



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

CAREER BARRIERS FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: CASE STUDY OF  
BENIN REPUBLIC (WEST AFRICA)

By

AYABA BRUNELLE BESSANVI

A project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master's in Human Resources Management  
to the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB)  
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

May 2018

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

CAREER BARRIERS FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: CASE STUDY OF  
BENIN REPUBLIC (WEST AFRICA)

By

AYABA BRUNELLE BESSANVI

Approved by:

---

Dr. Beverly Dawn Metcalfe  
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB)

First Reader

*Beverly Metcalfe*

---

Dr. Fida Afiouni  
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB)

Second Reader

*Fida Afiouni*

---

Date of project presentation: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2018

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name:

\_\_\_\_ Bessanvi \_\_\_\_\_ Ayaba \_\_\_\_\_ Brunelle \_\_\_\_\_

Last First Middle


Master's Thesis     Master's Project     Doctoral Dissertation

I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes

After:

**One ---- year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**  
**Two ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**  
**Three --X-- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 

Date 16/05/2018

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is dedicated to my husband, my best friend and life partner Bill, my children Chris and Eva. You gave me love, support and encouragement in my studies during difficulties and happy times.

To my sisters Olga, Nicole and Pauline. Thank you for your support and prayers.

To my nieces Joanita and Deo-Gracias may this work inspire you to persevere in your quest to excel and empower yourselves with knowledge even when circumstances challenge you.

Lastly this work is dedicated to my beloved father Eloi and my brave mother Emilienne. Thank you for your wonderful support, and for looking after my children while I was miles away. Thank you for all the sacrifices you have done to give me the opportunity to have access to education.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to GOD Almighty, and to all the persons who gave their full support and assistance in many ways during my studies in Lebanon.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisors Dr. Beverly Dawn Metcalfe and Dr. Fida Afiouni for their tireless efforts in guiding and giving me direction regarding the content, and for their invaluable support and dedication in critically evaluating my work.

I would also like to extend my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the MasterCard Foundation at AUB. Thank you for all your unceasing support.

Many thanks to Nadine KAZE who has opened her home and her heart to me. Thank you for making my stay in Lebanon much easier. More than a friend you are a Sister.

To my friend Georgine Honvoh, thank you for your unconditional support, love and prayers. You are so dear to my heart.

To my African MCF's fellow Mamadou Ouattara, thanks for being the wind beneath my wings and encouraging me to fly in adversity.

# AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Ayaba Brunelle Bessanvi

for Master of Business Administration

Major: Human Resources Management

Title: Career barriers for women's leadership development in the Public Sector: Case Study of Benin Republic (West Africa)

The Participation of women in the management of public sector is one of the most significant challenges worldwide in general, and Africa in particular. Globally, Women tend to be concentrated in lower-grade and lower-pay occupations despite their good representation in the public sector (OECD 2014). The Barriers to women's empowerment in public life persist and range from sex discrimination, biased mechanisms of promotion, limited women's choice of career path,. However, the extant research is based on western cases, and this does not reflect the issues and everyday experiences of women in the African public sector.

This study analyses the Career barriers women face in the Public Sector: Case Study of Benin Republic (West Africa). Literature was sourced from the following areas to support the study: gender equity in leadership positions, gender and leadership in Africa, gender inequality in management, gender stereotype, challenges to women in leadership, inequity in education, recruitment, employment and advancement, and government policies supporting and promoting women status and welfare.

Women leaders in the Republic of Benin and other parts of the world form the unit of analysis for this research. Qualitative research methods was used to collect and analyze data. To successfully conducted this research, two techniques were adopted, the use of the secondary data and semi-structured interviews (SSI). The use of secondary data included analysis of relevant data from World Bank, WEF, IMF, ILO; data from women's NGOs in West Africa. This provided insight into the current position of women in leadership roles, current global and state level policies for tacking capacity development.

To support extant secondary literature, semi-structured interviews was also conducted with ten (10) women, NGO's leader and managers working in the Public sector. The semi-structured interviews helped to obtain reliable, comparable qualitative data through relevant and meaningful questions in order to gain a better understanding of the current barriers and opportunities for woman leadership in Benin by analyzing interviewee's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions.

Based on analyzed data, the following related themes were found. From both sectors women are discriminated against due to 1.gender-based stereotypes in the workplace, 2.domestic constraints, 3.emotion management, 4.pressure at work and home, difficulty in finding find the balance between the professional and the family. There are also cultural factors (early marriage, female genital mutilation, male domination) which reinforce gendered power relations including finding that it difficult to take orders from women. Thus, women are seen as lesser than, less able and less knowledgeable to hold a management position. While trying to understand those obstacles

for women career, many recommendations were put together in order to lead to the development of constructive policies to support women's advancement in Benin Republic.

*Key words: Women, Career barriers, leadership development, West Africa, Benin Republic*

# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF .....	vi
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	xiii
TABLES .....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY .....	1
I-INTRODUCTION .....	1
II-MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY .....	4
A. Research Problem and Motivation of the Study .....	4
1. Main objective .....	6
2. Specific Objectives .....	6
B. Research Questions .....	7
C- Significance of the Study .....	7
D- Ethical Consideration in the Research.....	8
E. Limitations of the Research .....	8
III. SUMMARY .....	9



CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW: .....	10
WOMEN PARTICIPATION CHALLENGES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (WORLDWIDE AND AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES).....	10
I. INTRODUCTION .....	10
A.Theoretical literature on women leadership.....	12
1.Women and leadership .....	14
2.Women roles in sub-Saharan Africa.....	15
B. Cultural barriers linked to societal values .....	17
C. Barriers in organizations .....	21
D. Women empowerment .....	24
II. SUMMARY .....	26
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	28
I- INTRODUCTION.....	28
A. Research Design.....	29
B. Area of Study .....	30
C. Target Population .....	31
D. Sample and Sampling Techniques .....	31
E. Data Collection Methods.....	31
F. Data Analysis.....	32

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	33
I. INTRODUCTION .....	33
II. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS.....	38
III. CAREER BARRIERS FACED BY BOTH WOMEN LEADERS/MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND WOMEN OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION.	39
A. Theme 1- Socio-cultural barriers .....	39
1. Sub-Theme i -Gender stereotype .....	39
2. Sub-theme ii - Access to higher education .....	41
B. Theme 2 – Emotion management issues .....	43
C. Theme 3 -The problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions .....	44
D. Theme 4 - The support of government, national and international organizations in Benin toward women Leadership. ....	46
E.The entrance and success of women in leadership position. ....	48
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	50
..... I. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS.....	50

II. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP POSITION .....	52
A. Organizational Challenges .....	53
B. Selection and promotion process .....	53
C. Workplace Relationships and Challenges.....	54
D. Globalization of businesses and leadership activities.....	54
III. WOMEN ENTRANCE AND SUCCESS IN LEADERSHIP /MANAGEMENT POSITIONS.....	55
IV. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	56
CHAPTER SIX : SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION .....	58
I. SUMMARY .....	58
A. Summary of the study .....	58
B. Summary of the keys findings .....	59
1. How Socio-cultural Practices leads to woman challenges in Leadership .....	59
2. Emotion management issues. ....	60
3. The problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions .....	60
4. Lack of enough mentors to mentor more women to leadership .....	61
5. Lack of Government support.....	61

II. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	61
A. Recommendation to women leader .....	61
B. Recommendation to the government.....	62
C. Recommendation to institutional leaders.....	63
D. Recommendation to national/international institution.....	63
CONCLUSION .....	64
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES .....	66
APPENDICIES .....	67
1: Interviews questions .....	67
2: Consent to Participate Form .....	68
3: Recruitment material - Information letter-.....	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	75

## ILLUSTRATIONS

1.	Women in the workplace.....	11
2.	Female Participation Rates on Boards of Directors.....	14
3.	West African Girls are being married off too young.....	18
4.	Female genital mutilation (FGM) - West Africa.....	18
5.	Learning lessens early births.....	19
6.	Sub-Saharan Africa Girls attending primary school.....	21
7.	Women in Parliament.....	23

## TABLES

1.	Emergent themes and sub-themes based on analysis of open-ended responses.....	33
2.	Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.....	38



# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

## I-INTRODUCTION

Globally, women continue to be disadvantaged when it comes to public participation both in the public and private sectors of society. Women still have to deal with a number of hurdles to reach positions such as CEOs and company board members (ILO Global report, 2015). Despite women's impressive gains in education and the workplace over the past 50 years, men greatly outnumber women in leadership, especially in the public sector. From corporate boardrooms to the halls of Congress, from universities to the courts, from religious institutions to philanthropic organizations, men are simply much more likely than women to be leaders (AAUW, 2016 page number).

