colonization Society conducted a census in the colony, revealing a population of 2,388 at the time, 652 of which were born in the colony.

1. HUBERICH, HENRY. The Political and Legislative History of Liberia. New York, 1947. Vol I, p. 145
2. HLOPHE, S. op. cit.
3. SAWYER, AMOS. Social Stratification and Orientation to National Development in Liberia. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1973



Among a total of 311 enumerated females, one was a professional, 75 artisans, 127 semi-skilled, 101 unskilled, 6 in agriculture and one miscellaneous. Among the 762 enumerated males, 20 were professionals, 8 appointive, 49 artisans, 274 semi-skilled, 175 unskilled, 49 commercial, 184 in agriculture and three miscellaneous. Most of the highly educated immigrants and those belonging to the occupational elite settled in Monrovia. In fact, 38% of the settlers were found during the census to reside in Monrovia<sup>2</sup>. There, the settlers "filled most of the positions in the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies of the state, and staffed much of the government service. Thus, the settlers constituted the rulers... However, actual power rested in the hands of prominent members of certain leading settler families or lineages"<sup>1</sup>

Migration by nature involves movement and contact of cultural patterns. Shick<sup>3</sup> perceived a process of "cultural fragmentation" in Liberia, i.e. the disengagement of a cultural fragment, carried over by the settlers during a process of migration, creating a society exhibiting only certain characteristics of the original society. The settlers were an alien group, superimposing itself as the ruling stratum, creating a situation similar to that of conquest. Several alternatives exist in such a situation. The immigrants/settlers may have reconstructed their American life style upon coming to Liberia, or a process of "cultural fragmentation", involving blending of American and African cultures, took place. It is

1. AKPAN, M.B. "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African People of Liberia, 1841-1964. The Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1973, pp.217-236
2. SHICK, T.W. op. cit. p. 17
3. SHICK, op. cit. p. 4

evident though that what ever alternative occurred, consideration must be given to the cultural background of the immigrants and to their perception of goals and values. The settlers were Americans in orientation and values. They were Christians, wore the Western mode of dress (a black silk topper and a long black frock coat for men, and a 'Victorian' silk gown for women.<sup>1</sup>). They were monogamous and followed American culture in food habits, style of building etc. As mentioned above, the immigrants/colonists came from a rigidly structured society. Upon coming to Africa, they perceived themselves to be the elite group, placed in circumstances in which they could spread Christianity and civilization among the Africans.<sup>2</sup> They saw themselves as difusing "'light' and 'knowledge' over the 'barbarism' and 'paganism' of Africa"<sup>3</sup>, and "rolling back the appalling cloud of ignorance and superstition which over-spreads the land"<sup>4</sup> The settlers came therefore to Liberia with a sense of superiority. It is interesting to note though that despite their 'civilizing' role, according to 1843 census more than half of the settlers had no education at all- 1,345 out of the total population of 2,388.<sup>5</sup> With such a perception of their mission in Africa, it is no wonder that the settlers attempted to build a nation through population accession from abroad rather than rely upon the native Liberians. Those among the tribal Liberian who were incorporated into the settler's political community had to accept Western institutions and form of life.

1. AKPAN, M.B. op. cit.

2. BLYDEN, EDWARD W.. In T.W. SHICK, op. cit. p. 18

3. AKPAN, op. cit. p. 220

4. BLYDEN, Ibid.

5. BROWN, MARY A. G. Education and National Development in Liberia. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Cornell University, 1967, p. 38

Voting rights depended on the acceptance of Western 'civilization'. In fact, political institutions on the whole were clearly modelled after American political institutions, with an elected President, Senate and House of Representatives. An account of Charles W. Thomas, a traveller to Liberia in the late 1850's tells us that the settlers "desire to live in comfortable and pretty houses, the ladies and beaux dress in fashion, and an aristocracy of means and education is already set up. The people generally dress above their means, extravagantly so, and the quantity of kid gloves and umbrellas displayed on all occasions does not promise well for a nation whose hope rests on hard and well developed muscles".<sup>1</sup> The wish to 'civilize' the Africans was obviously not the only motivation for migration. Many of the settlers saw the migration as an opportunity for upward economic mobility, to a degree which could not have been possible for them in the United States. To many others migration meant freedom from labour, to which they were subjected in the southern plantations, and which they perceived as degrading. Since menial jobs were performed in the slave society by the lowest status group, it is not surprising that the settlers developed a distaste for hard manual labour, and a feeling of superiority in relation to the tribal Africans. A group similar to the Liberian settlers developed in Sierra Leone, where settler repatriated freed slaves, the Creoles, developed into a closed group, "having monopoly of elite offices and differentiating themselves from the interior people by an emphatic acceptance of Western dress and manners".<sup>2</sup>

The unique nature of the Liberian settler society was exhibited in other ways as well. To maintain their position as an elite group, the settlers accumulated wealth, This was done through commercial activities

1. SHICK, T.W. op. cit. p.100

2. LLOYD, P.C. The New Elite of Tropical Africa, p.16

involving trading in palm oil, rice, camwood and skins.<sup>1</sup> The increased commercial activity brought in more revenues, used in turn to allow more territorial expansion<sup>2</sup>, and for the establishment in 1862 of Liberia College, among other things. The preoccupation of the settlers at the time with trade and commerce is not unique. Priestly narrates the history of the Brew family, of Mulatto origin on the Fanti coast of Ghana, whose members followed three occupations: trade, the legal professions, and bureaucratic positions in European organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The wealth and position acquired through commerce were further consolidated through marriage, laying the firm foundation to the important role family groupings played in the Liberian social structure later. Examples of such families would be the Roberts and Waring families, both successful and rich merchants at the time.<sup>4</sup> Marriage became economically significant for social mobility, and family ties were emphasized in manipulating and soliciting political positions. The solidarity of the settler elite group was also strengthened through membership in church congregations. The importance of the church within the settler group rests on a dual basis: the establishment of separatist Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian churches by the freed slaves in American urban areas, and their belief that their mission was to Christianize the "heathen" Africans. The church supported the way of life of the settler group, against the "uncivilized" way of life of the Africans.

1. The camwood, ivory and other items for trade were obtained during the early part of the 19th century through Bopolu, ruled until 1836 by King Sao Bosso.
2. See M.B. AKPAN, op. cit. p.221 for further discussion of the colonial/imperialist nature of such expansion.
3. PRIESTLY, M. "The Emergence of an Elite...". In P.C. LLOYD, *The New Elites of Tropical Africa*. pp; 87-108
4. T.W. SHICK, op. cit. p.108

An additional feature of settler society was membership in various voluntary associations. These included benevolent societies, such as the Ladies Benevolent Society of Monrovia, or the Ladies Dorcas Society, literary associations (also many of them organized by females: Ladies Liberia literary Institute of Greenville), fraternal orders which upheld the moral values of the settler society (the Freemasons were established in 1851. Later appeared the Independent Restoration Grand Lodge, and the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten), and economic associations (including the women's United Daughters of Economy Society)<sup>1</sup>. Through these associations, political favours and economic rewards were allocated. They served as a state apparatus and as an institutional base for maintaining social ties and solidarity among the settler group.<sup>2</sup>

The four features mentioned above - commerce, family, church and voluntary associations, are the corner stones on the basis of which the settler society was built. They are also important in understanding the ensuing relationships between the settlers and the Africans, and between various factions within the settler group.

Though most of the settlers came from southern U.S.A., they were joined by various other ethnic elements. A number of the settlers came from the West Indies, though culturally they did not differ much from the settlers originating from North America.<sup>3</sup> The recaptured Africans constituted however a more important ethnic element. They were the slaves captured on ships on their way to southern plantations in the U.S. Between 1858 and 1859 alone about 1,650 Africans were captured and brought to be settled in Liberia. Though not familiar with Euro-American culture, the "Congoes" as they came to be known, identified themselves with the settlers rather than with the native Africans. They served as first as a

1. T.W. SHICK, *op. cit.* p. 124

2. S. HLOPHE. *op. cit.* p. 185

3. AMOS SAWYER. *op. cit.*

"socio-economic buffer" between the settlers and the Africans.<sup>1</sup> The recaptured Africans established the settlement of New Georgia. In 1840, Captain Charles Bell visited the area and wrote about the Recaptured Africans: "They call themselves Americans. And from the little civilization they have acquired, felt greatly superior to the natives around them...all take great pride in imitating the custom and manner of those who are more civilized"<sup>2</sup>. By the end of 1860, the number of recaptured Africans equaled that of the settlers, and new settlements, called "Congo towns", were established by them. Many of these were up-river settlements along the St. Paul River. Their importance was not only in expanding the frontier of the settlers' community, but also in increasing cash crop production.

Though West Indians and Recaptured Africans, or Congoes, were assimilated, and some rose to prominent political positions, they could not have been accepted fully by the 'mulatto' faction within the settler group. The light-skinned mulatto settlers saw themselves as a privileged elite group, superior to the dark-skinned settlers. They alleged inability to adapt to the tropical climate, and demanded therefore special social welfare privileges.<sup>3</sup> The differences between the Mulattos and the dark-skinned settlers became especially pronounced after Liberia was declared independent in 1847. The party ruling the country at the time was headed by Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the "True Liberian Party", and was identified with the the mulatto commercial and civil servant elite. The opposition party on the other hand was called the "True Black Man Party", and was identified with the dark-skinned settler farmers, receiving the support of the 'Congoes' and the West Indian immigrants.

1. AMOS SAWYER. op. cit.

2. African Repository, Vol. XVI, 19, october 1840. In T.W. SHICK, op. cit. p.159

3. AMOS SAWYER. op. cit., p. 5

The hegemony of the mulatto was strengthened by the Masonic secret society, an "all mulatto club" at the time, which controlled the distribution of political and commercial favours.<sup>1</sup> Not only did the mulatto group control commercial and political opportunities, they have also kept the distinction between themselves and the others by informally forbidding marriage into what they considered lower status groups. Reverend B.R. Skinner, the Acting Colonial Governor, reported in 1836 that "the marriage of the colonist with any one of the neighboring tribes was considered exceedingly disreputable, and subjected the individual to the contempt of his fellow citizens".<sup>2</sup>

The picture emerging is therefore of a society in which distinction among the groups was clearly enforced, upward mobility was severely restricted, and interaction among the groups followed prescribed channels. In other words, the implantation of the settler group into Liberia resulted in a 'caste-like society'.<sup>3</sup> So extreme was the exclusiveness of the Americo-Liberians as an elite group, that Akpan is led to say "in spite of their colour, they were, as a rule, as foreign, and lacking in sentimental attachment to Africa as were European colonists elsewhere in Africa ....the British, the French, the Portuguese and the Spaniards".<sup>4</sup>

Despite the rigidity of such a society, the social structure, out of economic and political necessity, allowed later for various mechanisms of interaction and integration between the elite group and the tribal group. The settlers arrived into Liberia at the time of conflict between the Gola and the Mandingoes over the control of trade routes to the coast.

1. S. HLOPHE. op. cit. p. 96

2. Quoted in M.B. AKPAN, p. 225

3. See also ABAYOMI KARNGA. History of Liberia. Liverpool: D.H. Tyte and Co., 1926

4. AKPAN, op. cit. p. 219

The Golas attacked the settlers in order to prevent them from establishing direct contact with the Mandingoes in the interior. The conflict had its sources also in the location of the colony, which was where Gola religious shrines were found. Further conflicts erupted between the settlers and the Krus, Bassas and Greboes, in whose area Maryland was established, mostly due to trade interference. Many of these conflicts ended with the signing of peace treaties: 1840 with the Dei, 1843 with the Gola, and 1845 with Bassa chiefs.<sup>1</sup> These treaties, in addition to purchase of land, allowed the settlers to increase their territory. True to their belief that their mission was to 'civilize' the Africans, the settlers maintained their cultural patterns and life style, hoping to attract these Africans to it. Towards that end were directed the activities of various missions established by settlers. These missions however were established in the coastal area only: Lott Carey and Colin Teage of the Baptist Mission were active mainly in Monrovia. In 1827 they established a mission school among the Vai in Cape Mount, and in 1840 among the Bassa people along the coast. The Presbyterian missionary activity began in 1833. Both the Presbyterian and the Protestant Episcopal churches established missions in Cape Palmas, among the Glebo<sup>2</sup>. Though the mission schools were intended to educate the Africans in the ways of Western culture, they were not intended to incorporate and assimilate the Africans fully into the elite group. On the contrary, clear distinctions were still maintained. Brown<sup>3</sup> describes six schools existing in 1827 in Monrovia: one was for native Africans only, with 45 students, and the five other schools catered separately to settler and recaptured Africans, male and females, with an enrollment of 182. Similarly,

1. HLOPHE. op. cit.

2. T. W. SHICK. op. cit. p. 137

3. MARY BROWN. op. cit. p. 94



Elizabeth Carsar and Elizabeth Thompson established in Caldwell and Monrovia schools intended only for settler children. A third school was again established by them for the children of recaptured Africans. The Methodist mission also concentrated on provision of education to the settlers themselves. Both the Vai and the Glebo tribes, who requested the establishment of schools in exchange for territories they gave over to the settlers, were disappointed. The settlers apparently feared that encouraging education among the Africans would lead to a competition between them and the Africans for lucrative administrative posts. The settlers also feared the commercial/economic power of the Kru and the Gleboes, and sought to curb it by imposing heavy taxation on commercial activities.<sup>1</sup> Thus, despite their declared aim to Christianize and civilize the Africans, the settlers concentrated their meagre efforts in the coastal area only. The Kru and the Gleboes were first to adopt the settler educational and cultural patterns. Hlophe states that "When President Johnson in 1884 extended membership into the legislature to groups who paid more than a specified amount of tax, only the Krus and the Gleboes had the wealth and ambition to qualify",<sup>2</sup> Marriage between settlers and Kru and Glebo families, though not very common, occurred more frequently at that time, especially in the Cape Palmas area. The coastal tribes were therefore the first to be incorporated into the new social structure established by the settlers. Contact with the interior tribes came much later. The dense tropical rain forest presented the settlers with a geographical barrier to contact with the interior. For a long time the coastal tribes and the Mandingo traders served as the middlemen, linking the settlers and European traders with the interior tribes.

1. HLOPHE, S. "The Significance of Barth and Geertz" Model of Ethnicity in the Analysis of Nationalism in Liberia". The Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol VII, 2, 1973, pp. 237-256
2. HLOPHE, Ibid.

It should be stressed also that the Africans themselves were not overly enthusiastic when it came to the settlers. Akpan quotes an 1844 American visitor to Liberia, who stated that "many of the natives look with contempt on the colonists and do not hesitate to tell them that they are merely liberated slaves".<sup>1</sup>

Various mechanisms existed for the integration of the coastal Africans into the settler society, setting at the same time social barriers between settlers and Africans. In 1862, the Liberian Supreme Court ruled that indigenous people were bona-fide subjects of the state, though not full-fledged citizens.<sup>2</sup> Earlier than that, in 1837, the colonial administration passed the Apprenticeship Act, under which young Africans were brought into the homes of settlers in order to be trained. The act provided an available labour pool for the settlers, based on a contract to be signed regarding the subject to be taught to the apprentice by the adopting family and stipulation of the terms under which food and lodgings were to be provided. One such apprentice was Betty Preston, about whom the AFRICAN LUMINARY paper of February 5, 1841 said that she was an African who "preferred civilized habits to those of her country people, could never be induced to quit the Cape and retire with her tribe, but remained among the settlers."<sup>3</sup>

In 1869 the settlers created the Interior Department, extending not only Liberian law, but also taxes to the interior, and in 1873 Commissioners of African Affairs were appointed. In 1883 the National Legislature allowed the representation of African Chiefs.<sup>4</sup> In 1904 President Barclay formulated a plan for indirect rule of the interior, through appointment of District Commissioners, a plan similar to the one which guided the British colonial rule in West Africa. However, Barclay's policy

1. M. AKPAN. op. cit. p. 225
2. AMOS SAWYER, op. cit. p. 12
3. T. W. SHICK, op. cit. p. 154
4. AMOS SAWYER, Ibid.

of indirect rule resulted in corruption and repression in the hinterland. District Commissioners often abused their position, especially in collecting the "hut tax". Coersion and intimidation were used to force the Africans into paying taxes above the stipulated amount, plus various illegal fees, to be used by the Commissioners for personal ends. The hinterland Africans were forced additionally to provide frequently free hammock and carrier services to government officials, and free labour for various construction projects, especially road construction. They were also recruited for cultivation of Commissioners' farms. An example is Commissioner James B. Howard, who not only indulged in exploitation through imposition of illegal fees, but was also indulged in smuggling, all of which resulted in the Gola revolt in 1918. In 1908 President Barclay organized the Liberian Frontier Force. Although this brought the Loma, Gio, Mano and Krahn, who manned it, into national political structure, the officers remained from among the settler group. The formation of the force was actually to the detriment of the Africans, since the irregularly paid and poorly trained officers indulged often in rape and harrassment.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in 'up-river' settlements the integration of the Africans was aided by the mechanism of "country wives", i.e. informal associations between settlers and tribal women, whose offsprings could be incorporated more easily into the settler society. Such liasons became an important feature of Liberian society due to the crucial role the Liberian family plays within its social structure. Such a role is based on network linkages between families who have controlled for many generations business<sup>2</sup>, commerce, large real estate properties and political positions. The

1. AKPAN, op. cit. pp. 130-232

2. e.g. Mesurado Group of Companies, which was owned by the Toberts until the coup d'etat, Parker Industries - similarly owned by the Parkers, Liberian Industrial Development Corporation - by Leroy Francis, West African Agricultural Corporation - the Shermans, Auriole Enterprise - by the Weeks, Liberian National Trading Corp. - by the Dennises, and Lofa Construction Company - by the Padmores.

Liberian settler family recruited new members from the indigenous group when it became clear that external recruitment would not suffice to fill all the positions in government. The indigenous new members were recruited through the sponsorship system, i.e. adoption of a ward into a sponsorship family, which is an offshoot of the apprenticeship system described earlier. Though contracts were not signed, the sponsoring families groomed individuals who could rise later to high positions. The typical settler/Americo-Liberian family included therefore not only consanguinal relations, but also foster children, loyal servants who took the family name, and offsprings of extramarital relations with tribal women. For these people, the family served as a mediator between them and the other institutions important for achievement of a political position: the party (True Whig Party at the time), and the masonic craft.<sup>1</sup>

The Masonic craft, among other voluntary associations,<sup>2</sup> played an important role among strategies for political survival in Liberia. Active membership in the craft guaranteed political, and therefore economic success and prominence.<sup>3</sup> Those who occupied key positions in the Masonic craft occupied similar positions in the church, the political party and in government.<sup>4</sup> The resulting social structure exhibited rigid stratification. In 1958 Fraenkel noted the following strata:

1. The Americo-Liberian family control of the political system is also discussed by Liebenow, who identifies the family as the innermost among the three political circles in Liberian society. See GUS LIEBENOW. *Liberia: the Evolution of Privilege*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.
2. e.g. Crowd 18, the Circle Club, the Literary Club, The Junior Chamber of Commerce.
3. See also ABNER cohen, "The Politics of Ritual Secrecy", *MAN*, Vol. 6, No.3, 1971, pp. 427-447, for a discussion of a similar relationship between the Masonic order and prominence in Sierra Leone.
4. See STEPHEN HLOPHE, op. cit., 199 for a list of Masonic craft members and their corresponding positions in the party and in government.

1. The Elite - including senior government officials.
2. The Honourables - including high government officials, doctors, lawyers and clergymen.
3. The Civilized - including minor officials, clerks, teachers and nurses as one group, and electricians, mechanics, drivers and craftsmen as a second group.
4. The indeterminate - including the domestics.
5. The Tribal, or Uncivilized - including labourers, stevedors, fishermen, petty traders, and farmers.

The first two groups, the Elite and the Honourables, were composed mainly of Americo-Liberians.<sup>1</sup> Fraenkel observed that the Liberian society changed its caste-like structure to a class system, and noted that the number of "pure" Americo-Liberians belonging to the elite group was probably much smaller than was thought, due to the intermarriages and extramarital unions between settlers and tribal people. However, rigidity was still markedly present within the stratification system. Although Fraenkel's analysis of the Liberian/Monrovia structure in terms of a class system is debateable, there is no doubt that the group ranking presented by her remained relevant until the coup of 1980.

After a long period of a minimal political and social contact with the hinterland, President Tubman came to power in 1944. The period of his administration is significant in understanding later changes within the Liberian social structure. The year 1954 signalled the beginning of Tubman's program of National Unification, which called for the inclusion of people in the hinterland of Liberia in national development. For the first time in Liberian history, the African people were raised to a citizen status, having their own courts, and electing Senators and

1. FRAENKEL, MERRAN. op. cit.

Representatives to the Legislature. The National Unification policy could have remained, however, a mere rhetoric were it not for certain factors which contributed further more to the indigenous people's entry into higher positions.

The first of these factors was education. The acquisition of formal education, accompanied by a process of 'acculturation' i.e. adoption of Euro-American culture, enabled indigenous Liberians to achieve middle level positions within the government.<sup>1</sup> The first to achieve middle level education were the coastal Africans, but already within the period 1930-1944, education became available to hinterland Africans. Missions began to establish their schools out of the narrow coastal strip, and Firestone Plantation Company opened its schools in the plantation, catering mainly to indigenous children whose parents migrated from other parts of the country. Between the years 1949-1960, the number of teachers had increased from 21,389 to 61,427. In 1971, there were already 1,096 schools and 138,159 students, 1,199 of them in higher education.<sup>2</sup> School enrollment in 1978 rose to 237,853, excluding those in higher education.<sup>3</sup> The increased availability of education created a labour pool of indigenous Liberians who could fill minor positions within the government. Furthermore they

1. In this connection it is interesting to note that already in 1881, Edward Wilmont Blyden said during his inaugural address as President of Liberia College that the tribes will be incorporated within the settler society only if they achieve education. EDWARD BLYDEN, "Inaugural Address", Proceedings at the Inauguration of Liberia College at Monrovia, p.24 . In M. BROWN, op. cit. p. 193.
2. CLOWER, ROBERT, DALTON, G., HARWITZ, M. Growth Without Development. Evanston, 1966
3. AZANGO, B.B. "A Rationale for Career Guidance in Liberia" University of Liberia Journal, January 1983, pp. 15-25

were aided by the shortage of manpower experienced by the Liberian government, especially in manning lower and middle level positions. The manpower shortage opened the fields of bureaucracy, education and the technical professions to non Americo-Liberian individuals.<sup>1</sup> Initially, education constituted only a stepping stone in a strategy for political survival, since the educated had better access to the Liberian patronage system. Later, however, and especially so during the Tolbert's administration, technical skills became increasingly important. Educated indigenous Liberians were co-opted and moved to middle level positions, though decision-making and managerial positions remained firmly in the hands of the influential Americo-Liberians till April 1980. The increased number of indigenous Liberians who have been trained abroad resulted in the creation of the rudiments of a technocratic class, who, toward the end of the Tolbert's administration, were pressing for power.

A second factor contributing to the entry of indigenous Liberians into higher positions was the growth of the Liberian economy.<sup>2</sup> The domination of the Americo-Liberians in business was greatly reduced with the coming of foreign investors and merchants, opening employment opportunities to skilled Liberians, regardless of family influence.

A third factor was clearly demonstrated by the introduction of large scale mining into Liberia. Although Liebenow<sup>3</sup> saw the mining centers as sources of additional financial means for the continuation of the Americo-Liberians' privilege, there is no doubt that their impact extended

1. Tribal Liberians who fill lesser positions in government, were termed by Cole "Tribal Liberians in transition". See JOHNETTA COLE. "Traditional and Wage Earning Labour Among Tribal Liberians". Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Evanston, 1967.
2. See CLOWER, R., DALTON H. et. al. op. cit.
3. LIEBENOW, G. Liberia: the Evolution of Privilege.

further beyond that. Four iron ore mines have been active in Liberia: the Mano River Mine, Bong Mine, the Nimba Mine and Bomi Hills Mine. The fourth one, Bomi Hills, closed down in 1977, after 31 years of operation. The mines have always had adequate labour supply from among the indigenous Liberians, who were attracted by the wages and the amenities offered.<sup>1</sup> The mining companies offer vocational training, including short term on-the-job courses and advanced training, plus a scholarship program for overseas training. The vocational training centres in Nimba and Bong Mines supply skilled personnel for the lower technical positions, replacing some of the skilled Europeans. Since descendants of the settlers community, the Americo-Liberians, occupied the majority of the posts in law, politics and government, and since commercial and trading facilities were held mainly by Europeans, Americans, Lebanese and a few wealthy Liberians, the mining centres in the interior offered a much needed outlet for educated tribal Liberians. Significantly, the share of the Americo-Liberians in the total mine labour force in 1967 was only 0.3%<sup>2</sup>. The possible role of the mining centres as an outlet for aspiring tribal Liberians was noted by Liebenow<sup>3</sup>, who said that "Given the present scale of economic growth...it may be possible for some time to continue the uneconomic use of foreign personnel...at a certain point, however, higher wages, housing and other prerequisites, make the recruitment of

1. e.g. subsidized food, medical facilities, housing and schools.

2. See SCHULZ, WILLI. "Sozialgeographische und wirtschaftliche Aspekte des Eisenerzbergbaus in Liberia unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Binnenwanderung der Beschäftigten", In Die Erde, Vol 98, 1967, No.1, pp. 31-60

3. LIEBENOW, G. op. cit.



non-Liberian personnel a costly enterprise. Coupled with this development is the fact that the expanding scholarship programs for higher education have already created a pool of talent that the regime simply cannot absorb en masse into government sinecures...Hence, it seems inevitable that the educated tribal youth will eventually be displacing the foreign managerial personnel". In this light, it is interesting to note that in the agreement signed with Bong Mine by the Tolbert's government in 1973, Bong Mines was committed to work out specific programs in order to qualify Liberians for technical, supervisory and managerial positions.<sup>1</sup>

X A fourth factor contributing to the indigenous Liberians' entry into higher positions was the spirit of African nationalism evident in neighbouring countries since Ghana's independence in 1957, which made it impossible for the elite Americo-Liberians to continue to suppress openly the indigenous Liberians. This was coupled with a continuous power struggle between Americo-Liberian families.<sup>2</sup> All these factors aided the emergence of an indigenous technocratic stratum.

Therefore, in April 1980, when a coup d'etat carried out by a group of junior indigenous army officers took place, large group of African technocrats was available and ready to fulfill the positions left vacant.

1. For further discussion of the role of mining centres in the Liberian social structure see ESTHER LIVNE GULUMA, Some Aspects of Mining settlements in West Africa, With Special Reference to Liberia. Unpublished M.Sc. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1977.
2. e.g., the assassination attempts on Tubman's life during the 1954 elections period, and the organization of an opposition party at the time, headed by Edwin Barclay.

One of the first steps taken by the new government, the People's Redemption Council, was the enlisting of trained civilians to the various government posts. The majority of the government ministers today are therefore of tribal origin.<sup>1</sup> Lenski states that "Revolutions are the work of a small minority. Hence, when the revolution is over, the new elite is obliged to employ the services of others to achieve their objectives. Only in this way can they hope to bring the surplus of society effectively under their control... The portion of the economic surplus they already control can be used to hire an army of technicians and specialists... This process leads to the creation, extension and perpetuation of a middle stratum of technicians and specialists working in the service of the elite."<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the tables seem to have turned: it is the Americo-Liberians who are found now in middle level government positions. The same crucial factor of shortage of qualified manpower which brought the indigenous Liberians into these positions now keeps the settlers' descendents in their various positions, though the stumbling block to the ascent of tribal Liberians has been removed with the change of government in 1980.

Though it is questionable whether the coup had brought any increase in class consciousness among the Liberian people, yet the homogeneity of the Americo-Liberians as an elite group seems to have finally dissipated, and the last traces of a "caste-like society" described before seem to have disappeared as well. No other clear ethnic division has emerged yet in its place. Education, religion, political position and occupation have not crystallized yet in any one ethnic group.

1. For a short while, Counselor Winston Tubman, an Americo-Liberian, performed as the Justice Minister, to be quickly replaced by Jenkins Scott, a Lorma by tribe. The only remaining notable exception is E. Eastman, the Foreign Minister, who is an Americo-Liberian as well.

2.. LENSKI, G. op. cit. p. 62

Though the force used during the coup d'état was most effective in gaining power, force does not necessarily retain power. If a new elite group is to emerge in post-coup Liberia, whether military or educated elite, its rule will have to be ideologically legitimized. However, since the elite has to rely on the support of other groups, and therefore has to maintain interethnic ties, it can be predicted that status barriers which preserve the elite will not be maintained in Liberia. Instead, the components of the present social stratification system seem to be based on various socio-economic indicators. Prominent among them are life style and conspicuous consumption, occupation and education, all indicators used in determination of status groups in the Western world as well. Occupational status however does not seem to be as important status indicator in the Liberian society as it is in Western societies.

The role played by women within the social structure and stratification system described above is unique. As will be seen, they helped inadvertently in the preservation of the advantages of the ruling minority elite group. It is stipulated that in reaction to the exercise of power and privilege by an elite, and the control they impose on key resources, members of middle strata may attempt to gain control over power and privileges traditionally reserved for the elite.<sup>1</sup> The problem is further intensified by a situation of status inconsistency. Following our earlier discussion of class and status, we can perceive different status ranking systems: based on property-holding, educational level, ethnic group membership, occupation and position within the political bureaucratic structure. A person may have a different status in each of these systems. He may belong to a low status ethnic group and yet to a high status group based on his education, or may have accumulated wealth, yet unable to achieve high rank in the political/bureaucratic status system.

1. LENSKI, G. op. cit. p. 65

The assumption is that persons of inconsistent status, who suffer therefore from status conflict, are more likely to lead persons of consistently low status in support of radical movements designed to change the political status quo.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the Liberian ruling Americo-Liberian elite preferred to assign middle level administrative and managerial positions to women of their own group, in order to reduce the risks of status inconsistency and risks of attempts by middle strata to gain control.

The data presented subsequently will analyze the patterns of the Liberian female's entry into such middle and high managerial and administrative positions.

1. LENSKI, G. op. cit. p.88

C H A P T E R        I V

THE FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER AS A SUPPORTIVE  
MECHANISM WITHIN THE LIBERIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

While males comprise 92% of the paid employees in Liberia today, females comprise only 8%.<sup>1</sup> However, a closer look at the ethnic composition of this small group of women reveals even more startling statistics. Among those in the professional group, 30% come from one group - that defined as "no tribal affiliation", i.e. Americo-Liberian/settler group. Although this category is also largest among professional males, their distribution among the various ethnic groups is more even. In the administrative and managerial group, 48% of the women come again from one single group, the America-Liberian/settlers, followed by Grebo, Bassa, Kru and Vai, in that order. The same ratio applies to clerical workers.<sup>2</sup> Table IV, 1 presents the occupational distribution of the Liberian working population, by sex and ethnic affiliation. Although the dominance of the labour force, and especially administrative, managerial and professional categories among females, by the settler-group can be explained by differential access to education, this seems to be only a partial explanation.

Western education was preceded among the tribal people of Liberia by a system of education comprising of the Poro and the Sande institutions, which instructed young people in the traditional ways of life and therefore ensured the continuity and preservation of the culture. The settlers who arrived in the 19th century were distinguished from the tribal people by their attachment to Western institutions, values and beliefs. However, despite their declared aim, which was to "civilize" the Africans, the settlers were unable to establish and maintain during the 19th century a Western education system which would train the masses of tribal Liberians. The reasons for this apparent failure in their mission are varied, and may have included lack of training, lack of competence and lack of finance.

1. CARTER, JEANETTE. Liberian Women: Their Role in Food Production and Their Educational and Legal Status. Profile of Liberian Women in Development Project. University of Liberia, 1982
2. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA. Population and Housing Census. Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, 1977

TABLE IV, 1

## MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP BY ETHNIC AFFILIATION AND SEX

( percentage )

Ethnic group and sex		occupation group								All Occupations
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Bassa:	Male	11.5	8.6	14.3	10.6	19.7	12.7	15.0	17.8	13.6
	Female	14.8	10.4	17.1	14.4	23.8	9.9	15.9	17.3	11.0
Belle:	Male	.5	.3	.4	.3	1.0	.5	.3	.4	.5
	Female	.3	.0	.4	.2	.4	.6	-	.7	.5
Dey:	Male	.2	.0	.4	.1	.3	.5	.3	.9	.4
	Female	.2	1.0	.2	.3	.3	.4	.08	1.7	.5
Gbandi:	Male	2.3	1.2	2.1	.9	1.8	2.6	2.3	1.8	2.4
	Female	1.4	2.1	.8	1.4	1.1	4.4	1.7	2.9	4.0
Gio:	Male	3.8	2.4	5.0	3.4	8.2	10.4	5.9	5.1	8.7
	Female	2.8	2.1	2.0	3.5	5.6	9.8	6.5	5.2	8.9
Gola:	Male	3.2	2.6	4.7	1.6	2.2	5.5	4.3	4.7	4.9
	Female	3.4	1.0	5.4	2.5	2.9	5.0	3.3	5.6	4.8
Grebo:	Male	10.4	7.1	9.1	3.3	6.7	6.4	5.5	6.3	6.4
	Female	11.9	13.5	11.2	4.8	9.1	8.6	7.0	5.8	8.4
Kpelle:	Male	8.9	6.0	11.7	8.2	14.3	25.8	10.8	18.7	20.9
	Female	7.8	3.1	8.0	7.9	11.8	20.5	11.4	20.6	19.2
Kissi:	Male	1.9	2.0	2.8	3.4	2.0	4.8	4.6	3.0	4.4
	Female	1.5	-	.8	2.5	1.8	3.6	1.9	3.6	3.4
Krahn:	Male	4.6	3.4	5.1	1.8	6.7	4.1	4.1	3.4	4.2
	Female	1.5	1.0	2.2	1.8	4.4	1.9	4.4	1.6	1.9
Kru:	Male	14.6	9.5	16.0	1.4	10.1	5.9	8.1	9.4	7.2
	Female	10.6	8.3	14.7	10.5	8.9	7.5	11.1	8.5	8.0

Ethnic group and sex		occupation group								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Loma:	Male	6.1	3.1	6.3	3.77	14.2	5.0	5.4	5.3	5.5
	Female	3.2	1.0	2.4	5.3	5.2	9.1	3.9	6.3	8.4
Mandingo:	Male	1.7	1.5	1.5	19.9	3.8	3.0	12.4	2.9	4.9
	Female	.8	1.0	1.2	14.2	2.0	3.5	10.6	2.6	3.8
Mano:	Male	3.9	1.8	4.9	2.5	5.6	8.1	4.8	4.5	6.8
	Female	2.2	-	1.6	3.1	4.0	10.4	4.3	6.2	9.3
Mende	Male	1.7	.8	1.1	1.0	.3	.6	1.3	.9	.8
	Female	.8	-	.9	.7	1.0	.5	.9	.4	.5
Vai:	Male	5.2	4.3	5.3	3.0	2.6	2.4	5.2	4.0	3.2
	Female	6.1	6.3	7.1	5.0	5.9	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.8
Other:	Male	.2	.0	.2	.2	.1	.2	.1	.2	.2
	Female	.2	1.0	.5	.1	.2	.1	.2	.2	.2
Fante:	Male	.8	.8	6.7	1.2	.03	.5	.8	.7	.6
	Female	.3	-	.4	9.2	.4	.1	2.7	.3	.5
Other African	Male	1.9	1.4	1.0	6.0	.6	.2	2.9	1.5	1.0
	Female	.7	-	.9	2.6	1.0	0.05	3.5	.4	.3
No tribal Affiliat.	Male	16.4	43.0	7.6	24.4	2.9	.9	5.8	8.6	3.7
	Female	29.6	47.9	22.5	10.1	10.3	.4	6.6	6.1	2.6
TOTAL		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table IV,1 - Code:

- 1 - Professional, technical and related workers
- 2 - Administrative and managerial workers
- 3 - Clerical and related workers
- 4 - Sales Workers
- 5 - Service Workers
- 6 - Agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry
- 7 - Production and related workers
- 8 - Occupation unidentifiable

SOURCE: 1974 population and Housing Census, Republic of Liberia



<sup>1</sup>Brown<sup>1</sup> notes that despite the various laws passed, no system of public education developed during the 19th century in Liberia.

At the same time, the American Protestant church missions established few schools. Since their mission was to Christianize and "civilize", these schools were mostly placed in the coastal area., where there was the least resistance to the acceptance of Christianity. According to Brown, the odds for attendance in those schools were greatly in favour of the settler children, children of recaptured Africans, and children of the principal men of the coastal tribes. The mass of the Liberian population had no access to these schools.

The Western education system was expanded into the rural areas of Liberia mainly in the 1950's partially as a response to the Unification Policy of President Tubman. Since then more public schools have been established in the interior of the country, training manpower for the increasing number of low and middle level jobs available in the public and the private sectors. Higher education opportunities, especially abroad, remained limited to settlers mainly .

The Liberian educational system has been therefore inegalitarian in nature, more so at the higher educational level required for training for professional and managerial positions. It resulted in settler women having much greater access to formal Western education than tribal women, and produced a small group of highly educated settler women who could compete successfully therefore with the majority of tribal men for higher positions. It was to the benefit of the ruling Americo-Liberian oligarchy to support a value system which attached greater importance to the education of their women.<sup>2</sup>

1. BROWN, M.A.G. "Education and National Development in Liberia".  
Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1967
2. The first class containing women graduated from Liberia College today the University of Liberia, already in 1905.