Women's social status and development in the home and workplace has improved during the last twenty years, yet women continue to face many challenges in rising to senior and executive ranks in public service administration and NGOs. Although international development agencies have reported gains in some economic, social, political and education inequalities (UN report, 2012, World Bank, 2012, WEF, 2017)), there are still many barriers that hinder women's situation at the workplace in general, especially for leadership or managerial decision-making roles. According to a recent survey of business students and alumni conducted by the Global Network for Advanced Management, "Women remain underrepresented in business leadership roles worldwide, and intriguing variation across the globe and even across industries within the same country suggests that there is more to blame than a monolithic culture of patriarchy." (Global Network Perspectives for Management, Conference Report 2017 p5). While this situation is an



international issue, the barriers for women's leadership differ from one country to another and are shaped by cultural, economic, and political forces. Indeed, while one would expect that advances have been attained in developed regions, this is not the case. There are glaring inequalities between women and men in both the Global South and Global North.

Commitments to advancing women in the global sphere has been a long term goal of international organizations, and the UN conferences on women forged global agendas. Again, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, drew attention to the persisting inequality between men and women in decision-making. The Beijing Platform for Action reaffirmed that women's persistent exclusion from formal politics, in particular (UN Women, Beijing, 1995). Nevertheless, the follow up to Beijing and all the reviews after this conference from 2000 to 2015 show that there are still many discrepancies which are remaining and hindering women development. (CEDAW 29th Session, 2003) Moreover, women remain discriminated in terms of accessing top management/leadership positions even when they are well qualified and educated. Although women represent over 50 percent of the population, in no country do women represent half or even close to half of the corporate managers. (UN-Women, 2012)

One of the major challenges that is hindering women development is education. The global literacy challenge is gendered. About 757 million adults and 115 million young people globally lack basic literacy, for the past two decades women have accounted for approximately two thirds of all illiterate adults, and the gender gap is nearly as wide among young people (CEDAW 29th Session report, 2003). Women's illiteracy remains extremely high at 477 million, falling just 1 per cent since 2000. Half the adult women in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa cannot read or write (CEDAW 29th Session report, 2003). According to the UNESCO, in many countries, girls still have not the opportunity to go to school. Due to early marriage, pregnancy, violence in

and around schools, poverty, and traditions, girls in sub-Saharan do not have the chance to start or finish the Post- primary level of education (UNICEF, 2015) .The lack of progress in reducing the proportion of illiterate women worldwide, and in Africa in particular constitutes a major concern that marginalized most women in social, political and economic domains (UNESCO Report, 2016, p7). Participation of women in the management cannot be a reality if the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 4: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all is not attained. It has also been observed that many barriers from cultural (male domination, gender stereotype, traditional practices), to political are preventing many women from reaching important level in the African society (Emeka et al., 2011).

In Africa, women's public participation public has significantly improved over the last years. For example, Liberia has 51% of the ruling house occupied by men and women represent more than half in many public admiration roles (World Bank, 2012, WEF, 2016). Despite this the glass ceiling is still intact in many African states. Women's advance evidenced by the number of Africa states that have established women's ministries to target women's development. In Benin for example, according to the International labor of Organization, the percent of rate female in labor has not evolved that much 8% (1990-2016) this seems low. Also, there is limited access for women to education, the political and cultural constraints are making things much difficult to women. While there is emerging research on women's leadership and capability on Africa, the extant research focuses on the Global North political roles, or in private sector organizations.

The question is "Why, despite all the international growth and development of women in Africa, are women still underrepresented in public sector or political life and even in the economy?" "Why despite the notable improvement of women's education in Africa, women in Benin are still struggling to access the managerial and strategic positions?"

This project aims to redress this knowledge gap, and explore the structural and cultural barriers that women leaders face in their career in the public administration and NGOs in the Benin Republic.

This research will be organized as follow: Chapter one of the paper introduced background and the motivation of the study. Chapter Two, the literature review explore, and analyses women participation in public life, Chapter four discloses the research methodology, while the Chapter Four is the analysis of primary and secondary data collected. Finally, Chapter Five reviewed the study, stated the recommendations that should be put in place to motivate and encourage participation in management and gave a conclusion.

## II- MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

### A. Research Problem and Motivation of the Study

For centuries now, traditional and cultural beliefs have been dictated the role of women in the community and that ideology has always been carried at the workplace. In the African society the identity of an African woman has still been confined to the family or domestic level creating a belief that women are not allowed to seek positions that would empower them in the community. Although women comprise more than 50 percent of the African population, few is making it to the top leadership especially in public sector (Emeka and al., 2011). This situation is due to cultural, educational, political, economic, and social barriers that prevent women from ascending to strategic position in their career.

There have been an upward trend in the number of women in public sector, yet there remain glaring differences between them and men in West African countries. The Government controls the public area of the Benin Republic like in any other country in the world. Thus, we can suppose

that any appointments are based on qualifications and experience in various sectors of the economy (Ahmed, Uddin, Ashikuzzaman, & Khan, 2016). Positions in public sector are the available for men and women who are qualified.

In a society that is not gendered biased, we would have expected chances to be distributed equally among all men and women. Unfortunately that is not the case in many parts of the Africa, and word as well. Men have always been the upper hand when it comes to appointments in public sector compared to women. Leadership calls for experience, education, and ability to deliver success in the department that one has been assigned. The question is: do women in the Benin Republic have the required qualification to be managers or members of the board of directors in various institutions in the public sector? The answer to this is the standard quote that “what men can do, women can do better.” However, women cannot showcase their abilities and competencies if there are not given equal opportunities to men (Global Network for Advanced Management, March 2017). Thus, the very first step in solving this problem is by acknowledging that indeed there have been some careers barriers that women face in their professional journey in the public sector.

One other motivation of the study is to unearth the problems that women face when seeking the leadership positions in the Benin Republic. People believe that women should be accorded more opportunities, unfortunately this is not the case when we look at the ratio of men in comparison to women in the public sector in the Benin Republic. Many global and local conventions have been held to empower women who want to be top managers in both public and private sector little success (Beverly D. Metcalfe, Woodhams, 2008). Therefore, this research, was motivated by finding out what could be the career barriers and challenges that have been hindering

women from ascending to the top position in management; in order to recommend effective policies to solve this issue in the Benin Republic.

## **1. Main objective**

Currently, in the Benin republic, there is a limited number of women leaders in public sector despite the efforts from various organizations to encourage women to access strategic management positions. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to determine the challenges that women in Benin have been facing in their career development, and in their journey of leadership. The research is focused on understanding multi-level barriers in West Africa that make it hard for women to be considered for strategic positions at the workplace.

## **2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives are the following:

- To identify the career barriers challenges faced by women leaders/managers in both Public Administration and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- To analyze the similarities and differences in the challenges women in both sectors face
- To evaluate the of any government policies for women advancement,
- To determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in both the private and public sectors in the Benin republic with implications for the country.

## **B. Research Questions**

The Central Research Question (CRQ) of this research is to critically evaluate women's leadership role in West Africa, in NGOs, and public administration. This helped determine the barriers facing women who seek leadership positions in public sector, in order to develop recommendations and strategies that should be implemented to increase women 'chances to access strategic positions. . I evaluated women's leadership roles in agencies and their everyday personal experiences of leading, as well as explored further how these agencies themselves (which are dedicated to women's advance) can provide development policies that can build leadership capacity in future.

This includes a number of sub-questions:

- i. What are the barriers and challenges women face as women leader in NGO's and public administration in Benin?
- ii. How have women overcome all the challenges they faced in their career?
- iii. What role can women's organizations play in supporting women's leadership development in the government of Benin Republic?
- iv. What is the role of the current Ministry for women, and how can they further support women's leadership development?
- v. What is the role, and how can international organizations support women's leadership and capacity development role in the government of Benin Republic?

## **C- Significance of the Study**

First, the study is intended to add to the existing body of knowledge on women management and leadership in public and private sectors in West Africa. The study is important as it is one of the few studies that has been focused on women's limited role in Public

Administration in Benin Republic. Using data gleaned from women leaders in Public Administration, and in women's dedicated NGOs provided important and interesting information.

Second, this study investigated on the opportunities that are available for women in the Republic of Benin and whether the women are in a position to take them and deliver results. Third, this study explored recommendations on what should be done to ensure women to be successful in leadership were also discussed in depth.

Lastly, this was done to improve women situation at the workplace to ensure they can compete and deliver effective results like their male counterparts, not only in the Benin Republic but also in other parts of West Africa.

#### **D- Ethical Consideration in the Research**

The research purposed at improving the status quo and, thus, the information collected or asked by the researcher did not in any way raised insecurity to those interviewed. Precisely, I followed the regulation on how to maintain ethics in research as stipulated by the IRB Board to ensure the study met international standards. In a society where such an investigation is seen as efforts to create feminism in leadership positions, I assured the questions asked and analysis done did not in any way shape gender conflict. In matters of secondary data and review of other people's work in ensured all details are referenced to avoid cases of plagiarism (Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, Eds. 2012). All references were stated at the end of the dissertation for confirmation and further reading as recommended in research ethics.

#### **E- Limitations of the Research**

The research sampled a small number of women leaders (10) who are occupants of senior management positions in the country. The reason behind this is that there are few women in Benin

who are in leadership positions. Thus, the sample could be considered as very small to represent the entire population of estimated 5 million women. Secondly, some of the secondary data quoted are from other countries where the conditions could be different like in the United States or other African nations. In some countries, there are more empowerment women policies than in others. For instance, in Kenya (which is also in Africa) the constitution that half of the ministries must be given to women to have gender equality.

### III- SUMMARY

The chapter introduced the topic of the barriers faced by women leaders around the world in general, and in Benin Republic especially. Besides, the Chapter one has provided the background to the research problem, discussed the problem statement of the study, stating hypotheses, objectives, research questions, motivation of the study, significance of the study and the methodology used to generate knowledge for this study. Limitations of the study and its ethical considerations were also mentioned and explained in this chapter. The following chapter is a review of literature on the subject.



## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW:

### WOMEN PARTICIPATION CHALLENGES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (WORLDWIDE AND AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES)

#### I- INTRODUCTION

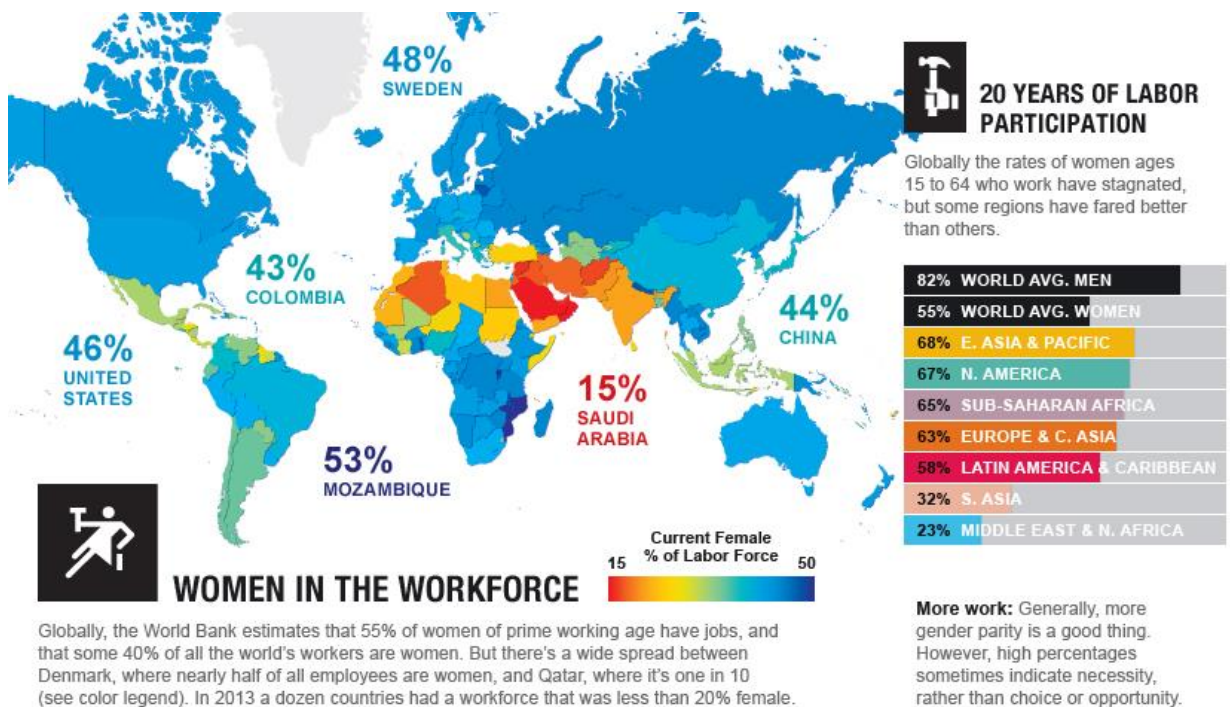
Historically, the workforce has been substantially segregated along gender, race and class lines. In that sense, it is common for women to face discrimination at workplaces especially when top management positions are involved (De La Rey, 2005). Employers are reluctant to promote women to managerial jobs because they worry that women's household responsibilities might interfere with their work performance, or simply because they believe women are not as good as men in leadership or administrative positions (African women Leadership Conference 2018). The patriarchal status of most societies concentrated all the power in men hands, and makes men seen as the only ones capable to hold a leadership position (Hojgaard 2002). De La Rey (2005) lists the qualities commonly linked with leadership as effective communication skills, task completion, responsibility, problem solving, originality, decision making, vision, self-awareness, confidence, experience and power. Thus, we can deduce that women possess similar characteristics management traits as men. Although, the society has to some extent labeled women as less aggressive when it comes to leadership roles, and this has incapacitated their chances of being rewarded with management positions in public sector (Epstein, C. F. 2007). So, for women to assume leadership at the workplace, it is required of them to conform to some men norms to fit in the business world (Emeka et al., 2011).

The bias and barriers facing women across the world have been a recurrent theme that has been discussed in many spheres with intentions of promoting gender equality. Organizations,

agencies, and governments have been fighting the idea of leadership and masculinity for decades (African women Leadership Conference, 2018). Women are seen as an integral driver of social, cultural, political, and economic developments, thus, the world cannot afford to ignore them in management levels (UN report 2012). According to CIA Fact Book, women are more than men in the world, but when it comes to holding leadership positions, women are underrepresented (Figure 1). It is hard to find a situation whereby they are given equal job opportunities (World Economic Forum 2015-2016). Many theories have been developed to offer women with advice on how they should fight for their positions in the society (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). Outline the structure of chapter here

It is unclear as you move around

**Figure 1: Women in the workforce.**



Source: Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/03/05/women-in-the-workforce/>

Much of the questions about women's leadership positions in the workplace have often arisen in a number of studies. However, there is a limited information on the challenges faced by women in West Africa in management or leadership position in both the public and private sectors. This chapter attempts a review of literature of the study. This section will review the theoretical literature on women leadership, the cultural barriers linked to societal barriers, the barriers women face in organizations, why do so few women reached the top and the last part provides the knowledge gap filled by this study.

### **A- Theoretical literature on women leadership**

Worldwide, Women's advancement in the corporate workplace has taken significant strides over the last century. Research demonstrates, however, that despite an increased presence of female employees in mid-management positions, executive positions continue to be male dominated. Less than 16% of corporate officers and board members of Fortune 500 companies are women (Catalyst, 2007, p. 1). These positions have often come at a cost to women who do achieve them. Women leader carry burdens such as family responsibilities, stereotyping /unequal pay, and lack of support, (Barreto, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2009, p. 9).

Around the world, many women make the full time workforce and managers (Wirth, 2001); yet they are still under-represented in management in most countries and in senior management everywhere (Davidson and Burke, 2004; Wirth, 2001) (Figure 2). Wirth concluded then that one of the major obstacles to women advancement to management is the gender inequality in the home responsibilities. Family responsibilities create major challenges for a woman who wants to advance to management cadre. Cares for dependent children continue to be the major responsibility for women (Wirth, 2001). Additionally, Liff & Ward, (2001) and Metz & Tharenou,

(2001), conclude that many women believe that family responsibilities are barriers to their advancement.

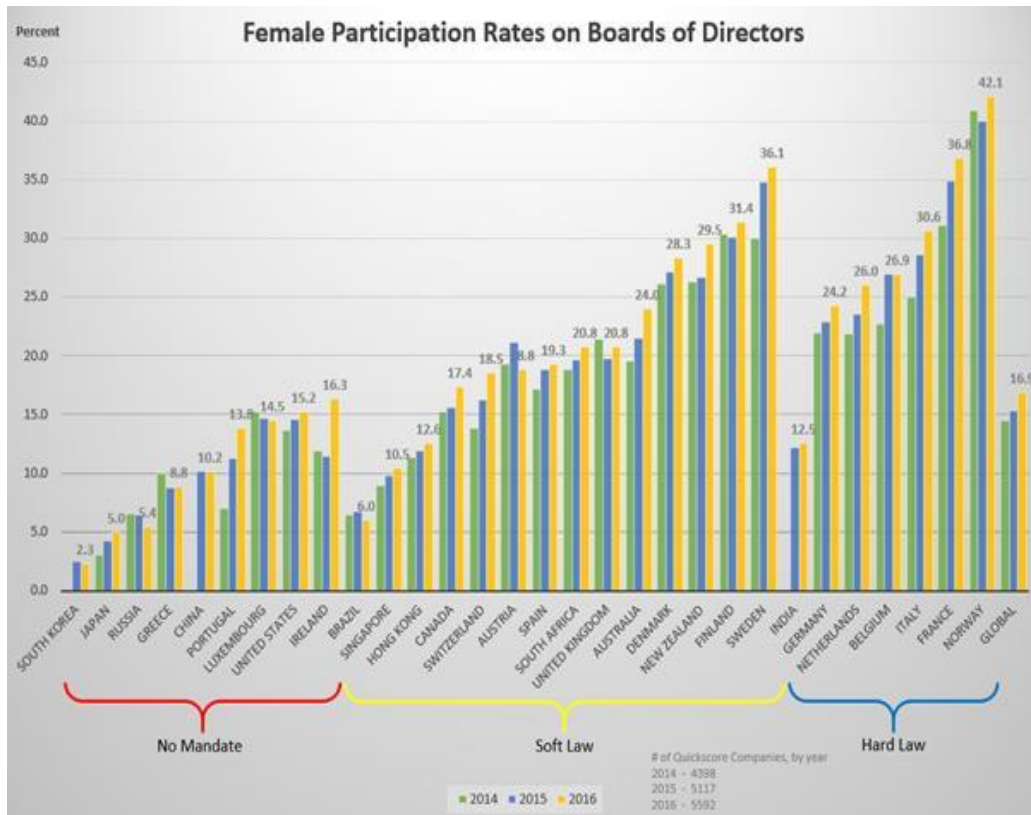
Another challenge women face in their leadership journey is gender stereotyping. Women are not seen as bold or equal to men at the workplace. Such a stereotype is typical in many spheres of life where one's sexuality is seen as not able to perform specific function competitively (UN-Women, 2016). This situation leads to some inequalities. For instance, women are not making equal pay in their workplace as their male counterparts (Francine and al, 2000). On average since the slavery years, we have many cases where women are paid less than men in the society. Therefore, for women to catch up with men regarding payments, they have to work additional days (Emeka and Al., 2011), such inappropriate behaviors have substantially undermined the capability of women in work leading to absenteeism and low productivity (World Bank for Gender report, 2014, p). Lack of promotion at the workplace is another consequence of gender stereotyping, this have threatened the role of women at work (Brannon, 2016).