With educated and trained women to fill the many middle and high position in the government bureaucracy, the advance of educated indigenous Liberians could be checked, and the rule of the settler group descendants maintained. At the same time, differences in access to education were further accentuated and aided by the economic system of hinterland tribes, in which girls have always played an important role in agricultural production. Sending their girls to school meant for the people of the hinterland of Liberia loss of manpower and a disruption of the farming cycle.

The differential access to education served therefore for the ruling elite as a mechanism for preservation of power, through which educated elite women were placed in positions which guarded the interests of the group. Were it not so, the ratio of women of Americo-Liberian descent and women of tribal descent in the private and public sectors of the economy would be similar. A difference in the ratio would indicate that employment, and especially placement, of women is not based solely on availability of educated and trained women, but on other factors which favour their employment and placement in one sector of the economy more than the other. A preponderance of women of tribal descent, especially of hinterland tribes, among women in administrative and managerial middle and high positions in the private sector, contrasted with a preponderance of women belonging to the elite Americo-Liberian group in the public sector, is essential in proving the hypothesis that these women's role rests in part "on the political stand of the Americo-Liberians, who were a minority ruling group, and utilized fully the women who were perceived as less of a political threat".

The question used in the questionnaire for the determination of the distribution of positions among the women was: "What is the title of your job?". Answers were verified by three other questions: "Explain in short what does your job entail doing?", "Who are the people you have to report to in your job? State only their positions, not their names", and "Which aspects of the job are left to your own decision, and which have to be decided with the help of someone above you?". On this basis, a three position scale was devised, according to which the women fell into one of three categories: those in high position were government ministers, general managers, company directors, assistant ministers, assistant managers, judges and comptrollers. Those in middle position were heads or directors of departments, school principals, personnel officers, supervisors, inspectors, coordinators, administrative assistants, special assistants, sales representatives, vice principals and chief accountants. Those in low positions included junior officers, planners, chief catalogers, treasurers and executive secretaries.

The majority of the women in the public sector were found to concentrate at the upper part of the scale. 77% of them are in the middle and high positions. Women in the private sector on the other hand were found to concentrate in the lower part of the scale. 69.6% of them were in middle and low positions, out of which 41.5% alone were in low positions. The overall distribution of positions on this scale, for both the public and the private sectors, shows only slight differences between positions; 36.9% of the women are in high positions, 32.1% are in middle positions, and 30.9% are in low positions. Table IV, 2 presents the distribution of positions in both sectors, pointing a clear tendency of women in the public sector to congregate at the upper part of the scale.

TABLE IV, 2 - DISTRIBUTION BY POSITION

	PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	TOTAL
HIGH POSITION	31 ( 34.0% )	31 (40.2% )	62
MIDDLE POSITION	40 ( 43.9% )	14 ( 18.1% )	54
LOW POSITION	20- (21.1% )	32 -(41.5% )	52
TOTAL	N=91, (99.8%	N=77, (99.8% )	N=168

The ethnic affiliation of the respondents was determined on the basis of questions concerning the place of birth and the ethnic affiliation of both parents. Initially, parents were placed in five different groups: group 1 are Bassa, Kru and Vai - all coastal tribes, group 2 are those belonging to other coastal tribes - the Dey and the Grebo, group 3 are those belonging to hinterland tribes - Krahn, Gio, Mano, Kpelle, Belle, Gola, Loma, Mandingo, Kissi, Bandi and Mende. Group 4 are the settlers, of no tribal affiliation, and group 5 are the non-Liberians<sup>1</sup>. The result showed that more women in the public sector as a whole had a group 4, or settlers father than women in the private sector, 20.6% in the public sector vs. 15.5% in the private sector. They also had more group 1 and group 2 fathers, 55.7% in the public sector, vs. 38.9% in the private sector. More than twice as many fathers in the private sector than the public sectors came from among the hinterland tribes- group 3. Table IV;3 presents the distribution of respondents by parents' ethnic affiliation.

1. Only Liberian women were included in the study. Therefore, those whose parents fell in group 5 either had one non-Liberian parent only, or grew up in Liberia and were naturalized Liberians themselves.

TABLE IV, 3

	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	MOTHER	FATHER	MOTHER	FATHER
BASSA, KRU VIA-group 1	32 (34.7%)	35 (38.4%)	31 (40.2%)	24 (31.1%)
OTHER COSTAL TRIBES-group 2	21 (23.0%)	16 (17.3%)	8 (10.3%)	6 (7.8%)
HINTERLAND TRIBES-group 3	10 (10.8%)	9 (9.7%)	15 (19.4%)	16 (20.6%)
SETTLERS- group 4	22 (23.9%)	19 (20.6%)	13 (16.8%)	12 (15.5%)
NON-LIBERIAN- group 5	5 (5.4%)	12 (13.0%)	10 (12.9%)	19 (24.6%)
NO ANSWER	2 (2.1%)	1 (1.0%)		
TOTAL N = 169	N=92 (99.9%)	N=92 (100.0%)	N=77 (99.6%)	N=77 (99.7%)

Table IV, 3 shows that more mothers than fathers were of groups 2 and 4 in the public sector, and of groups 1 and 2 in the private sector. In both sectors, the number of non-Liberian fathers exceeded that of non-Liberian mothers.

Tables IV, 4 and IV, 5 correlate the ethnic affiliation of the mother and the father.

TABLE IV, 4 - PARENTS ETHNIC AFFILIATION

## PUBLIC SECTOR

MOTHER FATHER	BASSA KRU VAI	OTHER COSTAL TRIBES	HINTERLAND TRIBES	SETTLERS	NON LIBERIAN	NO ANSWER	TOTAL
BASSA	21	5	2	5	2	0	35
KRU							
VAI							
OTHER COASTAL TRIBAL	2	9	2	3	0	0	16
HINTERLAND TRIBES	1	3	5	0	0	0	9
SETTLERS	5	1	0	13	0	0	19
NON- LIBERIAN	3	3	1	1	3	1	12
NO ANSWER	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	32	21	10	22	5	2	N=92

TABLE IV, 5 - PARENTS' ETHNIC AFFILIATION

## P R I V A T E   S E C T O R

MOTHER \ FATHER	BASSA KRU VAI	OTHER COASTAL TRIBES	HINTERLAND TRIBES	SETTLERS	NON- LIBERIAN	NO ANSWER	TOTAL
BASSA KRU VAI	17	1	2	3	1	0	24
OTHER COASTAL TRIBES	0	5	0	0	1	0	6
HINTERLAND TRIBES	2	0	11	2	1	0	16
SETTLERS	4	0	1	8	0	0	13
NON- LIBERIAN	8	2	1	0	7	0	18
NO ANSWER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	31	8	15	13	10	0	N=77

A relatively strong correlation was found between the ethnic affiliation of mothers and fathers. In both the public and private sectors there is very little tendency towards intermarriage. Out of the 32 women in the public sector who have a Bassa, Kru or Vai mother, 21 have also a Bassa, Kru or Vai father. In every other category there is an exhibited tendency towards in-marriage. More detailed data analysis showed this to be true of individual tribes as well. Since the data concerns urban women, it can be expected that the rate of inter-marriage is even lower in the rural areas.

A previous discussion of the social structure of Liberia pointed out the role played by the coastal tribes. It was stressed that they were the first to assimilate into the settler group, either by imitating their ways, or through the mechanisms of informal liasons between settler fathers and tribal mothers, and the "ward system". Interestingly, the largest number of intermarriages occur between the Bassa, Kru and Vai tribes and the settlers: in the public sector, 5 of the women who had Bassa, Kru or Vai mother had a settler father, and a similar number of those who had Bassa, Kru or Vai father had a settler mother. In the private sector the number of women whose mothers came from among these ethnic groups and whose fathers were settlers was not as large perhaps as those whose fathers were non-Liberians, but the hegemony of settler group descendents was maintained among those who had Bassa - Kru or Vai fathers. In the 'coastal tribes' category in the public sector the settler mothers featured prominently among those who had 'other coastal tribes' fathers. On the other hand, more of the women who had non-Liberian mothers, or 'hinterland tribes' mothers, had a settler father. The rate of intermarriage between coastal tribes, especially the Bassa, Vai or Kru, and the settlers is therefore higher than the rate of intermarriage exhibited by the other groups. The model constructed in this study had therefore to take into account this assimilation process. Consequently, the three groups utilized in the analysis are the core group, the extended group and the external group. Respondents who fall within the core group have parents who are either both settlers, or at least one parent is a settler. No distinction was made between father and mothers, since in most cases Liberian children grow up in their father's house, rather in the mother's house, where the parents are not living together. The Liberian law grants in fact the custody of children over the age of 7 to the father and not to the mother.



Therefore, even in cases where the respondent's mother was of tribal origin, she most probably was brought up as an Americo-Liberian.

Those who belong to the extended group have both parents of coastal tribe origin, belonging to groups 1 and 2. Those who belong to the external group have both parents of hinterland tribes - group 3, or both non-Liberians - group 5, or one of the parents is of the coastal tribes and the other of the hinterland tribes or a non-Liberian.

On this basis, table IV, 6 presents group affiliation by sector:

TABLE IV, 6 - GROUP AFFILIATION BY SECTOR

SECTOR	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
CORE GROUP	28 30.7%	18 23.3%
EXTENDED GROUP	38 41.7%	23 29.8%
EXTERNAL GROUP	25 27.4%	36 46.7%
TOTAL	91 99.8%	77 99.8%

Members of the core group form 30.7% of the public sector, but only 23.3% of the private sector, while members of the external group formed 27.4% of the public sector, and 46.7% of the private sector. The differences are striking also in relation to the extended group: against 41.7% of the surveyed females in the public sector, only 29.8% of these in the private sector belong to this group.

Table IV, 7 utilizes the same model for analysis of the core, extended and external group affiliation in the three position scale, and in each sector.

TABLE IV, 7 - GROUP AFFILIATION BY SECTOR  
AND POSITION

	HIGH POSITION		MIDDLE POSITION		LOW POSITION	
	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
CORE GROUP	9	10	13	2	6	6
EXTENDED GROUP	17	7	16	4	5	12
EXTERNAL GROUP	5	14	11	8	9	14
TOTAL	31	31	40	14	20	32

A factorial design table was constructed to confirm these relationship between women's ethnic affiliation and their positions in the private and the public sectors:

TABLE IV, 8 - CORE AND EXTENDED GROUP

	HIGH POSITION	MIDDLE POSITION	LOW POSITION
PUBLIC SECTOR	$\frac{26}{31} = .84$	$\frac{29}{40} = .73$	$\frac{11}{20} = .55$
PRIVATE SECTOR	$\frac{12}{41} = .54$	$\frac{6}{14} = .43$	$\frac{18}{32} = .56$

$$\frac{\text{Core group} + \text{Extended group}}{\text{Total}} = \frac{107}{168} = .64$$

In this table the core group and the extended group were combined, following the analysis presented earlier, according to which members of the extended group were assimilated to an appreciable degree into the ruling elite. Members of the external group on the other hand have never identified themselves with the settler group.<sup>1</sup> The table shows clearly that women of the core + extended group are overrepresented in high positions in the public sector. This overrepresentation can be concluded from the comparison with the ratio of all core and extended groups women to the total sample: there were 107 women falling in that category within a sample of 168 women. They represent therefore 64% of the total sample population. They form, however, 84% of the total women in high position in the public sector, and 73% of the total women in middle positions in the public sector. Both percentages represent a high ratio of core/extended women to total number of women in that position than expected. By the same token, core/extended group women form only 54% of all women in high position in the private sector, and 43% of all women in middle level positions in the private sector. Both percentages represent a lower ratio than expected when compared to the ratio of these groups of women to the total sample population. They are therefore overrepresented in middle level positions in the public sector. (.84 and .73 respectively). At the same time, they are underrepresented in low positions in the public sector (.55), in high positions in the private sector (.54), and in middle positions and low positions in the private sector (.43 and .56/respectively).

1. There are few instances of members of the external group being partially assimilated within the core group. Stephen Hlophe, op. cit., records the examples of E. Sumo Jones, now Minister of Labour, and R. Azango, previously a Supreme Court judge. These however are the exception rather than the rule.

TABLE IV, 9 - EXTERNAL GROUP

	HIGH POSITION	MIDDLE POSITION	LOW POSITION
PUBLIC SECTOR	$\frac{5}{31} = .16$	$\frac{11}{40} = .28$	$\frac{9}{20} = .45$
PRIVATE SECTOR	$\frac{14}{31} = .45$	$\frac{8}{14} = .57$	$\frac{14}{32} = .44$
<u>External group</u> Total	$= \frac{61}{168} = .36$		

Similar analysis was done concerning women of the external group, who were found to comprise 36% of the total sample population. The finding that they form only 16% of all women in high positions in the public sector is indicative of a lower ratio than expected. Their being 45% of all women in high positions in the private sector indicates on the other hand a higher ratio than expected when compared to their ratio to the total sample population.

In Table IV, 9 we can see clearly that members of the external group are grossly underrepresented in high positions in the public sector. They are also underrepresented in middle positions in the public sector. On the other hand, they are overrepresented in low positions in the public sectors, and in all positions in the private sector: .45 in high positions in the private sector, .57 in middle level positions, and .44 in low level positions.

The data presented in the two tables above indicates clearly an imbalance between the two sectors: the public sector favours the employment of women of core and extended groups in high positions, while the private sector tends to employ women of the external group in such positions.

The design used above presents us with 12 groups of women, which will be used for analysis of various variables in the next chapters: Women of high position/core and extended group who are in the public sector, women of middle position/core and extended group who are in the public sector, women of high position/external group in the public sector, women of middle position/external group in the public sector, women of high position/core and extended group in the private sector, women of middle position/core and extended group in the private sector, women of high position external group in the private sector, women of middle position/external group in the private sector, women of low position/core and extended group in the public sector, women of low position/external group in the public sector, women in low position/core and extended group in the private sector, and women of low position/external group in the private sector.

While women of settler origin comprise only 1.2% of the total population of Liberia, and 2.5% of the total female population of Liberia, women of coastal tribes comprise 32.9% of the total female population of the country. Women who belong to the external group comprise therefore 64.6% of the total female population.<sup>1</sup> We have seen however that the same ratio does not exist in the distribution of females belonging to the three groups in administrative and managerial positions. Not only that, but the distribution is also askew in favour of the core group in one of the sectors of the economy, i.e. the public sector.

1. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, Population and Housing Census, 1974

In considering the variables which may affect favouring the employment of women of the core group and the extended group in the public sector rather than the private sector, we can discount such variables as educational level or place of residence, since these will affect employment and placement in both sectors in exactly the same way. In other words, we could expect a preponderance of female members of the core and extended groups in managerial and administrative positions in Monrovia, Monrovia being located on the coast. All variables being constant, we would not expect a preponderance of females of these groups in only one of the sectors. Yet, our data proves such a preponderance for the external group in the private sector, and for the core and extended group in the public sector. This preponderance cannot be due to personal characteristics demanded by the individual sector. There is also no substantial difference in the qualification and the training demanded by the individual equivalent jobs in the private and the public sector. We can safely assume therefore that the difference is due to special conditions which are bound to the social structure of Liberia as presented in this study, and in particular to the situation of the settler group. Core and extended female administrators/managers had served therefore as a supportive mechanism within the structure, maintaining a long existing stratification system.

The role of women as supportive mechanism is further accentuated by their apparent lack of political, or power, motivation. The level of power motivation will be discussed therefore in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV - CASE STUDIES

DR. S. B. S.

Dr. B. S. is the first female president of a large educational institution and the daughter of a man who held a prominent position in the Liberian government. Although Dr. B. S. has achieved a very influential position, she is convinced that she is only following the foot steps of many before her. She also attributes her success, and the success of others, to the educational system of Liberia, which, unlike neighbouring West African countries under British colonial rule<sup>1</sup>, offered similar educational opportunities for men and women<sup>2</sup>. Since career advancement may depend largely on education, she admits that career opportunities were historically confined to the population in the urban areas, where there has always been access to education. She herself was born in Monrovia and her father came from the settler group. She believes most women in high positions come from "educated homes". She does not attribute much importance to the role of legislature in propelling Liberian women towards high positions. Though President Barclay (1930-1944) was opposed to women's suffrage, she believes the Women's Movement during President Tubman's time (1944-1971) did not really have to fight for equal rights for women.<sup>3</sup> Most of the important social legislation concerning women was actually launched during the 1976-1978 period.

MRS. J.

Mrs. J. was the manager (resident) of one of the largest private companies in Liberia, and has been retired recently. Both her parents were originally non-Liberians, her father migrated from neighbouring Sierra Leone while her mother was born to naturalized Sierra Leonean parents, She herself is married to a naturalized Liberian who originated from the West Indies. Her mother was a successful business women who had supported her children through school and is still active today.

Mrs. J. did not see herself as an exception in the Liberian society, though she noted that she may be the exception in the private sector, where there are fewer women in her position. She felt it was equally easy for men and women in Liberia to attain high positions once they possess the necessary qualifications. In her words, "while the women in the United States were fighting for Women's Lib, the Liberian women were already emancipated. There was no need to burn brassieres". She attributed this situation to the historical role Liberian women played in the traditional, indigenous societies, where women have always carried the burden, economically, and still continue to do so. An equally important factor, in agreement with Dr. B. S., is the equal educational opportunities offered to men and women. Though a similar educational system offered in the U.S. A. did not result in more women in management until recently, the shortage of qualified manpower in Liberia resulted in women fully utilizing their education to gain high positions. She also noted that women from coastal counties had more opportunities to participate and be familiar with 'modern' life, resulting perhaps in more of them attaining high positions.<sup>4</sup>

1. See LILIAN SANDERSON, "Girls Education in Northern Sudan", in G. and M. Hiskett, eds. Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa. JEAN TREVOR, "Western Education and Muslim Fulani Women in Sokoto, Nigeria", Ibid.
2. In the 1880's Dr. Blyden advocated equal education for women, and in 1906 there were already four women graduates from the Liberia College, followed by more graduates in 1928, 1931 and 1935. Similarly, the College of West Africa had women graduates as early as 1904.
3. The women Movement was active during President Tubman first term in office, in the 1940's. The movement was headed by Mrs. Sara Simpson and Elizabeth Collins, who became a senator later.
4. The distinction between 'coast' and 'interior' may be almost synonymous with 'Americo-Liberian' and 'tribal'.



MRS. A.

Mrs. A. currently heads a large section within a major educational institution and was prior to that an assistant minister. She is a prolific writer, a coordinator of many projects and the member of numerous boards and committees. She also did not see herself as an exception, pointing out that there were and are many female deputy and assistant ministers in the Liberian government.<sup>1</sup> The accessibility of women to high positions is taken as a matter of course, and so is equal pay. Although Mrs. A. maintained that ethnic background is not a factor in determining such accessibility, she did stress the imbalance between the coastal and the rural counties.<sup>2</sup> She herself is a descendent of a settler family but married to a man of tribal background.

MS. S.

Ms. S. is the president of a large company in the private sector who was born in the coastal area to an army career man of settler origin. Both her parents were well educated. Contrary to others, she did see herself as an exception, especially in being independent and having decision-making power, yet she believes it is equally easy for men and women in Liberia to reach to top positions.

MRS. K.

Mrs. K. is the Director of a government agency. Born in the U.S.A., she is a naturalized Liberian and is married to a man of tribal origin.

1. Specifically pointed out by her were junior ministerial posts in the Judiciary, and the presence of women even among judges: Judge Martha Massoud, the Resident Judge in Bassa and Montserrado counties, Angie Brooks, who was the first Supreme Judge in the Supreme Court, and Judge Emma Walser, who was removed from the bench before the coup.
2. The rural/urban polarity was evident in the case of the running for the presidency for the Women's Movement during the last precoup True Whig Party election, in which Ninerva Johnson "represented" Lofa Co.- a rural county/- against the Montserrado county candidate.

Mrs. K. believed that she just "happened to be in the right place at the right time and to have people's confidence" in her. She also believes that upward mobility depends on the ability of the person, not his/her sex, and women who have reached top positions in Liberia are 'achievers', who would want to accomplish something in any society. Yet, there is in her opinion more acceptance in Liberia of women achievers, the reason being perhaps the role of mothers, who are very influential in the Liberian society.

MRS. T.G.

Mrs. T. G. is the Monrovia resident manager of a large private company and is of settler descent. She stressed the fact that Liberian women are "already emancipated", and achieve higher positions because they strive for higher education. Higher education is a valuable asset in a country with few qualified people. She sees herself as one of many women in similar positions.

MS. F.G.

Ms. F. G. holds currently a position in an international organization, but was until a year ago an assistant minister and the chairman of various boards. She is of pure tribal descent, though she was born in the coastal area. She noted that the social structure will always determine who will reach to high positions. There have always been "cliques" in the Liberian society, and women within those cliques had contacts and found it easier to reach high positions. In other words, women with expertise within the elite group in Liberian society had contacts which facilitated their fast upward mobility. She felt that opportunities for women are limited in the private sector because it employes more 'expatriate' staff, barring therefore contacts, and because it demands more geographical mobility which is suitable only to single women.

## C H A P T E R V

## THE LIBERIAN FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER AND POWER MOTIVATION

" The claim that Liberian women are usually on the periphery of the political wagon can hardly be disputed. In our society . . . , it is the men that are actors within the political arena. It is they who spearhead the revolutionary struggle."

(New Liberian, June 5, 1981.)

'Power' is a concept which has engaged many writers in the fields of sociology and political science during the last few decades. It has been variously described as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance"<sup>1</sup>, or as "the capacity of the individual, or group of individuals to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner in which he desires, and to prevent his conduct being modified in the manner in which he does not".<sup>2</sup> Power is perceived therefore as emanating from the individual, as interaction phenomenon involving asymmetry in relationship which can occur in the social, political and economic spheres.

Power can emanate however also from the group, and should be distinguished from power which has its source in the personal characteristics of the individual. Such power, based on membership in a group, is termed by Maquet<sup>3</sup> status power. The status of an elite group will permeate any social intercourse, since actors belonging to different groups will remain conscious of their respective status power irrespective of their personal qualities. The power held by an elite group will accord its members certain privileges which they may exercise during such social intercourse. These privileges can also occur in either the social, political or economic spheres.

Having power, in the sense in which it was defined above, in one of the spheres, does not necessarily imply power in the other spheres, though there is a certain degree of correlation between them in the sense that having power in one sphere facilitates acquisition of power in the other spheres. Hence, West African women who may yield considerable economic power as successful traders do not necessarily have political or social power.

1. GERTH, H.H. and MILLS, C.W. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Oxford University Press, 1946. P. 224
2. COSER, LWEIS A. "The Notion of Power: Theoretical Developments". In L. Coser and B. Rosenberg, Sociological Theory. Macmillan Publishing, 1976, pp. 150-161
3. MAQUET, JACQUE, "Rwanda Castes", In A. TUDEN and L. PLOTNICIV, Social Stratification in Africa, pp. 93 - 124

'Political power is here defined as the ability of individuals or groups to effect and carry out their will pertaining to policy and government, social power being defined as the ability of individuals or groups to carry out their will pertaining to interrelations within the group, and to obligations tied to the relations between superior and submissive individuals and groups, and economic power being defined as the ability of individuals or groups to carry out their will pertaining to the management of material resources, the control and the disposal of wealth.

The assessment of women's economic role raises the question of the degree to which occupational prestige and the control over the economic organization and the disposal of wealth corresponds with the measure of political power available to women as discussed already in Chapter I. In this connection, there are structural differences between the economic and political value systems of 'traditional'<sup>1</sup> and 'modern' societies, which demands a separate discussion of the two.

As stated in Chapter I, Sanday<sup>2</sup> suggests that only when the female contribution to subsistence is equal to that of the male's is the woman's status high, with political power and authority shared. In other words, in the situation where women contribute either very little, or very much, to subsistence production, men's share in defense, and therefore power and authority, will increase. Sanday's concept of 'equal share' has however to be more precisely defined, since sharing subsistence production may mean either performing the same roles in production, or performing complementary but equal roles, as in the case in many West African 'traditional' societies.

1. The term 'traditional' is used here to denote a pattern of social relations, attitudes and practices which is part of observed indigenous culture.
2. SANDAY, PEGGY R. op. cit.

Rosaldo<sup>1</sup> suggests two venues of increased availability of sources of political power to women: either more participation in the public sphere, or creating a public sphere of their own. The second alternative is the one typical of 'traditional' West African societies, where female political power has its own public sphere, complementary to that of the men. Such political power finds its expression through organizations like the Sande Society, the Nimm Society of the Ekoi in southern Nigeria, women's societies in Bamenda, Cameroon,<sup>2</sup> or the Ibo women's associations. The first of Rosaldo's alternatives, shared participation in the public sphere, is more applicable to urban 'Westernized' Africa, in which women's economic role as independent farmers and traders is exchanged for salaried employment. Men and women do not perform complementary roles within the economic sphere, but rather the same roles, removing therefore the basis on which their separate public sphere was built. In sharing the public sphere with men, West African women are at a disadvantage: their freedom of movement is curtailed due to lack of child care facilities, their educational level and technical knowledge have been impaired by perpetuation of male preference in educational orientation by colonial government and missionaries, and their traditional authority has been annihilated by colonial governments which recognized the men's political organizations as the only legitimate political authority holders.

While 'modern' African societies cannot offer women political power to any considerable degree, an interesting situation arises when we are confronted with the Liberian case, in which the entry of women into higher positions was facilitated by certain conditions in the social structure. Do the women utilize the political power available to them by virtue of the positions they share with the men?

1. ROSALDO, MICHELLE Z. op. cit.
2. KABERRY, PHYLLIS P. N. op. cit.

The ability to wield social, political or economic power is not dependent on the individual's prestige, influence, dominance, rights, force, or authority, and can occur without any and each of those, as pointed out by Bierstadt.<sup>1</sup> Prestige is not accompanied necessarily by power, influence is persuasive while power is coercive. Dominance is a personality trait and more psychological in nature than power. Rights on their own do not mean power. On the contrary, power is frequently used to protect rights. Force on its own again does not mean the possession of power, but rather power means the ability to employ force in order to enforce one's will. The distinction between power and authority has been made very frequently in literature: Weber defined authority as the probability that a specific command will be obeyed. It is legitimized power. The distinction between power and authority is especially important to our discussion of women in high positions, which concentrates on the role women play within formal organizations, in the public domain, as defined by Sanday and Rosaldo: "The domestic domain includes activities performed within the realm of the localized family unit. The public domain includes political and economic activities that take place or have impact beyond the localized family unit and that relate to control of persons or control of things".<sup>2</sup>

Should the public sphere be considered political and the domestic sphere as non-political? According to Tiffany<sup>3</sup> women can be viewed "as powerful 'behind the scenes' operators who 'work through' men, whereas men are viewed as the public upholders of authoritative actions".<sup>4</sup>

1. BIERSTEDT, ROBERT, "Analysis of Social Power". *The American Sociological Review*, XV, 6, pp. 730-738.
2. SANDAY, op. cit. p. 190
3. TIFFANY, SHARON. "Models and the Social Anthropology of Women". *MAN*, Vol. 13, No. 1, March 1978, pp. 34-51
4. TIFFANY, Ibid. p. 43

Where women are "formally excluded from public administrative roles" and are restricted to the domestic sphere, they are nevertheless political actors, using "manipulation, bluff, influence, gossip, possession, threats of ritual pollution, witchcraft, sorcery or suicide".<sup>1</sup> Where women have therefore wide access to public/formal administrative roles, they should be capable of authoritative actions. Such were the women in our study, who have been placed in positions that enable them to exercise power, by virtue of the authority invested in them. However, not all individuals who have the capacity to exercise power actually do so. The exercise of the potential power depends on the individuals' perception of themselves and the degree to which they encourage their image as powerful. Wrong comments that "If an actor is believed to be powerful, if he knows that others hold such a belief, and if he encourages it and resolves (my italic) to make use of it by intervening in or punishing actions by the other who do not comply by his wishes, then he truly has power".<sup>2</sup> In defining power as dependent on the resolution to use it,<sup>it</sup> is essential to determine the Liberian women's perception of their power in the public domain: do they want to be powerful? Do they wish to rise to higher positions? Do they conceive the ability to control others as important? Do they have decision-making power? Do they attach importance to their ability to make decisions? In short, what is their level of power motivation?

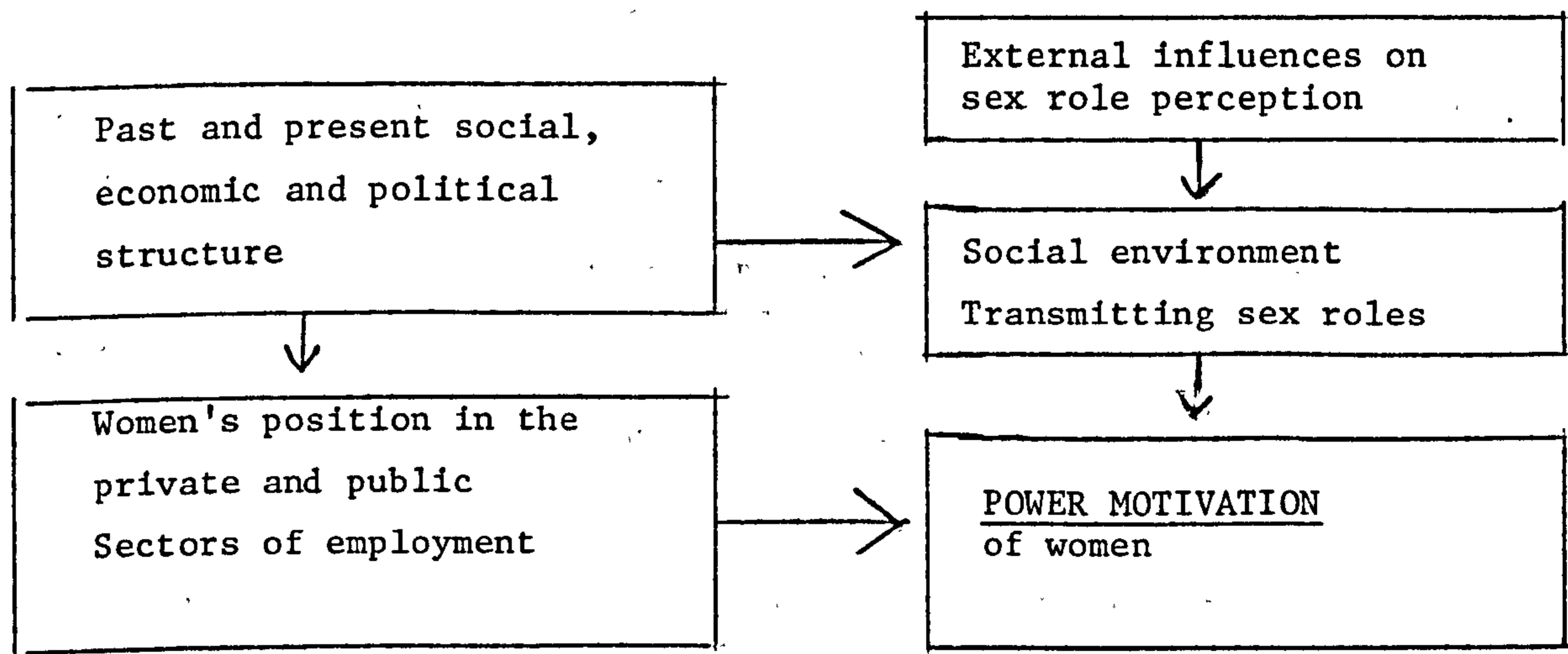
The model used here for the analysis presents two distinct factors as sources influencing the nature of the power motivation of the women: the social environment on the one hand, and the job position of the women on the other. The social environment creates a milieu in which sex roles are being defined, and transmitted in turn as sex stereotypes to the individuals.

1. TIFFANY, Ibid. p. 45

2. WRONG, DENNIS, "Some Problems in Defining Social Power". The American Journal of Sociology, 73, May 1968, pp. 673-681



Sex stereotypes "not only restrict the participation of women in politics, but also limit their occupational alternatives".<sup>1</sup> They tend to influence greatly the behavioural alternatives of males and females, including those who reach elite positions. It is in the social environment that the role of the femals as an important economic contributor innovator, active in her own political sphere, submissive to the male, and as transmitter and therefore protector of society's culture through socialization of the young, is being determined. It is here that women may be seen as having power deriving from their reproductive power and their contribution to food production and distribution, yet learn to associate power and decision making ability in the public domain with the male, confining their power and decision-making scope to the private domain.



O'Barr<sup>2</sup> notes that in contemporary Africa "women's position is modified to the extent mandated by government, but in the absence of further specific mandates women acquiesce to long established cultural norms, at least in the short run", and therefore will remain in extensions of the domestic material role in public affairs. O'Barr further states that "no where do women yet have the political clout to match their emergent educational and economic strength.

- 1.. BUVINIV, MAYRA. "ACritical Review of Some Research Concepts and Concerns". In I. Tinker and M. Bransen, Women and World Development. Praeger Publication, 1976, pp. 224-243
2. O'BARR, JEAN F. "Making the Invisible Visible: African Women in Politics and Policy". African Studies Review, Vol. XVIII No. 3, December 1975, pp. 19-27

The reasons for this gap rest with the images and ideologies societies have of women's place". For women in higher positions there may be a strain inherent in the conflict between the requirements of their career and the female role requirements. The role expectations of one may be dysfunctional to the performance of the other.

Sex role perception is determined in turn by external influences and by the social, economic and political structure of the society. The external influence on sex role perception is cultural in nature, being attributed to contacts with other value systems. In African societies these occurred through trading, colonialism, migration and missionary activity. Of those, migration and missionary activity seem to be the most significant exogenous factors influencing sex role perception in Liberia. Migration in Liberia has been composed of two streams: the early migrations of the different tribal groups, and the late migration of the Americo-Liberian/settler group. The external cultural influence in the first is manifested also in Islamic values, which stress to a considerable degree the exclusion of women from the public domain, while those of the second include both values of slave society, in which the women are important contributors, workers and reproducers, and of the southern American plantation, in which women were relegated to the private domain, more of decorative assets to their husbands than equals to them, though playing an important role in plantation management.

Missionary activity is of importance in Liberia in that Western education has been to a great extent controlled by the various missions. American missions operated all schools in Liberia up to the end of the commonwealth period. According to the 1956 census, missionaries operated half the elementary schools in Monrovia, and four of the five high schools. Though many private schools operate nowadays in Monrovia, the number of mission schools is still significant.

Values relegating women to the private domain can be most successfully instilled through the educational system. In most African countries, colonial governments whole heartedly supported an educational system which stressed domestic subjects for women, since schools were seen mainly as a pool from which a supply of minor male government officials could be drawn.<sup>1</sup> Though in Liberia attitudes towards female education were definitely favourable among settler families, female role perceptions were transmitted from Euro-American societies into Liberia, through the Euro-American missionaries, enhancing the role of the female as the 'home-maker'.

The social, economic and political structures of the society, which is the second determinant of sex roles transmitted by the social environment, incorporates factors such as form of subsistence, ethnic composition and form of government. The rule of the minority elite in Liberia overshadows other factors, having serious repercussions for the social and economic structures of the society. There is no substantial industrial development in the country, yet government machinery is inflated in number, creating a multiplicity of middle level positions. A two tier society was created, consisting of the minority settler group and the tribal majority group. While the tribal majority has been largely engaged in subsistence agriculture, the settler minority has occupied almost all available government positions. For female members of the tribal majority who wished to enter the professions, or to occupy administrative positions, the sex roles promoted by the settler group were the ones to be emulated, the settler group serving thus as a reference group for those aspiring to such positions, while sex roles promoted by tribal society were looked upon less favourably.

1. See LILIAN SANDERSON, "Girls' Education in Northern Sudan", In Godfrey and Marvy Hisket, *Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa*. London: 1975
- JEAN TREVOR, "Western Education and Muslim Fulani/Hausa Women in Sokoto, Nigeria". In M. Hisket, *Ibid*, pp. 247-270
- MOUMOUNI, ABDOUS. *Education in Africa*. London, 1968

Women's position in the public and the private sectors of employment, the last factor in our model, is a consequence of the social and political structure of Liberia, which allowed disproportionate penetration of women into middle and high positions in administration and management in the public sector. In such positions, they occupy roles of leadership, in which they are expected to influence and control people's behaviour. These positions allow them power derived from the formal organization. The bases of such power are: 1. the ability to control the administration of incentives (reward power), 2. the ability to control the administration of punishment (coersive power), and 3. the authority vested in the position by organization policy (legitimate power).<sup>1</sup> It is therefore the second source of influence on the power motivation of women, as presented in the model above. Being in positions of authority, we would expect the women to be accustomed to decision-making and the exercise of command. However, although the distribution of positions within the public sector is greatly askew in favour of middle and high positions, with only 21% of our public sector sample in the lower positions, against 41% of the women in the private sector who are in low administrative and managerial positions, we do not expect their power motivation to be different from that of the women in the private sector. The argument supporting this expectation is that if our hypothesis that the rise of women to middle and high positions within the public sector was due to the need of the minority ruling elite to preserve its rule, then we can exclude power

1. This analysis of bases of power was developed by French and Raven. See William C. Howell, Essentials of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1976

as a motivation which propelled the women towards these positions.