Again, lack of support/mentorship is one other challenge that is refraining women to access top management level (UN-women, 2016)).The management of the national/international organization is a demanding work that requires cultural, economic, and political strategies to make the organizations successful (Martin and al.,2001). The nature of these tasks is what makes the requirements of those applying for the position to be many. Due to the small number of the women leaders in these positions women lack mentors who can guide them to great heights of international organizations' leadership (Innocentia, 2013).

In the figure below it is notice that Female Participation Rates on Boards of Directors ranged from 2.3% the lowest to 42.1% the highest. This clearly illustrated women's poor representation in managerial positions. Although the 2015 index analyzed the private corporations,

there are disparities in non-profit making organizations where women have higher chances of assuming leadership positions. In those sectors, they remain primarily underrepresented in many countries (Global Organization EY, 2013, p 17-21).

**Figure 2:** Female Participation Rates on Boards of Directors.



**Source:** Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance retrieved from <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/>

## 1. Women and leadership

Traditionally, leadership has been associated with masculinity and the belief that men make better leaders than women. Even though the number of women leaders has improved especially in Africa over the last two decades after ratification of the Beijing conference in 1995, yet, women representation and participation in the public sphere is still small. Hojgaard (2002) argues that the cultural structure of leadership in itself initiates difference. Research has shown that “there is direct

link between a country's attitude toward women and its progress socially and economically” (Sharma, 2008). Further studies show that women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country (Soni, 2008). In addition, leadership in an organization in any society requires capacity on the part of the leader to perform; and capacity is seen as the ability to marshal and use available resources people, money, talent, and time-in the best possible way for the good of an organization (Ingraham, 2005).

Again, many researches has shown that relationship exists between capacity to lead and organizational performance, there is nothing yet to prove that females lack the capacity to lead compared to their male counterparts in management positions for organizational performance either in public or private sector of any economy (Obasanjo & al., 2013). Therefore, discriminating against women in leadership positions, based on sex, particularly at the higher level in an organization, is a recipe for underdevelopment (Wilson Center Forum, 2017). This implies that the more acceptable leadership roles assigned to women is in a society, the more that society is likely to experience development in social, political, cultural and economic spheres. In addition, due to gender stereotyping, the girl child may not be given the privilege of acquiring western education, rather, they are given out in marriage at early age; and, also this informs their decision in choosing career because it is complicated and worrisome for female gender to combine home obligations and career (Obasanjo & al., 2013).

## **2. Women roles in sub-Saharan Africa**

In West Africa the roles of women at workplace and in public sphere is still limited (UN-Women, 2016). Typically, those works are house chores, lower administrative work or positions that require less competencies (Emeka & al., 2011). Social scientists who have dwelled in this issue argue that waiting for the number of women in the administration to increase will not solve

anything (Emeka & al., 2011). Therefore, there should have necessary actions that will facilitate the elimination of gender gaps in various leadership positions not only in Benin but also in other African countries (Wilson Center report, 2017, p 7-8). The issue of biases can only be fought through a multispectral strategy that would change the way we think about women in our societies (Schein, 2001). Organizational policies and government strategies should also undergo changes to create more space and chances for the women who want to become managers/leaders in West Africa (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013).

Achieving gender parity in our communities will be a step forward of giving women and the girl child the confidence to pursue their dreams without having to carry the load of gender biases in their lives (UN-Women, 2016). To achieve gender parity, Patricia Fae Ho (AAUW Board Chair) and Linda D. Hallman (AAUW Chief Executive Officer) said *“we need women willing and able to take up leadership positions. We need men willing and able to take on more domestic responsibilities so that more women have the opportunity to pursue demanding fields. We need employers to embrace a more flexible workplace, allowing women and men to move in and out of the workforce as they balance careers, family, and personal goals. In essence, we all need to intentionally engage in making diversity and inclusion work on a daily basis.”*

Leaders are highly compensated which means they may be in a position to cater for expenses of their families, and have enough to invest and help others in their communities (Dabla-Norris, et al, 2015). Therefore, closing the gender gap is a prerequisite for economic growth in African societies (UN 2016 -WEF 2012). Nonetheless, we need to understand that this discrimination against women has its roots in many barriers and challenges that they have faced, and still facing in the society.

## **B- Cultural barriers linked to societal values**

In Africa, traditionally women's work has remained mostly in the informal sector comprised of home and family based responsibilities (UN-Women, 2016). The employment rate of women in sub-Saharan Africa (59.3%, ILO, 2017) is the highest in the world (45.8%); however, most of the work is subsistence-based and confined to farming and household enterprises. Gender earnings gaps persist and are largely explained by differences in human capital variables, such as education, training, and experience. Women and girls have fewer educational opportunities and more domestic responsibilities. Lack of access to infrastructure for water and electricity compounds cultural constraints on women's time by adding inefficiencies to household work. This aggravated women's situation in West in their quest to reach the top management level at the corporate workplace. For example, according to the UN Inter Agency Task Force on Rural Women, African women spend 40 billion hours a year collecting water. Because their hours are spent primarily on unpaid labor and activities, they are not contributing financially to their households, or the global economy (World Economic Forum, 2014).

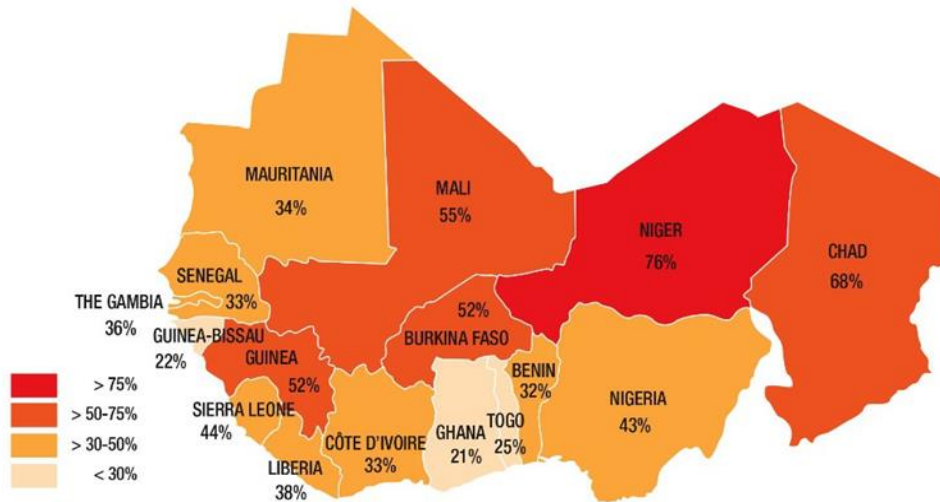
Moreover, in African societies women have roles that are often deeply anchored and affect their capacity to be leaders or front liners (Emeka and al., 2011). Women usually are tasked with time consuming household responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and childcare, leaving little time to develop the capacities to participate in public life or access to leadership (Wilson Center Forum, 2017). In addition, young girls are often victims of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, and are denied access to education (UN-Women, 2016) (Figure 5 and 6). More value is placed on the boy child, who is not typically expected to perform these tasks, and thus has more time to invest in his education and leadership growth (African women leadership Conference, 2018).



**Figure 3:** West African Girls are being married off too young

## WEST AFRICAN GIRLS ARE BEING MARRIED OFF TOO YOUNG

Percentage of young women (20-24 years) married before age 18



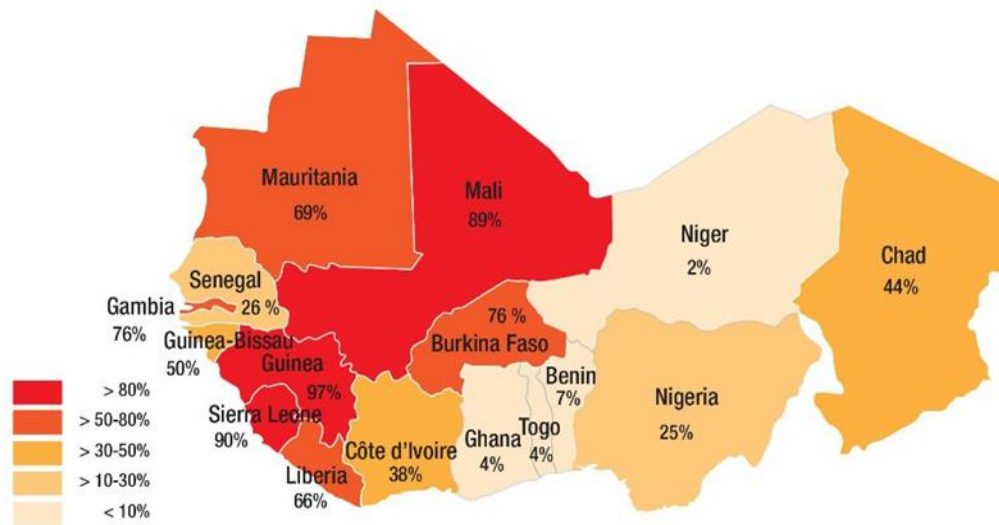
Sources: UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2015; Girls not Brides

© 2016. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

**Figure 4:** female genital mutilation (FGM) - West Africa

## FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING (FGM/C)

FGM/C prevalence rate among women aged 15-49 years

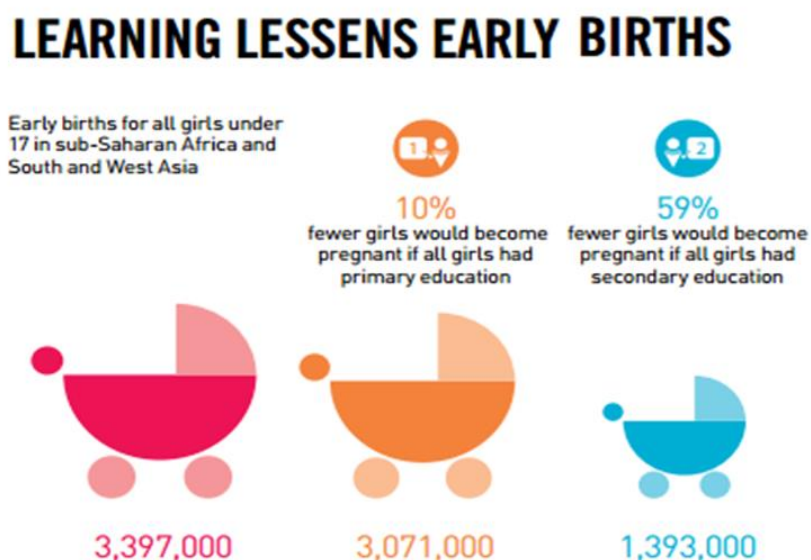


Sources: UNICEF, Global Databases, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys, October 2014 update.

© 2016. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

These cultural norms and practices in Africa also affect women’s economic status, perpetuating certain biases against women and girls (UN-Women, 2016). For instance in poor families, even parents value the girl and want to see her grows as women leader in the future, often they have to make decisions about her immediate value (Wilson Center report,2017, p 7-8). When resources are limited, school fees become a greater financial burden. Consequently, parents usually send the boy to school instead of the girl, especially at secondary or tertiary level (UNESCO, 2015). In the short term, they might view child marriage as a better life for the girl, or they might send her to the fields or as a domestic worker. In many cases, families do not see the long term return on investment in her education, and even if they are legally required to send her to school, the laws are rarely enforced (UNESCO, 2016, p. 145). However, higher educational attainment expands women’s freedoms by strengthening their capacity to question, reflect and act on their condition and by increasing their access to information and public life (UNDP, 2010; UN Women, 2011/12) (Figure 5) . These biases hindered the growth of potential female leaders.

**Figure 5:** Learning lessens early births.



**Source:** Global Education Monitoring

Cultural diversity has also played a significant part regarding the position of women in the society. In West African countries women are merely seen as more of domestic workers where they are supposed to take care of their children and husbands (Epstein, 2007). Subordination of their place within the society standard makes it difficult for them to clinch management roles in both the private and public sectors (Obasanjo & al., 2013). This has in a way hindered the level of education for women, and it is just a small number of women who have acquired formal education which can enable them to be considered for executive positions in the public sector. For instance Across the African region, in 47 of the 54 countries girls have a less than 50% chance of completing primary school (Plan West Africa, 2012) (figure 6).

Again, lack of defined labor laws, as well as the lack of education for the girl child in West Africa, has crippled chance of women participating in top management roles (McBride, 2011). Experience and educational background can also cause women discrimination on top management positions (Obasanjo & al., 2013). For example, in some cases, we have education programs where women are underrepresented. In other instances, a senior position requires someone who has had experience as a senior manager. When women possess less experiences and capacities in these two cases, then there is a high probability of a man being promoted and a woman left out as per the Human Resource Policies.

**Figure 6:** Sub-Saharan Africa Girls attending primary school.

## Staying in and completing school remains a challenge

In Sub-Saharan Africa, 75 percent of girls start primary school but only 8 percent finish secondary school



World Bank believes that investing in women education and giving them equal opportunity to participate in leadership positions in the smart economy. However, even education will not solve the problem, since many challenges in organization are hindering women participation to the public sphere.

### C- Barriers in organizations

Gender discrimination at the workplace has long been a debated issue (Bernard & Laband 1995, Lazear & Rosen 1990, & Arrow 1971). Gender inequalities at the workplace are one of the leading factors that affect the promotion of women to leadership positions (Ahmed & Al, 2016). Even though the number of women leaders has improved especially in Africa over the last two decades after ratification of the Beijing conference in 1995, yet, women representation and participation in the public sphere is still low. The gender dimension of glass ceiling is most often applied in organizations where the upper echelons of power is prejudiced in favour of men and the women counterparts are sidelined in the race to organizational hierarchies. This prejudice and

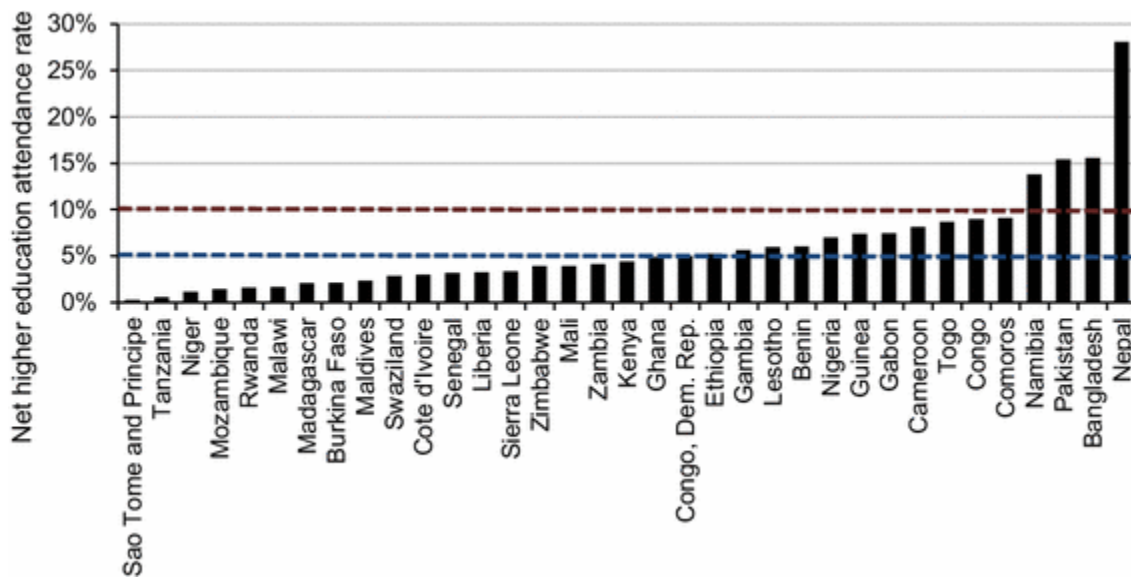
discrimination that excludes women from higher level of leadership positions in working environment is a phenomenon, known as the glass ceiling (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987); this discrimination is due to negative beliefs about women's management ability.

The phrase *glass ceiling* has been understood to represent a variety of biases that prevent qualified minorities and women, though they are members of an increasingly diverse workforce, from advancing into mid and senior-level management positions within the workplace (Zachariasiewicz, 1993). Glass ceiling can also be defined as an intangible barrier that determines to what extent women or a marginalized/under represented demographic minority can come up in an organization (Albrecht, Borland, & Vroman, 2003; Arulampalam, Booth, & Bryan 2004; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2005). According to Carli and Eagly (2001), the glass ceiling constitutes an invisible organizational or perceptual barrier for women and minority groups, preventing them from moving up the corporate ladder. Even though previous circumstances and consequences of the glass ceiling occurrence have been well documented in developed countries (Vianen et al., 2002), little is known about this subject in less developed countries, such as Benin.