Power motivation of women within the public and the private sectors should be of similar level, with differences attributed to the position itself (high, middle, low) rather than to the sector, and the level for both sectors should be determined by the factors presented in our model i.e. the nature of the position and the nature of the transmitted sex roles. Any evidence of higher rate of power motivation among the public sector women will lead us to question the hypothesis.

In subsequent data analysis the public sector is taken as representative of the core/extended group characteristics, while the private sector is considered as representative of the external group characteristics. This comparison between the sectors rather than between ethnic groups is justified by the marked preponderance of women of settler origin in high positions in the public sector, and women of tribal origin in high positions in the private sector. The data was also analyzed on the basis of ethnic affiliation in relation to the various variables presented hereafter, and the relationship between ethnic group characteristics and economic sector characteristics was found to hold in many cases. Analysis on the basis of ethnic group affiliation will be presented therefore only in the cases where the findings pertaining to 'ethnic' and 'sector' group characteristics did not correspond.

Our data tested a few indicators of power motivation: these included the decision-making level, the wish to be in a powerful position, the strength of the aspiration for a higher position, and the importance attached to the ability to command and control.

Power to make key decisions is proportionate to the resources people have, while possession of resources depends in turn on the position the individual has attained. How did the women in our public sector and private sector samples utilize the possibility of making key decisions, as their position would entail? The question "Which aspects of the job are left to your own decision and which have to be decided with the help of others" was used as an indicator of the decision-making level of the women. Answers were put into four categories: makes all decisions on her own, makes most decisions on her own, makes few decisions on her own, makes no decisions on her own. Table V.1 below shows as expected a decline in decision-making level with position, i.e., in every sector, the higher the position, the better was the decision-making ability of the respondent. However, in every single position, women in the private sector seemed to have better decision-making ability than women in the public sector. In middle level positions 78.5% of the women in the private sector make most of the decisions in their jobs, while only 58.8% of the middle level public sector women do so. Even in low level administrative and managerial positions 37.5% of the women in the private sector make most decisions on their own, while only 20% of women in low level positions in the public sector do so.

The position is even clearer in Table V.2, which combines making all decisions with making most decisions, and making few decisions with making no decisions. 93.6% of the women in the private sector were found to belong to the first category in high positions. 10.5% of the women in high positions in the public sector, 35.3% of women in middle

positions, and 75% of women in low positions made few or no decisions on their own, all figures much higher than those of the private sector.

TABLE V.1 - DECISION-MAKING LEVEL (percent)

Sector	PUBLIC			PRIVATE		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
All decisions				9.7		
Most decisions	89.4	58.8	20.0	83.9	78.5	37.5
Few decisions	7.9	29.4	60.0		21.4	43.7
No decisions	2.6	5.9	15.0	3.2		9.4
No answer		5.9	5.0	3.2		9.4
Total	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%
	N=92			N=77		

TABLE V.2 - DECISION-MAKING LEVEL (percent)

Position	High	PUBLIC		High	PRIVATE	
		Middle	Low		Middle	Low
All or most decisions	89.4	58.8	20.0	93.6	78.5	37.5
Few or no decisions	10.5	35.3	75.0	3.2	21.4	53.1
No answer		5.9	5.0	3.2		9.4
Total	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%
	N=92			N=77		

It is possible that the nature of the private sector allows high decision-making level for all persons occupying administrative and managerial positions. Yet, government agencies, public corporations and private companies are all bureaucratic organizations, with a well-prescribed chain of command. If the bureaucratic organizations of the private sector appear more flexible in granting decision-making power to their female employees in administrative and managerial positions, the question remains as to why the decision-making structure of the public sector as a bureaucratic organization is different. Therefore, the assumption that although women were recruited into middle and high level positions in the public sector, the intention was to prevent educated tribal males from penetrating into key positions in government may be offered as a plausible explanation. The actual decision-making level of these women is not commensurable with their positions.

The importance for these women of the ability to make decisions was tested by a question which asked the women to choose among factors important to them in accepting a job. The respondents were given a list of fifteen statements and were asked to choose the three which were most important to them, giving them numbers from 1 to 3, in order of importance. The statement "being able to exercise authority and make important decisions" was considered by only nine women in the whole sample as the most important in accepting a job (see Table V.3 below). Two of these women came from the public sector, and the other seven came from the private sector.



TABLE V.3 - IMPORTANCE OF AUTHORITY AND DECISION-MAKING IN ACCEPTING A JOB

	PUBLIC		PRIVATE	
	Chosen as first in importance	First, second or third in importance	Chosen as first in importance	First, second or third in importance
1	11 (12.0)	20	7 ( 9.1)	20
2	7 ( 7.6)	10	2 ( 2.6)	5
3	8 ( 8.7)	15	13 (16.8)	20
4	9 ( 9.8)	23	4 ( 5.2)	13
5		3	1 ( 1.3)	2
6		4	1 ( 1.3)	6
7				1
8	6 ( 6.5)	35	6 ( 7.8)	27
9		11	2 ( 2.6)	11
10	34 (36.9)	50	19 (24.6)	35
11 *	2 ( 2.1)	17	7 ( 9.1)	22
12	6 ( 6.5)	18	3 ( 3.9)	13
13	2 ( 2.1)	20	7 ( 9.1)	25
14	5 ( 5.4)	37	4 ( 5.2)	25
15	2 ( 2.1)	13	1 ( 1.3)	8
Total	92 (99.7)		77 ( 99.9)	

## KEY:

- 1 - flexible working hours
- 2- knowing exactly how many hours are expected daily
- 3- being her own boss
- 4- being paid exactly for the effort put in
- 5- having someone in authority to protect their rights
- 6- where will not be easily fired
- 7- where it is easy to be absent

(Cont.)

- 8- where salary and fringe benefits are adequate
- 9- where the position gives the respect of the community
- 10- where the job is compatible with training
- 11- where will be able to exercise authority and make important decisions
- 12- an interesting job
- 13- where there are possibilities of promotion
- 14- where able to help people
- 15- where will be able to express themselves

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Among the total responses to the question in the public sector, 18.4% placed the ability to exercise authority and make important decisions in either first, second or third place. Among the private sector responses the percentage was somewhat higher: 28.6% of the responses placed such ability in first, second or third place.

The ability to exercise authority and make important decisions was preceded in the public sector by compatibility with training (chosen by 36.9% of the women as first in important in accepting a job), having flexible working hours (12%), being paid exactly according to the effort put in (9.8%), being her own boss (8.7%), knowing exactly how many working hours are expected daily (7.6%), getting adequate salary and fringe benefits (6.5), and interesting job (6.5%), being able to help people (5.4%), having promotion possibilities and being able to express themselves (2.1% each). In the private sector however, the 'ability to exercise authority and make important decisions' is preceded only by compatibility with training (24.6%) and being her own boss (16.8%).

Though public sector women are better placed on the position scale than private sector women, the importance of decision-making, which is perceived here as an indicator of power motivation, is really negligible for them. The material rewards of the job, in the form of

salary, the expected effort input, in terms of hours of work, and the compatibility with training, are all considered more important. The private sector women exhibited in fact greater power motivation, indicated by placing 'ability to exercise authority and make important decisions' as third only in importance. They also put much less stress on the material rewards of the job or the expected effort input.

Our small sample of 38 public sector males, though limited in size and therefore accuracy, exhibited several differences from the public sector females: the expected effort input in terms of hours of work was first in importance to only 2.6% of the male respondents. However, salary rewards and the interest of the job both proved to be more important to the males (15.8% each), taking second place, behind compatibility with training. While the security of the job was not considered most important to any of the public sector females, 5.2% of the males considered it so, reflecting perhaps the conception men have of themselves as the main bread-winners in the family, and the conception public sector women have of the strength of their position. The respect of the community was more important to the males than to the females. Again, none of the public sector females thought that having the respect of the community was the most important consideration in accepting a job. The ability to exercise authority and make important decisions was considered as most important by 5.2% of the males, a figure higher than that of public sector women, yet lower than that of private sector women!

In accordance with the statement that the social actors are powerful only when they resolve to make use of the power in their possession, the 'ability to command and control others as important in career' was selected as an indicator of power motivation. The majority of the women in our sample did not choose at all the 'ability to command' as important in their career (see Table V.4).

TABLE V.4 - ABILITY TO COMMAND AND CONTROL OTHERS: PERCENTAGE CHOOSING IT AS IMPORTANT IN THEIR CAREER (percent)

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
<u>Chosen as important:</u>	22.7	26.0
First in importance	4.3	5.1
Second in importance	7.6	6.5
Third in importance	10.8	14.3
<u>Chosen as unimportant:</u>	77.3	74.0
Total	99.9%	100.0%
	N=92	N=77

77.3% of the public sector, and 74% of the private sector women did not consider the ability to command and control as important in their career. The difference between the sectors is insignificant. Though the women in our sample were placed in higher positions, especially so in the public sector, they underused their power to command and control.

The power motivation of the women was further tested in a question inquiring about the strength of their ambitions: five indicators were built into the question, distinguishing between tendency towards professionalism and tendency towards power in the respondents' careers.

The respondents were asked to indicate their attitude towards having a reputation as capable and competent in their career and towards making an important scientific discovery or a professional contribution (indicators of professionalism), towards fame (social power), wealth (economic power) and being in a powerful position (political power). Table V.5 presents the results.

TABLE V.5 - PROFESSIONAL AND POWER ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AMONG FEMALES (percent)

	PUBLIC					PRIVATE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
W/N	2.2	32.6	36.9	47.8	8.7	46.8	35.0	54.5	11.7	
L	13.0	50.0	47.8	36.9	40.2	20.7	41.5	44.1	26.0	39.0
L/V	84.4	13.0	9.8	9.8	46.7	78.0	3.9	11.7	9.1	39.0
N/A	4.3	5.4	5.4	4.3	1.3	7.8	9.1	10.3	2.5	10.3
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N =				92					77	

PROFESSIONAL AND POWER ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AMONG MALES

	1	2	3	4	5
W/N	7.7	23.0	46.1	43.6	
L	17.9	41.0	33.3	38.4	30.7
L/V	71.8	30.7	12.8	12.8	66.6
N/A	5.1	7.7	5.1		2.5
Total	99.9%	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.8

## KEY:

W/N - will not like it  
 L - like it  
 L/V - like it very much  
 N/A - no answer

1 - competence  
 2 - fame  
 3 - wealth  
 4 - political power  
 5 - professional contribution

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Women's perception of their role as reflected in this table indicates a tendency towards professional competence rather than power. This is in conformity with the findings of various studies done on the role of women in politics. Jaquette concludes that women may not see themselves as effective agents in politics, since "men are expected to be dominant in action directed towards the world outside the family."<sup>1</sup> Fogarty found women graduates in his study "to be less oriented than men towards the goals of money and power and more oriented towards service to and work with people". Women in his study were "less exclusively motivated to reach top level of power and wealth".<sup>2</sup>

As expected, the ambition for professional excellence overshadowed by far in our data the ambition for fame, power and wealth. Being proven as competent in their career was of prime importance to women in both the private and the public sectors. 78% of private sector women and 84.4% of public sector women said they would like to achieve it 'very much'. The second indicator of professionalism, the ambition to make an important scientific or professional discovery/contribution, was ambiguous: though important in professional performance, it is also associated with fame.

1. JAQUETTE, JANE. Women in Politics. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974
2. Fogarty, op. cit.

Therefore, 46.7% of women in the public sector and 39% of the women in the private sector indicated that they would like very much to achieve this ambition, a percentage decidedly lower than that of the first indicator of professionalism. The indicators of power ambition followed a similar pattern among the women in both sectors, showing a small percentage only of women who would like very much to achieve fame, wealth or political power. Taking into account the different nature of the two sectors, especially where positions in the public sector are often political appointments, we would have expected public sector females to exhibit a much higher level of political power ambition. This does not seem to be the case. Though the percentage of women in the private sector who would like very much to achieve a powerful position is somewhat smaller than that of women in the public sector, the difference is not highly significant. 47.8% of the women in the public sector, and 54.5% of the women in the private sector would clearly not like to achieve this ambition. Only 13% of the public sector women and 3.9% of the private sector women would like very much to achieve fame, while only 9.8% of the public sector, and 9.1% of the private sector women would like very much to be rich.

A comparison of this pattern with that of the males in the small public sector sample reveals a similarity in the overall pattern: males, like females, give priority to professional ambitions. They differed however in two significant counts: the ambition to make an important scientific discovery or professional contribution, and the ambition to be famous, which are related indicators as pointed out earlier. 30.7% of the males want very much to achieve fame, while 66.6% would like to make an important scientific discovery.

Such differences sustain the distinction between the public domain, associated with outer displays and celebrity, and therefore fame, demarcated for the males, and the domestic domain in which fame is not to be achieved, demarcated for women. In other words, while the men would like to excel in the public domain, the women in both sectors were wary of such reputation, and preferred to direct their ambition towards professionalism, or professional competence. Again, the percentage of the males who wanted to achieve a powerful position was slightly larger than that of either public or private sector females. More than half of the public sector males liked to achieve a powerful position, or liked it very much, against 35% of the private sector females who fell in these categories, and 46% of the public sector females who fell in these categories.

The last factor to be considered in the analysis of the power motivation of women is their promotion aspiration. Fogarty<sup>1</sup>, in his study of career women, points out that "women show and are expected by society to show less aggression in seeking promotion than men". "Women tend more than men to settle for a reasonably paid job which they like, either because of its content or because it is relatively sheltered from competition and discrimination, and not to press on for further promotion".

The same pattern outlined by Fogarty was evident in our study. The women were asked whether they would be ready to accept a job out of Monrovia, the capital city. Those who answered in the affirmative were further asked for the reasons, as presented in Table V,6 below:

1. FOGARTY, op. cit.



TABLE V, 6 - REASONS FOR ACCEPTING A JOB OUT OF MONROVIA

	PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	TOTAL
Higher salaries	6 (10.3)	13 (36.1)	19 (20.2)
Better fringe benefits	11 (19.0)	4 (11.1)	19 (16.0)
Employment for husband	15 (25.8)	4 (11.1)	19 (20.2)
Higher position	2 (3.4)	4 (11.1)	6 (6.3)
Skills better utilized	22 (37.9)	10 (27.7)	32 (34.0)
Better facilities	2 (3.4)	1 (2.7)	3 (3.2)
Totals	N=58 (99.8)	N=36 (99.8)	N=94 (99.9)

As can be seen in the table, only a small percentage of the women considered moving out of the capital city in order to gain promotion (a higher position). This percentage was especially small for the public sector women (3.4%), forming the smallest category.

Women in the private sector seemed only slightly more motivated towards seeking promotion : 11.1% of them declared 'a higher position' to be the most crucial factor in a decision to move out of the capital. For women in the public sector, utilization of skills was the most important consideration in a decision to move out of the capital city, followed by possibility of employment for the husband, better fringe benefits , higher salaries and better facilities, in that order. Women in the private sector considered higher salaries first, followed by utilization of skills. These findings support our hypothesis that women in the public sector have only little promotional aspirations. They serve as a buffer in preventing males of tribal origin from penetrating the higher echelons of government, and are not propelled into these positions by virtue of their own promotional or power ambitions. In other words, their ability to achieve their present positions was a function of the ruling elite's conscious wish to allocate these positions to the women rather than to aspiring tribal males. Though the women themselves may not openly admit awareness of such elite group strategy, their lack of promotion motivation indicates support to the hypothesis that they occupy these positions as a result of this strategy, and not as a result of their own strong aspirations to positions of power and authority. It is interesting to note that better facilities, defined in the questionnaire as including schools and social life, received the least consideration.

The promotion pattern was finally tested by the question : "Do you expect you will rise to a higher position?" (see Table V, 7). Only about half of the women in all positions expected to rise to a higher position, the percentage being only slightly higher for women in high positions in the private sector.

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40% of the women in the public sector who were in high positions did not know whether they could rise to a higher position, a further testimony perhaps to the precarious nature of political appointments in the public sector. Table V, 8 compares our samples of males and females. The public sector males are also affected by the precariousness of government positions, resulting in a large number of 'don't know' answers. However, the percentage of those who do not expect any rise to a higher position is smaller than that of the women: only 5.1% of the males did not expect to rise to a higher position, against 16.3% of the public sector females and 16.9% of the private sector females.

TABLE V, 7 - PROMOTION EXPECTATIONS

	PUBLIC SECTOR			PRIVATE SECTOR		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Yes	13(43.3)	23(56.1)	10(47.6)	17(54.8)	7(50.0)	16(50.0)
No	5(16.6)	8(19.5)	2(9.5)	7(22.6)	3(21.4)	3(9.4)
Don't know	12(40.0)	10(24.4)	9(42.8)	7(22.6)	3(21.4)	13(40.6)
No answer					1(7.1)	
Total	30(99.9)	41(100)	21(99.9)	31(100)	14(99.9)	32(100)

N=92

N=77

TABLE V, 8 - PROMOTION EXPECTATIONS OF MALES AND FEMALES

	PUBLIC SECTOR	PRIVATE SECTOR	MALES
Yes	46 (50.0)	40 (51.9)	20 (51.3)
No	15 (16.3)	13 (16.9)	2 (5.1)
Don't know	31 (33.7)	23 (29.8)	16 (41.0)
No answer		1 (1.3)	1 (2.5)
	N=92	N=77	N=39

There is a great variety of power resources. "Bierstedt<sup>1</sup> notes that power resources "may be of many kinds - money, property, prestige, knowledge, competence, deceit, fraud, secrecy, and ... all the things usually included under the term 'natural resources'". The power of the elite may be enhanced by educational background (e.g. being an 'Eton man', of an Oxford/Cambridge graduate in Britain) or religious affiliation among other things. Hlophe<sup>2</sup> mentions two resources used by the settler elite group in Liberia to augment their power: the Masonic fraternal order and the church organization. According to him, voluntary associations in Liberia became extensions of family itself, Hlophe points out that through voluntary associations political favours and economic rewards were allocated.

1. BIERSTEDT, Op. Cit.
2. HLOPHE, S. Op. Cit.

They "also served as an institutional base for the maintenance of social ties and solidarity among the ruling elite... and as centers for the grooming of new recruits into this stratum".<sup>1</sup> The freemasons served as a state apparatus, since through them active members were promoted to high government posts. Those who occupied key positions in the Masonic craft also occupied similar positions in the church, corresponding to their positions in government. The analysis of women's voluntary associations membership, and their occupancy of senior positions in church organizations is fundamental therefore to the understanding of their power motivation. This view gets further support in various discussions in literature: Sanday<sup>2</sup> presents the existence of female solidarity groups as one of the indicators of the decision-making power of women (others are female material control, demand for female produce, and political participation). She sees a direct correlation between the existence of female solidarity groups and higher female status. Little<sup>3</sup> presents women's voluntary associations as means to social mobility among elite women. Research on women's organizations in India has shown that members use the associations as means of maintaining or gaining status. Patricia Caplan<sup>4</sup> noted that in the 1920's and 1930's many leaders of women's movements were elected to prominent political posts, but with the end of the nationalist struggle women's groups turned themselves mainly into social welfare organizations. Through their membership in such associations Indian women maintain the status they already have by virtue of their class positions. Caplan admits, however, that social welfare work can be a stepping stone to a wider political career for the Indian women, and in that way women's voluntary associations enable their members to achieve power and influence.

1. HLOPHE, S. Op. Cit
2. SANDAY, P. Op. Cit.
3. LITTLE, KENNETH. "Voluntary Associations and Social Mobility Among West African Women". Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, ii, 1972, pp 275- 288
4. CAPLAN, P. "Women's Organizations in Nadras City, India". pp. 99-100

Our data indicates a linear decline in membership in voluntary associations with position, with the exception of middle level position in the private sector (Table V, 9 ).

TABLE V, 9 - WOMEN'S ACTIVITY IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

	PUBLIC SECTOR			PRIVATE SECTOR		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Active	14(43.7)	15(32.6)	4(28.6)	9(29.0)	7(41.1)	7(24.1)
Not active	18(56.2)	31(67.4)	10(71.4)	21(67.7)	10(58.8)	20(68.9)
No answer				1(3.2)		2(6.9)
Total	32(99.9)	46(100)	14(100)	31(99.9)	17(99.9)	29(99.9)

N=169

43.7% of the women in high positions in the public sector are active in voluntary associations, against 32.6% of the middle level position and 28.6% of those in low position in the public sector. The percentage of high position females in the public sector who are active in voluntary associations is higher than that of high position females in the private sector (44% and 29% respectively). The majority of these women however are active in religious associations, an integral part of their church membership.

Table V.10 presents the categories of associations to which the women belong: women's associations (e.g. Women In Action), religious associations ( e.g. YWCA, Guild of Women at the Alter, Usher Boards), relief organizations (e.g. the Red Cross) and others (e.g. lodges equivalent to Masonic craft lodges). 21 out of the 32 women in the public sector who gave information about the nature of their voluntary association activity are members of various religious associations. So are 13 of the 23 members of voluntary associations in the private sector. Membership in women's organizations, which can enhance women's solidarity, is very low.

TABLE V.10 - MEMBERSHIP IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Sector	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
Women's associations	3	3
Religious associations	21	13
Relief organization	2	
Others	6	7
Total	32	23
N=55		

This pattern of voluntary association membership differs radically from that of the men, as described by Hlophe<sup>1</sup>. It is the activity in church associations, rather than in lodges and 'crowds' described by Hlophe, which enhances women's position.

1. HLOPHE, S. op. cit. p. 185



TABLE V.11 - CHURCH POSITION

Sector	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
Holding a position	33 (35.8)	30 (38.9)
Not holding a Position	52 (56.5)	47 (61.0)
No answer	7 (7.6)	
	92 (99.9%)	77 (99.9%)

N= 169

The pattern of church position holding seems to be similar for women in both the public and the private sectors, and does not seem to be affected by the career position of the woman. Women in the low position in the public sector, and women in middle positions in the private sector, seem to be holding more church positions. None of the positions women hold in church is very high though. Most are treasurers, Sunday school teachers, or hold various positions in the women's auxiliaries in church. Nevertheless, the pattern on the whole is in conformity with the societal values in Liberia, stressing as the settlers did the important role the Christian church plays in the life of the elite. As noted by Fraenkel,<sup>1</sup> "The professing of Christianity, the wearing of Western-style dress, and the use of the English language, were the main cultural features differentiating the Americo-Liberian community from the surrounding tribespeople ; and became the three chief characteristics of the Americo-Liberian way of life".

1. FRAENKEL, M. Op. Cit.

The same special historical conditions which have emphasized Christian church membership to such a degree, also created a unique social structure in which Liberian women share the public domain with men. We have seen however that though Liberian women may be in positions of authority, they are not necessarily motivated to yield power as well, possibly due to female role perception as transmitted by the environment. The women do not encourage their image as powerful and are certainly not determined to use the power they could have had by virtue of their positions. Further more, we have established that power motivation is not a factor in thrusting women towards high positions in the public sector, lending therefore more credibility to the hypothesis. Public sector women, though being proportionately in higher positions than private sector women, exhibited in fact less decision-making power and also attached to it less importance than the private sector women. A smaller number of them was found to be motivated towards seeking higher positions. In all other indicators, power motivations was never higher in the public sector than the private sector.

Having clarified the role these women play within the Liberian social structure as a buffer group between settlers and tribes, we can turn next to an analysis of their characteristics: job characteristics and personal characteristics.

## CHAPTER V - CASE STUDIES

Most interviewees agreed that despite the fact that Liberian women reach top positions there is no evidence of female participation in political activities. The ex-deputy Mayoress of the Monrovia City Corporation, Ms. R. S. was arrested twice for her political activism. One during the "rice riots" of April 1979, and again in 1980 in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government. Yet she noted that "...women remained non-political, fearing reprisals from the system. The harsh treatment given to political prisoners in many instances was perhaps a factor that discouraged women's political activism"<sup>1</sup>. While the men are the actors in the political arena, the women remain outside the battle for political power, and serve in government mainly in non-decision-making capacity.

DR. B. S.

Dr. B. S. believed that despite the historical precedent of Liberian women in top positions, the political power usually accessible to people in such positions is hardly used by the women because there has never been an outlet for it. She noted that appointments to governmental-political positions are usually manouvered, and women therefore have no clear venue for political expression. Utilization of possible political power is suppressed.

1. THE NEW LIBERIAN, June 5, 1981

MRS. J.

Mrs. J. observed that the Federation of Liberian Women, headed by Leona Chesson who succeeded to get into the legislature, had the opportunity to use its political power but failed to do so and had no effect. She maintained that the women realized just before the 1980 coup what could be done, but did not have the chance to do it. Women therefore remain outside the core of decision-makers.

MSS S.

Believed that with the exception of women like Elizabeth Collins, who was in the House of Representatives and became a senator, Liberian women are not interested in political activism. They are content with seeing the business or office run smoothly. The authority and decision-making power they have are purely job-related, and are not "carried-over" into political decision-making.

MSS. K.

Similarly believed that women have authority, but do not care to exploit possible resulting political power. Mrs. K. recounted the case of Helen Johnson Sirleaf<sup>1</sup> as an example of a woman in top position with a possible power base due to her descent from both tribal and settler parents, who could have had an appeal for all sections of the Liberian society, yet did not exploit it.

1. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the Minister of Finance during the previous Tolbert regime. After the April 12 coup she did not retain her portfolio. She is currently working in a top position for City Bank in East Africa.

C H A P T E R VI

A PORTRAIT OF THE LIBERIAN FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/  
MANAGER

"Without work all life goes rotten, but when  
work is soulless, life stifles and dies"

Albert Camus

Work and the values and orientations attached to it are of paramount importance to all members of society since the attainment of food, shelter and social approval all depend on it. These in fact are presented as rewards by all cultures which demand that their members work to ensure their survival. Modern society regards highly those individuals, especially males, who have achieved success through hard work, and condemns strongly those who fail to achieve it due to lack of effort. The rewards and sanctions ensure that all individuals in society are socialized to regard work, whether paid or not, as a necessary part of productive membership in society. Though the prescribed norms defining the nature of the work itself may differ in regard to men and women, work remains a result of a cultural pressure, and in it people fulfill cultural norms. The social context determines the characteristics of occupations available to males and females, and influences the behaviour of individuals in their work careers.

As we analyze the work roles of Liberian women in high positions our point of departure will be that any characteristics of their work roles are due not only to the individual personalities involved, though individual characteristics do play a role, but are also due to cultural norms affecting them as members of social group, and as women in particular.

People are socialized within families, neighbourhoods and primary social networks, and seek to act out the norms and values of their subcultures in various situations. The need dispositions and the role expectations of individuals, which are determined by the social system, affect career aspirations of men and women, albeit differently including job satisfaction and commitment.<sup>1</sup> The cultural norms form the contextual

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1. See Bame's study of Ghanaian elementary teachers. BAME, K.N. "The application of Western social theory to the study of Ghanaian teachers work values and attitudes." Ghana Journal of Sociology, VII, 2, pp. 11-29

aspect of work, yet are based on the structural aspect, which in our case is the structure of the Liberian society as presented in previous chapters. In other words, the structure of the society is the basis upon which cultural norms are determined, including those pertaining to the work situation. The social structure channels and sustains work motivation through a process of socialization, in which values, norms and behaviour patterns are accepted into the personal behaviour system of men and women.

In this chapter and the following chapters it is the individual woman, rather than the Liberian social structure, which becomes central to the analysis. However, the discussion of these individual women is not psychological in nature, though there is no doubt as to the centrality of work to human fulfillment, but rather sociological/anthropological, and is not divorced therefore from the social structure. In other words, though the meaning attached to work may vary from individual to individual, it does follow a pattern which is assumed to reflect the basic power relationship within the society including male/female power relationship.

In this discussion we follow Weber's general perspective and his concept of 'social action' in broad terms and will apply it to women's work: work behaviour and work patterns will be seen in the context of political, social and cultural patterns, so that the woman worker's actions are part of her whole cultural life. The orientation of the individual to work<sup>1</sup> is determined by his culture. Consequently, the attitude of men and women to work, which is culturally determined, may differ.

We have seen in the previous chapter that women in high positions in Monrovia lack power motivation. What therefore does motivate them

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1. Following Watson, 'orientation to work' is defined as the culturally determined significance which the prospective work has for the prospective worker, guiding his choice of work and his attitudes and actions once engaged in the work, and influenced by job related contingencies while working. WATSON, T. Sociology, Work and Industry, 1980.

in their working roles? Which values guide them in their perception of their working roles? What are the perceived rewards? What work orientations do they have?

To be able to answer these questions fully we must begin by providing a descriptive analysis of the work role, i.e. job characteristics: experience, history and behaviour/performance. On this basis we can proceed later to an analysis of job motivation: aspirations, satisfaction, commitment, job involvement and attitudes, and will return later to the question of cultural norms affecting women's work roles in a concluding discussion of work/sex role stereotyping.

Most of the women in our study have had an uninterrupted career pattern. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, in relation to women's family status and their labor commitment. It is worthwhile commenting here though that our data is similar to findings from other African countries. Shields<sup>1</sup> comments that "It is commonly believed that low female employment rate can be attributed to women's life cycle commitments." We would expect therefore low participation rate of women in the labour force during the reproductive years. Her data from Tanzania proved however the opposite: women in the urban areas did not withdraw from the labour force.

Almost half the women in our study have been working for more than 11 years, and 85% of them have been working at least five years. Only about one-tenth of them have had less than five years of work experience. (See Table VI.1). Within that period of time the women have changed their jobs quite a number of times: more than three-quarters of them have had at least three jobs, and more than half have had more than four jobs. The pattern seems to be quite similar for women in both the private and public sectors. (Table VI.2).

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. SHIELDS, NGANGA. op.cit.p.62



TABLE VI.1 - NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING BY SECTOR

Sector			
No. of years	Public	Private	Total
Less than five	(11) 12%	(8) 10.4	(19) 11.2
5 - 10	(32) 34.8	(30) 39.0	(62) 36.7
11 - 15	(19) 20.6	(24) 31.2	(43) 25.5
16 and above	(25) 27.2	(13) 16.8	(38) 48.0
No answer	(5) 5.4	(2) 2.6	(7) 4.1
Total N	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

TABLE VI.2 - NUMBER OF JOB CHANGES BY SECTOR  
(including present job)

Sector		Public	Private	Total		
Number						
One	(1)	1.1	(1)	1.3	(2)	1.2
Two	(15)	16.3	(16)	20.8	(31)	18.3
Three	(24)	26.2	(16)	20.8	(40)	23.7
Four	(19)	20.6	(14)	18.2	(33)	19.5
Five or more	(30)	32.6	(28)	36.3	(58)	34.3
No answer	(3)	3.2	(2)	2.6	(5)	3.0
Total	(92)	100.0%	(77)	100.0%	(169)	100.0%

The pattern remains similar in both sectors when we look at the women's ascent to their present positions. Almost half of all women in either the private or the public sector have held no previous high positions. (See Table VI.3)

TABLE VI, 3 NUMBER OF PREVIOUS HIGH POSITIONS  
(excluding present job)

Sector Number	Public		Private		Total	
	None	(40)	43.5	(35)	45.4	(75)
One	(23)	25.0	(16)	20.8	(39)	23.1
Two	(10)	10.8	(9)	11.7	(19)	11.2
Three or more	(17)	18.5	(15)	19.5	(32)	18.9
No answer	(2)	2.2	(2)	2.6	(4)	2.4
Total	(92)	100.0%	(77)	100.0%	(169)	100.0%

About a quarter of the women in the public sector, and one-fifth of the women in the private sector have held only one previous high positions. About one-fifth in each sector also had three or more previous high positions.

Their job history did not include much movement from one sector of the economy to another. 58.7% of the public sector women have had no previous job experience in the private sector (Table VI.4). An additional 21.7% have had only one job previously in the private sector, usually at the beginning of their work career.

TABLE VI.4 - PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR WOMEN (excluding promotion)

No job in the private sector	One job	Two jobs	Three or more	No answer	Total
(54) 58,7	(20) 21.7	(8) 8.7	(8) 8.7	(2) 2.2	(92) 100.0

The time demands of a job in a high position did not seem too heavy for the women involved: more than one-third of them work eight hours a day or less, and a slightly smaller proportion work more than eight hours daily. The hours of work of the rest of the women seem to be relatively flexible, more so in the private sector than in the public sector: 33.8% of the private sector women work "as needed", or their hours of work vary, being sometimes less and sometimes more than the customary eight hours. 23.9% of the public sector women have similar flexible hours. (Table VI.5)

TABLE VI.5 - NUMBER OF DAILY WORK HOURS

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Hours			
Less than 5		(1) 1.3	(1) 0.6
5 - 8	(36) 39.1	(28) 36.3	(64) 37.9
More than 8	(34) 37.0	(22) 28.6	(56) 33.1
Varies	(9) 9.8	(11) 14.3	(20) 11.8
As needed	(13) 14.1	(15) 19.5	(28) 16.6
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

TABLE V.I.6 - SALARY BY SECTOR

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Below 600	(35) 38.9	(11) 14.7	(46) 27.9
601-900	(32) 35.6	(21) 28.0	(53) 32.1
901-1,200	(19) 21.1	(25) 33.3	(44) 26.7
Above 1,200	(4) 4.4	(18) 24.0	(22) 13.3
Total	(90) 100.0%	(75) 100.0%	(165) 100.0%

No answer - 4

Salary earnings of the women understandably differ: the private sector usually pays higher salaries. As expected, Table V.I.6 above reveals that while only 14.7% of the private sector women in high positions earn less than 600 dollars a month, a much larger percentage, 38.9%, falls within this category in the public sector. Also, while about one-quarter of all private sector women in high positions earn above 1,200 dollars a month, only 4.4% of the public sector women fall in this category.

The differentials in salary may play a role in determination of job motivation. As such, salary can be seen as a reward offered in exchange for effort put in. Other rewards may be offered as well as part of job motivation, e.g. security, power, status or opportunity for advancement. Sociologists have distinguished between power pay (a job of greater importance, or executive jurisdiction over a job), authority pay (promotion), status pay and privilege pay (opportunities for informal relationship with people in higher authority). Power as a reward has been analyzed already in the previous chapter, which

concluded that power does not serve as motivation to the women in our study. Unlike salary, power is a non-financial/non-economic reward, much like status or possibilities for advancement. As a further distinction, we can group all rewards as either extrinsic (monetary, regarding physical conditions) or intrinsic (non-monetary, regarding emotional well-being and psychological gratification), and observe the relative importance of each type of rewards for the women.

Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are expected to produce job motivation. Various studies have suggested that perceived intrinsic rewards are a more powerful determinant of overall motivation of white-collar male and female professional workers than of unskilled, semi-skilled and clerical workers. Yet, the definition and measurement of job motivation in itself is a difficult matter. Howell<sup>1</sup> notes that it is difficult to verify motives in people's work behavior, especially since some motives may be considered noble by society, and people like to think well of themselves, or present themselves as such to others. In other words, studies of motivation are necessarily based on self-report, and can therefore be misleading.

Quite a few theories have been advanced in an attempt to clarify the exact process by which rewards lead to job motivation. Designed to account primarily for men's attitudes, the classical motivational theory sees people as driven by fear of hunger and search for monetary profit, concluding that material rewards alone, as long as they correspond to the effort put in by the worker, will suffice for motivation to exist. The human relations approach stresses on the other hand non-economic, intrinsic, rewards, leading to the psychological satisfaction of the worker, and playing a central role in determining his/her motivation. Maslow's need

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1. HOWELL, WILLIAM. Essentials of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1976

hierarchy theory sees behaviour as activated by basic needs. Grati-  
 fications of need will increase satisfaction and reduce the level of  
 motivation, i.e. the individual will not work any more to satisfy  
 that need. These basic needs are hierarchically arranged and behaviour  
 is controlled by the lowest need which still remains unsatisfied. The  
 hierarchy is composed of psychological needs (basic survival), safety  
 needs, social needs (belonging), ego needs (self esteem) and self-  
 actualization needs. Others, following Maslow, distinguished between  
 survival, social and human development needs, or simply between physio-  
 logical needs versus all other needs. Maslow, Herzberg and others  
 emphasized that work has to be meaningful, challenging and intrinsically  
 rewarding in order to motivate the worker. The structuralist approach  
 attempts to synthesize the two former approaches: utilizing concepts taken  
 from both Marx and Weber, it distinguishes between white-collar workers  
 and blue-collar workers in relation to the type of rewards producing  
 motivation. Marx's concept of alienation indicates an intrinsic type of  
 reward - creativity and control over the work process/production process.  
 Alienation indicates lack of such control. The structuralist approach  
 agrees that alienation results in reduced motivation, but sees it as  
 affecting more the motivation of white-collar workers, while material/  
 extrinsic rewards affect more blue-collar workers' motivation.

Though the theories mentioned above do not take into account gender  
 differences, whatever theoretical approach is chosen, it seems clear that  
 the more satisfying the work role is, whether due to intrinsic or extrinsic  
 rewards, the higher will be the motivational level of the individual man  
 or woman. Vroom<sup>1</sup> described the most satisfying work role as one "which  
 provides high pay, substantial promotional opportunities, considerate and  
 participative supervision, an opportunity to interact with one's peers  
 socially, varied duties, and high degree of control over work methods  
 and work pace."