According to Brannon (2001), many factors could possibly be responsible for this glass ceiling. One possibility is that women choose occupations that required less or few competencies. African women most of time choose job position in which employees remain stuck in the lowest levels (Obasanjo & al., 2013). Positions such as administrative assistant or secretary offer limited chances of being promoted to the top management. Some women prefer to sacrifice their career to their families' responsibilities life. They choose to be wives or mother, thus reducing their chances to be promoted at work. In most cases, women are caregivers who take long periods of time in maternity leaves and that limit their time within the company (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). For instance in some organizations if the promotion to a management position is based on the time that

an employee has been present at the workplace, then such HR policies will edge out women. Those practices adding to Human Resources policies, and structures of an organization can contribute to gender biases without any intention to discriminate women based on their gender (Inglehart, Norris 2003). Other major reason why women are not promoted to the top management position might be that there are not well qualified (Gberevbie & al., 2014). In fact, due to the cultural limits, many girls in Africa do not have access to higher education, thus impact negatively on their literacy level (Emeka & al., 2011). Consequently, women lack competencies and professional degrees to access to top managerial positions (Figure 6).

**Figure 6:** Access to higher education in sub-Saharan Africa



**Source:** Higher Education October 2016, Volume 72, Issue 4, pp 435–455 |

Nowadays, the lack of upper-management promotions being offered are not the only issues affecting African women at the workplace (Emeka & al.,2011). Often, women feel discriminated against by their male coworkers and/or managers, who use words such as “honey,” “sweetie,” “dear,” and “baby” (Esty, Griffin, & Hirsch, 1995). Also, there are some company jokes practiced that could demean the status of women, and eventually reduce their chances of ever becoming a

leader in that organization (African Women Leadership Conference, 2018). For example, the idea of always sending women for tea and coffee might reflect gender biases (Obasanjo & al., 2013). In that case, men will be assuming the role of the “boss” while women go to fetch tea and serve them will reflect the idea for reducing women to domestic servants (Emeka and al., 2011). Although the purpose of this study is not to create difference among men and women at workplace, we must bear in mind that for there to be gender parity in our places of work then we must change some of these behaviors (African Women Leadership Conference, 2018).

Personal discrimination in the recruitment process has also been lowering the number of women in top management (Petersen, Togstad, 2004). The HR department of a company is one of the departments that is commonly accused of discrimination based on gender because it is responsible for the promotion of workers to a management position. Recent studies indicate that when applicants send application letters, there are high chances of a male being selected than their female counterparts (Petersen, Togstad, 2004). The recruitment department, in this case, looks at the flexibility of training a man who is less likely not to be having domestic chores and has time for company’s urgent tasks as the best candidate for the job (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). The above cited barriers can explain why do so few women reach leadership position.

#### **D- Women empowerment.**

Empowerment entails giving someone powers or authority to do something. An empowered person is more confident and stronger in such a way they can be able to provide direction or control what other people are doing in a company or the society. In most cases, we empower people whom we believe if given a chance can change the lives of others. We make them leaders by giving them opportunities and anything that is required to ensure they perform their tasks efficiently. Thus, there is a correlation between leadership and empowerment. Empowerment

framework is advocated by Greenberger (2006) and Lee (2003) and is influenced by development and planning thinking. The issue of women's equality in all spheres of life is presented as a moral and ethical one. Equal opportunities, equal pay for equal work and ensuring that women and not disadvantaged to men are regarded as women's right. The empowerment approach thus advocates social transformation.

Empowerment is a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged individuals or groups to challenge existing power relations that place them in subordinate economic, social and political positions. Rao and Kelleher (2005) define women's empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient and self-reliant with control over decisions affecting their life options and freedom from violence and discrimination. They suggest that women's empowerment must focus on increasing women's ability to be economically self-sufficient that is earn an income, own assets and manage their own finances, increasing women's confidence and ability to know and negotiate for their rights in the household and the community and increasing women's control over their bodies, their time and their movement. Furthermore, working towards gender transformation is conceptualized in terms of increasing women's and men's abilities to analyze and reshape socially constructed gender relations in order to transform power dynamics.

In Africa and by extension the whole world women empowerment has been fostered in political, social, and economic settings (UN-women, 2016). The African woman needs to be given chances to prove that she can perform in the male-dominated leadership society. Thus, different organizations have been empowering women for decades, and some new organs are cropping up to support women. Identification of the problems facing women and provision of solutions calls for the mobilization of resources and goodwill of the ambassadors of this noble task.



Over the years empowerment has proved to be successful as we have witnessed more and more women occupying political positions and enrolled in the board of governors in major corporations across the world. The 1990 Benin Republic constitution prohibited any form of discrimination against women in the West African country. The structure of the former France Colony also provides equal rights among men and women, still it is evident that like any other part of the world discrimination is still widespread. In Benin, the women Political empowerment is still very low. For the 2018 Global ranking done by the World Economic Forum, Benin occupied the 129 place out of 144, with 0.065% of women in Politics (WEF 2018, p 12). But, the good news is that Women in Africa are being empowered through various national and international organizations (World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF...).

## II- SUMMARY

The number of women in leadership has been stark for decades. Although through education the number of women with qualifications to hold senior management positions have been increasing there is minimal change when it comes to women leadership positions. From the congress halls to corporate boardrooms, from philanthropic institutions to religious organizations, and from private sectors to public sectors there are glaring disparities in the number of men and women in top management. The issue has caught the attention of many nations across the world. research (like the one I am doing) articles and books have been studied and researched with the purpose of promoting awareness of the struggles that women in leadership go through trying to prove they can do what men can if given a chance.

Various reports have been formulated to help bridge the existent gap amid the number of females in management positions in West Africa and men holding similar posts in the public sector

(OECD, 2008, World Bank 2012). Given equal opportunity to participate in the economy both men and women promote equitable governance and public trust from the community to top-level circles thus strengthening economic growth and sustainability (World Bank, 2012). Moreover, more representation of people who set up the public policies enables them to focus on matters aimed at improving the human development, public service delivery as well as gender-based discrimination in workplace. Global Forum provides a platform to bring on board governments, civil society, parliaments and the business fraternity under a common umbrella to extensively explore various actions in addressing various challenges which the society experiences in the management portfolio. The forum promotes increased the inclusiveness of policymaking, closing the gender gaps in management roles in the public sector as well as strengthening women's voice in the society.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### I- INTRODUCTION

The research method used in the present study is the Feminist approach. Studies that are concerned with equality are identified as feminist as they want to explain how inequalities are assessed and challenged. Moreover those studies strive to find solutions to empower women. Many feminist studies use qualitative approaches methods relate to the tools for collecting data- i.e. semi-structured interviews. What makes research feminist? A classic answer is that it is research done by, for, and about women. Another is that "feminist researchers produce feminist research" (Robbins, 1996, p. 170). It has therefore been argued that qualitative methods are more appropriate for feminist research as they are best suited to reveal and understand experiences of women in contemporary society and adequately address their needs by allowing subjective knowledge (Depner, 1981), thus challenging the partial accounts of the gendered lives of both women and men. In feminist research, respect for the experience and perspective of the other is upheld, with many feminist researchers expressing commitment to "realizing as fully as possible women's voices in data gathering and preparing an account that transmits those voices" (Olesen, 1994: 167).

Furthermore, feminist research is characterized by 'non-hierarchical relations' between the researcher and the participants Feminist research usually takes semi-structured interviews to obtain, organize, and analyze data for interpretation is called research methodology (Ramazanoglu and Al., 2002). It is possible to conduct feminist qualitative research using a range of research methods. Some of the methods include: life histories, interviews, focus groups and conversational analysis; diaries, letters, documents and texts; questionnaires and statistics; Content Analysis; Oral History; Ethnography; Discourse Analysis; and -participant and non-participant observation.

The primary focus of this study was to understand the carriers' barriers and opportunities for women's leadership in West Africa, and to gain a depth inside of women in managerial positions. Given to the nature of the research question, qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyze data. This provided insight into the current status of women in leadership roles, current global and state level policies for tackling capacity development, and NGO operations where relevant.

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews with female leaders NGO and women managers in the Public sector helped gain reliable, comparable qualitative data through relevant and meaningful questions to gain a better understanding of the current barriers and opportunities for woman leadership in Benin by analyzing interviewee's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. Also, the use of semi-structured interview helped provide a set of clear recommendations and relevant solutions to improve women's development in Benin and West Africa.

### **A- Research Design**

As stated early in the introduction, the action plan research design adopted in this study was the **Feminist Methodical approach**. The feminist method is a means of conducting of scientific investigations and generating theory from an explicitly feminist standpoint (Code, 2015, p-5-6) Feminist methodologies are varied, but tend to have a few common aims or characteristics, including seeking to overcome biases in research, bringing about social change, displaying human diversity, and acknowledging the position of the researcher (Ramazanoglu and Holland. 2002). Each of these methods must consist of different parts including: collection of evidence, testing of theories, presentation of data, and room for rebuttals.