1. See HOWELL. W, op. cit. p.64

The factors named by Vroom are 'outcomes' of work. Their importance in generating satisfaction may differ, however, among men and women. In this context, we shall define satisfaction as the relationship perceived by women between their performance and the attainment of the work outcomes (i.e. pay, promotion, opportunities for social interaction, desirable working conditions, etc. ). Though performance was not measured in our study, except as a subjective self-report<sup>1</sup>, satisfaction can still be evaluated on this basis. We should bear in mind that satisfaction in itself is subjective. Whatever is the actual performance of the women, their level of satisfaction will be determined by their subjective, perceived, level of performance, coupled by their subjective perception of attainment of promotion, fair pay and other work outcomes (and not objective work outcomes).

This approach is considered more useful here than the Marxist approach, which sees the workers' satisfaction as determined mainly by their objective conditions of work, i.e. performance of labour under the capitalist system, involving actual lack of control over products or methods of production, without ownership of materials or tools, resulting in alienation. In this respect, the Marxist approach does not fully allow for the effect of cultural differences on alienation, including male/female cultural differences, since it assumes that in all cultures and for both male and female, self-actualization, and therefore gratification and satisfaction, are achieved only through the work situation. Though work is central to human fulfillment, it is subjected to different work ideologies concerning males and females in different societies.

The subjective positive or negative weight that a person attaches to attainment of work outcomes will determine the amount of effort he/she is ready to put forth. The women's performance does not depend therefore only

1. Accurate measurement of job performance should depend on an objective evaluative report, e.g. levels of production, supervisor's assessment, etc.



on their ability, but also on their perception of the rewards attached. This perception depends in turn on cultural factors and norms relating to their role as women workers, learnt during the socialization process.

The relationship between performance and perceived attainment of work outcomes is a relationship between behaviour and attitudes. While behaviour, or performance, is indicated in our study by various criteria of job involvement and job commitment, the attitudes, as represented in the perceived attainment of work outcomes, are indicated by the level of satisfaction the women exhibit in relation to various outcomes. It is important to bear in mind that no cause and effect relationship is claimed here between attitudes and behaviour. It is rather pointed out that the two relate to each other within the context of motivation, and that certain behaviour and attitudes are compatible with a higher level of motivation.

Job involvement, as a factor in the analysis of job behaviour, is the level of penetration of the job into other areas of life. Operationally, it is defined as the priority given to the job over family, religion, politics, voluntary services, etc., the prevalence of professional and job-related material in reading habits, and the preferred social interaction with work colleagues when not working. The last two indicate a close relationship between work and leisure activities. The higher the job involvement, the more will be the evidence of leisure activities being an extension of the job itself, with blurred distinctions between work and non-work activities.

The first of these three indicators of job involvement, the priority given to the job, is related also to job commitment, and was tested in a question which presented seven different areas in the lives of the women, from family relations, their job, their political belief, religious beliefs, recreation and voluntary services, to running a home. The women were asked

to choose the area from which they derive the maximum satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>  
 (see Table VI.7). Women in the private sector chose only 4 areas:  
 ( family, job, religion and running a home. Though half of them indicated family relations as the source of greatest satisfaction, about one-third preferred their job as such a source. Moreover, during the process of interviewing it became clear that most women who chose either their family or their job, in preference to the other five areas mentioned, did so after a considerable period of pondering and almost obvious internal struggle. Some resented having to choose between the two, insisting that both carry equal weight for them. It was further observed by interviewers that after debating with themselves as to which alternative to choose, most women finally settled on the family. Such behaviour is an indication of the conflict felt by some women between the cultural norms demanding that the family be the centre of life to the woman, and the reality, in which they find that the job has become central to their lives. Fogarty<sup>2</sup> comments: "For women... family relationships are supposed to be paramount, with career integrated with the rest of their lives in a secondary way or not at all... Where a woman derives in fact primary satisfaction from her career, she may experience conflict and have difficulty in integrating her family relationship into this pattern."

The conflict felt by the Liberian women on the other hand may stem from the contradiction between their high level of 'labour commitment' (a variable which will be discussed later on) and an acceptance

1. The question is based on a similar question asked by Fogarty et. al. Fogarty et al showed that the relative importance of career and family depends on marital stage. The satisfaction from the career declines for both men and women with marriage and after having children. See Fogarty et al, Op. Cit., p. 168
2. FOGARTY et al, Op. Cit. p. 186

TABLE VI.7 - AREA OF GREATEST SATISFACTION

Sector Area	Public	Private	Total
Family relations	(42) 46.7	(38) 49.4	(80) 47.9
Job	(22) 24.4	(24) 31.2	(46) 27.5
Religious beliefs	(15) 16.7	(11) 14.3	(26) 15.6
Recreation	(3) 3.3		(3) 1.8
Political beliefs	(1) 1.1		(1) 0.6
Voluntary services	(2) 2.2		(2) 1.2
Running a home	(5) 5.6	(4) 5.2	(9) 5.4
Total	(90) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(167) 100.0%

in the Liberian society of work as a primary life concern for the women on the one hand, and moral obligations women feel towards their family responsibilities on the other hand. This conflict is unavoidable among women who participate in the work situation within the industrial/bureaucratic context, where separation of family and work activities and locations exists. Though no comparison with male 'labour commitment' in Liberia is available, male labour force participation pattern is assumed to be uninterrupted, with work assuming the position of a primary life concern as well. The 'labour commitment' of Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions is therefore similar to that of men. However, the conflict occurring with the separation of family and work locations is minimal among males.

About 14% of the private sector women derived most satisfaction from their religious beliefs, and 5% from running a home.

In the public sector, nearly half of the women chose the family as giving them the greatest satisfaction, while one-quarter chose the job. Similar inner conflict to the one observed among private sector women was noticed here. Though more women in the private sector than the public sector chose their job as the source of maximum satisfaction, in both sectors it was given priority over all other areas, excluding the family. Dubin's distinction between the job-oriented person and the community-oriented person becomes relevant at this point: the job-oriented person centres his life on his job and finds major satisfactions, rewards, disappointments and frustrations in connection with his/her work. Such a person feels dedicated and attached to his/her job, strives to achieve competence and is committed to change the work environment when it proves inadequate. The life of the community-oriented person on the other hand centres on institutions outside his job - family, religion, leisure activities. Work represents a source of income, needed for the achievement of non-job satisfaction, and the person is indifferent to other sources of satisfaction in his job. Interestingly, though half the women in our study declared that they derive major satisfaction from their family relationship, only few of them perceived the work as primarily a source of income, as we shall see later.

1. DUBIN, R. The World of Work, 1960

2. It may be worthwhile to note here that the low proportion of women who chose the alternative of running a home is probably due to the existence in Liberia of an abundant supply of cheap household help, whether hired or in the form of relatives. We shall return to this factor in the next chapter.

Turning to the second indicator of job involvement, the prevalence of job-related reading material, we can see a relatively similar distribution among public and private sector women (Table VI.8).

TABLE VI.8 - READING MATERIAL BY SECTOR

Reading	Public	Private	Total
Novels	(25) 27.5	(25) 32.5	(50) 29.8
Daily paper	(17) 18.7	(9) 11.7	(26) 15.5
Weeklies/monthlies	(17) 18.7	(22) 28.6	(39) 23.2
Business journals	(8) 8.8	(7) 9.1	(15) 8.9
Work material	(13) 14.3	(9) 11.7	(22) 13.1
Does not read	(7) 7.7	(3) 3.9	(10) 6.0
Others	(4) 4.4	(2) 2.6	(6) 3.6
Total	(91) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(168) 100.0%
N/A - 1			

Almost 12% of the private sector women, and 14% of the public sector women, read mostly material relating to their work. An additional 9% of the private sector women and 8.8% of the public sector women read mostly business journals. The largest percentage however read novels (a third of the private sector, and a quarter of the public sector women). Weeklies and monthlies came in second place, and daily newspapers in third. This distribution may indicate only a middle level of job involvement through reading, though comparable statistics are not available. Three women in the private sector, and seven in the public sector, indicated that they hardly ever read.

1. The six women falling in the category of 'others' read mostly the bible. This variable was not discovered during the pilot study and was not mentioned therefore in the questionnaire.

The third indicator of job involvement is the preferred interaction with work colleagues during non-working hours (Table VI.9).

TABLE VI.9 - ACTIVITY PREFERRED WHEN NOT WORKING

Activity	Public	Private	Total
Visiting relatives and friends	(23) 25.0	(17) 22.1	(40) 23.7
Meeting work associates	(8) 8.7	(2) 2.6	(10) 5.9
Hobbies	(14) 15.2	(15) 19.5	(29) 17.1
Relaxing at home	(37) 40.2	(36) 46.7	(73) 43.2
Sports	(4) 4.3		(4) 2.4
Voluntary work	(4) 4.3	(7) 9.1	(11) 6.5
No answer	(2) 2.2		(2) 1.2
Total	(92) 99.9%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

In a question which presented different types of activities, the women were asked to choose the activity which they mostly preferred when not working. More than 40% of the women chose "relaxing at home". The next popular choice was "visiting relatives and friends", indicated by about a quarter of all women. In the third place came "hobbies" and in the fourth "voluntary work". "Meeting work associates socially" took the fifth place, followed only by sports. Clearly, the job involvement of the respondents is almost never to such a degree that clear distinctions between the job and social life are not maintained.

Though the three indicators discussed are not intended as an index of job involvement, they do point out that only a medium level of job involvement probably exists among women in high positions in Monrovia. Again, lack of comparable data prevents us from reaching any definite conclusions.

Job behaviour is also expressed through job commitment. Following Fogarty<sup>1</sup>, it may be defined as a commitment to the idea of working outside the home. Fogarty et al however perceive career commitment as an issue relating to the relative place of work and family in the women's lives, and do not distinguish clearly between commitment and motivation. The use of the two concepts, commitment and motivation, interchangeably, results in a less coherent commitment concept. Also, the definition above seems somewhat narrow, dealing only with one aspect of commitment, i.e. commitment to paid work in general, and does not take into account commitment as expressed through actual work behaviour (which is a commitment to a particular job or kind of work).

We shall define work commitment therefore as a pattern of work expressed in a greater than usual dedication to work aspects, and commitment to the idea of continuous work outside the home. This definition covers both types of commitment. Operationally, commitment is defined as readiness to work over-time, to take on extra responsibilities, to travel as part of the job, to cancel social and family engagements because of pressure in the office, and to continue working outside the home even when having enough money to live on comfortably. In other words, commitment is defined as a combination of variables.

1. FOGARTY et. al., Op. Cit.

The last variable, continuation of work even when having sufficient money, is an indicator of 'labour commitment'. Though labour commitment is more often analyzed in terms of employment behaviour alone, rather than attitudes to employment, our analysis in this section will concentrate on attitudes. Reference was made earlier, and will be made later in greater detail, to the actual behaviour: Liberian women in high positions were found to have an uninterrupted work career, i.e., to have greater labour commitment. The attitudes analyzed here are conceived as an integral part of the concept of labour commitment and hence the term 'labour commitment' assigned to them. The compatibility between attitudes towards continued paid employment and the actual uninterrupted continuation of the employment is significant to our analysis. In other words, labour commitment is judged on the basis of the actual employment behaviour, and the attitudes supporting it. The other variables in the operational definition are indicators of commitment to the job itself (job commitment). We shall begin the analysis with a discussion of job commitment.

When women in our study were faced with the question of working over-time, more than a third declared that they 'always' work over-time. Slightly more women in the private sector than the public sector work over-time when given a short notice, or when they know it will bring them recognition in their career. About 83% of all private sector women, and 74% of the public sector women, work over-time, whether sporadically or always. Almost a fifth of all public sector women are never asked to work over-time, which may be compatible with the nature of the private sector itself.



TABLE VI.10 - OVER-TIME

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Over-time			
Never	(2) 2.2	(1) 1.3	(3) 1.8
Never asked	(17) 18.5	(7) 9.1	(24) 14.2
Always	(35) 38.0	(27) 35.0	(62) 36.7
When planned	(8) 8.7	(11) 14.3	(19) 11.2
When given short notice	(18) 19.6	(18) 23.4	(36) 21.3
When it brings recognition	(7) 7.6	(8) 10.4	(15) 8.9
Should not be asked	(3) 3.2	(4) 5.2	(7) 4.1
No answer	(2) 2.2	(1) 1.4	(3) 1.8
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

Readiness to work over-time, however, is better expressed in the options 'when planned ahead', 'when given a short notice', and 'when it brings recognition' ( Table VI.10 ), since these options imply self-decision of the women ( whether or not to work over-time), rather than the dictates of the nature of the job. Each of the three categories mentioned above was chosen by more private than public sector women.

Readiness to take on extra responsibilities was tested in a question in which the women were asked in which cases they are most likely to take on extra responsibilities in their jobs ( see Table VI.11 ).

While a similar percentage of women in the private and the public sector declared they will take on extra responsibilities simply

because there is nobody else to do it, differences were noted between public and private sector women who exhibit readiness to take on extra responsibilities as seen in the motives of either enhancing their own personal success, or enhancing the prestige of the office, organization or ministry where they work.

TABLE VI.11 - READINESS TO TAKE ON EXTRA RESPONSIBILITIES

Sector	Public	Private	Total	Men
Nobody else to do it	(44) 47.8	(34) 44.2	(78)46.2	(8) 21.0
Extra pay	(6) 6.5	(1) 1.3	(7)4.1	(4) 10.5
Office prestige	(23) 25.0	(25) 32.5	(48)28.4	(11)28.9
Job success	(15) 16.3	(17) 22.1	(32)18.9	(15)39.5
Other	(4) 4.4		(4) 2.4	
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0	(169)100.0	(38)99.9%

In all, 54.6% of the private sector women manifested readiness to take on extra responsibilities for the sake of their own success or that of their organization, not because of the dictates of the job ('there is nobody else to do it'). 41.3% of the public sector women answered similarly. By comparison, 68.4% of our surveyed males would take on extra responsibilities for these reasons, almost 40% of them in order to enhance their own personal success! More males than females also take on extra responsibilities for extra pay.

Readiness to take on extra responsibilities was further tested by a question in which the women were asked what they will do for 'more pay'. Though 61.8% of the private sector women, and 56% of the public sector women, indicated that an increase in their pay will bring no change in their behaviour (i.e. they will "work as hard as usual

and be grateful" ), about a third of the women in each group confirmed readiness to take on extra responsibilities. (Interestingly, only two private sector women and three public sector women were ready to put in more hours for more pay ). When asked what they will do if found at the end of the day that an error was made, more private sector women were ready to stay for an additional period of time in order to correct the mistake. More than a third of the public sector women declared that they will postpone the correction of the mistake to the next day, while only a fifth of the private sector women thought similarly (see Table VI.12).

TABLE VI.12 - READINESS TO STAY OVER-TIME IN ORDER TO CORRECT MISTAKES

Public Sector

Readiness	Public	Private	Total
Stay over-time and correct	(55) 60.4	(59) 76.6	(114) 67.9
Correct next day	(33) 36.3	(16) 20.8	(49) 29.2
Instruct others to correct the same day	(2) 2.2	(2) 2.6	(4) 2.4
Instruct others to correct the next day	(1) 1.1		(1) 0.6
Total	(91) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(168) 100.0%

The extension of the work beyond the regular working hours was again investigated in a question in which the women were asked whether they take work home (Table VI.13 ). The options "most of the time" and "never" were attributed to the nature of the job itself.

However, "when you feel energetic", "only when there is pressure of work", and "when it is important for your success to complete the work", were taken as expressing readiness to work beyond regular hours.

We can see that only about 12% of the private sector women and 17% of the public sector women are so motivated, having chosen the option of carrying work home in order to increase their success. In comparison, 21% of the surveyed males carry work home when it is important for their own success. About 8% of the males carry work home when feeling energetic.

In both sectors, almost half of the women were ready to take work home only when they felt energetic, or when they were forced to do so because of pressure in the office. These last two options may represent lack of commitment to the job. The apparent lack of readiness to carry work home in order to achieve success, seen in both the private and the public sectors, may be an indication of the wish to maintain the separation between the job and the home. The woman in high position may be ready to work over-time, to remain at her place of work after hours in order to correct mistakes, and take on extra responsibilities in her working place, but she is less willing to let her work infringe on her home domain.

In this connection, the women were asked to determine which prior engagements they will be ready to cancel because of pressure in the office. The engagements presented to them were: an appointment at the beauty shop, a dinner date with husband/friend, a planned vacation, voluntary organization work such as church work, or daughter's or son's birthday party. The more engagements the woman was ready to cancel for the sake of her job, the more committed she was considered to be.

TABLE VI.13 - CARRYING WORK HOME

Sex Sector	Women			Men		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Most of the time	(12) 13.0	(7) 9.1	(19) 11.2	(3) 7.9		
Never	(20) 21.7	(24) 31.2	(44) 26.0	(10) 26.3		
When energetic	(5) 5.4	(2) 2.6	(7) 4.1	(3) 7.9		
When there is pressure in the office	(39) 42.4	(35) 45.5	(74) 43.8	(14) 36.8		
When important for own success	(16) 17.4	(9) 11.7	(25) 14.8	(8) 21.0		
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0	(169) 100.0%	(38) 99.9%		

Again, private sector women showed greater readiness to cancel various personal engagements than public sector women (see Table VI.14 ).

35% of them were ready to cancel all the engagements mentioned above if their job demanded so. Only 20% of the public sector women fell in the same category. In all, 46.7% of the private sector women and 26.1% of the public sector women were ready to cancel four or more engagements.

Readiness to travel as part of the job was also considered to be an indicator of commitment. Looking at Table VI.15, the pattern is familiar: private sector women show greater readiness to travel as part of their job in order to achieve success. Public sector women though, indicated greater readiness to travel even for long trips.

TABLE VI.14 - READINESS TO CANCEL PRIOR ENGAGEMENTS

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Number of engagements			
None	(4) 4.3	(3) 3.9	(7) 4.1
One	(17) 18.5	(13) 16.9	(30) 17.8
Two	(35) 38.0	(21) 27.3	(56) 33.1
Three	(12) 13.0	(4) 5.2	(16) 9.5
Four	(5) 5.4	(9) 11.7	(14) 8.3
All	(19) 20.7	(27) 35.0	(46) 27.2
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

On the whole, a similar proportion of public and private sector women have admitted readiness to travel, which is indicative of greater commitment. 20% of the public sector women, and 16.9% of the private sector women agreed that they will be ready to travel under certain conditions only (that the trips be either short, or not too often). The choice of these alternatives may indicate less commitment.

When compared to the male sample, it became evident that men are readier to travel in order to achieve personal success (60%) in their job, than the women.

TABLE VI.15 - READINESS TO TRAVEL

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Travel			
Yes, short trips	(16) 17.4	(9) 11.7	(25) 14.8
No	(1) 1.1		(1) 0.6
Yes, not too often	(3) 3.2	(4) 5.2	(7) 4.1
Yes, long trips	(37) 40.2	(23) 29.9	(60) 35.5
Yes, if essential for success	(34) 37.0	(38) 49.3	(72) 42.6
No, family obligations	(1) 1.1	(2) 2.6	(3) 1.8
No, husband's opposition		(1) 1.3	(1) 0.6
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

## READINESS TO TRAVEL AMONG MALES AND FEMALES (percent)

Sector	Women		Men
	Public	Private	
No	2.2	3.9	2.6
Yes, infrequent trips	20.6	16.9	10.6
Yes, long trips, essential for success	77.2	79.2	86.8

The final indicator of commitment relates to commitment to the idea of working outside the home, i.e. labour commitment. (We have seen already that labour commitment is apparent in the uninterrupted career pattern). The question posed to the women was: "If you had enough money to live on comfortably, would you continue working?"<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VI.16 - COMMITMENT TO THE IDEA OF CONTINUED WORK

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Reason , Continued work			
Yes, emotional, physical, professional well-being	(25) 27.2	(35) 45.4	(60) 35.5
Yes, financial security	(8) 8.7	(7) 9.1	(15) 8.8
Yes, altruistic services	(25) 27.2	(16) 20.8	(41) 24.3
Yes, enjoy own business	(3) 3.2	(2) 2.6	(5) 3.0
No, devote time to family	(5) 5.4	(3) 3.9	(8) 4.7
No, relax	(3) 3.2	(5) 6.5	(8) 7.7
No, give chance to others	(14) 15.2	(4) 5.2	(18) 10.6
No, does not like present job	(1) 1.1		(1) 0.6
No answer	(8) 8.7	(5) 6.5	(13) 7.7
Total	(92) 99.9%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

1. See discussion of a similar question, based on a research made by Morse and Weise, in Watson, Op. Cit, p. 133.



84% of the private sector women, and 71% of the public sector women answered in the affirmative, indicating a greater commitment to the idea of working outside the home in paid employment among private sector women ( see Table VI.16 ).

When asked for their reasons, 45% of the private sector women insisted that their emotional, physical and professional well-being depended on continuous work. A lesser proportion of the public sector women, 27%, thought so as well. Public sector women were more inclined to stress altruistic services and the utilization of their education as appropriate reasons for continuation of work. A typical public sector answer came from A., a Health Management Associate in the Ministry of Health, who said: " I feel that Liberia needs educated people to help build it, and I can contribute to the development of the people and this nation." D., the Director of Laboratory Services, said: "I think I have a contribution to make to the society and it's not financially linked." A development specialist in the Ministry of Education said she will continue working in order to " maintain my independence and utilize the education I have acquired." A senior legal counsel in the Ministry of Justice was convinced she will continue working "to help the poor and unfortunate, the downcast and downtrodden in our society."

A typical answer in the private sector came from a bank treasurer who said she will continue working "to keep me occupied... . At my age I do not believe in being idle." A special assistant and coordinator in a shipping company said that "staying at home will be boring", while a credit manager in a bank stated simply: "I have to put my brains to work," and a personnel manager said: "I enjoy my career." A chief accountant in a large firm said that "working, especially at a demanding job, gives that satisfaction of accomplishment. My mind,

being active, would want to keep abreast with developments in the accounting world. I would want to feel useful." An executive secretary in a large factory said she will continue working in order to have " the opportunity to compete with men in the workforce. I feel that every woman should be independent and work until she feels she has acquired her goal in life." The general manager of a logging company summed up by saying "I will continue working to achieve a sense of usefulness to myself."

What did the women who were not committed to the idea of continuous work outside the home say ? An executive secretary in a heavy equipment firm said: "I would love staying at home and be a faithful housewife." A traffic supervisor in the same company said, "I would like to spend more time with my kids." A sawmill manager said she "would like to enjoy life," and a personnel manager in an export firm said she "will give other people the chance to do this work." A garage spare parts manager felt that because of her age she would like to rest <sup>1</sup>, while in the public sector a Regional Youth Supervisor agreed and said she will relax. The Director of Kindergarten Education in the Ministry of Education said further: "I will have enough to maintain my family if I can make good use of the money, giving others the opportunity to get a job.. I will give my services to my country if they need me, but not for pay." The executive secretary to the Auditor General admitted: "I would rather be at home resting and doing something on my own without getting up every morning and coming to work..." <sup>2</sup>

1. Although age may be an important variable affecting women's responses, the small percentage of very young or very old women in our sample permits its exclusion in the present analysis.
2. Watson, Op. Cit. P. 134, reports that according to Morse and Weise research and answers to a similar question, people in middle class occupations pointed out the loss which would result with regard to their interest in the job and their sense of accomplishment, while those in working class jobs pointed out the loss of activity and money rewards.

It is significant that among those who were not committed to the idea of continued work the smallest percentage suggested the care of the family as the paramount reason for discontinuing work. In other words, unlike Western societies, where the role of the woman as a worker is subordinated to her role as a "home-maker" and mother, women in the Liberian society regard their family responsibilities as secondary in nature. More women stated that they will discontinue work in order to relax and 'give chance to others'. This attitude corresponds with actual labour commitment findings presented in the next chapter, according to which only a very small percentage of the women have interrupted their career in order to take care of their children. Similar findings have been reported in studies done in other developing countries, suggesting that the primacy of the mother role over the work role is typical of developed, rather than developing, countries.

All indicators of commitment analyzed above point out to private sector women as working more over-time, more inclined to remain after hours in order to correct mistakes, more inclined to take on extra responsibilities in order to achieve success in the job, ready to cancel more prior engagements for the sake of the job, readier to travel for the success of their jobs, and more committed to the idea of continuous work outside the home. They are therefore more committed to their jobs, and their uninterrupted career pattern is supported by an ideology of labour commitment.

The differences in the commitment level noted between the private and public sector women may be due to the demands and nature of the economic sectors, i.e. the private sector, geared towards

maximization of profit, naturally demands greater commitment to the job in the personality of the women it employs. On the other hand, Veblen postulated that achievement of conspicuous leisure is essential for the superior pecuniary class, being accepted as an evidence of wealth. Non-productive consumption of time is evidence of the ability to afford a "life of idleness." If we were to accept this postulate, we would expect the elite, the core group, to be less committed to the job, as a mark of prestige, and show more evidence of dedication to leisure activities. Therefore, to test whether the difference in the commitment level is affected also by antecedent factors such as tribal affiliation and position, two of the indicators were also analyzed in relation to group membership (core, extended and external) and position. The two indicators chosen were readiness to cancel prior engagements (job commitment) and commitment to the idea of working outside the home (labour commitment). (See Tables VI.17 and VI.18).

When analyzing readiness to cancel prior engagements because of job obligations by group affiliation, in all groups, commitment was higher in the private sector than in the public sector. Nevertheless, in the public sector it is the core group women who seem more committed. 38% of core groups members were ready to cancel four or all obligations, compared to 24% of the extended group, and 16% of the external group. In the private sector, 44% of the core group members, 56% of the extended group members and 42% of the external group members were ready for similar cancellation.

Since the private sector stresses maximization of profit more than the public sector, we would have expected more of the highly committed core group women to find their way into the private sector,

where such job commitment is needed, while more of the external group women, with lower job commitment, would be found in the public sector. The situation was found however to be the reverse: the women with the higher job commitment level, the core group, were found to be over-represented in the public sector (see previous chapters) which has an over-all lower job commitment level. This observation lends further support to our original hypothesis, attributing the preponderance of core group women in the public sector to easier access, made possible because of the need to check the advance of educated indigenous Liberians and therefore preserve the rule of the elite settler group.

The analysis of the second commitment indicator, the commitment to continuous work outside the home, by position, reveals an interesting picture as well. While in the public sector commitment to the idea of continued labour force participation seems to correlate to position, with three-quarters of the high and middle position women committed to continuous work, and only about half of the low position women committed to the idea as such, commitment to the idea of continued work was found to be greater among the low position private sector women !

Therefore, our original proposition, that the nature and demands of the private sector itself call for greater commitment, will be retained.

TABLE VI.17 - READINESS TO CANCEL ENGAGEMENTS BY GROUP AFFILIATION

Sector	PUBLIC			PRIVATE		
	Core	Extended	External	Core	Extended	external
No. of obligations						
None	(2)6.9	(1) 2.6	(1) 4.0	(1) 5.5		(2) 5.5
One	(5)17.2	(10)26.3	(2) 8.0	(1) 5.5	(5)21.7	(7)19.4
Two	(10)34.5	(14)36.8	(11)44.0	(5)27.8	(4)17.4	(12)33.3
Three	(1) 3.4	(4)10.5	(7)28.0	(3)16.7	(1) 4.3	
Four or more	(1) 3.4	(4)10.5		(1) 5.5	(2) 8.7	(6)16.7
All	(10)34.5	(5)13.2	(4)16.0	(7)38.9	(11)47.8	(9)25.0
Total	(29)100%	(38)100%	(25)100%	(18)100%	(23)100%	(36)100%

TABLE VI.18 - COMMITMENT TO THE IDEA OF CONTINUOUS WORK BY POSITION

Sector	PUBLIC			PRIVATE		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Position Commitment						
Yes	(23)74.2	(30)75.0	(11)52.4	(24)77.4	(11)78.6	(29)90.6
No	(8)25.8	(8)20.0	(10)47.6	(7)22.6	(2)14.3	(3) 9.4
No answer		(2) 5.0			(1) 7.1	
Total	(31)100%	(40)100%	(21)100%	(31)100%	(14)100%	(32)100%

Up to this point we have analyzed various factors associated with the work behaviour of the women in managerial and administrative positions. We shall turn now to related factors - the women's attitudes and aspirations. It is in the discussion of work attitudes that the role played by cultural norms is clearly revealed. Such cultural norms play an important part within the managerial/administrative group in relation to their expectations from work. We must also bear in mind that the basic attitude patterns exhibited by the women are not learnt in a specific work organization, but rather in the wider society. We therefore expect work attitude patterns of Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions to reflect the cultural norms of the wider Liberian society.

The basic work attitudes to be discussed here concern the distinction referred to earlier in the chapter between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. How is the women's orientation towards intrinsic or extrinsic values, based on cultural norms, expressed in their work attitudes? In other words, do the women gain satisfaction in the work situation from intrinsic or extrinsic rewards?

Our point of departure will be the reason stated by the women in an answer to the question "Why are you working?". The women were asked to distinguish between their original reason for working, at the time they were employed in their first job, and the reason for working now (see Tables VI.19 and VI.20). In both sectors, the women's orientation towards work has changed over the years.

However, while in the private sector a clear grouping of 39% emerged as working originally in order to be independent, followed by about 17% of the women who did not want to waste their education (the second representing an intrinsic reward and the first representing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), differences were not that clear-cut in the public sector. 26% of all public sector women began

TABLE VI - ORIGINAL REASON FOR WORKING

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Reason			
Cover subsistence costs	(24) 26.1	(10) 13.0	(34) 20.1
Cover household expenses	(6) 6.5	(9) 11.7	(15) 8.9
Be independent	(22) 23.9	(30) 39.0	(52) 30.8
Keep busy	(1) 1.1	(1) 1.3	(2) 1.2
Extra costs	(2) 2.2		(2) 1.2
Not waste education	(13) 14.1	(13) 16.9	(26) 15.4
Services needed	(21) 22.8	(9) 11.7	(30) 17.8
Other	(3) 3.3	(5) 6.5	(8) 4.7
Total	(92) 100%	(77) 100%	(169) 100%

TABLE VI.20 - REASON FOR WORKING NOW

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Reason			
Subsistence	(11) 12.0	(12) 15.6	(23) 13.6
Household expenses	(10) 10.9	(2) 2.6	(12) 7.1
Be independent	(15) 16.3	(27) 35.1	(42) 24.1
Extra costs	(2) 2.2	(3) 3.9	(5) 3.0
Keep busy		(1) 1.3	(1) 0.6
Not waste education	(32) 34.8	(19) 24.7	(51) 30.2
Services needed	(19) 20.7	(10) 13.0	(29) 17.2
Others	(3) 3.3	(3) 3.9	(6) 3.6
Total	(92) 100%	(77) 100%	(169) 100%



working for a clear extrinsic reward - covering subsistence costs. A slightly smaller percentage of 24% worked in order to be independent, financially or otherwise, and 23% because their services were needed, an intrinsic reward. As they advance in the life cycle and become more established economically, the women find that extrinsic rewards lose their importance. Less private sector women work now for house expenses, and less public sector women work in order to cover subsistence costs. On the other hand, the proportion of women who work in order not to waste their education has increased in both sectors, evidently because many of them have in the meantime completed their training. In fact, the intrinsic value of working in order not to waste their education became of prime importance to public sector women, claiming 35% of their choices. Very few of the women chose "keeping busy" as a reason for working. Similarly, Kumekpok<sup>1</sup> comments about the educated Ghanaian woman: "She feels the impulse to put what she has learnt into the classroom into practical use and to justify the investment in her." The women in Kumekpok's survey, mostly in lower level jobs, low income group and lower standard of education, insisted however that they work out of sheer financial necessity. Only a few thought it was necessary for them to work so that the country could utilize all available skilled and qualified people. Only a few stressed the emotional<sup>2</sup> satisfaction they receive from working<sup>3</sup>. Mandeville says about

1. KUMEKPOK, Op. Cit., p. 71
2. KUMEKPOK, Op. Cit., P. 80
3. MANDEVILLE, E. Op. Cit., P. 46

women in Kampala, Uganda: "They work for money and to a much lesser extent for mobility and social contact." Women in Ouagadougou declare that "any money they earn is needed for the material advancement of their families of procreation."<sup>1</sup>

In this respect, African countries do not seem to be different from the U.S.A., where it was found in 1970 that 70% of the women worked because of absolute economic need. Lewis<sup>2</sup> states, on the other hand, that "The large proportion of working women who are married shows that marriage is not perceived as an alternative to work in Abidjan. Nor, given the greater proportion of well-educated and well-married women who work, can labour force participation be explained as a response to absolute economic necessity."<sup>3</sup>

In his study of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Harbach<sup>4</sup> concluded that women were found to stress "social" and "humanitarian" aspects of occupations, while the men in Freetown stressed the economic aspects of occupations. The relative stress assigned to intrinsic and extrinsic rewards was similarly investigated in our study in a question in which the women were presented with a list of fifteen values/rewards, seven of them extrinsic and eight of them intrinsic. The women were asked to indicate the rewards which are most important to them in choosing a job. The extrinsic rewards included flexible working hours, knowing the expected daily working hours, being paid exactly for the effort put in, not being easily fired, having adequate salary and fringe benefits, and having someone in authority to protect her rights. The intrinsic rewards included having possibilities of promotion, being her own boss, having a position

1. SKINNER, Op. Cit., p. 162

2. SAFFIOTI, H., "Female labour force and capitalism in the U.S...". In R. ROHRlich-LEAVITT, Ed. Women Cross-Culturally, 1975

3. LEWIS, Op. Cit., p. 173.

4. HARBACH, H. "Occupational stratification in Freetown". Africana Research Bulletin, IV, 1, 1973, pp. 3-55

which gives the respect of the community, compatibility of the job with training, ability to exercise authority and make decisions, being an interesting job, ability to help people, and ability to express herself. Table VI.21 summarizes the results:

TABLE VI.21 - INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC VALUES IN JOB CHOICE

Sector Values	Public	Private	Total
<u>CORE</u>			
Extrinsic	(11) 39.3	(5) 27.8	(16) 34.8
Intrinsic	(17) 60.7	(13) 72.2	(30) 65.2
<u>EXTENDED</u>			
Extrinsic	(11) 28.9	(7) 30.4	(18) 29.5
Intrinsic	(27) 71.1	(16) 69.6	(43) 70.5
<u>EXTERNAL</u>			
Extrinsic	(9) 36.0	(9) 25.0	(18) 29.5
Intrinsic	(16) 64.0	(27) 75.0	(43) 70.5

Women in both sectors exhibited the same distribution of values: about a third of the women in each sector stressed extrinsic rewards, while about two-thirds stressed intrinsic rewards. The similarity extends to the group affiliation as well, with very minute differences noted between the groups. A bigger percentage of core and external groups stressed however extrinsic rewards in the public sector. It must also be noted that all groups, core, extended and external, placed prime importance on the intrinsic reward of compatibility with training, especially so in the public sector. Private sector

external group women, though, considered 'being your own boss' as equally important to 'compatibility with training'. Compatibility with training was also an important value to our male sample, in which 26% chose it as the most important reward, followed by 'interest in the job' (16.0%), and being paid exactly for the effort put in (13.2%).

Since attitudes are indicated by the measure of satisfaction the woman derives from various rewards, we shall look next at levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The women were presented with two lists of rewards, the first comprising of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to be derived from the job, and the second a list of rewards which may be lacking in a job. They were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction from the first, and their level of dissatisfaction from the second. The intrinsic rewards included: prestige, freedom to work independently, belongingness, opportunities for socializing, self-expression, use of skills, working with qualified people and utilization of education. The extrinsic rewards included free allocation of time, higher earnings and stability and security of a job. The options representing lack of intrinsic rewards included repetitive work, inability to contribute, performing useless tasks, close supervision, lack of belongingness, lack of utilization of qualifications and skills, lack of opportunities for training and promotion and lack of understanding from superiors. The options representing lack of extrinsic rewards were lack of feeling of security in position, lack of freedom to allocate time, and low earnings. The responses were arranged into scales of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Tables VI.22 and VI.23).

Despite the different nature of the two sectors, the scales reveal remarkable similarity between private and public sector women, strengthening our proposition that work values are not learnt within the work situation, but rather in the wider society, and are based on cultural norms of the wider society.

In both sectors the women claimed to derive most satisfaction from the opportunity to utilize their education, an intrinsic reward. The related reward of 'opportunity to utilize skills' was placed next on the scale, followed by 'opportunity to work with qualified people'. All three rewards concern the intrinsic satisfaction derived from use of education, skills and qualifications. In both sectors only a little satisfaction was derived from the intrinsic rewards of feeling of belongingness and the prestige of the job, and from the extrinsic rewards of free time allocation and higher earnings.

Similarities between the sectors was noted also in the dissatisfaction scale: both sectors derived most dissatisfaction from doing useless tasks, which did not allow them to utilize their skills. Next came the dissatisfaction resulting from unutilized qualifications. These verify the findings of the satisfaction scale, according to which use of skills and qualifications afforded the women the most satisfaction. It also verifies the analysis of the findings concerning reasons for working, according to which 'utilizing education' is a very frequently stated reason. Public sector women placed next on the dissatisfaction scale the lack of opportunities for training, again a related concept. Lack of understanding from superiors was an important source of dissatisfaction in both sectors, but the extrinsic reward of 'earning' served as an important source of dissatisfaction

only to public sector women, presumably due to the much lower salaries paid in the public sector.