The purpose was to explore the problems women are facing as leaders in the Benin Republic and seek intervention measures that could be used to improve the state of women leaders in the country. The method used in this case was after close observation/ of the challenges that are facing women in the West African; analysis were done to understand why this problem has been persistent by finding a connection between primary and secondary data. This method is known as Questioning connections between knowledge, rationality and truth/reality (Ramazanoglu and Holland. 2002).Therefore, the research was successfully conducted by adopting two techniques, the use of the secondary data and semi-structured interviews (SSI).

### **B- Area of Study**

The issue of women in the administration is not a problem that is facing the Africans only. Women across borders and generations have always found themselves being discriminated in various ways and to some extent denied chances to become today's or future leaders. However, as stated earlier there are significant improvements in the way the woman of today is treated compared to the women of the last two decades. Many women have performed better than their male counterparts in various positions across the world. Others have competed against male colleagues in political and corporate areas and won, and that has ushered a new era. An era where we can no longer see women as weak compared to women in the society. Also, it is an era where we can no longer say that women belong to the kitchen or as housewives while men continue to work there outside to improve their status and their participation to the economy. The girl child must grow in a society that makes her feel she has equal opportunities with the boys.

The study narrowed down to the women of Benin Republic who are in top management positions where data was collected via interviews to determine if they face problems in leadership that are not common with their male counterpart. The use of secondary data included the analysis

of relevant data from World Bank, WEF, IMF, ILO; data from women's NGOs in West Africa, and finally, relevant government publications in Benin (Refer figures in the literature review).

### **C- Target Population**

Women leaders in the Benin Republic were the primary target of this research. The leaders sampled in this study were drawn from different industries of the public sector with a purpose of determining the challenges they face in leadership.

### **D- Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The semi-structured interview included five (05) women who are working with the ministry of Labour and Public service in the Benin Republic government and (05) other women who are non-Governmental organization but in leadership positions. The reason of this sampling was the consequence of the limited women that occupy a leadership position in government and private institutions in the West Africa countries. Thus the random sample that targeted a total of ten women was taken from individuals who have been in management and had a degree in their professions. The condition ensured that the right sample was made with minimum or no errors.

### **E- Data Collection Methods**

Interviews were done whether the interviewer booked an appointment with the ten leaders selected and their opinions on various issues sought and indicated on the questionnaires was explored. A qualitative approach was adopted while the interview looked into the life story of the leaders selected during their times in various capacities (Goodson & Ivor, 2009)

Focusing on the realities of the interviewees life, a developed face to face qualitative and interactive methods were the most appropriate to produce data (Ramazanoglu and Al., 2002). In

so doing, the researcher was able to get the individual subjective skills that revolved around personal experiences and challenges they have been through during their time as leaders.

## **F- Data Analysis**

The data analysis provided an involved determination of a sequence of factors that could be juxtaposed in the social theories related to challenges and barriers that a woman in Benin and other parts of the world face as a leader (Kothari, 2004). The qualitative approach used in the study involved looking at the previous research and women conferences that touched on the issue of women leadership in Benin and challenges they face. The technique of memo writing, and coding was employed in the analysis of data. According to the business dictionary, the memo is a formal written brief, note, record, reminder, or summary used as a means of communication, or to outline the terms of an agreement in its draft-stage. The process is also known as thematic coding. In this study, the coding of qualitative data involved organizing data into themes, data reduction, refining, and finally drawing links between the semi-structured interview and secondary data. Then, the conclusion and verification were done according to the results of the analysis (Kothari, 2004).

After the completion of field exercises, all the information collected were coded, organized, analyzed and converted into percentages, tables, by using a statistical package for social sciences abbreviated as SPSS as indicated in the data analysis section. The statistics reported after the analysis shed light on the issues that are of great concern to women living in the Benin Republic which can be extrapolated to represent Africa. Finally, recommendations and further suggestions were proposed to improve women development in West Africa.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### I- INTRODUCTION

This section presents findings from the study on the career barriers faced by women in management of the public administration and Non-governmental organization in Benin Republic. The specific objectives of this study were four. First, to identify the career barriers faced by both women leaders/managers in the Public administration and women manager of non-governmental organization. Second, to examine whether women leaders of NGOs face similar or different challenges from those of public sector; third, to find out if there are any government policies supporting women leadership ; and lastly, to determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in the public sector in Benin Republic.

The presentation and data analysis is organized under four sections: Section II provides socio-demographic characteristics of respondents; Section III presents the career barriers faced by both women leaders/managers in the Public administration and women manager of non-governmental organization, while section IV analyzes the entrance and success of women in leadership position. The last part section VI provides the summary of the chapter.

The Following table is the summary of different findings.



**Table 1.** Emergent themes and sub-themes based on analysis of open-ended responses

Themes and sub-theme s	Example SMI response
<p><b><u>Theme 1: Socio-cultural barriers</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-Theme i: Gender stereotype</li> </ul>	<p><i>“We belong to a patriarchal and conservative society where men domination is always present. This is due to the customs and cultures biases in our society. Nothing is given for free to us women have to fight to get what they want .....For a number of men, women do not have their place in public sphere. Men see us more as housewives or caregivers than manager.”</i></p> <p><i>“Men don’t want to marry highly educated women, by the fear that you won’t be a good housewife or they don’t want you to earn more money than them, this hurts a lot their masculinity. Personally, I ended up divorced because my husband couldn’t bear the fact to live with a woman entrepreneur and leader. His ego and the society seeing him as a “weak man” took over our marriage.”</i></p> <p><i>Stereotypes about leaders generally resembles stereotypes of men rather than those of women. As a result, women are placed at a disadvantage in most leadership role. Well, I personally think that people expect and prefer women potentials in leadership. But they assumed that women are not aggressive and bold unlike men.</i></p> <p><i>Although the Government of Benin Republic has implemented many initiatives towards promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination,; still, there is a need to change a mindset among men to appreciate the potential of women capacity and leadership.....</i></p> <p><i>“It was very hard for me to pursue my studies after my baccalaureate. With the limited revenues of my parents, I had to work while</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-theme ii: Access to higher education</li> </ul>	<p><i>attending the university. It was challenging, but I couldn't make it otherwise". Unlike me, many women do not have the chance to finish their studies, consequently this reduce their chance to access to managerial position because of the lack of education."</i></p> <p><i>"Upon completion of my primary school, my dad decided that I have received enough education and it was time for me get married. In addition, he said he doesn't have enough resources and he prefers to spare his savings for the education of my brother. Consequently, I escaped from home. After several months on the streets, I finally found shelter with one of my aunty. From that moment, I started selling many stuffs in order to finance my secondary studies. It was challenging but I managed to finish my secondary school, and then I went to the university.</i></p> <p><i>"Many parents in our country, especially in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to school. They prefer to keep them at home to help them with the house chores. That was my case, my parents didn't involve themselves in my education. I was able to start and finish my studies thanks to one of my friend mother."</i></p> <p><i>"Access to education is the biggest challenge which is hindering women to the managerial position. Although access to primary school is free of charge, the access to university is quite expensive and many women stopped their studies because they couldn't afford higher education".</i></p>
<p><b><u>Theme 2: Psychological factor</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's management.</li> </ul>	<p><i>. "I think women suffer from psychological factors as they cannot control their emotions. Women cannot manage their emotions and feelings unlike men. When facing a critical</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s fear of responsibility</li> </ul>	<p><i>times, they can hardly control the situation since there are overflow by their feelings.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have difficulty to manage my over sensibility. I cannot stand injustice or equity issue. Every time I am challenge by a man who question my managerial skills, I become very nervous and end up sometimes saying bad words. I acknowledge that I have emotions management issue....”</i></p> <p><i>Some women are not ready to take this responsibility. One of my friend said, “I don’t want to be a leader, I don’t have this strength, I cannot stand all those responsibilities.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Theme 3: The problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family responsibilities</li> <li>• Balance between family life and work</li> </ul>	<p><i>“One other major challenge I face is the difficulty to balance my professional life and my family. When you are a mother it is quite challenging to raise your children and be a manager at the same time. Often, I fail to pick my children out of school. In addition, I have to stay awake late at night to do house chores since I don’t have a maid”.</i></p> <p><i>“I end up many time arguing with my husband, because I come home late or spent most time at work and professional meetings. He doesn’t stand the fact to have a wife who is always out. I cannot always be there when my husband or my children need me...this make me cry a lot. I know that be a woman manager, wife and mother at the same time means that I have to sacrifice my family sometimes... You know, this issue leads to another challenge that prevents women to enter into managerial positions. Some women are not ready to take this responsibility. One of my friends said, “I don’t want to be a leader, I don’t have this strength, I cannot stand all those responsibilities”.</i></p> <p><i>“When I returned back to work after a pregnancy leave, I was shocked to see that my</i></p>



## II- SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The study consisted of 10 respondents who explored challenges faced by women in management in Public administration and women leader of non-governmental organizations.