TABLE VI.22 - SATISFACTION SCALE

<u>Private sector</u>	<u>Public sector</u>
1. Utilize education	1. Utilize education
2. Utilizing skills	2. Utilizing skills
3. Working with qualified people	3. Working with qualified people
4. Stable/secure job	4. Opportunities to socialize
5. Freedom to work independently	5. Freedom to work independently
6. Self-expression	6. Self expression
7. Opportunities to socialize	7. Stable/secure job
8. Higher earnings	8. Belongingness
9. Belongingness	9. Higher earnings
10. Prestige	10. Freedom to allocate time
11. Freedom to allocate time	11. Prestige

When confronted with a problem of a possible behaviour pattern, the women largely confirm the values expressed in the satisfaction/dissatisfaction scales. When asked whether they will be ready to accept a job out of Monrovia, the capital city, two-thirds of the public sector women answered in the affirmative. On the other hand, only 48% of the private sector women said they will accept a job out of the capital. Those in the two sectors who were ready to accept such a job were further asked for their reasons. Six possible rewards were offered as reasons: higher position and better utilization of skills (intrinsic)

higher salary, fringe benefits, improved facilities and employment for husband (extrinsic).

TABLE VI : 23-DISSATISFACTION SCALE

<u>Private sector</u>	<u>Public sector</u>
1. Performing useless tasks	1. Performing useless tasks
2. Qualifications not utilized	2. Qualifications not utilized
3. Lack of understanding from superiors	3. Lack of opportunities for training
4. Not being able to contribute	4. Lack of understanding from superiors
5. Lack of security	5. Low earnings
6. Lack of opportunities for promotion	6. Not being able to contribute
7. Lack of opportunities for training	7. Lack of opportunities for promotion
8. Supervised too closely	8. Lack of security
9. Lack of feeling of belongingness	9. Repetitive work
10. Low earnings	10. Lack of feeling of belongingness
11. Lack of control over job	11. Supervised too closely
12. Repetitive work	12. Lack of control over job
13. Lack of freedom to allocate time	13. Lack of freedom to allocate time

As expected, the women further confirmed the attitudes they expressed earlier: 37% of the public sector women, and 28% of the private sector women, indicated that they will move out of the capital and accept a new job if their skills will be better utilized. The intrinsic value attached to education, qualification and skills takes precedence again, especially among public sector women. Surprisingly, a larger proportion of the private sector women chose the extrinsic

reward of higher salary - 36% ( see Table V.7, Chapter V ). A larger proportion of the private sector women also chose the intrinsic reward of higher position.<sup>1</sup>

Higher pay and opportunity to use skills are only two of the components of a successful work role. Another component takes the form of promotional opportunities. To gauge the feeling of satisfaction the women have derived from this component as a reward they were asked whether they have progressed as rapidly as they should in their career. 83% of the private sector women and 70% of the public sector women felt satisfied about their progress. The reasons they gave for their progress, or lack of progress, reflect the rewards their value system taught them to expect in their career. Private and public sector women were strikingly similar in insisting that they felt they have progressed because their skills and qualifications were utilized. Those falling into this category formed the largest group, about 34% of the women (see Table VI.23 ).

In discussing her progress, the Assistant Minister of Health simply declared she had progressed because "I am qualified and the position was available." The Director of Philatelic Services at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications said, "I have been exposed to training relative to my job. I have had experience and therefore promotions." The Special Assistant to another government minister said: "I have been placed in a position to utilize my education, and have been successful therefore going up the ladder."

1. Fogarty et. al. noted in their study of British women in top positions that any extrinsic gratification the women expressed was supplementary to the husband.



TABLE VI.23 - REASONS FOR (LACK OF) PROGRESS

Sector Reason	Public	Private	Total
<u>Progressed:</u>			
Skills and qualifications utilized	(31) 33.7	(26) 33.7	(57) 33.7
Rapid promotion	(13) 14.1	(15) 19.5	(28) 16.6
Rose from lowest position	(12) 13.0	(15) 19.5	(27) 16.0
<u>Did not progress:</u>			
No understanding of the profession	(6) 6.5	(1) 1.3	(7) 4.1
Skills not utilized	(14) 15.2	(9) 11.7	(23) 13.6
Lack of challenge	(1) 1.1	(2) 2.6	(3) 1.8
No answer	(15) 16.3	(9) 11.7	(24) 14.2
Total	(92) 99.9%	(77) 100%	(169) 100%

An assistant minister believed that as an administrator she has progressed: "There were several instances of readjustment and I successfully pulled through, making management better." A special assistant in the National Police Force declared: "My several bosses always boast about my efficiency, and I have received promotions compatible with my output." An assistant director noted she has progressed because of her qualities and knowledge, skills and experience in the service. She believes she has "always demonstrated seriousness of purpose and constructive attitude towards work."

The commercial manager of a government corporation echoed these opinions by saying: "I have been able to employ my academic qualifications in practical utilization... I have been able to reorganize and restructure the department into an entity that is operated on the basis of sound management principles." The commercial manager of a private sector company summed it up by saying: "I have had a series of promotions that I believe are based on merit."

Various answers were given by women who believed they have not progressed as they should in their career. A credit manager admitted: "I am not closely in my field", while an assistant manager for personnel services attributed her lack of progress to marital problems, commenting: "I decided to stay on the same level, until I did not have a husband to consider..." Some attributed their lack of progress to lack of understanding of their profession. A chief cataloger lamented that "the educated Liberians have still not seen the need for libraries and librarians. We are still being misunderstood." An administrative assistant puts the blame however on attitudes towards females, claiming she has not progressed "because of the concept that women are helpless, that they should not be given difficult tasks." A school principal attributed, on the other hand, her lack of progress to lack of incentives: "After leaving school, you cannot go on seminars, there are no provisions for that. You are stagnat."

How confident are these women that they will rise to a higher position? Not less than half of the women in both sectors were confident that they will rise to a higher position. About a third in each sector did not know whether a high position will be possible for

them, or were hesitant to admit such possibility. Only 15% of the public sector women, and 17% of the private sector women stated categorically that they do not expect a promotion. However, when looking at the possibilities of rising to a higher position by group affiliation a slightly different picture emerges (Table VI.24).

TABLE VI.24 - HIGHER POSITION EXPECTATION BY GROUP AFFILIATION

Group Sector Expectation	CORE		EXTENDED		EXTERNAL	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Yes	(13)44.8	(7)38.9	(19)50.0	(14)60.9	(14)56.0	(19)52.8
No	(7)24.2	(5)27.8	(4)10.5	(1) 4.3	(3)12.0	(7)19.4
Don't know	(9)31.0	(6)33.3	(15)39.5	(8)34.8	(8)32.0	(9)25.0
No answer						(1) 2.8
Total	(29)100%	(18)100%	(38)100%	(23)100%	(25)100%	(36)100%

HIGHER POSITION EXPECTATION - PERCENT BY GROUP AFFILIATION

Group Expectation	Core	Extended	External
Yes	42.5	54.1	54.1
No	25.5	8.2	16.4
Don't know	32.0	37.7	27.9
No answer			1.6
Total	100%	100%	100%

A much higher percentage of the core group women, in both sectors, indicates assurance that they will not rise to a higher position,

and correspondingly, a lower percentage believe they will rise. Their answers may reflect the reality in post-coup Liberia, a situation in which the settler elite group has lost a great share of its power. With the loss of elite power there is to be expected a loss of accessibility to higher positions by female core group members, which the women are aware of.

The general pattern emerging from the data presented above is that of women who are oriented towards intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, values. Their work history shows a clear evidence of a shift from a stress on extrinsic rewards in the early work cycle, to stress on intrinsic rewards at present. This is especially so among extended and external group members.

In favouring intrinsic rewards, the women are conforming to cultural norms which orient them towards service to, and work with, people. Only the private sector, geared towards profit-making, allows a more frank expression of extrinsic values (e.g. salary reward), yet only in relation to actual behaviour. For most women, work is not performed for the purpose of gaining wealth, personal prestige, or power.

The stress on intrinsic rewards seems however to be mostly confined to utilization of education, skills and qualification. It has been noted also elsewhere in Africa that there is a positive relationship between educational attainment and labour force participation. Shields comments in her study of women in the urban labour market in Tanzania that "for most parents, education is an investment in the child, from which they expect a stream of benefits. Lacking social security, they

are insuring against future reduction in earning power. Consequently; regardless of sex, the more human capital investment embodied in a person, the more actively would that person be expected to participate in the labour force.<sup>1</sup> For the women in our study, their educational level is a perfectly acceptable cultural justification for their work role. Cultural norms may not encourage a woman to admit personal satisfaction from such intrinsic rewards as power, prestige, higher position, exercise of authority or interest in the job. It is significant that the reward 'an interesting job' was chosen as second in importance by males in our survey. While the men may be job-oriented,<sup>2</sup> the women are expected to be community-oriented. A culturally appropriate motivational pattern for the Liberian women in high position seems to be based on the value of utilization of skills for the benefit of society, i.e. service to people, which is perceived as an appropriate justification for derivation of satisfaction in the work role. The source of this motivational pattern is cultural. It represents an option usually open to women in developing countries, where qualified manpower is in short supply, and where national development needs dictate the use of women as manpower source.

Finally, having stressed that the individual's attitude to work and his motivation are determined also by outside forces of history and culture, it seems that in their perception of their work role the women are evidently following cultural norms which have created a sex/work role stereotype.

1. SHIELDS, N. Op. Cit., p. 70
2. Fogarty et al noted that 'a woman climbing the promotional ladder in a large British firm may well find herself condemned as unfeminine and aggressive if she seeks promotion vigorously.'

The segregated work role stereotype, prevalent in Western societies, according to which the housewife is restricted to the domestic domain and does not have an outside employment, while the male is restricted to the public domain and has no domestic duties, does not hold for Liberia. Women in tribal societies have not been restricted to the private domain and have taken part in political decision-making in addition to economic activities outside the home. Women in 'westernized' Liberian society also had free access to participation in the public domain within their work role. Sex role stereotype however may remain intact: women are seen as having 'feminine' characteristics, while men are said to possess 'masculine' characteristics. Therefore, male and female in the same career rôle may be perceived differently. In a study of the 'western' ideal sex role perceptions of men and women, Anne Steinmann noted that the characteristics of the 'ideal' woman include an even balance between career orientations and family interests, while the 'ideal' man is expected to be more strongly oriented to his own career and development.<sup>1</sup>

The women in our study were asked to indicate which are to them the important characteristics of a successful career woman (work/sex role): the emerging stereotype of the successful career woman was that of a person with the right academic qualifications, who also has a strong motivation to contribute to society (see Table VI.25).

1. See Fogarty et al, Op. Cit., p. 155

TABLE VI.25 - CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL CAREER WOMAN

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Characteristic			
Motivation to contribute to society	(31) 34.4	(17) 22.1	(48) 28.4
Experience	(9) 10.0	(9) 11.7	(18) 10.6
Motivation to succeed	(11) 12.2	(16) 20.8	(27) 16.0
Academic qualifications	(26) 28.9	(23) 29.8	(49) 29.0
Autonomous	(1) 1.1	(1) 1.3	(2) 1.2
Interest in her work	(8) 8.9	(7) 9.1	(15) 8.9
Ability to command and control	(4) 4.4	(4) 5.2	(8) 4.7
Total	(90) 99.9%	(77) 100%	(167) 100%

Almost 30% of the private sector women pointed to the 'right academic qualifications' as the most important characteristic of a successful career woman, and so did about 29% of the public sector women. 22% of the private sector women, and 34% of the public sector women pointed to the 'strong motivation to contribute to society' as the most important characteristic. These choices are obviously the least stressful options open to the women, and the most compatible with the 'feminine' stereotype as seen in the cultural context. Women's perception of their sex/work role conforms therefore to the same cultural norms which were shown to affect their work values. They are not accepted by society as the family's main material provider and do not therefore stress extrinsic values. At best, they are expected to be of help, financially, to the men or to their families.

For women in higher positions there is a possibility of a strain inherent in the conflict between the requirements of their career, and the 'feminine' role requirements. The expectations of their roles as 'mother', 'wife' etc. may be in some ways dysfunctional to the performance of their high position work role. Living in a developing country, their work role is therefore easily justified by society, and consciously by themselves, as a needed contribution to society, as a utilization of skills for the benefit of the developing society, rather than a contribution to the well-being and development of the self.

The discussion in this chapter separated the work role from the rest of the women's lives. However, personalities are 'wholes', and the work role is bound to the whole, affecting the way women are handling other facets of their lives. The needs for a personal identity structure are not satisfied merely through the work role, be it as central to our fulfillment as it may, but through other roles as well: the wife, the mother, the church goer, the voluntary worker.

Having painted a portrait of the Liberian female administrator/manager in her work role - her work behaviour and motivation, we shall turn next to a discussion of her personal characteristics.



## CASE STUDIES

DR. B. S.

Her career progress was confined to one institution, which she is heading now, and where she began as an instructor in 1950. She was promoted to various positions in the occupational ladder within the institution, and holds her present position since 1978. Generally, she believes women have longer careers than men, as exemplified in her own case: she reached to the presidency after 28 years of service to the institution, fifteen of them as a Dean. She believes that "because of the longer career pattern women who do reach the top are not resented by the men."

The only breaks in her career were due to child bearing, and she considers herself fortunate in being able to combine family and work. Her children were already grown when she reached her present top position.

Her career motivation varied over the years. Initially she worked because she had the education and felt that she should utilize it. After the death of her first husband she had to work in order to support herself and her children. Though in later years, especially after her second marriage, work was not an economic necessity, the contribution which she could make was an important motive.

MRS. J.

She began her career as a laboratory technologist, and after her return from studies in the U.S.A. she worked for eleven years in the public sector as a diagnostic laboratory supervisor. She left her job for a period of three years when her children were in their early school years and returned to work again when the children were sent to

boarding schools in the U.S.A. She did not return however to the public sector, but rather to the private sector, to the company which employed her until recently as a resident manager. She believes however that "most Liberian women do not drop out of the labour force since it is relatively easy to find a "nanny", and labour costs for unskilled labour are low." She mentioned that many women in fact work well past retirement age.

Mrs. J. got her first job because she felt she "had the training for it and the money it provided was necessary and needed." Her last job, however, was important to her because it kept her busy and gave her a measure of economic independence. She believes women work harder than men in the same jobs: while the men work because they have to, women work because they want to work.

MRS. A.

She began her work career in 1954, when she was employed as a university instructor. In 1958 she was employed by a government ministry and was steadily promoted until reaching the position of deputy minister in 1978. The only interruptions in her career were due to study leaves. She was also involuntarily out of job for a few months when she lost her job shortly after the 1980 coup.

For Mrs. A., economic independence and the knowledge that she is needed for the skills she can contribute to society are of equal importance. She also likes "being engaged in something." Yet she believes that in Liberia, economic survival, not just economic independence, is the motive for work for many women, especially among the low social class who are responsible for provisions for the home.

MS. S.

She started as work career as an assistant cashier in the private sector, joining her husband who was employed by the same company. The job was not in her own field of specialization, chemistry, because of the employment policies of the company. She was later made salary accountant, and when the company closed down she became the placement director for the company's ex-employees. She was later employed as the Monrovia office manager of another large company, and left in order to become the resident manager in the company which she is heading now. She was made the Acting President of the company after the 1980 coup, when the foreign management left the country.

She firmly believes that "Liberian women do not drop out of the labour force at any period in their lives, a necessity in a country where salaries are generally low, making it almost an impossibility for the man to be the sole bread winner in the family."

In relation to her own career, she felt very strongly about the motive of contribution to society. She was confident about her suitability for the job of president of the company, stating that she knows more about it than others, knows the workers personally, and "holds the place together." She felt she had responsibilities, especially towards the new staff members. The previous foreign management of the company did not hire, according to her, Liberian staff in middle level management, which created a gap in the company's management hierarchy.

This gap is being filled now. She is convinced that there is much to be done, and she is in the position to do it. "Keeping the company going" is her challenge. She is devoted to the company, spends every available minute in her office, even during week-ends and holidays, and between July and September 1980 did willingly the jobs of the sales manager and the chief accountant, who left, in addition to her own job.

She would like to prove wrong expatriates who feel that Liberians cannot handle business. Being needed in the job is the most rewarding thing for her, though she also likes to be busy. She feels that being a woman in the job gives her an edge over others, since "women pay more attention to details, like conditions of workers' housing." She also feels that as a rule, women work harder than men. She would not like to work in the public sector because there the hard work she is doing will not be recognized.

MRS. K.

She began her work career in 1964, in the U.S.A., as a house mother in a school for delinquent girls. She became later a case worker and a social worker. In 1966 she moved to Europe as a supervisor in the Investors Overseas service. In 1967 she came to Liberia and was employed as a secretary in the private sector. In 1970 she worked as a child care officer in the U.K., and upon her return to Liberia in 1972 was employed as an executive secretary in the public sector, the third in command, within the agency she is heading now. She reached the position of Director General in 1979.

She joined the agency during the period in which it was reformed, and helped shape the laws which reformed it. She therefore regards the agency as "a baby you want to get on his feet." The intensity of her feelings towards the agency is expressed also in calling her staff her 'disciples'. However, she is sure she will continue to work even if she loses her present position, because she is "not the domesticated type."

MS. F.G.

She started her work career in Monrovia in 1970, where she was promoted to the position of assistant director, and later director, within the organization. In 1975 she left government employment in order to work as a consultant for the U.N., but in 1980 returned, this time as a deputy minister.

She too believed that "the low salary generally paid to Liberians do<sup>s</sup> not allow women to retire from the labour force at any stage of their career."

She likes her job and enjoys being productive. "Self-realization" means to her fulfilling her aspiration to contribute to society. Generally, she believes "money is important to women as career motivation, especially in their aspirations to higher positions, since those positions pay higher salaries." The Liberian husbands "would love to see their wives at home", But cannot support their families. As a result, many women even have a second job. However, she herself will continue to work even if she had money, though not to the same degree, "in order to contribute to society." If she were married, she believes she would have worked to elevate her husband, not to fulfill her own aspirations.

C H A P T E R VII

PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE LIBERIAN FEMALE IN HIGH POSITIONS

"They accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and think if not together at least alike."

C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite

The socio-economic characteristics that most readily come to mind when constructing a personal profile of Liberian women in high positions are age, family status and education. Occupation and income, the variables generally used in status determination, form the basis for earlier discussions in this work, and therefore reference to them will be presently restricted to comparison with husbands' characteristics. Other variables can be added however in order to complete the personal profile of the women: these include religious denomination, length of stay in the urban area, and direct exposure to 'Western' society through lengthy periods of stay abroad.

#### Age Distribution:

The majority of the sampled women, though already successful in their career, were found to be relatively young. More than half of them fell within the 26-35 age group. On the whole, private sector women were found to be younger than public sector women: 65% of them are between the ages of 26 and 35, compared with 53.2% of the public sector women who are in that age group. (See Table VII.1). On the other hand, 29.3% of the public sector women are between the ages of 36-45, and only 22.1% of the private sector women belong to this category<sup>1</sup>.

Two factors can be directly contributing to this pattern of age distribution: education and number of children. It is an accepted fact that education delays the entrance of the individual into the labour force as a participant. The increased degree of specialization, and the higher qualifications demanded by modern occupations may be partially responsible for the very low incidence of women below the age of 25 in our sample: 3.2% for the public sector, and 1.3% for the private sector.

1. In Abidjan, Lewis found the largest number of working women to be in the age group 30-44, especially among single women, who in the absence of a husband's financial support had to care for themselves. See LEWIS, B. "Economic activity and marriage among Ivorian urban women." I.A. SCHELEGEL, ed. *Sexual Stratification*. New-York: Columbia University Press, 1977, pp. 161-191.

The percentage of women below 25 years of age is slightly higher for women in administrative and managerial positions in Liberian urban areas, as appearing in the 1974 census (9.3%), though still low when compared to the statistics pertaining to the urban female population in general, according to which one-quarter of all working urban females are below 25 years old. (See Table VII.2). Apparently, the years up to the age of 25 are spent in training and the pursuit of various degrees, in addition to a minimum period of time necessary for promotion in the job itself.

TABLE VII.2 - AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED WOMEN, URBAN WOMEN, AND WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL POSITIONS (PERCENT)

Age	Category Sample	Female working population	Urban working females	Urban female administrators and managers
Below 25	2.3	27.9	25.6	9.3
26 - 35	58.6	28.9	34.6	38.4
36 - 45	26.0	21.1	21.9	24.4
Above 45	12.4	22.1	17.9	27.9
N/A	0.6			
Total	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N=	169	116,024	16,425	86

SOURCE: 1974 Census

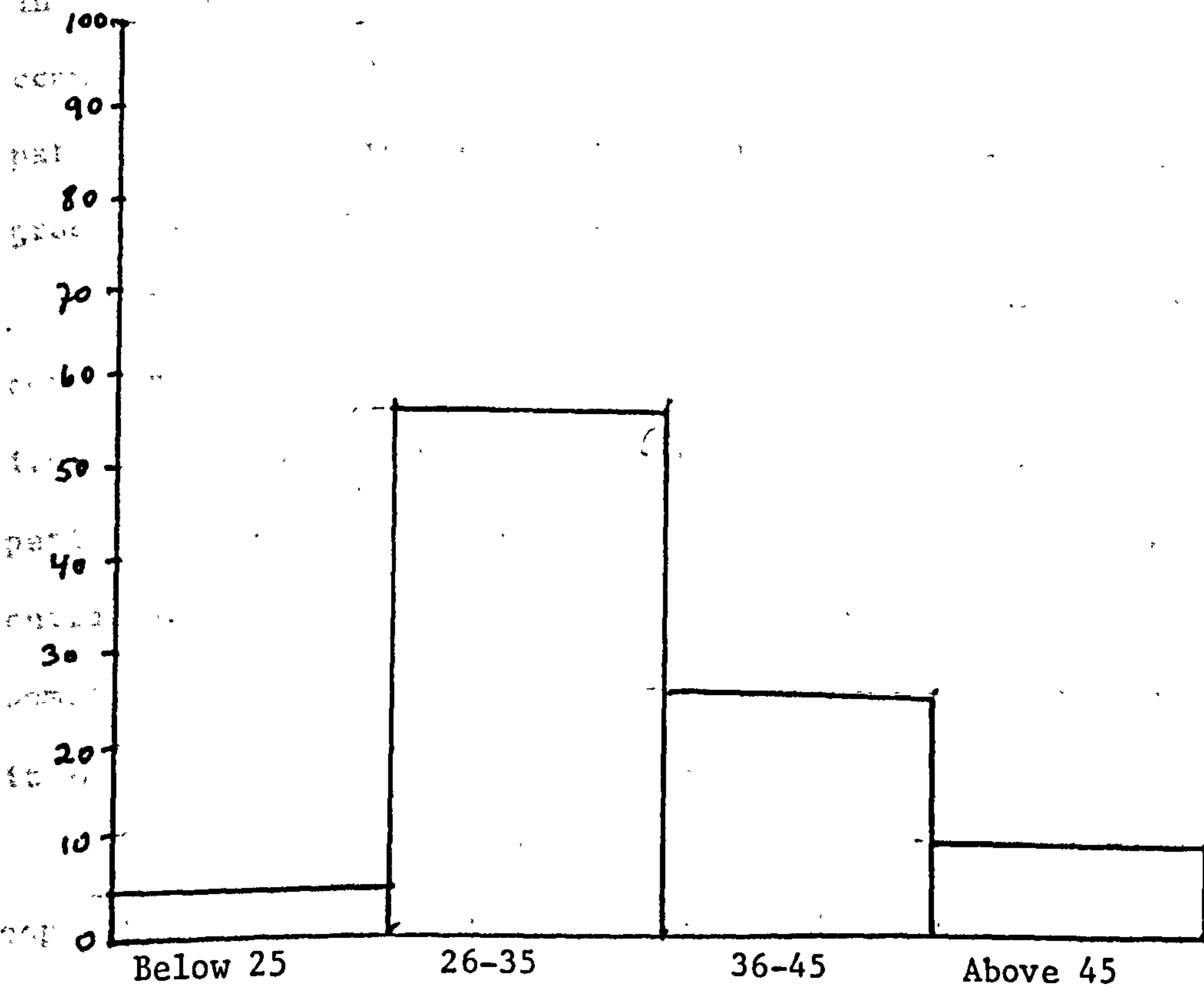


TABLE VII.1 - PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS AGE DISTRIBUTION

Sector		Public	Private
Age			
Below 25		(3) 3.2	(1) 1.3
26 - 35		(49) 53.2	(50) 65.0
36 - 45		(27) 29.3	(17) 22.1
Above 45		(12) 13.0	(9) 11.6
N/A		(1) 1.1	
Total		(92) 99.8%	(77) 99.9%

FIGURE VII.1 - SAMPLE AGE DISTRIBUTION

Percent



AGE GROUPS

The educational variable can explain perhaps the differences noted between the public and the private sectors: educational statistics which will be presented at a later point in this chapter clearly indicate a higher educational level for public sector women, accounting therefore for their smaller number among the younger age group.

In this connection, age was considered as one of the factors affecting women's entry into the modern labour force in a study done by Di Domenico<sup>1</sup> in Ibadan and Kano in Nigeria. His findings apparently show that in both cities younger women were less active in the labour force than older women. He offers as a possible explanation the educational or vocational training which the younger women may be undergoing. However, when we look at the breakdown by categories in Di Domenico's data it becomes clear that the increased participation in the labour force is almost solely in one occupational category - commerce. Among clerical and professional women, the higher participation rate seems to occur in the younger 20 - 29 age group, diminishing gradually among the older age groups.

The second factor related to the pattern of age distribution in our sample is the number of children. Women of the younger age group, i.e. 26 - 35, are in their child bearing years and are expected at this period of their life to have younger children, including pre-school children. The effect of child care responsibilities on the working women has been lengthily discussed in literature, and we shall return to it in the discussion of the family status of the women.

An important difference noted between the total working female population and our sample concerns the number of women above 45 years old who are working. The census results show a fairly constant

1. DI DOMENICO, C.M. "Occupational status of women in Nigeria: a comparison of two urban centers." In Africana Matburgensia.

labour force participation among the women (see T-table VII.2), and in fact an increase in the labour force participation after the age of 45 among women in managerial and administrative positions. Our sample on the other hand conforms more with the urban area general statistics, which show a decline in labour force participation with age. In other words, there is no evident return to the labour force once the children have grown up, as suggested in other countries.. A possible explanation to this phenomenon could be the voluntary "retirement" of women in this age group to private business of their own. In fact, this was an option suggested by many of the respondents themselves in response to the last question in the questionnaire: "Why will you continue/not continue working."

#### Family Status:

We have seen that the analysis of the age distribution pattern of the women cannot be completely divorced from a discussion of family status. On the contrary, these two patterns are closely interrelated.

The discussion of family status centers around two issues: children and husband/wife relationship. These two issues rest in turn on the question of marital status. Basically, the question is whether marriage results in any way in a disruption to participation in or a withdrawal from the labour force, i.e. whether it affects labour commitment. In Abidjan, the Ivory Coast, Lewis<sup>1</sup> found that 64% of the sampled married women were economically active. So were 75% of all unmarried women. The differences in the labour force participation between married and unmarried women do not seem very significant, and we can safely agree with Lewis that the marital status of married in Abidjan did not reduce the women's "need or desire to work."<sup>2</sup>

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1. LEWIS, B. Op. Cit.

2. LEWIS, B. Op. Cit., p. 165

Only half of the women in our sample are married (see Table VII,3). There were proportionately slightly more married women in the public sector, and more single women in the private sector. Also, there were no separated women in the public sector, while four of the private sector women were separated. A similar proportion of women in both sectors were divorced.

TABLE VII.3 - MARITAL STATUS BY SECTOR

Sector	Public		Private		Total	
Single	(23)	25.0	(25)	32.4	(48)	28.4
Married	(49)	53.2	(36)	46.7	(85)	50.3
Separated			(4)	5.2	(4)	2.3
Divorced	(14)	15.2	(11)	14.3	(25)	14.8
Widowed	(6)	6.5	(1)	1.3	(7)	4.1
N =	(92)	99.9%	(77)	99.9%	(169)	99.9%

When compared to the marital status of the total population, and the total urban population (see Table VII.4), the differences are striking: more than three-quarters of the total female population of the country are married. Also, while 28.4% of our sample are single women, only about 8% of the total female population above the age of 20, and 12% of the urban female population above the age of 20 are single. The rate of divorced and separated women is also much lower in the total population count: only about 6% of the urban female population are either divorced or separated, while 17% of the women in our sample were found to be in these categories.

TABLE VII.4 - MARITAL STATUS OF TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION AGE 20 AND ABOVE

Category	Total female population	Total urban female population
Status		
Single	(28,721) 7.9	(11,208) 12.4
Married	(281,278) 77.4	(67,932) 75.4
Divorced/ separated	(19,820) 5.4	(5,658) 6.3
Widowed	(33,361) 9.2	(5,318) 5.9
N =	(363,180) 99.9%	(90,116) 100.0%

SOURCE: 1974 Population and Housing Census

A similar marital status pattern is found in other West African countries as well: according to the 1960 census of Ghana, 71.5% of the female urban population were married, 12.3% were single and 7.9% were divorced. In a study of working women in Tanzania, done by Shield<sup>1</sup>, 73.7% of the women were married, while the percentage of those divorced, separated and widowed was found to be higher among women than among men. In Kumekpok's study of women in Accra, Ghana, 14% of the women were found to be separated, divorced or widowed, a finding which is closer to our data.<sup>2</sup>

1. SHIELDS, NWANGANGA, Women in the Urban Labour Markets of Africa: The Case of Tanzania. World Bank Staff Working Paper No.380, Washington, 1980.
2. KUMEKPOK, T.K., "Mothers and Wage Labour Employment." In Ghana Journal of Sociology Vol. 7, No.2, 74, pp. 68-91.

There may be different factors which determine the marital status pattern. Again, education may contribute to the delay in the commencement of the stage of marriage in the life cycle. This is especially so where university education is frequently done abroad, and post-graduate education has to be undertaken abroad since post-graduate programs are not offered in any university or college in Liberia<sup>1</sup>. The women may therefore delay marriage until returning to Liberia. Statistics concerning educational level and the length of time spent abroad, which will be presented in this chapter, will lend some support to this suggestion.

Looking at the distribution of marital status by position (Table VII.5) we note that there are more single women among those in low positions than among women in middle or high positions. It seems plausible that women in low positions may be younger, just beginning to climb the promotional ladder. The rate of separated and divorced women is also higher among women in high positions, indicating perhaps their later life cycle stage.

TABLE VII.5 - MARITAL STATUS BY POSITION

Position	Status		
	High	Middle	Low
Single	(10) 16.1	(18) 32.7	(20) 38.5
Married	(35) 56.4	(27) 49.1	(23) 44.4
Separated & Divorced	(14) 22.6	(7) 12.7	(8) 15.4
Widowed	(3) 4.8	(3) 5.4	(1) 1.9
Total	(62) 99.9%	(55) 99.9%	(52) 100.0%

1. The only exception is a regional planning program offered at the University of Liberia beginning March 1983.

The higher rate of divorced and separated women in our sample (almost one-fifth of the total number of women) than in the whole population probably depends on a multiplicity of factors which the study did not deal with, and it is difficult therefore to suggest any causal factors. Skinner<sup>1</sup> suggests in his study of Ouagadougou that "The senior literate wives of high status polygamists do not have the...fear of economic deprivation if they seek to obtain separation or divorce from their husbands. They have their own salaries, and even if, upon their marriage they signed a statement at the Town Hall indicating that they wished to pool their salaries with those of their husbands...they could easily break this contract."<sup>2</sup> Among the 42 divorce cases reviewed by Skinner, three were because of conflict over the wife's job.

It is interesting to note though the Oppong<sup>3</sup> suggests that divorce rates among Ghanaian urban and educated Akan women are actually lower than the divorce rate among rural Akan women: "Instead of living in their maternal households, supported to a greater or a lesser degree, both economically and socially, by lineage property and matrikin, they are mainly living with their husbands, far from their places of birth, and enjoying numerous modern urban amenities provided for them through their husbands' civil service jobs. The majority thus, in a sense, depend upon their husbands in a way they customarily never did."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, not only does a dissolution of a registered marriage incur considerable trouble and expense, far more than in the case of customary marriage, but an educated divorcee.. will be unlikely to marry a man of the same social and economic standing as her first husband."<sup>5</sup> The educated Akan wife is therefore in a much more vulnerable position than the rural Akan wife, and is less likely to dissolve her marriage.

1. SKINNER, E. African Urban Life. Princeton University Press, 1974
2. SKINNER, E. op. cit., p. 139
3. OPPONG, C. Marriage Among a Matrilineal Elite. 1974
4. OPPONG, op. cit. P. 116
5. OPPONG, op. cit. p. 118



We have seen that about 85% of the women in our sample are between the ages of 20 - 45, which is medically the child-bearing period. Among the total number of 121 women who are either married, divorced, separated or widowed, 113 are mothers.<sup>1</sup> They comprise therefore about two-thirds of our total sample (66.9%). In comparison, 82% of the total urban female population in Liberia are mothers. This of course is a direct consequence of the higher number of married women in the total population than in our sample. One should note that the age distribution table shows a much larger percentage of working females in the urban population below 25 years of age than our sample,<sup>2</sup> which lends more emphasis to our suggestion that these women tend to marry at an earlier age, and begin to have children also at an earlier age.

In her 1959 study of Monrovia, Fraenkel<sup>2</sup> found a much higher rate of childlessness than evident in either our study or the 1974 census data. 49% of all adult women in Fraenkel's sample had no living children. Also, 43% of all married women had no children! The extremely high infant mortality rate prevalent at the time may be offered at least as a partial explanation to this disparity of findings.

A comparison of the distribution of the number of children between the sample and the whole population shows however no significant differences. In fact, the pattern is remarkably similar, with a relatively even distribution of women having one child, two children, three children, or more than three children. It seems therefore that once the decision to start having children is reached, there is no difference between women who are in high position and the rest of the population in relation to the desired family size. (See Table VII.6). Research done in the Ivory Coast by Lewis<sup>3</sup> duplicates these findings: though highly educated women in Abidjan postponed

1. All subsequent analysis of family status refers also to divorced, separate and widowed women. Where necessary, the respondents were asked to describe the situation as it existed during the time of their marriage
2. Fraenkel, op. cit.
3. Lewis, op. cit.

starting their families until the completion of their education, they later caught up with the less educated or noneducated and had a similar number of children.

TABLE VII,6 ← NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF SAMPLE AND URBAN POPULATION (LIVING)

Population

No. of children                      SAMPLE                      URBAN MOTHERS, AGE 20-64

ONE	(18) 15.9	(14,394) 20.1
TWO	(33) 29.2	(18,769) 26.3
THREE	(25) 22.1	(15,236) 21.3
THREE OR MORE	(37) 32.7	(23,040) 32.3
TOTAL	(113) 99.9%	(71,439) 100.0%

These findings support the opposition to models which claim that when wives work there will be a drastic reduction in the size of the family, below the optimum needed for family life or national population policy, followed by confusion emanating from lack of segregation of roles<sup>1</sup>. There is no evidence of a reduction in the number of children in Liberia or the Ivory Coast.

Of the 113 mothers in our sample, 12.4% do not have any of their children living with them (see Table VII.7). Though more than half of the mothers have at least three children (54.8%), only 39% had at least three children living with them. This conforms to the acceptable Liberian pattern according to which children may be sent to live with relatives.

1. For a discussion of role segregation models in this context, see Fogarty, op. cit., p. 102

In addition, it was noted earlier that it is not only acceptable, but also very common, that children live with their fathers in case of divorce or separation. It should not be surprising therefore that while 84% of the women have at least two children, only 66,4% have at least two children living with them.

TABLE VII, 7. NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH RESPONDENT AND NUMBER OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Category	No. of children	Living with respondent	Below school age
One	(24)	21,2	(27) 23,9
Two	(31)	27,4	(3) 2,6
Three	(22)	19,5	
Three or more	(22)	19,5	
None	(14)	12,4	(83) 73,5
Total	(113)	100,0%	(113) 100,0%

Despite the relatively young age of the women in our sample, three-quarters of them had no pre-school children (73,5%). This is significant when considering that all the women in the sample were in higher positions, entailing relatively more responsibilities and commitment than positions which are lower in scale, and being less compatible therefore with pre-school child care. Exchange models, based on notions of family time allocation and individual maximization, propose that husbands and wives each specialize in activities for which they have comparative advantage.

Pryor<sup>1</sup>, in discussing such models, asserts that American wives will work more the less undersix years old children they have. Though not conclusive, this seems to be possibly true of our Monrovia sample as well.

How do the women in our sample who do have pre-school children cope with the responsibilities of child care and work? Our respondents were assumed to have three options open to them: hire help in the form of a cook, a houseboy, or a nanny/children-nurse, seek the help of relatives, who, in return for food and clothes and sometimes the payment of school fees are expected to manage the household, cook, clean and care for children, or the women may desire the help of both hired help and relatives. In a country where the majority of the population is engaged in subsistence farming, and where the illiteracy rate is very high, it is not surprising to find that half the women in our sample have relatives as home help. This is quite common among educated Liberians, most of whom find that having climbed the social scale, they are expected to lend a hand to their less fortunate relatives by providing them with basic needs and sending them to school. This is a reciprocal relationship, in which the relative staying with the educated person should help with the house chores in return for what he or she is given.

Our findings show a slightly higher reliance on relatives as home help among public sector women (30% have only relatives to help them) than among private sector women (25%). 23% of public sector women have both relatives and hired help, compared to 18% of the private sector women (see Table VII, 8). On the other hand, 49% of the private sector women have only hired help, compared to 40% of the public sector women. The pattern in the two sectors is similar though, the heavy reliance in both sectors on hired help made possible by the very low labour costs in Liberia.

1. PRYOR, F.L. The Origins of the Economy. New York: Academic Press, 1977.

TABLE VII.8 - HOME HELP BY SECTOR

Sector	Public		Private		Total	
	Help		Help		Help	
Relatives	(21)	30.4	(14)	25.4	(35)	28.2
Hired help	(28)	40.6	(27)	49.1	(55)	44.3
Relatives and hired help	(16)	23.2	(10)	18.2	(26)	21.0
None	(4)	5.8	(4)	7.3	(8)	6.5
Total	(69)	99.9%	(55)	100.0%	(124)	100.0%

N = 124

In comparison, the use of hired help in 'Western' countries is limited. In Britain, Fogarty<sup>2</sup> found that only 10% of the women with children had outside help. 3% of the women without children and 18% of the employed women without children reported having outside help.

According to Fogarty, the costs of the hired help were high, with families providing for their hired help 'extras' such as the use of the family car and separate quarters in some cases.

In the Ivory Coast, Lewis<sup>1</sup> found 64% of the childless salaried women to have home help. So did 86% of the salaried women who do have children. Most of them however had hired help rather than relatives.

When taking into consideration the low labour costs in Liberia, and the 'abundance' of relatives who have to depend on their educated kin, the findings that only about 6% of the public sector women and 7% of the private sector women have no home help at all do not come as a surprise.

In this light, the question of nurseries and day-care centres, which in

1. LEWIS, op. cit.

2. FOGARTY. et al. op. cit.

other countries seem essential in enabling the mother to work, is irrelevant in Liberia, at least for the time being. Surrogate care is available cheaply and easily in both the formal role of the nanny/child-nurse, or the informal role of the relative. In fact, among the 63 women who withdrew from the labour force at any time in their career, only 16% did so in order to care for their children.

In Britain on the other hand, a survey of married women graduates<sup>1</sup> showed that 61% of those with one child, 60% of those with two children, and 72% of those with three or more children were not working. The sampled women graduates also indicated a prevalent attitude that a child has to be 6-10 years old before a mother can accept a full time job<sup>2</sup>. A study conducted in Britain by Hunt<sup>3</sup> concluded that even among the most highly qualified women "there is a strong tendency to drop out of work at the time of having the first baby and not to return until many years later". These findings indicate low labour commitment among British women.

Shields<sup>4</sup> data from Tanzania however proved that women did not withdraw from the labour force during the reproductive years. In fact, women in the professional, technical and administrative group in her sample had a higher number of children than other groups, reflecting on their ability to pay for surrogate care.

These findings indicate the inapplicability of models such as Myrdal and Klein's three phase model to the African situation<sup>5</sup>. The three phase model suggests a primary period of training and education, followed by a period devoted to raising a family, and culminating in a period of career development in which the women's training is put into wider social use. In West Africa, widely available child care mechanisms, especially through relatives offering surrogate care, enable the highly educated salaried women to

1. FOGARTY. op.cit., p.249

2. FOGARTY, p. 337

3. Ibid.

4. SHIELDS, op. cit.

5. MYRDAL, A. and V. KLEIN, Women's Two Roles, Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1968. The model suggested by them seems more suitable to developed countries,

combine quite successfully career and family during the second phase.

It is not surprising therefore that various African researchers place very little stress on the effect of the family size on the decision of women to work. Based on data collected in Jos, Nigeria. in 1976, Uyanga<sup>1</sup> was able to state that "The most significant variables influencing participation of women in the labour force are her level of education, her state of origin, and the husband's opinion about his wife's employment.. The wife's opinion to work or not to work, as well as the desired family size, incidentally are not very important in her taking up jobs."

Interestingly, almost all the women in our sample who withdrew from the labour force in order to care for their children came from the private sector: only one woman in the public sector stated child care as a reason for withdrawal. Though our study did not investigate directly the reasons for such a discrepancy, we can speculate that the dissimilar nature of the groups composing the private and the public sectors can account for some of the differences: we have seen that women of the core group are over-represented in all positions in the public sector, while women of the external group are over-represented in all positions in the private sector. The different socioeconomic characteristics of these groups, including the ability to pay for surrogate care, may be partly responsible for the obvious difference in pattern between them. To this we may add that the external group includes women whose parents may be non-Liberian, resulting in inability to recruit relatives to act as home help. Another plausible explanation may be rooted in the different nature of the sectors themselves: career success in the private sector is largely dependent on performance, and probably allows for much less flexibility needed for child care than the public sector, which is not profit-oriented, and allows therefore greater flexibility in performance.

1. UYANGA, J. "Family size and participation of women in labor force: a Nigerian case study". In African Urban Notes. Vol. II. No.2, 1976, p.69

The second factor to be analyzed in relation to family status is

Husband/wife relationship:

The analysis of the variable of husband/wife ethnic affiliation (see Table VII.9) shows an interesting variance from the mother/father ethnic affiliation variable presented earlier in the paper. While the parents of the women tended to come from the same group, exhibiting an endogamous tendency to remain within one's own group, the women themselves are much less endogamous. This is especially so among members of the core group in the public sector, of whom almost equal numbers are married to core group, extended group and external group husbands. Even among the private sector core group, a third of the women are married to external group husbands. The strongest endogamous tendency is seen among public and private sector women who belong to the external group: only 8% of the external group private sector women have core group husbands, while 58% of them have husbands who come from the same group as themselves - the external group.

The data points therefore to an increased rate of intermarriage, especially among the settler group, where elite women are marrying 'down'. The reason may be twofold: the small number of the elite group forces its members to search for mates outside the group itself, while at the same time members of the extended and the external groups have achieved education and social standing to a degree which makes them acceptable to the core group women. However, ethnic affiliation is probably losing its importance gradually as an indicator of a pattern of upward or downward mobility in marriage.



TABLE VII.9 - HUSBAND/WIFE ETHNIC AFFILIATION BY GROUP AND SECTOR

Wife Husband	CORE		EXTENDED		EXTERNAL		Total
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	
Core	(6) 35.3	(7) 46.7	(3) 10.7	(3) 20.0	(3) 15.8	(2) 8.3	(24) 20.3
Extended	(6) 35.3	(3) 20.0	(12) 42.9	(8) 53.3	(5) 26.3	(8) 33.3	(42) 35.6
External	(5) 29.4	(5) 33.3	(13) 46.4	(4) 26.7	(11) 57.9	(14) 58.3	(52) 44.1
Total	(17) 100.0%	(15) 100.0%	(28) 100.0%	(15) 100.0%	(19) 100.0%	(24) 199.9%	(118) 100.0%

N = 118

In judging whether women tend to marry 'up' or 'down', an acceptable indicator is the husband's occupation (see Table VII.10) - or his educational level (Table VII.11). The indicators of occupation, education and income are however usually used in social class indices in reference to the husband's characteristics only, as 'head of the household'. This applies in many countries even in the cases of divorced or widowed women, and in relation to children. The characteristics of women rarely, if ever, play a part in formal determination of the family's status, despite the fact that the standard of living of the family is ultimately based on income generated by both the husband and the working wife. In her study of social class measurement in the United States, Haug<sup>1</sup> noted that in the samples studied the women's occupational position was more likely to be above the men's than to be equal or below it. These differences were however least conspicuous among professional and technical workers, managers and officials.

1. HAUG, M. "Social class measurement and women's occupational roles." Social Forces, 1973, Vol. 52, pp.86-98.

In Abidjan, Lewis<sup>1</sup> found the occupational status of only 8% of the wives in her sample to be greater than that of the husband. The lower the occupational status of the women, the more likely she was to be married to a man in a higher occupational status than herself.

TABLE VII.10 - HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION BY SECTOR

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Professional	(39) 58.2	(25) 46.3	(64) 52.9
Administrator	(6) 9.0	(2) 3.7	(8) 6.6
Manager, executive businessman, diplomat	(7) 10.4	(18) 33.3	(25) 20.6
Non-manual supervisor	(5) 7.4	(1) 1.8	(6) 5.0
Routine non-manual work	(7) 10.4	(5) 9.3	(12) 9.9
Skilled manual	(3) 4.5	(2) 3.7	(5) 4.1
Student		(1) 1.8	(1) 0.8
Total	(67) 99.9%	(54) 99.9%	(121) 99.9%

N = 121

TABLE VII.11 - HUSBANDS' EDUCATION

Level of education	None	Some high school	High school	College	Total
	(1) 0.8	(3) 2.4	(21) 17.1	(98) 79.9	(123) 100.0%

1. LEWIS, op. cit. p. 175

80% of the women who have ever been married in our sample (married, divorced or widowed) had husbands who fell in the three top occupational categories: they were either professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers), administrators, managers, executives, businessmen or diplomats. Although the largest category for both sectors was that of the professionals, there is a significant disparity in the number of women of both sectors married to men in the category of managers, executives, businessmen and diplomats: a third of the private sector women married men in this category, while only 10% of the women in the public sector did so. The percentage of the public sector women who were married to professionals and administrators is on the other hand larger (58% and 9% respectively).

About 15% of the women married men in lower occupational categories than themselves: their husbands were either in routine non-manual occupations such as policeman or clerk, or skilled manual occupations. One of the women was married to a student.

Similarly, 80% of the women married men who have at least some college education. About 17% of the husbands completed only high school, about 2% had some high school education, while only one of the women had an illiterate husband. These findings are again similar to those noted in the U.S. by Haug<sup>1</sup>, according to which wives were more likely to be at the same educational level as their husbands than to be either above or below it.

1. HAUG, op. cit.

TABLE VII.12 - HUSBAND'S EARNINGS BY SECTOR

Sector	Public		Private		Total	
	Earnings		Earnings		Earnings	
Not known	(12)	18,2	(11)	20,0	(23)	19,0
Lower	(5)	7,6	(8)	14,5	(13)	10,7
Equal	(7)	10,6	(6)	10,9	(13)	10,7
Higher	(42)	63,6	(30)	54,5	(72)	59,5
Total	(66)	100,0%	(55)	99,9%	(121)	99,9%

N= 121

Clearly, the women tended to marry husbands who were in similar occupational and educational categories as themselves. Income, the third indicator often used in social class measurement, is important as well in a discussion of the family status. Doubtless, the wife's earning can contribute quite substantially to the family income, and consequently to the family life style and the life chances of the children via better educational opportunities.

A comparison of husbands' and wives' earnings reveals a pattern conforming in part to the occupational and educational distribution patterns: about 70% of the women were married to husbands whose salaries were either equal or higher than that of the wife (Table VII.12). About 11% of the women were married to men whose salaries were lower, while 19% did not know their husbands' earnings. In comparison, 77% of the respondents in a survey conducted by Kumekpok<sup>1</sup> in Accra had no knowledge at all of their husbands' income. Lewis<sup>2</sup> survey of Abidjan showed that "the vast majority of working wives have less earning power than their husbands".

1. KUMEKPOP, op. cit., p. 85  
 2. LEWIS, op. cit., p. 174

Another aspect of the relative earnings of husbands and wives is the influence on power relationships within the family. The balance of power between husbands and wives may be reflected in the control over their economic resources. Oppong<sup>1</sup> distinguished between syncretic power relationship, in which husbands and wives are equal, autonomic power relationship, in which husbands and wives make decisions independently, and autocratic power relationship, in which the husband mainly makes the decisions. Income is a factor which may affect the potential power relationship. Oppong found the relationships between doctors and their wives to be autocratic, despite the high educational status of the wives, and in accordance with the higher income of the husbands.

What sort of financial arrangements exist therefore in these families, where both husband and wife work? Do husbands and wives pool their resources in managing their families? Little<sup>2</sup> states that among elite women "the man is to be the main provider and marriage is to be a true union of husband and wife as well as an economic partnership." On the other hand, Skinner<sup>3</sup>, in his study of Ouagadougou, states that among higher status groups "household finances appear to be one of the areas of greater tension." The educated wives of higher status men usually work as civil servants before marriage, and are expected to continue working after marriage. When in 1968 the Director of Labour announced a moratorium on hiring female civil servants in favour of males as part of austerity measures, the elite women organization, Amitie Africaine, objected, "claiming that they had as much responsibility in their households as did their husbands and other males". Skinner stresses that though husbands and wives may pool their salary cheques, this arrangement is frequently under strain, and when it breaks the women become economically quite independent of their husbands.

1. OPPONG, op. cit.

2. LITTLE, K. African Women in Towns. p. 147

3. SKINNER, op. cit.; p. 162

In response to the question concerning the expenses the women were responsible for within the household, 61% of the women in our sample said they shared all day to day expenses with their husbands. (Table VII.13), 25% contributed to some of the day to day expenses, 3% contributed only to large expenses (like buying a car, or furniture), while about 10% of the women did not contribute to the household expenses at all, but rather felt that their earnings were theirs to use as they saw fit.

In this connection, Jan Pahl identified four types of allocative systems within the household<sup>1</sup>: the whole wage system - in which either the husband or the wife are responsible for managing all the finances and expenditure of the household, the allowance system - in which the wife is given an allowance by the husband from his earnings and each partner has a sphere of responsibility in terms of household expenditure, the share management system - in which husband and wife are responsible for all management and expenditure out of a common pool, and the independent management system - in which each partner is responsible for specific items of expenditure out of his/her own income. Though no direct information to that effect was collected in the present survey, the first type of allocation system, the whole wage system is probably the least common among Liberian women in managerial and administrative positions. It may be also least common among Liberian women in general, considering the economic separation of husbands and wives in traditional West African societies, referred to in earlier chapters.

TABLE VII.13 - SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

Expenses	None	Occasional large expenses	All day to day expenses	Some day to day	Total
	(12)10.3	(4) 3.4	(71)61.2	(29)25.0	(116)100.0%

1. PAHL, JAN. "The Allocation of Money and the Structuring of Inequality Within Marriage". RKP, 1983, pp. 237 - 262.

At the same time, none of the allocative systems suggested by Pahl can accurately account for those 10% of the women in our survey who do not contribute at all to the household expenditure, despite the fact that they earn a monthly income!

The independent management system is not applicable to the 61% of the women in our sample who share all day to day expenses with their husbands since it calls for allocation of specific items of expenditure to the husband and the wife. The allowance system similarly calls for allocation of specific items. Therefore, where all household expenses are indeed shared with the husband the shared management system is probably applicable. It should be noted, however, that in the Liberian situation it is also possible that the husband does not contribute at all to household expenditure while the wife shoulders all the responsibility alone. Either the independent management system, or the allowance system may be applicable to the 28% of the women in our study who contribute only to some of the daily expenses, or only to occasional large expenses.

Pahl further notes that the normative expectations of the culture within which the household is located determine the allocative system adopted by the couple, and that in areas of traditional female employment women are more likely to control financial affairs.

Pellow<sup>1</sup> mentions in her Ghanaian study that husbands in urban areas become responsible for subsistence expenses, i.e. payment of rent, electricity, water bills and food. She argues that "all the women interviewed contribute in one way or another to such expenses, but it is not a cultural obligation for them to do so in the sense that it is for their husbands". They usually use their earnings for any extra expenses like clothing for them and their children, or buying extra food provisions. Pellow stresses that urban Ghanaian women mainly expect from their husbands material support,

1. PELLOW, D. Women in Accra; Options for Autonomy, 1977, p.134

and feel that their earnings are theirs to do with as they please, especially in financial contributions to their own siblings.

In Lagos, Fapohunda<sup>1</sup> found that between 81% to 86.5% of working mothers did not contribute at all to house building or rent payment, television, refrigerator or radio buying. Between 70.4% - 77.9% did not contribute at all to buying husband's clothes, paying children's school fees and salaries for household hired help. Expenses women were mostly responsible for were the family food budget, children's clothes and medical expenses. Between 14.6% - 29.2% did not contribute at all to the household expenses. Fapohunda's findings imply a separation of financial resources which comes with the separate financial responsibilities. There were less marked separate financial responsibilities in our study, with only 28% in all contributing to some of the household expenses.

In a study directly applicable to West African societies, Lewis<sup>2</sup> distinguishes between four types of budgetary arrangements among Ivorian families in Abidjan:

1. Separate budget, in which the husband was not mentioned as a recipient of the wife's earning.

2. Separate budget in which there is occasional contribution to household expenditure.

3. Integrated budget - shared expenses.

4. Budgetary subordination, in which all earnings are given to husbands,

Budgetary subordination was found in only 3.5% of the cases. The incidence

of integrated budgets was also very low in Abidjan - 8%. Separate budgets

with occasional contributions totalled 15% of all cases, while the majority

fell under separate budgets - 73.5%. The integrated budget was found to

1. FAPOHUNDA, E. "Characteristics of women workers in Lagos." In Labour and Society, Vol. 3, No.2, 1978. pp. 158-171

2. Lewis, op. cit.



be more common among upper cadre women, 27% of whom held such budgetary arrangement with their husbands, than among women of other statuses. However, even among high cadre women 67% held separate budgets!'

Oppong states in relation to the urban Akan that "financial provision for the conjugal family and household is in most cases a shared responsibility... Fewer than one in four husbands are completely responsible for the upkeep of their wives and children. Few wives feel that they can depend entirely upon their husbands for support."<sup>1</sup> She adds that women are most likely to pay for school fees, rent or fuel, but they may pay for clothes, food, or salaries for domestic help.

Traditionally, West African women have been economically independent of the men to such a degree that in agricultural societies they had the major responsibility for the production of subsistence food, and have always held the right to sell the food they produced.<sup>2</sup> Even in the cattle societies of West African women had the right to trade either milk products or handicrafts and keep the profit.<sup>3</sup> They also owned their own herds of goats and sheep, and could trade in them too. In his study of Fante villages in Ghana, Vercrujisse<sup>4</sup> states that West African women are economically active in their own right, and this is not affected by being married or having children. Their income does not have therefore the character of a supplement to the budget of the family, and cannot even be conceived as part of the 'family income'. In West Africa's urban areas, women's right to earn their own income is perpetuated. This is substantiated by reports from Ghana by Robertson<sup>5</sup> and from the Ivory Coast by Lewis<sup>6</sup>. Nigerian women in Lagos did not regard their husbands' income as their own<sup>7</sup>, and 54%

1. OPPONG, op. cit. p. 329

2. SUDARKASA, N. Where Women Work. 1973, MINTZ, S. "Men, Women and Trade." in Comparative Studies in Society and History. 13,3,71. pp.247-269

3. BUTCHER, P. The Role of the Fulbe, 1965, DUPIRE, M. Women of the Grasslands.

4. VERCRUIJSSE, op. cit.

5. ROBERTSON, C. Social & Economic Change in 20th century Accra: Ga Women. Ph.D. dissertation, 1974.

6. LEWIS, op. cit.

7. FAPOHUNDA, op. cit.

of them in fact believed that a woman should not have a joint account with her husband. Dakar's professional women reiterated that "a woman must be prepared to be independent, to have her own mind, and her own source of support."<sup>1</sup> In his survey in Accra, Kumekpok found that the majority of the women had to manage with their meagre salaries. If they fell into debt as a result - only 14% paid it with the help of their husbands.<sup>2</sup> In Abidjan, only 3.5% of the women gave their earnings to their husbands, while three-quarters of them maintained completely separated budgets from their husbands. In Ouagadougou<sup>3</sup>, women civil servants who had signed the MENAGE A DEUX agreement with their husbands - the pooling of salary cheques - found out usually that they had to break the agreement later and return to separate incomes. Similar findings were reported by Oppong<sup>4</sup> among Akan civil servants in Accra and by Harrel-Bond from Freetown,<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to many of these findings, half the women in our sample had joined their income with that of their husbands. In response to the question "Will you be ready to loan money to your husband?", 50.7% of the public sector women and 48.1% of the private sector women stated that there is no need for a loan since their finances are joined anyhow. (Table VII.14). Only 6.6% of the women in our sample would categorically refuse to lend money to their husbands, implying that their budgets are separated. 34.7% of the women would always be ready to loan money to their husbands, while 9.1% would do so only if they are sure that the husbands are able to pay back the loan. Both choices of answers imply separate budgets. These findings concerning joint income support the data offered concerning women's contribution to the household expenses.

1. BARTHEL, D. "The rise of a Female professional elite: Senegal" *African Studies Review*, XVIII, 3, 1975, p. 1 - 17
2. KUMEKPOK, op. cit.
3. OPPONG, op. cit.
4. SKINNER, op. cit.
5. HARREL-BOND, B. *Family Law in Sierra Leone*, 1975

TABLE VII.14 - LOAN TO HUSBAND BY SECTOR

Loan	Public		Private		Total	
No	(4)	6.0	(4)	7.4	(8)	6.6
Yes	(21)	31.3	(21)	38.9	(42)	34.7
When husband can pay back	( 8)	11.9	( 3)	5.6	(11)	9.1
Joint finances	(34)	50.7	(26)	48.1	(60)	49.6
Total	(67)	99.9%	(54)	100.0%	(121)	100.0%

N= 121

According to Oppong<sup>1</sup>, only a few couples among the urban Akan in Ghana own property such as houses, cars and farms together. Or possess joint bank accounts. "The majority maintain separate financial arrangements for spending, owning and saving". Such arrangements seem to provide financial security for the wife against the time when her husband may be unwilling or unable to provide for her. Only 6% of the Akan surveyed in Accra had a joint bank account, and 45% of the Akan husbands did not know in fact how their wives spent their income! The same feeling of insecurity may have prompted more than half of the women in our survey to maintain separate financial accounts from their husbands.

The nature of the relationship between husbands and wives in our sample was further tested by two questions, one concerning social events and the person these are attended with, and the other inquiring about the readiness of the respondent to move to another county or country following her husband when the husband is required to move.

1. OPPONG, op. cit., p. 330

A little over half of the respondents answering the first question always attend social events with their husbands (or, if divorced, separated or widowed, always did so while married). 11.5% only do so sometimes. One-fifth of the women attend social events with friends. In all, more than 38% of the women regularly attend social events with people other than the husband. (See Table VII.15).

TABLE VII.15 - ATTENDANCE OF SOCIAL EVENTS

Person attending with	Own friends	Husband	Colleagues	Sometimes husband	Other
	(25)20.5%	(68)55.7%	(7) 5.7%	(14)11.5%	(8)6.6%

N= 122

Smock<sup>1</sup> states in relation to Ghanaian women that "Even among the urban, educated elite, husbands and wives go out together perhaps only once a month, and rarely engage in recreation or socializing as a family, with husband, wife and children."

Over half the respondents in our sample are willing and ready to move with their husbands if the husbands should be transferred. 12% of the women were not sure whether they would leave their job and move with their husbands.

Lastly, husband/wife relationship was tested by a question inquiring about the husband's attitude towards his wife's career. Little<sup>2</sup> mentions the dualistic attitudes of African husbands, who saw the ideal women as a professional, 'western' woman, but refused to let their own wives work in their professions (citing as an example a study of teachers done by Bernard in Kinshasa).

1. SMOCK, A., "Modernization and Women's position in the Family in Ghana." In A. SCHELEGEL, Sexual Stratification, 1977, p.193
2. LITTLE, K. op. cit. p. 168.

About half of the respondents in our study agreed that their husbands "like to listen to the problems and successes" of their jobs and talk to them about it. (Table VII.16).

TABLE VII.16 - HUSBANDS' ATTITUDES

Attitude	Likes to listen	Not interested	Dis-satisfied	Wants her to stop working	Help	Happy she earns money
	(64)53.3%	(11)9.2%	(11)9.2%	(17)14.2%	(3)2.5%	(14)11.7%

N= 120

11.7% of the husbands are happy that their wives "work and earn money,"

Only 2.5% are sufficiently interested in their wives' career to "try and help get promotions," despite the fact that many of the husbands are in top positions themselves. Among the husbands who exhibited negative attitude towards their wives' career, 32.6% in all, 14.2% say occasionally that they would want them to stop working. 9.2% each "are not interested in anything connected" with their wives' career, and express dissatisfaction with the fact that the wife "is working too hard." This data contrasts with U.N. findings for lower status groups, according to which "Studies of low income areas in African cities showed that men preferred their wives to work in order to supplement the family income."<sup>1</sup> In the U.S., Fitcher<sup>2</sup> found in a study of black and white college graduates "a greater belief among the Negro females that their husbands would expect them to work regularly." Axelson's findings<sup>3</sup> were that more than two-thirds of the black males in his study believed that a wife should work as she desires, and almost 80% agreed that a wife has a right to her own career. Almost all of his respondents

1. U.N.E.C.A. "Women and National Development in African Countries." African Studies Review, XVII, 3, 1975

2. In AXELSON, LELAND, "Among Negro and white males." Journal of Marriage and the Family, Aug., 1970. pp. 457 - 463

3. Ibid.

agreed however that a wife should leave her job if it conflicts with her husband's work. A 1968 survey of British working wives showed that one-sixth of the wives worked despite opposition on the part of their husbands.<sup>1</sup>

It may be that once the economic necessity to work is removed, husbands' opposition to their wives' careers increases.

In summary, women in higher positions in Monrovia are less frequently married than the rest of the population, and more frequently divorced. Once married however, they do not differ from the rest of the population in the number of children they have. Despite their relative young age, only a quarter of them have pre-school children, and not all their older children actually live with them. They solve the conflict between the demands of the job and the demands of the household chores by employing the services of either hired help or relatives, both easily available, and consequently most of them have an uninterupted career pattern and therefore greater labour commitment. They still tend to marry within their own group, although their rate of intermarriage is certainly higher than that of their parents, especially among the core group women. Most are married to men who occupy similar high positions to themselves, or higher positions, and who are mostly professionals. The husbands are highly educated, the majority earning equal or higher salaries than their wives.

When compared to women in other countries and of other status groups, women in higher positions in Monrovia exhibited a higher rate of joint financial responsibilities and budgetary arrangements with their husbands.

The women's careers do seem to constitute a possible source of friction between them and their husbands in that quite a number of husbands harbour negative attitudes towards their wives' work. That all is not well is evident in the finding that one-third of the women do not attend any

1. FOGARTY, op. cit., p. 238

social events with their husbands.

Educational Level:

The Liberian formal educational system is formulated after that of the U.S. system. Schools in Liberia have been also associated with missionary activity, with 334 out of the total of 1651 schools in the country in 1980 registered as mission schools. Missionaries have served therefore as a normative reference group. We should bear in mind that we are concerned here with an imported system of formal education, and not the traditional educational system, or Islamic education. 'Western', formal, education was brought into Liberia by the various missions, established first in the coastal area during the colonization period, and mainly for the benefit of the settlers, and later in the interior of the country by various mission groups, notably the Lutheran mission schools among the Loma and the Kpelle groups. It is obvious that the coastal area was much more accessible for the missionaries. Most of the government schools have been established in fact within the last 25 years, and even among those, most were located, until the 1950's, in the coastal areas. Even today, 411 out of the total number of schools, 25%, are located in Montserrado County and Monrovia.

By virtue of their positions, we would expect the women in our sample to possess a higher educational level than the general population in Liberia. This is indeed so. According to Table VII.17, 53.9% of the women in our sample had college education, out of which 17.2% had post-graduate education. Though high, their educational level is still lower than that of their husbands, 80% of whom were found to possess college education. By contrast, only 3.2% of the total urban population of Liberia above the age of 20 have completed college education, and only 0.2% of them have post-graduate education. The percentage of those who completed high school is again slightly higher for our sample.

When looking at student enrollment at the largest of the only three college level institutions in the country, the University of Liberia, we can observe a definite pattern: the percentage of female students has remained almost constant during the past decade. 25% of the students were females in 1975, and 26.5% in 1980, despite a sharp increase in total enrollment. In comparison, in 1968-9 girls were 14% of the students in the University of Ghana, 5% of the University of Science and Technology in Ghana, and 11% in the University College of Cape Coast,<sup>1</sup>

A look at the county and territorial origin of female students at the University of Liberia reveals again the greater access people in coastal counties had to formal education, which had increased their chances of attaining university education: 36% of the female graduates in 1980 came from Montserrado County alone. In all, 76% of the university 1980 female graduates came from the coastal counties, and 24% came from hinterland counties. In a survey conducted by Carter and Ken<sup>2</sup> at the University of Liberia in 1975, nearly half of the surveyed women were born in Montserrado County, in contrast to only one-fifth of the men.

1. PELLOW, op. cit.

2. CARTER, J. and T. KEN. Report of University of Liberia Student Survey. Unpublished manuscript, n.d.



TABLE VII.17 - EDUCATION LEVEL BY SECTOR AND POPULATION

Level	Population		Total sample	Total urban females
	Public sector	Private sector		
None elementary				(78,809) 87.4
High school	(11) 12.0	(11) 14.3	(22) 13.0	( 8,502) 9.4
Vocational diploma	(21) 22.8	(35) 45.4	(56) 33.1	N/A
University	(37) 40.2	(25) 32.5	(62) 36.7	( 2,690) 3.0
Post graduate	(23) 25.0	( 6) 7.8	(29) 17.2	( 160) 0.2
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100%	(90,161) 100.0%

Our data points to differences between the public and private sectors which are worth considering: the percentage of college graduates is much higher among public sector women, especially those possessing a post-graduate degree. A full one-quarter of all public sector women have post-graduate education, yet only 7.8% of the private sector women have achieved a similar level. This difference probably reflects the availability of scholarships for post-graduate education abroad through government channels. The recipients of such scholarships may have come more frequently from among the core group members, who were influential in government circles until the 1980 coup d'etat. Naturally, all recipients of such scholarships, regardless of their group membership, are much more likely to work in government agencies and ministries upon their return, hence their high concentration in that sector. We should bear in mind that recruitment of personnel in government circles in the Liberian society has been closely related for a long time to social background, via the better chances that members of the elite have had for higher education.

The differences between the private and the public sectors also reflect the nature of these two sectors: 45.4% of all private sector women have had some sort of vocational training and possess vocational diplomas, many of those in the secretarial sciences. Promotion in the private sector may be therefore from the rank of secretary to the position held during the time of the study. In the public sector on the other hand, vocational diplomas are not that common: only 22.8% of the women possessed them. Promotion here may follow therefore a different route.

Since educational institutions have been concentrated in the coastal area, and especially Monrovia, it is not surprising that more than half of the women in our sample graduated from high schools located in Monrovia. A quarter of the women graduated from schools in Montserrado and other coastal counties (see Table VII.18). More interesting though is the concentration of women in our sample in two elite private high schools from which they graduated: 15.4% of the women are graduates of the College of West Africa, known as C.W.A. and 20.1% of the women are graduates of the St. Theresa Convent, a well known girls Catholic school, both located in Monrovia. According to Carter's 1975 survey of the University of Liberia<sup>1</sup> students, nearly one-third of the women had graduated from St. Theresa Convent or C.W.A., in comparison to only 9% of the male students who graduated from C.W.A. and St. Patrick's (the Catholic boys' school). Carter comments that 'those women who are able to maintain themselves in school to reach the university level come from a

1. CARTER, J. op. cit.

small sector of the Liberian population, They are more likely than men to have come out of the private school system and are more likely than men to have parents or guardians with the financial resources to support them in school. Comparing the educational background of the surveyed students' parents with the educational background of the population as a whole indicates that they are an elite group."<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VII.18 - HIGH SCHOOL LOCATION BY SECTOR

Sector	Public	Private	Total
Monrovia	(50) 54.3	(40) 51.9	(90) 53.2
Montserrado	( 9) 9.8	( 5) 6.5	(14) 8.3
Other coastal counties	(19) 20.6	(10) 13.0	(29) 17.2
Hinterland counties	( 5) 5.4	(10) 13.0	(15) 8.9
Other countries	( 7) 7.6	(12) 15.6	(19) 11.2
No answer	( 2) 2.2		( 2) 1.2
Total	(92) 99.9%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 100.0%

Educational level such as revealed in the data above necessitates very frequently travel abroad. Indeed, only about 22% of the women in our sample have never been abroad. Among the 132 women who did travel abroad 70% stayed over a year, indicating that the purpose of their trip was study rather than pleasure visit (see Table VII.19)

<sup>1</sup> CARTER, J. Liberian Women: Their Role in Food Production and Their Educational and Legal Status. 1982. p. 152

TABLE VII.19 - LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD

Length of stay	Less than a year	1 to 5 years	More than 5 years	None	Total
	(38) 22.5	(57) 33.9	(37) 21.9	(37) 21.9	(169) 100.0%

28% of the women stayed abroad for a period longer than five years. In fact, quite a few of these women worked abroad for at least some of the time, in addition to attending various schools. Taking in consideration Liberia's traditional ties with America, it is not surprising that the majority of these women travelled to the U.S.A. Trips to other African countries were usually not taken for the purpose of study.

Two other personal characteristics our study looked at, were religious affiliation, and growing up pattern. Since schools are not evenly distributed all over Liberia, it seems probable that educated women would have had to move often from their place of birth to a location where schooling was available. It is quite a common practice for a small child to be sent away to live with relatives in order to attend school. In addition, where polygamy and informal liaisons are relatively frequent occurrences, parents may not always reside together. According to our findings, less than half of the women grew up with both their parents, about one-third grew up with only one of the parents, and one-fourth of the women did not grow up with their parents at all (Table VII.20).

TABLE VII.20 - PERSON GREW UP WITH

Person	Both parents	One parent	None	Total
	(76) 45.0	(53) 31.4	(40) 23.7	(169) 100.0%

In their religious affiliation the women were found to follow a similar pattern to that described by Fraenkel:<sup>1</sup>

"Today, the professing of Christianity remains the basic requirement of 'civilized' status, but does not in itself confer that status... Rather, it is membership in specific church congregations... which indicates one's social position."

Fraenkel further states that "In Monrovia... there is a tendency for occupational and religious groupings to correspond with tribal ones and so to reinforce them."<sup>2</sup> She emphasizes that the majority of the 'civilized' population belong to denominations which have long been established in Liberia, i.e. the Methodist, Baptist, Protestant Episcopal, or Roman Catholic churches. The Protestant Episcopal church in particular "draws its members almost exclusively from the civilized population, and it is the favoured church of the elite, within that population, as it is among upper class Negroes in the United States."<sup>3</sup> Fraenkel further mentions that according to the 1956 Liberian Year Book, half of those in the 'Who's Who' section declared their religious affiliation as Protestant Episcopal.<sup>4</sup> She noted a correspondence between tribal membership and religious affiliation, as between the Bassa and the Baptist church, the Kru and the Methodist and Roman Catholic, and the Loma-Kpelle and the Lutheran church.

80.4% of the women in our study belong to one of the four churches mentioned above (Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian or Roman Catholic). The largest group among them belonged to the Episcopal church, the "elite church." This is especially so among public sector women, Private sector women on the other hand showed greater numbers in the Catholic and the Lutheran churches, the latter reflecting the 'hinterland origin' of private

1. FRAENKEL. op. cit.
2. FRAENKEL. op. cit. p. 70
3. FRAENKEL, op. cit. p. 159
4. FRAENKEL, op. cit, p. 160

sector women, since it is in the hinterland that the Lutheran church is most active (see Table VII,21). None of the women is Moslem.

TABLE VII, 21 - RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION BY SECTOR

Affiliation	Public	Private	Total
Baptist	(8) 8.7	(7) 9.0	(15) 8.9
Methodist	(22) 23.9	(19) 24.7	(41) 24.2
Episcopalian	(32) 34.8	(20) 26.0	(52) 30.8
Lutheran	(1) 1.1	(6) 7.8	(7) 4.1
Pentecostal	(1) 1.1		(1) 0.6
Presbyterian		(2) 2.6	(2) 1.2
Church of the Lord		(1) 1.3	(1) 0.6
Catholic	(14) 15.2	(14) 18.2	(28) 16.5
Jehovah Witness	(1) 1.1	(1) 1.3	(2) 1.2
Others	(7) 7.6	(2) 2.6	(9) 5.3
No answer	(6) 6.5	(5) 6.5	(11) 6.5
Total	(92) 100.0%	(77) 100.0%	(169) 99.9%

The high school location data presented earlier indicates a long period of urban residence for the majority of the women, especially in Monrovia which served as the high school location for more than half of the women. When asked about their length of residence in Monrovia, 82% of the women were found to have lived in the capital city for a period above ten years, 31% alone have lived in Monrovia continuously (see Table VII,22).

TABLE VII,22 - LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN MONROVIA

Length of residence	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Continuously	Total
	(7) 4.2	(23) 13.7	(86) 51.2	(52) 31.0	(168) 100.0%

Only 4% of our sample are relative "new-comers" to Monrovia, having resided in it less than five years. Similarly, Carter found in 1975 that approximately 30% of the female students of the University of Liberia had lived in Monrovia for most or all of their lives, in contrast to only 14% of the men.<sup>1</sup> In her 1959 survey in Monrovia, Fraenkel recorded 43% who lived in Monrovia for a period longer than ten years, as compared to 82% of the women in our study.<sup>2</sup> This, coupled with the finding that a large percentage of our respondents did not grow up with their parents, spent long time abroad and attended elite schools, indicate exposure on the part of the women to the way of life of the elite group. The exposure the women have had to urban values and norms is considerable, reflecting in their work attitudes and in their role perceptions. We shall turn next therefore to a discussion of these role perceptions, their sources, and the way they were shaped historically and modified by the life pattern of the women in administrative and managerial positions.

1. CARTER, op. cit. p. 151

2. FRAENKEL, op. cit.

## CHAPTER VII - CASE STUDIES

DR. B.S.

She holds a Ph.D. degree from Cornell University, U.S.A. and was married twice. Her present husband is a former minister and ambassador, now retired. She admitted that "conflict is possible in families of women in high positions, especially where their status is higher than that of the man, or where their earnings are a cause for competition." She attributed the success of her own marriage partly to the fact that she has always maintained a joint bank account with her husband, noting that "when both husband and wife work they are setting a competition, especially when the woman feels that the money is hers if she works."

She considered herself fortunate in not having problems in combining family and work, though she stated that "if I had problems - I would have dropped the job." She also noted that "when women rise to higher positions, some husbands may be reluctant to allow them to continue."

MRS. J.

She is a graduate of the College of West Africa, C.W.A., and holds a B.A. and an M.Sc. degrees in public health and laboratory technology respectively. Though her husband has a successful career of his own as a professional, they pool their financial resources and share attendance of social functions (to which she is committed because of her job), with the exception of necessary trips abroad. She feels that her family did not lose because of her work, and neither did she, though she was fortunate enough to have her mother assist her with the children. She strongly believes that "very few Liberian women would



feel that they should not work and that their husbands should support them. Rather, the husbands expect their wives to work and raise the economic status of the family with their earnings." She represents the very few women who believed that the usual child care mechanisms available in the Liberian society (through 'nannies' and relatives) are insufficient for the educational and developmental needs of her children. Mrs. J. commented "I left the job in order to be with my children, in order to help them with the school work, because that was something which a nanny should not help me with." She also noted that she did not feel the need to leave her job earlier because she found the 'nanny' quite adequate for pre-school children. Accordingly, she felt free to return to work when her children left Liberia in order to go to a boarding school in the U.S.A. and she was not needed any more to help with their education. In fact, she said, "my working has been inspirational to them: they both turned out to be hard working."

MRS. A.

She holds an M.A. degree in anthropology and an M.Ed. She is married to a successful professional. She observed that "though Liberian men would be ready to accept without hesitation the authority of the woman who is their superior in the office, they will not do so at home." She also noted the changing family patterns in Liberia, resulting in frequent physical separations due to husbands and wives living and working in different parts of the country. Many women are therefore heads of households, and carry many responsibilities.

MS. S.

She graduated from the College of West Africa at the top of her class and won a scholarship which enabled her to obtain a B.Sc degree in the U.S.A. She got married in the U.S.A., and upon their return

to Liberia, both she and her husband were employed by the same company. She feels that the rapid promotions she enjoyed while working for the company were not acceptable to her husband, resulting finally in their divorce eight years ago. She does not intend to marry again, since she finds unacceptable "the Liberian men's expectation that the wives will manage everything by themselves." She does feel that her divorce is an impediment to smooth family life, since she had to place her children in a boarding school and rely on a "nanny" to enable her to work and support the children. She noted: "The low labour costs enable me to have a nurse for them since they were born. Still, I had to find an hour a day to be with them." Her children are now in a boarding school and come home once a month, but because her job is demanding, she "cannot give them enough time." At the same time, in a choice between a demanding career and constant contact with her children, she chose the first.

MRS. K.

She is the holder of an M.A. degree in social service administration, an experienced social worker, and a member and head of a few voluntary organizations. Her husband, an ex-government minister, is currently employed in the quasi-public sector. In 1969 she left her job in the private sector in order to join her husband who went to the U.K. for further studies. She felt that "going with him was more important than my job." However, she did start working in her profession almost immediately upon arrival in Britain, and also utilized the time for further studies. She is confident that if her husband will leave the country tomorrow she will "go with him without hesitation," resigning from her present positions. She said further, "if a better job is offered to me out of Monrovia, I will take it only if there is no utter separation from my husband as a result, and only if this separation is temporary. Separation because of

career is quite common in Liberia, and many women accept it. I could never agree with them and will never do so."

MS, F, G,

She is a graduate of the College of West Africa, the University of Pennsylvania, and New York University, where she completed her graduate studies. She is single, yet declares that were she married, she would work to elevate her husband and not to fulfill her own aspirations for achievements.

CHAPTER VIII - ROLES AND IMAGES: THE SELF-PERCEPTION  
OF THE LIBERIAN FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/  
MANAGER

"The self is not an immediate character of the  
mind but arises through the imagination of the  
ideas which others entertain of the individual"

G. H. MEAD

One of the focal points in women's studies in recent years has been the analysis of sex role differences. Offering a nonbiogenetic social role perspective, many authors argue that the environment and cultural forces shape role obligations, conceptions and performance of women to a much greater degree than genetic differences. A direct link between sex roles and economic roles is often stressed: when the environment affords, and even demands, increased economic contributions and economic independence of women, such economic role performance will shape women's sex roles. The analysis in this chapter of the images and self-perception of the female administrator/manager is largely dependent therefore on the discussion of economic roles, their cultural/historical sources, and their effects. The changing cultural systems of ideas, values and institutions are the context in which the psychological experiences of the individual actor occur. They are therefore the basis on which the actor/actress builds his/her self-image, through a cognitive, deliberate and selective process. The argument offered here is that Liberian women performed important economic functions in various capacities in the past, as a result of which roles were assigned to them which became a part of their self-image, and persisted, though the cultures producing the economic functions have changed.

Before turning to a detailed description of the economic roles, we ought to explain the process by which a self-image is created. The process of image formation involves imitations of objective realities created in childhood, synthesized and organized later into mental structures;<sup>1</sup>

1. This approach is common in the writings of J. Piaget.

These mental structures are part of the subjective dimension which is the self, since a person's self can be conceived as comprising his experience of his identity as a distinct individual. The ideas and attitudes which constitute the person's awareness of his existence form his experience: they are beliefs, values, moral commitments, conception of qualities, abilities, purposes etc. The process by which a person acquires the experience is a cognitive process, and it is accompanied in the development of the self by an evaluative process, i.e. self-evaluation.

The ability to evaluate oneself is only possible when the individual can compare his images and perception to those of others. Mead<sup>1</sup> pointed out that the mind, consciousness and the self all result from interaction between individuals. The self is built through a process of social experience, in which the individual initially internalizes the attitudes of various others by placing himself in the roles they are playing, and then looking at himself through the eyes of others, evaluating himself. Mead stressed that it is impossible to conceive of a self arising outside of social experience. The self is constructed therefore out of the assumptions the individual has of the attitudes of the 'generalized other', and awareness of the judgement of others - the group to which the self belongs. Mead limited those groups to the actual social groups in which the actor is directly implicated. The implication of the actor can be interpreted as membership in the group, or as reference to the group's norms and values. In other words, Mead's concept of the 'generalized other' may be linked to the concept of reference groups.

1. G.H. Mead, in URRY, JOHN. Reference Groups and the Theory of Revolution. 1973. p. 5

Reference groups are selected groups with whom the individual identifies and relates to, though he may not necessarily be a member. Individuals orient their behaviour in terms of both membership and non-membership groups.

The process of orientation to a non-membership group is termed by Merton and Kitt<sup>1</sup> anticipatory socialization. They comment that "For the individual who adopts the values of a group to which he aspires but does not belong, this orientation may serve the twin function of adding his rise into that group and of easing his adjustment after he has become part of it." The process of anticipatory socialization has different consequences in societies with open social structures, which provide for mobility, and societies with closed social structures. Where the social structure is closed, mobility is restricted, the individual will not "find acceptance by the group to which he aspires and would probably lose acceptance because of his outgroup orientation, by the group to which he belongs."<sup>2</sup> However, Merton and Kitt observed that "If a structure of a rigid system of stratification...is generally defined as legitimate... then the individuals within each stratum will be less likely to take the situation of the other strata as a context for appraisal of their own lot."

Historically, the period in Liberia which ended with the election of President Tubman in 1944 may be seen as such. Gershoni<sup>3</sup> comments that "The prospect of assimilated masses of Africans from the hinterland frightened the Americo-Liberian community, since this would undermine their status as a privileged minority."<sup>4</sup>

1. MERTON, R.D. and KITT, A. "Reference Groups". In L. COSE~~LL~~ and B. ROSENBERG, Eds. *Sociological Theory*. pp. 243-250
2. MERTON and KITT, op. cit.
3. GERSHONI, YAKUTIEL. "Liberia's Unification Policy and Decolonization in Africa..." Asian and African Studies, Vol. 16,2, 1982, pp. 239-260
4. GERSHONI, op. cit. p. 241

They therefore segregated themselves and ignored the existence of the the tribes in the hinterland. The rigidity of the Liberian social structure began to crumble however during the first two decades of the 20th century, when Britain and France began showing interest in Liberian territory. The Americo-Liberians had to demonstrate effective control over the hinterland tribes if they were to retain their territory, resulting in increased contact between the two elements of the social structure: the settlers and the tribesmen. The trend continued with the election process of 1943, in which a new party challenged the ruling True Whig Party, promising political rights to Africans. To retain his rule, President Tubman hastily proclaimed the Unification Program, granting some civil rights to indigenous Africans. The final blow to the rigidity of the Liberian social structure came with the granting of independence to the African colonies. Minority rule in Liberia, which was very similar in nature and character to colonial rule elsewhere, could not be justifiably continued when colonial masters in adjacent countries were yielding to demands for self-rule. This was further intensified when the Creole minority in neighbouring Sierra Leone lost its hegemony in the early 1950's. Gershoni comments that despite all that, "To the world the Americo-Liberians made it seem as if their Unification Policy was a process parallel to decolonization, and as a consequence Liberia had been given its right to a place among the new African states. But in actual fact the Americo-Liberian withheld full citizenship from indigenous Africans, continued to hold on to all key posts in the country and spared no effort to keep their supremacy and ruling position intact."<sup>1</sup>

1. GERSHONI, op. cit. p.253



In spite of the attempts of the Americo-Liberians to retain a social structure which ensured their rule, the system came progressively under criticism from within, coming from both elements in society: the tribal people and some of the Americo-Liberians themselves, and culminating in the 1980 coup d'etat.

Merton and Kitt noted that "If...the system of stratification is under wide dispute, then the members of some strata are more likely to contrast their own situation with that of others, and shape their self-appraisals accordingly."<sup>1</sup> As more and more members of the hinterland tribes in Liberia became exposed to western education and urban modes of living through employment in urban areas and in the various mining concessions which were established, their ties with their own tribal membership group weakened. Merton and Kitt state that "there is a continued and cumulative interplay between the deterioration of social relations within the membership group and positive attitudes towards the norm of non-membership group."<sup>2</sup> The relaxation of the rigid social structure in Liberia, a process mainly evident in the last two decades, has allowed therefore identification with the Americo-Liberians as a comparative non-membership reference group, though no full admittance into it. Although educated Americo-Liberians of tribal descent did not try to pass into the dominant Americo-Liberian elite group as such (those who did try are few in number), they did strive to become more acceptable to it, in order to ensure admittance into government and occupational structures controlled by the elite group. This entailed internalization of some of the elite group standards and norms, through a process of emulation. Women in administrative and managerial positions are no exception to that.

1. MERTON and KITT, op. cit.

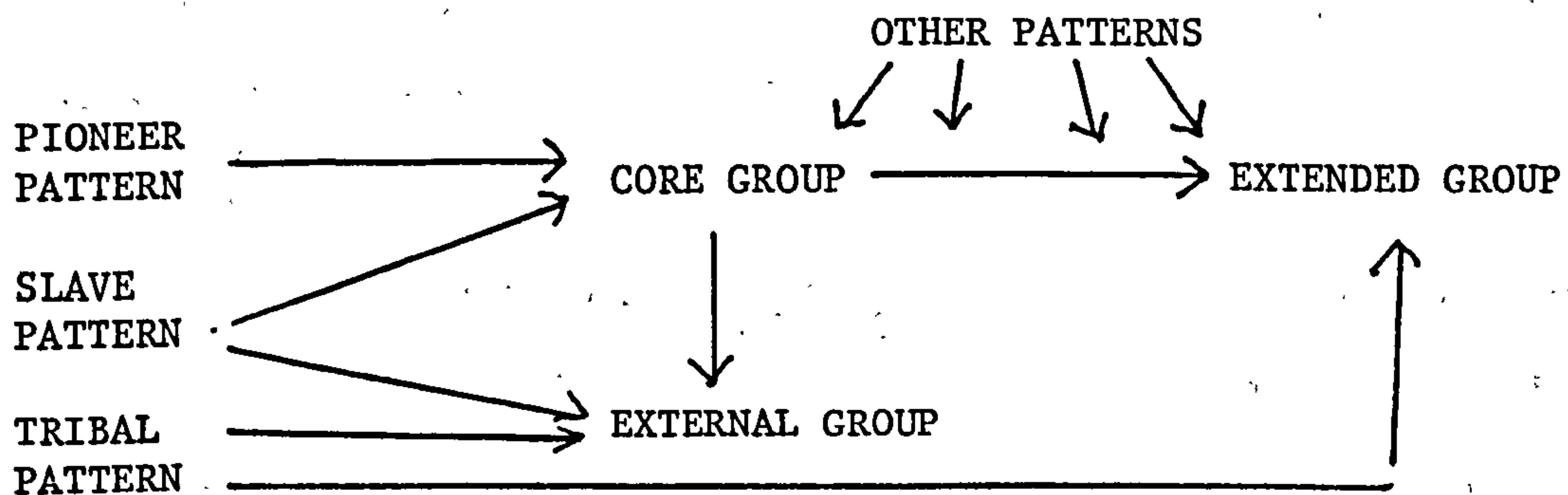
2. MERTON and KITT, op. cit. p. 248

In this discussion of the development of the self and reference groups we have seen that the self is conceived as built by images acquired through the process of social experience, i.e. through contact with others. Reference groups constitute those 'others', transmitting to the individual cultural and historical patterns upon which the reference group norms and values are based. Hyman, the originator of the term reference groups, showed "that actors often took individuals of .. high status as their reference group since this enhanced their subjective status."<sup>1</sup> Since our discussion led us to believe that with time it became possible for members of the various tribes in Liberia to identify themselves with the Americo-Liberians as a reference group, though not a membership group, we can safely assume that cultural patterns<sup>2</sup> emanating from the historical background of the Americo-Liberian group, as slaves and then pioneers, will be of importance even to women of tribal origin in our study, though tribal cultural pattern may be preserved as well among them. Such cultural patterns may help shape the images all Liberian women have of themselves and consequently their roles. Though there is a multiplicity of pertinent cultural patterns, we shall deal here with only three significant patterns which contributed to and shaped the roles of women: the tribal pattern, the slave pattern and the pioneer pattern. ('Other patterns' include 'Western' cultural patterns, transmitted through the Western educational system, aid programs etc.).

1. Urry, op. cit. p.18

2. 'Cultural patterns' refer here to sets of norms and values concerning individuals' behaviour within their roles, which were established at specific historical periods.

FIGURE VIII.1 - CULTURAL PATTERNS



In the model above, the tribal pattern relates historically to the extended and the external group, since both contain women of hinterland and coastal tribal origin. The pioneer and the slave patterns relate to the core group. The slave pattern may affect, to a limited degree only, members of the external group, since it is being composed also of women whose parents are non-Liberian, who may be of West Indian or similar origin.

The three patterns determine to an extent the self-images of women: in tribal cultural pattern we should note cattle societies and agricultural societies.<sup>1</sup> Friedl suggests that "among horticulturalist the relative power of women is increased if women both contribute to subsistence and also have opportunities for extra-domestic distribution and exchange of valued goods and services."<sup>2</sup>

1. Hunting and gathering societies are irrelevant to the present discussion in the region of West Africa to which we confine ourselves.
2. FRIEDL, E. *Woman and Men* 1975, p 135.

In her example of the Bemba, the women are seen to have a relative degree of balance with the men, which she attributes to the women's labour contribution to cultivation and their distribution of cooked food outside the household. In West African agricultural societies, women have a major responsibility in the process of production of subsistence crops, though the men are always responsible for the clearing of the land.<sup>1</sup> West African women, Liberian tribes being no exception, generally have always held the right to sell the food they produced.<sup>2</sup> Even among West African cattle societies women had the right to trade either milk products or handicrafts, and keep the profits.<sup>3</sup>

The control women have over production and distribution in the agricultural process is very evident in Liberia. In her description of the pattern of farm organization among the Mande-speaking people of rural Liberia, Carter<sup>4</sup> notes that though the male household head selects the farm site, this is done in consultation with the women of the household. The household communal farm is under the control of the head wife, who is responsible for the allocation of the rice, the staple food.

In addition to communal farms, there are also personal rice farms, most of which belong to women, who control both the labour and the rice produced.

Among the Kruan-speaking people of southeastern Liberia there are no communal farms as such. Instead, the head of the household

1. The exception are the Yoruba in Nigeria, where men are responsible wholly for growing the subsistence crop, yam, which has turned into a prestige crop.
2. See Sudarkasa, N. *Where Women Work*, 1973. Also Mintz, S. "Men, Women and Trade", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XII,3,1971
3. See Butcher, A.D.P. "The Role of The Fulbe...". Unpublished dissertation, 1965, and Dupire, M. "The Position of Women in Pastoral Society", 1963
4. Carter, J. *op. cit.*, p. 62

divides the farm land among the wives, and each becomes responsible for her part. Though the wives are under obligation to feed the household, the rice is under their control.

Where personal farms are prevalent, they may be owned by women other than the wife of the head of the household who have no control over the rice produced in the communal rice farm. Carter notes that the male household head has no responsibility for assisting in these personal farms, and labour may be obtained through lovers, sons or migrant labourers. Hired labour is paid from the proceeds women have from the sale of rice, palm kernels or vegetables. Where wives of the household head have personal farms, the "rice produced is surplus which can be used for gifts for relatives or friends and for sale in the market."<sup>1</sup> Though the personal farm pattern seems a later development, it is still important in consideration of cultural patterns in the Liberian society.

Though the women in rural Liberia control the allocation of the rice from the household communal farm, they do not own it personally. By the same token, men cannot sell the rice. Carter notes that any rice sold by a man is with the knowledge and permission of his wife.

Women produce and control the allocation of cassava, which is also a staple crop in Liberia. In fact, cassava is an important cash crop nowadays for Liberian women, and they do virtually all the work which the cultivation and the processing of the product entail.

The economic institutions of tribal societies in Liberia maintain and preserve therefore a cultural pattern, which in turn affects women's sex

1. CARTER, J. op. cit. p. 65

roles. Through their form of participation in these economic institutions the women perceive themselves, and are perceived by others, as economic contributors, performing a necessary and integral part in the economic process. Their independent economic role, outlined also in earlier chapters, does not necessarily lead to increased political power or increased control over their life outcomes. However, it does create a powerful role image which tribal Liberian women can identify with. This role image persists and is perpetuated through the women's continued participation in the economic processes of production and distribution. In fact, Liberian husbands of tribal origin expect their wives to perform this economic role, even in the urban areas: women are encouraged to be able to support their children on their own, e.g. by earning profits through marketing activities, rather than rely on the husband as the provider. They are customarily provided by the husband with the initial capital which will enable them to do so.

The preservation of women's economic roles lies also in the prevalent unemployment and underdevelopment in urban areas. Handwerker<sup>1</sup> mentions that half of the female market sellers in his sample had husbands whose incomes were unreliable, or were unemployed for considerable length of time. Many of the husbands who were employed earned below 60.00 dollars a month. Handwerker also notes that Liberian women in the rural areas plant food crops with the intention of selling the produce so that they would not have to rely on allocation of money from their husbands (or fathers or brothers). Kaba<sup>2</sup> stresses that "Liberian women, in their great majority, enter on an informal basis, the money economy, with the apparent consent, encouragement

1. HANDWEKER, W. The Liberian Internal Market System. Unpublished Ph.D.

Thesis, Univeristy of Oregon, 1971

2. KABA, B. op. cit. p.36

and financial help of their husbands and other relatives, through the sale of most locally produced food commodities." Further more, "they not only control the marketing system but are consolidating this control by attempting, among other things, to organize themselves into marketing associations."

The image of the Liberian tribal woman is therefore that of a capable worker, producer and distributor of food and other goods and services. The image is sustained in the Liberian society through a perpetuation of an economic system in which women are expected to provide their share of the family subsistence in both rural and urban areas.

The slave cultural pattern affected mainly the self-image of the women of the core group - the freed slaves who settled in the 19th century in Liberia, and to a much lesser degree the self-image of the small number of women of West-Indian descent whose parent may have migrated to Liberia in the 20th century.

The special master/slave relationship in the Americas seems to have favoured the women rather than the men. In her discussion of slavery in the United States and Latin America, Landes notes that masters minimized "the recognition and opportunities of slave men in class and personal relationships" and "aggrandized the position and opportunities of slave women."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, a slave family was regarded as having a responsible parent, not male, and a child was "identified by his mother's given name and by the owner's surname".<sup>2</sup> Landes also mentions that the slave family's overtime wages were paid usually to the woman as head of the family, and not the man. Slave women were also more fortunate in being elevated frequently to positions of nurse, cook or seamstress.

1. LANDES, R. "Negro Slavery and Female Status", African Affairs, Vol. 52, pp. 54-57

2. LANDES, R. Op. cit. 54-57

In contrast, male slaves suffered the degradation of loss in the game of sexual competitiveness, when white masters took their women away from them, and were more violently uprooted from their social world, not being able to perform their previous prestigious tasks of "pursuing of government, property and war."<sup>1</sup> Landes summarizes by saying that the "sexually-weighted favouritism of New World masters combined with cultural precedents of Africa to elevate the status of slave women in the Western hemisphere."<sup>2</sup> Similar points are stressed by Jain, who contends in relation to slave women in the U.S. that "in constant flux of slave relations, her relationship to her children was clear, while the father's was often not...In addition to her capacity as worker, the owner profited from her child bearing and rearing her young. She was therefore less apt to be sold out of hand than the male, and was the more stable element in what little there was of slave family life."<sup>3</sup> Since in slavery both men and women were subject to equal hardship and degradation, "out of slavery the black woman emerged without a specially protected position, because she had few expectations of economic dependence upon males."<sup>4</sup>

In a discussion of the roles of men and women in the context of the English slave plantation colony of Barbados,<sup>5</sup> Sutton stresses the importance of women in the domestic quarters and their participation in both work and public activities.<sup>6</sup> Not only did the women and men work and were exploited equally, they were also segregated from the dominant social groups

1. LANDES, R. op. cit., p.56

2. LANDES, R. op. cit., p.57

3. JAIN, R.B. "Women in the United States-The Quest of Equality". In PHANDIS and MALANI, Women of the World, 1978. p. 237

4. JAIN, R.B., Ibid.

5. In 1865, 346 settlers arrived to Liberia from Barbados.

6. SUTTON, CONSTANCE and MAKIESKI-BARROW, S. "Social Inequality and Sexual Status in Barbados". In SCHLEGEL, A., ed. Sexual Stratification, 1977, pp. 292-325



and their culture and ideology of male dominance. The woman slave in Barbados was her own economic provider and performed similar jobs to men. Consequently, Barbadian women play today an important role "in both the domestic domain and in the social and economic life of the community."<sup>1</sup> Because of the slave plantation background "both sexes put a special premium on personal autonomy and the capacity to act in their own interests,"<sup>2</sup> Barbadian women are viewed by both sexes as capable and independent: they control their own money and own land and houses. There are only few distinctions made between the attributes of both sexes, and Sutton stresses that these are not carried over into the work roles. Creativity, power, or the ability to act decisively, are attributes of both men and women.

The image of the slave woman within this cultural pattern is therefore that of a hard worker and provider, capable of fending for herself and heading a household,

Though the condition of slavery is not applicable any more to the Liberian society, various images created during that period have persisted. The persistence is due to the peculiar situation of the Americo-Liberians/settlers as an elite group, and to the relative isolation of the Liberian society, and its relative lack of contact with Western colonial ideologies over a long period of time. The settlers who arrived to Liberia more than a century ago have attempted to preserve their culture in the face of tribal cultures which were threatening the cohesiveness of the settler group. An ideology regarding women as independent economic providers, rooted in the historical slavery situation, formed part of the settlers' culture and was therefore preserved. The absence of colonial rule in Liberian history

1. SUTTON, C. et. al. "Women, Knowledge and Power". In ROHRLICH-LEAVITT, Woman Cross Culturally. p.592
2. SUTTON, C. op. cit. p.594

implies relative segregation from female sex role models prevalent in colonial countries, notably models regarding women primarily as mothers and home makers. This factor facilitated the persistence of models regarding women as independent economic contributors. Educational opportunities, which have always been offered equally to males and females in the Liberian society, did not discourage this persistence.

We should bear in mind that this pattern as well did not involve images of women as powerful political actors.

The preservation of images rooted in slavery cultural patterns was further intensified and helped by the third pattern influencing the Liberian woman administrator/manager: that of the pioneer. The strong figure of the pioneer mother is evident for example in American history, where the pioneer mother is a provider figure.<sup>1</sup> In a pioneering situation, families cannot afford sex discrimination. The contribution of all family members is essential and women are expected to share or assume work obligations to a much greater degree than in other situations. Thompson discusses the relative emancipation from conventional English ideas about women which took place in America: "All hands, including feminine ones, were needed."<sup>2</sup> Women could expect "to breach male closed-shops so far as employment opportunities were concerned"<sup>3</sup> due to the labour shortage. "Any skill was valuable whichever sex possessed it." The frontier, as Thompson sees it,

1. See EPSTEIN, C. "Successful Black Professional Women". In Hubar, J. Changing Women in a Changing Society... pp.150-173
2. THOMPSON, R. Women in Stuart England and America, 1974 p.11
3. THOMPSON, R. op. cit. p.67

is a "threshold to economic opportunity... a new way of life and a state of mind, and...a transformer of traditional ideas."<sup>1</sup> The frontier presented challenges to women, not only to men: they became co-workers in the pushing back of the frontier by the founding of new townships, handling guns and taking part in the defence against the Indians. The pioneering situation often forced the women to replace their husbands in leader positions, take the law into their own hands and gain positions of decision-making, implying therefore access to political power and control. As Thompson succinctly put it, "Once landed, women must contribute to the survival and expansion of the bridgehead. Where manpower was so precious, women were not only a pair of hands, but also the reproducers of others. There was no time in these circumstances for rigid division of roles. Where a new world was being made, women could not stick to the kitchen, let alone the boudoir."<sup>2</sup>

In Ryan's analysis of colonial society in America in the 17th century, southern wives "created the office of the female household manager."<sup>3</sup> They organized and supervised the economic system, and were also producers and traders: they sold their skills (e.g. midwifery) and their products (e.g. hens, soap). Out of necessity they did lumber sawing, manufacturing of potash, slaughtering and flour processing. They were "productively active, essential to survival, and free to barter their surplus goods."<sup>4</sup>

Altbach noted that during the colonial period in New England, American women were needed to produce and manage the families necessary "to populate

1. THOMPSON, op. cit. p.102
2. THOMPSON, op. cit. p.103
3. RYAN, M. Womanhood in America. 1975. p.32
4. RYAN, op. cit. p.35

and civilize the wilderness." "Women were valued as contributors of the skills and labour needed to produce food, clothing and shelter, and as managers of family resources and affairs."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the pioneering situation is responsible for the existence of a very strong ideology of sex equality in Israeli society, though in reality there exists sexual inequality.<sup>2</sup> The image of the Israeli woman, unlike reality, is that of a woman capable of competing with men in all work obligations.

The disparity between image and reality in Israel may be partially explained by a crisis model. Chaney<sup>3</sup> observed that public intervention of women tends to occur at the crisis points of history, when historical events call on women to share the risks and tasks of society side by side with men. Women become active in times of extreme challenge or emergency, as exemplified in the pioneering situation. However, while in a crisis situation "behaviour outruns belief", when the crisis is over "the image of the woman's proper role has not changed sufficiently to allow them to remain active at a responsible level."<sup>4</sup> Non-traditional role stereotyping tends to be discarded and forgotten as soon as the need for it is eliminated. Chaney noted that studies from all over the world reveal decline in the participation of women in public roles after the crisis is over.<sup>4</sup> "Thus, the self-sufficient pioneer woman of the North American West was succeeded (in image at least) not by the woman entrepreneur, senator or professional, as might have been expected, but by the fainting sheltered Victorian lady."<sup>5</sup>

1. ALTBACH, E. H. Women In America. 1974, p. 19

2. See PADAN-EISENSTARK, D. "Image and Reality: Women's Status in Israel". In ROHLICH-LEAVITT, R. Women Cross-Culturally

3. CHANEY, E. "The mobilization of Women: Three Societies". In ROHLICH-LEAVITT, R. Women Cross-Culturally . p.475

4. e.g., comparison of the number of women in parliament immediately after World War II and much later, in France and Italy.

5. CHANEY, op. cit. p.476

In Liberia, eighteen women arrived with the first group of pioneers in 1820. In erecting shelters and supporting themselves, women obviously had to contribute their labour, helping build the mud, log or board houses, and cultivating gardens. They had to take part in the defence of the settlement as well: December 1st had been celebrated for many generations as "Mathilda Newport Day" in commemoration of Mathilda Newport who, during the Deis 1822 attack on Monrovia ignited the cannon which drove the attackers away.<sup>1</sup> When more land was acquired, the pioneers established the settlements of Edina, Marshall, Buchanan, Greenvill and others, all with the help of women, who worked side by side with the men.

While in American and Israeli societies the images created during the crisis episode of the pioneering period gave way later to other images, affecting the economic roles of women, their public participation; and consequently their status, the self-images of Liberian women created during the pioneering period seem to have perpetuated. This phenomenon is rooted in what we shall term a situation of continuous crisis: the challenges of the first settlements were replaced by others, no less exerting. In a situation of minority rule and the oppression of tribal majority, the women had to be called upon to defend, side by side with the men, the way of life of the settler group, their Christian values and their supremacy. In this situation of continuous crisis, without the help of their women the small group of settlers stood the danger of assimilation. Fraenkel noted that the skin colour of the Americo-Liberians made it "more important for them to stress the social distance between them and the local Africans. The fact that they were not obviously physically different accentuated the fear - shared by other colonial communities - of being submerged in what was to

1. Mathilda Newport Day, which symbolized the victory of the Americo-Liberian group over the tribal people, is no longer celebrated in Liberia, for obvious reasons.

them a barbarious and heathen society. This fear is still basic in Americo-Liberian psychology".<sup>1</sup> In other words, the need for the women to fulfill roles in which they share tasks and public roles with men has persisted in a situation of crisis determined by fear of assimilation and loss of elite group privileges.<sup>2</sup>

The image of the pioneer woman is therefore that of a necessary, and equal partner to the man in a situation of crisis.

The three cultural patterns presented in the model above (see figure VIII.1) can be seen as reinforcing cultural patterns. We have seen that the tribal cultural patterns produced the image of a capable producer and distributor, the slave cultural pattern produced the image of the worker and provider, while the pioneer cultural pattern produced the image of the necessary and equal partner. We have stressed that economic roles are based mostly on cultural patterns determined by the environment and history rather than by biogenetic characteristics. The reinforcing cultural patterns which are significant in the history of Liberian society, tribal, slave and pioneering patterns, are expected therefore to produce and strengthen egalitarian female economic roles and images.

Objectively, we have already proven that as administrators and managers Liberian women certainly appear to fulfill economic roles which are egalitarian and independent in nature. The fact that a bigger proportion of them are in such positions when compared to other countries is in itself an evidence of the role women play in the Liberian society. Yet, subjectively, the question remains as to whether the women see themselves as such. This is precisely what the survey data aimed to explore. How does the typical Liberian administrator/manager perceive herself and her economic role? What does she feel ought to be the role of women in society?

1. FRAENKEL, M. op. cit. pp. 13-14

2. The sharing of public roles with men does not entail however full participation in decision-making roles. This issue was discussed at length in Chapter V

What are her own role priorities?

In order to determine the perception of the role of women in the Liberian society, the respondents in the survey were given a list of eight qualities which they were asked to arrange in order of appreciation. It was stressed in all interviews that answers to this particular question should correspond to the respondent's perception of what is generally thought of in the Liberian society as ideal qualities, and not necessarily to the respondent's own perception. However, the women were very likely to present their own perceptions as representing those of the society in general, in order to avoid cognitive dissonance, i.e. a dissonance between their actions and their values. Where there may be a discrepancy between the social norms as the woman sees them, e.g. in relations to expectations concerning her mother role, and her actions, which may be perceived by the woman as deviation, we expect the woman to tend to present herself as a conformist rather than a deviant. Therefore, being highly educated, we would expect the woman to indicate that the "Liberian society" appreciates education as a quality attributed to women. At the same time, conformity being an important value in society, we would expect the women to also indicate a high level of appreciation for qualities which are usually considered 'feminine', e.g. faithfulness to husband. Such adjustments are obviously in relation to what the respondents believe is expected of them.<sup>1</sup>

The eight qualities presented to the respondents represent each a corresponding role, assuming that the qualities represent the individual conception of that particular role:

1. Field work experience fully supported the assumption that women see society values as 'coloured' by their own value. Most respondents did not distinguish between the two. Also, the concept of evaluative, or audience, group may be introduced here to indicate in an abstract manner the group according to which the woman will evaluate her behaviour and will adjust her declared values accordingly.

- Spending most of the time with her children-(mother role)
- Being successful and a smart business woman-(business woman role)
- Being a faithful and loyal wife-(wife role)
- Being able to manage things on her own-(independent woman role)
- Being able to earn supplementary income to help the family-(provider role)
- Being highly educated-(educated women role)
- Being in an important job and being committed to it-(career woman role)
- Engaging in many voluntary services-(philanthropist' role)

TABLE 8.1 - QUALITIES SCALE

<u>CATEGORY PLACEMENT</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN CHOOSING THE CATEGORY PLACEMENT</u>
1. Being highly educated	28.8%
2. Being a faithful wife	26.4%
3. Spending most of the time with her children	23.3%
4. Able to manage on her own	20.2%
5. Able to earn supplementary income	19.8%
6. Being a successful business woman	19.5%
7. Being committed to an im- portant job	20.2%
8. Engaging in voluntary ser- vices	49.1%

The categories are arranged in order from the most appreciated to the least appreciated. The percentages opposite each category indicate the proportion of the women who have chosen that particular placement for the category. For every category, the highest percentage was chosen in order to determine the placement on the scale.



Indeed, being highly educated themselves, the women placed the quality representing the role of the educated woman at the top of the list, as being more appreciated than the qualities representing the roles of wife and mother, which were placed next on the scale. This again was expected, since the choice of these categories represents conformity to two of the most highly valued norms in society, attached to the roles of wife and mother.<sup>1</sup>

Next on the scale came the quality of being able to manage on her own. The cultural pattern analysis pointed out the importance of the element of economic independence in the images based on tribal, slave and pioneering patterns, and corresponds therefore with this finding. Being able to earn supplementary income, a quality representing the role of the provider, is again based on images built on tribal, slave and pioneering patterns, and ranks midway down our scale.

Though the women in our survey are all in administrative and managerial positions, and are presumably what we call 'career women', the quality of being in an important job and being committed to it ranked next to last on the scale. Turning back to the hypothesis presented and analyzed in previous chapters, we can accept the women's choice as further confirmation of their lack of power motivation.

Table 8.2, which compares the scale by sector, points out further that it is in the public sector where the role of a career woman is less appreciated. Private sector respondents stressed on the other hand the quality of being in an important job and being committed to it, and awarded it the fourth place in the scale, followed by the quality representing the role of the business woman.

1. These norms were further strengthened by Western cultural patterns, in a process referred to earlier.

Finally, the category in which the respondents in both sectors exhibited the highest level of agreement in placement was the quality of 'being engaged in voluntary services'. 52.1% of all private sector women, and 46.7% of all public sector women agreed this quality of offering philanthropic services to society is least appreciated in Liberian society.

TABLE 8.2 - QUALITIES SCALE BY SECTOR

<u>PRIVATE SECTOR SCALE</u>		<u>PUBLIC SECTOR SCALE</u>	
<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
1. Educated woman	37.0%	1. Faithful wife	30.0%
2. Faithful wife	21.9%	2. Educated woman	22.2%
3. Mother	23.3%	3. Mother	23.3%
4. Career woman	21.9%	4. Provider	22.2%
5. Business woman	21.6%	5. Independent woman	22.2%
6. Provider	22.2%	6. Business woman	21.1%
7. Independent woman	21.9%	7. Career woman	18.9%
8. Philanthropist	52.1%	8. Philanthropist	46.7%

Further analysis of the data showed that among those in the private sector who placed the educated woman in the first place, 48.1% came from among the external group. Among those who placed the faithful wife in the first place, 56.3% came from among the core group. In the public sector however, 55% of those who placed the educated woman in the first place came from the core group, while 48.1% of those who placed the faithful wife in the first place came from the extended group. Among those who placed the business woman in the first place, 45.5% in the private

sector, and 50.0% in the public sector came from the core group, while among those who placed the independent woman in the first place 44.4% in the private sector came from the external group, and 54.6% in the public sector came from the extended group.

TABLE 8.3 - FIRST PLACE RANK BY ETHNIC GROUP

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>CORE</u>	<u>EXTENDED</u>	<u>EXTERNAL</u>
Mother role	8 (13.1%)	12 (22.6%)	5 (9.6%)
Business woman role	9 (14.8%)	3 (5.7%)	7 (13.5)
Wife role	16 (26.2%)	14 (26.4%)	13 (25.0%)
Independent woman role	5 (8.2%)	9 (17.0%)	6 (11.5%)
Provider role	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.9%)	0
Educated woman role	18 (29.5%)	12 (22.6%)	17 (32.7%)
Career woman role	2 (3.3%)	2 (3.8%)	2 (3.8%)
Philanthropist role	1 (1.6%)	0	2 (3.8%)
N	61 (100.0%)	53 (100.0%)	52 (99.9%)

In Table 8.3, which presents the number of women in each ethnic category who rank the quality in first place, we observe that among those who ranked the mother's role qualities first, the lowest percentage came from the external group. This can be explained on the basis of child-care patterns prevailing among people of the hinterland tribes: where polygamy is fairly common, and where the extended family as a residential unit is almost the rule, women find it easy to provide surrogate care to

their children while they are engaged in farm work or trading. A co-wife or an older/younger member of the family is usually available for the job. It is also fairly common to give a child to be brought up by another member of the family who is childless, e.g. a sister.

Among those who ranked the role qualities of the independent woman in the first place, the lowest percentage came from the core group, while among those who ranked the educated woman in the first place, the highest percentage comes from the external group.

The roles of the woman as a provider for her family, an economically independent woman, and educated woman and a philanthropist who offers her services to society, were further tested in a question inquiring about the respondent's motives for working. Women who declared that they work in order to cover subsistence costs or to pay household expenses act the role of the provider. Those who stated their motive to be the wish to be independent, to be busy, or to cover costs of better clothing for themselves, act the role of the independent woman. Those who work in order to utilize their education stress the role of the educated woman, while those who work because they feel their services to society are needed stress the philanthropist's role.

In this question, the actual performance of the woman in her work role was tested, rather than her conception of the obligations of various roles which was presented earlier, i.e. her ideals concerning role images.

In their actual role performance, according to the result presented in Table 8.4, the role of the provider seems to be stressed in performance more among women of the extended and external group than among women of the core group, while the philanthropist role, expressed in the motive of needed services, is stressed among members of the extended group. However, more significant are the results obtained concerning independence and education. Though members of the external group believe the educated is highly appreciated in the Liberian society (see Table 8.3, presenting

the women's role conception), only 15.4% of them actually work in order to utilize their education. 37.7% of the core group members, and 34.5% of the extended members on the other hand work in order to utilize their education. The seeming contradiction between the role conception and performance is explained when we bear in mind the educational level of the groups: according to the data presented earlier, public sector women, among who core group members are over-represented, have a higher level of education than the private sector women, where external group members are over-represented. Also, in their position of members of the elite group, core group women have had better access to education, via better access to money and influence. It is not surprising therefore that the more highly educated women, the members of the core group, are also numerically more motivated by the wish to utilize their education.

TABLE 8.4 - MOTIVES FOR WORKING BY ETHNIC AFFILIATION

<u>MOTIVE/GROUP</u>	<u>CORE</u>	<u>EXTENDED</u>	<u>EXTERNAL</u>
Cover subsistence costs and household expenses	10 (16.4%)	14 (25.5%)	11 (21.2%)
Be independent, keep busy and cover clothing costs	17 (27.9%)	7 (12.7%)	24 (46.1%)
Utilize education	23 (37.7%)	19 (34.5%)	8 (15.4%)
Services needed	8 (13.1%)	14 (25.5%)	7 (13.5%)
Others	3 (4.9%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.8%)
N	61 (100.0%)	55 (100.0%)	52 (100.0%)

The data concerning the economic independence motive is interesting as well, in that almost half of the external group members, 46.1%, work in order to be independent, keep busy, or cover costs of own clothing. 27.9% of the core group women, and 12.7% of the extended group women admit that the achievement of economic independence as a motive plays a part in their work performance. Again, this is compatible with the role of the woman as an independent producer and distributor, as established by tribal cultural patterns. Though less core and extended group members chose economic independence as a motive, it does take second place, after education, in core group motivation. This is compatible with the economically independent role of women as established by the slave and pioneer cultural patterns.

The philanthropist motivation seems to be consequently low among the women's priorities: few of them considered the need the society has of their activity in voluntary associations, except church groups. Role conception and role performance here are well coordinated. Not surprisingly, in the three cultural patterns we presented, philanthropist activities are not an essential part of women's roles.

The slave cultural pattern established the role of the woman as an equal partner to the men. How did women in administrative and managerial positions perceive the attitudes of the men who subordinate to them? Do the men accept the equal access women have with men to such high positions, or do they resent it? Though data may be biased in that it presents only the opinion of the women, and not the men themselves, it reveals clearly that more than three-quarters of the women feel that they are fully accepted by the men: 43.3% of those who have males as their subordinates insisted in fact that the men do not pay attention to their being females, while an additional 32.2% believe that their relationship with their male subordinates is in fact better because they are women.

TABLE 8.5 - MALES' ATTITUDES

<u>ATTITUDE</u>	
<u>Men could do better</u>	<u>12 (8.4%)</u>
<u>Do not pay attention</u>	<u>62 (43.4%)</u>
<u>Relationship better because respondent is female</u>	<u>46 (32.2%)</u>
<u>A Few openly hostile</u>	<u>23 (16.1%)</u>
<u>N</u>	<u>143 (100.0%)</u>

The role of the woman as an equal partner is also expressed in the expense sharing pattern as we have seen earlier, which is an indicator of role performance: 61.2% of all married women are responsible together with their husbands for all day to day expenses in the family. In that, they fulfill, ofcourse, their provider role as well.

As this chapter concentrated on role perception and performance, it is only appropriate that we end with a note on role conflict: in this context we shall define role conflict as a wide gap of incompatibility between the society's norms regarding rights and obligations attached to specific social positions, i.e., role conception, or role expectation, and the specific actions actors in certain social positions actually carry out, i.e., role performance. It entails compatibility between role images and the self perceptions of women. The role images are provided by society as normative patterns and conflict will result therefore in a situation of cognitive dissonance, i.e. when women perceive themselves as acting contrary to these normative patterns. Levine<sup>1</sup> suggests that occupational roles are part of the self-image of women, and when economic changes

1. LEVINE, R. "Sex Roles and Economic Change in Africa". Ethnology, Vol V, 1966, pp. 186-193

necessarily cause changes in the self-image of women, through the new occupational roles they are expected to fulfill, the result is the arousal of conflict and stress. These will be reduced only where the occupational roles of the women will remain well-defined. Role conflict as a potential stress producing factor in the work situation depends on the women's traditional roles, and on societal attitudes concerning women's occupational roles, i.e. on role images.

Apart from specific cultural norms, other stress-reducing mechanisms include the husband's attitude and the means available to the working mother in aiding her in the supervision of her children. Both these mechanisms were dealt with in an earlier chapter.

We have seen that cultural patterns affecting the three ethnic groups of women in the Liberian society, core, extended and external groups, define the role images of the women as economically independent and equal producers and distributors, as necessary workers, whether the cultural pattern is of tribal, slave or pioneer origin (which were all seen as reinforcing patterns). Role images originating from the cultural patterns of the core group, slave and pioneer patterns, affect women outside this group, the core group being an elite reference group.

In their role performance within their present occupational/economic roles, the Liberian women who are managers and administrators remaining within a well-defined role image established by those patterns, and the possibility of role conflict is therefore minimized. Their role images allow them to maintain a self perception of independent economic actors, equal partners to men, without experiencing conflict between these images and perception. The role image of women in the Liberian society is compatible with their current occupational role, and it conforms precisely to the performance expected of them in their roles as women in administrative and managerial positions.



## CHAPTER VIII - CASE STUDIES

DR. B. S. - believes that the image of educated Liberian women is based on the model of the American woman, in contrast to the British influence in other West African countries, which predisposed them towards the "British Housewife" model. However, she believes that initially it was not accepted among the 'civilized' (the educated) Liberians that women should work.<sup>1</sup>

MS. S. - attributed the success of the women in reaching high positions to the prevalent images and roles of women in society: the image of a woman as a worker more than others. In her words: "We Liberian women are unusual in the way we are brought up - taught to work. I was a cadet in the Ministry of Finance, and worked in V.O.A. during high school. I have always worked. My father was a general in the army and he expected me to do so." She noted that during the 1980 coup many women had to face the soldiers alone since the husbands disappeared. They continued to head to family in the absence of the men. This seems to have been the pattern even in pre-coup Liberia, since wives were brought up to work hard and were expected to manage alone.

MRS. K. - attributed the success of the women to the influential position of mothers in the society. This influence she attributed to two sources: one is the traditional position of women within the pioneer society established in Liberia with the coming of the freed slaves during the 19th century, and the second is the great importance attached in traditional Liberian societies to tracing relationships through the mother side. (A reference to the matri-patrilineal nature of Liberian societies).

MS. F.G. - said in reference to male/female perceptions in the Liberian society that there was never a sharp demarcation between boys and girls in relation to education and the aspirations attached to it. She also noted that although there is a clear division of labour by sex in traditional society, both sexes are expected to work and contribute, and consequently women have always been productive: "Traditionally, starting from the village level, all men and women are working, though doing different kinds of work. They all have roles to play. Women's role has always been to work."

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Liberian women in administrative and managerial positions may seem insignificant when their absolute number within the Liberian workforce is considered. However, even the casual observer in Monrovia has to admit that their impact is encountered frequently in the Liberian urban society. Such impact cannot be disregarded in a society undergoing a process of social change.

Our understanding of regular patterns of attitudes and behaviour can be improved by examining cases which do not fit into the regular pattern. An insight may thus be gained into the general work pattern of women by observing those who are the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, the Liberian female administrators and managers represent a 'frontier force', and the ultimate point to which Liberian women have reached in their penetration into the modern labour force. As such, their study sheds light on the magnitude of female modern labour force participation in Liberia in general.

For these reasons, the work summarised in this paper is considered an essential part in our understanding of women and work. It identifies occupational motivations and aspirations - an important factor in manpower planning, it provides information on women's job mobility, labour force participation and levels of education. It investigates their attitude to job performance, cultural job stereotyping, the norms of adequacy attached to work by the women, and their achievement motivation. It provided data concerning the possible role to be played by women in the process of urbanization. Finally, as much emphasis was laid in the past on the participation of West African women in the "informal sector" of the economy, namely in trading and

1  
 agriculture, this work aimed to explore the much less researched participation of urban women in the "formal sector" of the economy. It aimed to add to our knowledge in a poorly documented area in Liberian studies, and will help fill therefore some of the information gap.

Methodologically, the research concentrated on the comparison of women in high positions in the private and the public sectors of Monrovia, as it is affected by the nature of the Liberian social structure.

The study was initially spurred by statistical findings, presented in the first and second chapters, according to which the participation of Liberian women in sales occupations, as large scale traders, market sellers and street vendors, is much lower than that of women in other West African countries. Their participation rate in managerial and executive positions however is higher than that of other West African women, coupled with the relatively higher proportion of women in third level education - university or college - found in Liberia.

The purpose of the research was consequently to find out the scope, the shape, the characteristics, and the causes of the Liberian women's penetration into, and participation in the modern labour force in administrative, managerial and executive positions in the urban area of Monrovia. It aimed to analyze the relationship between the occupational position of the Liberian female administrators/managers and their status, as expressed in their perceptions of decision-making and power motivation.

1. An example is the most recent project on Liberian women, which was jointly sponsored by USAID and the Liberian government, "A Profile of Liberian Women in Development", published in March 1982. The project disregarded the participation of Liberian women in the modern labour sector, producing therefore an incomplete "profile" of Liberian women.

The point of departure was the hypothesis, stating that "the position of the Liberian female administrator/manager is a function of the political stand of the Americo-Liberian/settler group, who, being a minority ruling group who perceived women as less of a political threat, utilized the women fully." The utilization of women occurred within the public sector, i.e. in government posts over which the ruling group had control. The women came primarily from the core group, and when their number was insufficient to fill all the posts, extended group women, who have been exposed to core group values and norms for long, were recruited as well.

The first of four assumptions resulting from the hypothesis stated therefore that "a higher number of the women in administrative and managerial positions come from among the settler group, and share similar personal and social characteristics." The data presented in Chapter four clearly supported this assumption: women of settler origin were found to dominate the higher positions.

The discussion of the personal and social characteristics of the women in Chapter seven centred on the comparison of sectors rather than ethnic groups, assuming that the public sector is dominated by women of the core/extended group, and the private sector by women of the external group (as seen in the following discussion of the second assumption). The discussion revealed that women in the public sector tended to be older, a large proportion of them was found to be married, and more of them utilized relatives as home help. Women in the public sector were married mostly to professionals, while women in the private sector exhibited also a large proportion married to husbands who are managers, executives or businessmen.

More women in the public sector had husbands whose earnings were higher than theirs, and fewer of them could answer an unqualified "yes" when asked whether they were ready to loan money to their husbands. Public sector women were also found to be more highly educated, and about a quarter of them had completed post-graduate studies. They were mostly educated during their high school in Monrovia or in schools along the coast, and a bigger proportion of them belonged to the three 'elite' churches in Liberia - the Baptist, Methodist and Episcopalian churches. (More Lutherans and Catholics were found among the private sector women.)

Statistical analysis of the data by ethnic affiliation rather than sector lends support to our presumption that the preponderance of core group women in the public sector corresponds with most of the characteristics mentioned above. In other words, our analysis of the public sector as representative of the core/settler group was justified, and the assumption that women of the settler group occupying high positions in the public sector share similar personal characteristics was therefore proven correct. To preserve the clarity of the model and avoid unnecessary repetitions, the analysis of personal and social characteristics was presented only by sector.

The second assumption was that "a larger proportion of the settler women in administrative and managerial positions are found in the public sector, not in the private sector." Again, Chapter four analyzed the distribution of the women by sector, proving the assumption correct.

Women of settler origin and members of the core group were found to dominate the public sector, i.e. they were more numerous in government positions. They also dominated the highest positions among all administrative and managerial positions which were examined. On the other hand, women of tribal origin were found to be more numerous in the private sector, dominating the highest positions there as well. The dichotomy presented by the data is quite clear, and serves as a statement of the minority elite policy of utilizing women in government positions in order to preserve their rule.

The third assumption stated that "the Liberian women in administrative and managerial positions do not have political power ambitions, and did not reach to these positions because of motivation to be politically influential or successful." The analysis supporting this assumption and proving it correct was presented in Chapter five. In fact, public sector women, presumed to be given easy access to their positions so that they may act as a 'buffer' force between the settler minority and the aspiring male tribal Liberians, were found to have less actual decision-making power than women in similar positions in the private sector. They were also found to attach less importance to the ability to exercise authority and make important decisions in their career than the private sector women, and a smaller percentage among them were ready to accept a job out of the capital city in order to be in a higher position. Though the actual level of decision-making may depend on the nature of the sector of employment, the attitude towards the exercise of authority does not emanate from the sector itself.



Though a larger number among the public sector women were members in voluntary associations, this did not carry any political implications, as the majority of the associations they belonged to are religious in nature and do not serve as a stepping stone to a political career as the men's associations have been proven to be.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the data revealed that the majority of the women do not hold any positions in their church organizations.

It must be noted that though the power motivation of the women in the public sector was found to be lower than that of private sector women, it does not necessarily follow that the power motivation of private sector women is high. Values concerning women's roles are disseminated throughout society, and as expected, only a small proportion of both public and private sector women declared that they would like very much to achieve political power, or considered the ability to command and control others as important for career women in their positions.

The fourth assumption stated that "women in administrative and managerial positions in the private sector are therefore more committed to, and more motivated to succeed, in their jobs." Though commitment to the job as the area from which the greatest satisfaction is derived was slightly higher among private sector women, women in the public sector were found to have a higher job involvement by virtue of reading more job related material and having greater social interaction with their work associates. The data proved inconclusive in relation to other commitment variables, including work over-time, or taking on extra responsibilities, although private sector women's level of readiness to do such, seemed to be higher.

1. HLOPHE, S. op. cit.

Women in the private and the public sectors were willing to travel as part of the job, yet private sector women were mostly ready to travel in order to achieve success, unlike public sector women. Readiness to cancel prior engagements was found to be higher among private sector women and so was their commitment to the idea of continued work, mostly for the sake of emotional, physical and professional well-being.

In the case of the fourth assumption, further data analysis indicated that in relation to commitment variables the public sector did not represent the core group. In fact, analysis by ethnic group affiliation presented earlier revealed that core group women, in both the private and public sectors, exhibit a higher level of job commitment, though among all groups commitment was consistently higher in the private sector. The fourth assumption remains therefore inconclusive and only partially correct: while it is true that private sector women are more committed, this commitment seems to stem from the nature of the sector itself, rather than from the position of 'core' women as a buffer group.

The implications for further research are evident in this case: there is a need for deeper understanding of the motivations and consequent commitment of the core group women to their jobs. Being a previously unexplored area of study, it is clear that this work cannot encompass all the variables relevant to the study of women in higher positions in Liberia. Subsequent research should explore areas which are either only superficially discussed here or are ignored altogether: the interaction between family patterns and work/careers, ideologies concerning home and work roles, the relationship between education and work,

performance levels, and the economic context of the employment of women in developing countries in high posts. In broader terms, there is strong need for research to be carried out involving the participation of Liberian women in the modern labour force in general.

The framework for the research presented here is a socio-historical process which placed one social group in Liberia, the settler group and those assimilated into it, in its position as a ruling group. This process resulted in a demand for the labour of women of the core group, especially in administrative and managerial positions, in order to preserve elite rule. April 1980 brought about the end of the settlers' rule as an elite group. Political pressure groups began forming already in the early 1970's, including the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas, the Movement for Justice in Africa, and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia, the later lately registered as a political party.<sup>1</sup> The tension built-up in the Liberian society was finally channelled towards the explosive situation of the "April 14 riots", which occurred in 1979. The riots left many dead, and most opposition leaders were jailed. Undaunted, the newly registered Progressive People's Party declared that "the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness."<sup>2</sup> This change of government finally took place on April 12, 1980, when a group of army officers, later declared the People's Redemption Council, carried a coup which toppled President Tolbert's regime and ended more than a century of settlers' rule.

1. BOLEY, S. G. E. Liberia: the Rise and Fall of the First Republic. Macmillan Publishers, 1983, p. 97.
2. BOLEY, S. op. cit., p. 114.

The initial reaction of the new regime to women was ambiguous. An earlier newsletter of the PRC government proved in fact to be hostile towards women, which prompted Ms. Olivia Shannon, a prominent broadcaster, to react sharply in a letter to one of the daily newspapers. Similar hostility, though towards market women specifically, was noted in Ghana by Harrel-Bond and Fraker, who commented that the "excess of hostility which we have seen displayed towards market <sup>1</sup>mammies this summer in Ghana may only be the other side of the coin on which is printed the fear which men feel of women's power." However, casual observation reveals no significant change in the situation of Liberian women. As before, the factor most important in their entry into top positions as administrators and managers is the demand for their labour. Though the justification for the demand has changed, the demand itself persists. Women are still perceived as less threat to the ruling group than men, since women can always be recruited through male/female relationship to support the ruling group, old and new alike. More importantly, the revolutionary change of government in 1980 resulted in a severe drain of qualified manpower. Those of settler origin, or those who were favoured by the Tolbert's government, hurriedly left the country and have begun to return in small numbers only recently. In the vacuum left by their absence there was no place for continued hostility towards women. They were needed to fulfill various positions. Quite apart from the posts which they have retained, <sup>2</sup>women have been appointed to positions which were

1. WEST AFRICA, 25 November 1979, p. 2286

2. For example, the replacement of Kate Bryant, ex-minister of health, by Martha Sandolo Belle, previously the Director of Nursing School in Cuttington College, or the replacement of the Deputy Mayoress of Monrovia, Ms. Ryta Stryker, by Moima Kpoto.

previously a male stronghold: in 1983 alone a woman was appointed as the Minister of Commerce and Transportation, while another was made the General Manager of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Co. Nevertheless, women are still not included in the decision-making group, and obviously are not part of the ruling military council of the PRC.

The future of the Liberian female administrator/manager depends on various factors which are beyond the scope of the research presented here, especially factors which may promote the growth of a healthy middle class, composed of technocrats of tribal origin. The limited experience of the post-coup period in Liberia may enable us to assert however that whatever the prevailing conditions, the participation of women in the labour force in administrative and managerial occupations will continue to depend on the existence of a demonstrated demand for their contribution.

## APPENDIX

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - THE

QUESTIONNAIRE

The interviewers were chosen from among senior sociology major students in the University of Liberia. The students were taking part in a practical research course, but also underwent additional training sessions in preparation for their role as interviewers in order to enhance and improve their interview techniques. During the training period all questions in the questionnaire were discussed at length. In sessions held after the completion of the pilot study problems were discussed.

The interview technique used in the survey did not allow interviewees to complete the questionnaire in the absence of the interviewer. Two copies of the schedule were used for each interview: one of each was given to the interviewee and the interviewer. The interviewee was given the choice of whether to mark the answers herself in her copy of the schedule, or to have the interviewer mark her answers.

SURVEY OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN MONROVIA

This questionnaire is part of a study done under the auspices of the Department of Sociology, University of Keele, England, and the Institute of Research, the University of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia. It contains questions concerning your job experience, your career pattern, and related factors.

You have been selected as a respondent for this questionnaire in a completely random way, and you will not be asked to write your name. All information reported in this interview will be held in strict confidence, and none will be published in such a manner as to identify you. It will only be used in statistical analysis which will enable us to present a clear picture of Liberian women in positions similar to yours. Your help and cooperation in giving truthful answers will be greatly appreciated.

-----  
Please place a check mark (x) for the appropriate questions in the space beside the answer you chose.

PART I

1. What is the title of your job? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Explain in short what does your job entail doing: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your approximate monthly salary? Include income tax and fringe benefits if any.

- a. below \$600.00 a month
- b. \$601.00 - \$900.00 a month
- c. \$901.00 - \$1,200 a month
- d. above \$1,201.00 a month

4. Do you receive any fringe benefits? Check more than one if applicable.

- a. housing
- b. housing allowance
- c. transportation allowance
- d. a car
- e. travelling allowance
- f. dependents allowance
- g. payment or reimbursement of children's school fees
- h. medical insurance
- i. overseas trips/vacations
- j. others, please specify:
- k. none

5. Who are the people you have to report to in your job? State only their positions, not their names.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_



6. Which aspects of your job are left to your own decision, and which have to be decided upon with the help of someone above you?

Make my own decisions

Make decisions with the help of others

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

PART II

7. Please give details of your occupational experience. Include all the jobs held prior to the one you have now, whether related to your present job or not.

TITLE OF JOB

PLACE OF WORK

NO. OF YEARS IN IT

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever been out temporarily of job since your first job?

( ) Yes

( ) No

9. If you have been temporarily out of job, why? Check more than one reason if applicable, and state how long you had been out of job.

<u>REASON</u>	<u>NO. OF YEARS OUT OF THE LABOUR FORCE</u>
( ) a. in order to care for my children.....	a.
( ) b. in order to go for further studies.....	b.
( ) c. in order to be a better housewife.....	c.
( ) d. I could not get a suitable job for a .. while.....	d.
( ) e. other, please specify: _____	e.
_____	
_____	

PART III

10. What was your original reason for working? Please check the most important reason.

- ( ) a. to cover subsistence costs
  - ( ) b. to pay for household expenses (like school fees, furniture, car, etc.).
  - ( ) c. to be independent
  - ( ) d. to keep busy
  - ( ) e. to cover regular extra costs, e.g. better clothes
  - ( ) f. did not want my education to be wasted
  - ( ) g. felt my services were needed
  - ( ) h. other, specify please... \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

11. Why are you working now? Check the most important reason.

a. to cover subsistence costs

b. to pay for household expenses (see above)

c. to be independent

d. to keep busy

e. to cover regular extra costs (see above)

f. to utilize my education

g. feel my services are needed

h. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you progressed as rapidly as you should in your career?

Yes

No

12a. Why do you think so?

13. Do you expect you will rise to a higher position in the place where you work now?

Yes

No

Don't know

13a. If not, why? Check the most important reason.

a. higher positions are usually reserved for men

b. I do not have sufficient qualifications, experience or skills

c. I am quite satisfied with my present position

d. I do not have the right contacts or know the right people

e. Women with families, like myself, are not able to combine such positions with family responsibilities

f. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

14. Which of the following gives you the most satisfaction?
- ( ) a. family relations
  - ( ) b. your job
  - ( ) c. your religious beliefs
  - ( ) d. you leisure time activities, recreation
  - ( ) e. your political beliefs
  - ( ) f. your voluntary services (e.g. activities in the Red Cross)
  - ( ) g. running a home

15. Below is a list of ambitions people may have. Indicate beside how much you would like to achieve this ambition:

	<u>WOULD NOT LIKE IT</u>	<u>LIKE IT</u>	<u>LIKE IT</u> <u>VERY MUCH</u>
a. having a reputation as very capable and competent in my career.....( )		( )	( )
b. be a famous person.....( )		( )	( )
c. be rich.....( )		( )	( )
d. be in a powerful position.....( )		( )	( )
e. make an important scientific discovery very or professional contribution...( )		( )	( )

16. Below is a list of things considered by various people as important in accepting a job. Please check the three which are most important to you, giving them numbers in the space provided from 1 to 3, in order of importance:

- ( ) a. having flexible working hours
- ( ) b. knowing exactly how many hours a day you are expected to work
- ( ) c. being your own boss
- ( ) d. being paid exactly for the effort you put in
- ( ) e. having somebody you know in authority who can protect your rights

16. (con'd)

- f. where you will not be easily fired
- g. where it is easy to be absent from the job when you need to
- h. getting adequate salary and fringe benefits.
- i. where the position gives you the respect of the community
- j. where the job is compatible with your training
- k. being able to exercise authority and make important decisions
- l. an interesting job
- m. there are possibilities of promotion
- n. where you are able to help people
- o. being able to express yourself

PART IV

17. Which of the following gives you satisfaction in doing your present job? Check after each item whether you do not get satisfaction from it, get a little satisfaction, or get a lot of satisfaction:

	<u>NO</u> <u>SATISFACTION</u>	<u>A LITTLE</u> <u>SATISFACTION</u>	<u>A LOT OF</u> <u>SATISFACTION</u>
a. the prestige of the job.....	( )	( )	( )
b. the freedom to work independently without much supervision.....	( )	( )	( )
c. the freedom to allocate your time at work according to your own convenience.....	( )	( )	( )
d. the feeling of belonging to an organization or a group.....	( )	( )	( )

17. (con'd)

- e. the opportunity to socialize  
and meet with people in simi-  
lar occupations..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- f. the opportunity for self-ex-  
pression..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- g. the opportunity to use your  
skills and show what you can  
accomplish..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- h. the opportunity to work with  
people who know their job.... ( ) ( ) ( )
- i. the opportunity to earn more  
money..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- j. the feeling that it is a sta-  
ble and a secure job..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- k. the opportunity to put to use  
your educational qualification( ) ( ) ( )

18. Which of the following results in dissatisfaction in dion your present job? Check after each item whether it causes no dis-  
satisfaction to you, a little dissatisfaction, or a lot of dis-  
satisfaction:

- |   | <u>NO</u>              | <u>A LITTLE</u>        | <u>A LOT OF</u>        |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|   | <u>DISSATISFACTION</u> | <u>DISSATISFACTION</u> | <u>DISSATISFACTION</u> |
| a. doing repetitive work...( )                              |                        | ( )                    | ( )                    |
| b. not being able to contri-<br>bute a lot..... ( )         |                        | ( )                    | ( )                    |
| c. not being wholly responsi-<br>ble for jobs done..... ( ) |                        | ( )                    | ( )                    |
| d. doing useless tasks.... ( )                              |                        | ( )                    | ( )                    |
| e. being too closely super-<br>vised..... ( )               |                        | ( )                    | ( )                    |

18. (con'd)

- f. not feeling secure in  
your position.....( ) ( ) ( )
- g. not being free to move  
about and allocate your  
time as you want..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- h. not having a feeling of  
belonging..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- i. not having your skills  
and qualifications fully  
utilized..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- j. not earning enough..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- k. not having opportunities  
for training..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- l. not having opportunities  
promotion..... ( ) ( ) ( )
- m. lack of understanding  
from your superiors.... ( ) ( ) ( )

19. How many hours do you usually work daily?

- ( ) a. less than 5 hours
- ( ) b. 5 - 8 hours
- ( ) c. more than 8 hours
- ( ) d. it varies from day to day
- ( ) e. as many hours as needed to complete the work for the day

20. Do you work over-time?

- a. never, I find it difficult because of other responsibilities
- b. I am never asked to work over-time in my job.
- c. always
- d. only when planned far ahead
- e. when given a short notice
- f. when I know it will bring me recognition in my work
- g. I do not think I should be asked to work over-time.

21. If you found at the end of the day that you did something wrong, you would...

- a. correct it first thing the next morning
- b. stay over-time and correct it
- c. instruct somebody to correct it the same day
- d. instruct somebody to correct it the next day
- e. ignore it in the meantime

22. Do you carry work home?

- a. most of the time
- b. never
- c. when you feel energetic
- d. only when there is pressure of work
- e. only when it is important for your success to complete the work

23. Will you be ready to travel as part of your job?

- a. for short trips only
- b. no, I will not like to travel
- c. only if it is not too often
- d. yes, even for long trips
- e. only if it is really essential for the success of your job
- f. I am not ready to travel because of family obligations
- g. I am not ready to travel because of husband's opposition



24. If offered more pay, what would you do for it?

- a. work as hard as usual and be grateful
- b. put in more hours
- c. take on extra responsibilities
- d. others, specify please \_\_\_\_\_

25. Which of the following will you be ready to cancel because of pressure in the office? You may check more than one:

- a. an appointment at the beauty shop
- b. a dinner date with your husband or friend
- c. a planned vacation
- d. voluntary organization work (e.g. church work, Red Cross)
- e. your daughter's/son's birthday party
- f. none of the above
- g. all of the above

26. In which case are you most likely to decide to take on extra responsibilities in your job?

- a. there is nobody else to do it
- b. you are getting extra pay for it
- c. it will increase the prestige of your office/ministry/company
- d. it will bring you success in your job
- e. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

27. Which of the following will justify your being late or absent from work?

- a. living far from the place of work
- b. being busy with another work you have to do
- c. a member of your immediate family is sick
- d. you yourself are sick
- e. there is nothing much to do in the office
- f. the absence is not going to affect your success in the job

28. If you are offered a good job out of Monrovia, will you be ready to accept it?

- Yes
- No

29. If yes, check the reason which appeals to you most:

- a. the salary is much higher than what you are getting now
- b. better fringe benefits are offered, e.g. paid utilities, housing
- c. your husband could be employed in the same area too
- d. the position is higher than the one you are now holding
- e. your skills could be better utilized in the new job
- f. there are better facilities in the area, e.g. schools, social life

30. What do you mostly read in your spare time?

- a. novels
- b. daily newspapers e.g. The Observer
- c. weekly journals, monthlies, e.g. Newsweek, African Women
- d. business journals & magazines, e.g. African Business
- e. material relating to your work
- f. the job does not leave you with much spare time to read

PART V

31. Where were your parents born?

- a. MOTHER: Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ethnic affiliation: Tribe \_\_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_
- b. FATHER: Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ethnic affiliation: Tribe \_\_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_

32. Where were you born?

Country \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

32a. Your age group:

- a. less than 25  
 b. 26 - 35  
 c. 36 - 45  
 d. above 45

33. Did you grow up with your parents?

- a. Yes, with both of them  
 b. yes, with one of them  
 c. No

34. How many years have you been residing in Monrovia?

- a. continuously  
 b. less than a year  
 c. 1 - 5 years  
 d. 6 - 10 years  
 e. more than 10 years

35. Have you spent any time abroad?

a. Yes

b. No

35a. If yes, what was your length of stay? \_\_\_\_\_ years

35b. Where were you?

a. U.S.A.

b. Europe

c. Another African country

36. Please list the schools you have attended, including elementary and high school, trade school & college

<u>SCHOOL'S NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DIPLOMA, CERTIFICATE, DEGREE</u>
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____	8. _____

37. What is your marital status?

a. single

b. married

c. seperated

d. divorced

e. widowed

IF YOU NEVER MARRIED BEFORE, SKIP QUESTIONS 38-49.

38. If married, or was married before, what is/was your husband's -
- a. occupation \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. birth place \_\_\_\_\_
  - country \_\_\_\_\_
  - county \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. ethnic affiliation \_\_\_\_\_
39. How many times have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_
40. How many years of schooling were completed by your husband?
- a. none
  - b. elementary
  - c. some high school
  - d. high school
  - e. some, or completed college
41. Do you have children?  a. Yes  b. No
- 41a. If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- 41b. How many are still living with you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 41c. How many are below school age? \_\_\_\_\_
42. Do you have home help? Check those you do:
- a. relatives
  - b. paid cook
  - c. houseboy
  - d. nanny/baby nurse

43. Which of the following statements describes most accurately your present or previous husband's attitude towards your work?
- a. likes to listen to your problems and successes and talks to you about them
  - b. is not interested in anything connected with your work
  - c. expresses sometimes dissatisfaction with the fact that you are working so hard
  - d. says occasionally that he would want you to stop working
  - e. tries to help you get promotions
  - f. happy that you work and earn money
44. Will you be ready to loan money to your husband?
- a. no, never
  - b. always
  - c. Yes, when you know he is able to pay the money back
  - d. there is no need, your finances are joined anyhow
45. Do you know your husband's exact earnings?
- a. no, I have no idea
  - b. yes, they are below mine
  - c. yes, they are equal to mine
  - d. yes, they are higher than mine
46. Which expenses in the home are you responsible for?
- a. none, my earnings are mine to use as I see fit
  - b. occasional large expenses, e.g. furniture, car
  - c. day to day general expenses: food, medicine, house repair, school fees, gasoline (cross out those you are not responsible for).

47. With whom do you attend social events?
- a. usually with your friends
  - b. mostly with your husband
  - c. mostly with your colleagues and business associates
  - d. sometimes with your husband, if it is expected of you
  - e. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
48. If your husband had to move abroad, or to another part of the country, would you leave your job and move with him?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. not sure
49. If yes, or if not sure, which of the following is most likely to affect your decision?
- a. prospects of getting a good job for yourself in the new area
  - b. his salary and fringe benefits are high enough to support both of you
  - c. the facilities in the area to which he is moving are better e.g. schooling, shopping, social life
  - d. your marriage will not last if you separate
  - e. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
50. If you wanted to leave your present position, how difficult do you believe will it be for you to achieve a similar position elsewhere?
- a. very difficult
  - b. fairly difficult
  - c. not very difficult
  - d. not difficult at all

51. Are there people in your close social circle (friends, family) who are in any of the following positions? You may check more than one:
- a. managers or assistant managers of private companies
  - b. managers or assistant managers of public corporations
  - c. government ministers, deputy ministers, or assistant ministers
  - d. directors or assistant directors in government
  - e. none of the above
52. Which is your religious or church affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_
53. Which, if any, of the following factors helped you attain your present position? You may check more than one:
- a. experience in the place where you are working now
  - b. experience in another company/government agency
  - c. knowing people in key positions
  - d. family influence
  - e. academic qualifications, professional qualifications
  - f. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
54. Are you active in any voluntary organization?  Yes  No
- 54a. If yes, name them: \_\_\_\_\_
- 
55. Do you hold any position in your church or religious organization?  
 Yes  No
56. What are your feelings and perception as a young person about your future career?
- a. perceived social barriers in becoming what you wanted to be
  - b. perceived financial difficulties in getting the type of education necessary for your career
  - c. felt sure your family would be able to help progress in your career



56. (con'd)

- d. did not perceive any social or financial difficulties in achieving your aims

PART VI

57. Do you have men as your subordinates? Yes No

58. If yes, which will you say is the statement which expresses most accurately the attitude of the men towards you?

- a. they believe a man could do the job better
- b. they do not pay attention to the fact that you are a woman
- c. your work relationships are better because you are a woman
- d. few of them are openly hostile to you because you are a woman

59. How did you get your present position?

- a. heard about a vacancy and applied for it
- b. was approached by someone in high position who asked you to fill the position
- c. was transferred to your present position from another ministry/agency/department
- d. was promoted to your present position
- e. approached yourself someone in high position and inquired about it
- f. other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 

60. Which of the following activities do you prefer most in occupying you when not working?

- a. visiting relatives and friends
- b. meeting business and work associates socially
- c. hobbies
- d. attending parties and similar social events

60. (con'd)

e. relaxing at home

f. sports

g. voluntary work

61. Below is a list of characteristics considered by people as most important for a successful career woman in your position in Liberia. Please check the three characteristics which are most important for you, and rank them from 1 to 3 in order of importance:

a. having a strong motivation to contribute to society

b. having the right experience for the job

c. having a strong motivation to succeed in life

d. having the right academic qualifications for the job

e. able to be autonomous in actions and decisions

f. being very interested in what you are doing

g. able to command and control others

62. Below is a list of qualities attributed to women. Some are more appreciated in the Liberian society than others. Please arrange them in order by giving them numbers from 1 to 8, from the most appreciated (1) to the least appreciated (8):

a. spending most of the time with her children

b. being a successful and a smart business woman

c. being a faithful and loyal wife

d. being able to manage things on her own

e. being able to earn some supplementary money to help the family

f. being highly educated

g. being in an important job and being committed to it

h. engaging in many voluntary services

63. If you had sufficient money to live on comfortably, would you continue working? ( )Yes ( )No

63a. Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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