**Table 2:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Women Managers in Public Administration	05	50
	Women Leaders of NGO	05	50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	20-30	02	20
	30-40	04	40
	40-50	03	30
	50 and Above	01	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education Level</b>	Bachelor's degree	04	40
	Master's degree	05	50
	Doctorate/Phd	01	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>	0-5	03	30
	05-10	06	60
	10-20	01	10
	20 and above	00	00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Situation</b>	Married	<b>03</b>	<b>30</b>
	Divorced	<b>07</b>	<b>70</b>
	Single	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Interviews data 2018

The statistics in Table show that the respondents were all females. Five 05 (50%) females managers in the Public Administration, and five 05 (50%) female leaders of NGO.

### III- CAREER BARRIERS FACED BY BOTH WOMEN LEADERS/MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND WOMEN OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

When research participants for both categories were asked to explain the challenges faced by women leaders/managers, the following main themes were identified, namely, *social and cultural barriers, emotion management issues, the problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions, and finally lack of support from the government.* In addition, it was mentioned challenge of rivalry, the negative perception on competencies of women leaders among women themselves and lack of confidence.

#### **A. Theme 1- Socio-cultural barriers**

The interviews gave varying responses concerning certain issues which directly or indirectly linked to some practices at the workplace.

##### **1. Sub-Theme i -Gender stereotype**

One interesting but not surprising finding was the fact gender-based stereotypes have gained much recognition in the workplace, and thus women are seen as lesser humans when the idea of management position comes on board. This kind of discrimination has harbored to a large degree the role women can play at higher levels of management, and impact negatively on the lives of their families and the economy at large (Beverly, 2008).

The research participants (both categories) agreed that socio-cultural stereotypes are part of the society culture which constraint women career or leadership in Public administration. One respondent among the woman NGOs leader in an interview session said:

*“Although the Government of Benin Republic has implemented many initiatives towards promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination;, still, there is a need to change a mindset among men to appreciate the potential of women capacity and leadership.....”* **Ada 40 years Old.**

Another woman working with the Ministry said:

*“Stereotypes about leaders generally resembles stereotypes of men rather than those of women. As a result, women are placed at a disadvantage in most leadership role. Well, I personally think that people expect and prefer women potentials in leadership. But they assumed that women are not aggressive and bold unlike men.”* **Fiona 35 years**

Moreover, another interviewee affirmed that

*“We belong to a patriarchal and conservative society where men domination is always present. This is due to the customs and cultures biases in our society. Nothing is given for free to us women have to fight to get what they want .....For a number of men, women do not have their place in public sphere. Men see us more as housewives or caregivers than manager.”* **Kossiba 35 years old**

In the same framework, one women working with the Ministry said:

*“Men don’t want to marry highly educated women, by the fear that you won’t be a good housewife or they don’t want you to earn more money than them, this hurts a lot their masculinity. Personally, I ended up divorced because my husband*

*couldn't bear the fact to live with a woman entrepreneur and leader. His ego and the society seeing him as a "weak man" took over our marriage." Esther 30 years old*

Women participants reported that removing socio-cultural stereotypes involved a transformation in employees' mindsets, management practices, processes and organizational culture. The challenge women face with gender stereotyping, is that the deep conditioning about gender has affected their self-esteem and the perception of their own leadership capabilities (Oswald and Chapleau, 2010).

## **2. Sub-theme ii - Access to higher education**

In particular, it was noted that low aspiration for women to occupy managerial positions. This was noted as a result of the lack or low level of education which means the majority of women have lagged behind in acquisition of the formal education. Specifically, a majority of those interviewed reported the difficulty to access to high education which is the primary reason for their lack of opportunities to compete favorably against the male (Jackson, 2005). One of the interviewee said:

*"It was very hard for me to pursue my studies after my baccalaureate. With the limited revenues of my parents, I had to work while attending the university. It was challenging, but I couldn't make it otherwise". Unlike me, many women do not have the chance to finish their studies, consequently this reduce their chance to access to managerial position because of the lack of education." Aya 30 years old*

Another woman leader of NGO said:



*“Upon completion of my primary school, my dad decided that I have received enough education and it was time for me get married. In addition, he said he doesn’t have enough resources and he prefers to spare his savings for the education of my brother. Consequently, I escaped from home. After several months on the streets, I finally found shelter with one of my aunty. From that moment, I started selling many stuffs in order to finance my secondary studies. It was challenging but I managed to finish my secondary school, and then I went to the university. Eva 40 years*

In addition, another woman working with the ministry said:

*“Many parents in our country, especially in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to school. They prefer to keep them at home to help them with the house chores. That was my case, my parents didn’t involve themselves in my education. I was able to start and finish my studies thanks to one of my friend mother.” Kari 35 years*

Another participant acknowledged that she did not have access to higher education. She said:

*“My dad after my baccalaureate told me that he could no longer finance my studies. He added that I am a woman and I don’t need higher degrees or diploma, since I will end up marrying a man who will care for me and satisfy all my needs.” Andy 39 years*

Participants acknowledged that the cultural norms and practices in Benin also affect women’s economic status, perpetuating certain biases against women and girls (UN-Women, 2016). For instance in poor families, even parents value the girl and want to see her grows as women leader in the future, often they have to make decisions about her immediate value. Many

parents do not send their girls to school not because they do not want to, but because they don't have enough financial resources. When resources are limited, school fees become a greater financial burden. Consequently, parents usually send the boy to school instead of the girl, especially at secondary or tertiary level.

## **B. Theme 2 – Emotion management issues**

Many participants reported that emotion management issues as one among the challenges faced by women in the public administration. Consequently, one of the respondent said:

*“I think women suffer from psychological factors as they cannot control their emotions. Women cannot manage their emotions and feelings unlike men. When facing a critical times, they can hardly control the situation since there are overflow by their feelings.”* **Joa 25years old**

Another respondent Afi a female manager working with the Ministry affirmed that.

*“I have difficulty to manage my over sensibility. I cannot stand injustice or equity issue. Every time I am challenge by a man who question my managerial skills, I become very nervous and end up sometimes saying bad words. I acknowledge that I have emotions management issue....”* **Women manager at the Ministry.”** **Afi 30 years old**

In addition, another interviewee said:

*“I lost several contracts because I failed to manage my feelings. Most of the time I take decisions with my heart rather than my critical thinking. I acknowledged that this is a serious issue that I have to resolve.”* **Sica 30 years**

But, another respondent during the interview argued against this statement.

*“It is not fair to generalize women when it comes to the management of their feelings. Women can control their emotions as there are aging...look at mature woman, you will realize how confidence we are in every task that we do....” Lyne aged of 50.*

Women’s opinions on the psychological factor are a little divergent. However, it can be deduced that one of barriers that is preventing women from ascending to top managerial positions is their capability to manage their feelings and emotions.

### **C. Theme 3 -The problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions**

Another finding is the fact that family responsibilities are squarely shouldered on women which have limited their ability to manage managerial posts and take care of their family (Wirth, 2001). Balancing reproductive and workplace functions was also mentioned by respondents as one among challenges facing women in leadership. Many or almost all the interviewees affirmed that they do face hard times balancing their families and professionals lives. One female manager working at the Ministry said:

*“One other major challenge I face is the difficulty to balance my professional life and my family. When you are a mother it is quite challenging to raise your children and be a manager at the same time. Often, I fail to pick my children out of school. In addition, I have to stay awake late at night to do house chores since I don’t have a maid”. Gina 35 years old*

Another respondent Leader of NGO affirmed:

*“I end up many time arguing with my husband, because I came home late or spent most time at work and professional meetings. He doesn’t stand the fact to have a wife who is always out. I cannot always be there when my husband or my children need me...this make me cry a lot. I know that be a woman manager, wife and mother at the same time means that I have to sacrifice my family sometimes... You know, this issue leads to another challenge that prevents women to enter into managerial positions. Some women are not ready to take this responsibility. One of my friends said, “I don’t want to be a leader, I don’t have this strength, I cannot stand all those responsibilities”. Angie 38*

In addition, another interviewee working with the ministry said:

*“When I returned back to work after a pregnancy leave, I was shocked to see that my position was occupied by a man. To avoid legal proceedings, my manager at that time proposed a similar job position. I have accepted but I lost many advantages related to my previous work. This was unfair...” Women manager at Ministry.” Mona 32 years Old*

Helgesen (2005) supports the findings above saying that social issues are challenges that originate from home. Apart from being employees, women as part of the family play a central role of caring for the home. Erasmus (1998) indicates that the attitude of populace in our society revealed that women are essentially nurturers, and homemakers. In the field of employment, a glass ceiling exists for women that they have to prove their capability before they are permitted beyond a certain point.

It was however mentioned that despite that challenge of balancing reproductive and workplace functions, a significant number of women that entered the workforce has increased in numbers over the last two decades (Marthur-Helm, 2002). He however concurs with the view that more women than men are faced with the challenge of choosing between family and their career.

In addition to all themes above, eight women over ten acknowledged the issue related to rivalry among women themselves. The negative perception on competencies of women leaders among women themselves and lack of confidence is another minor challenge women face in their journey of leadership.

**D. Theme 4 - The support of government, national and international organizations in Benin toward women Leadership.**

Various institutions and governments across the world have been calling for institutional changes that would increase the number of women in leadership. Women without Borders, Women in the World Foundation, Women for International Women, Womankind Worldwide, United Nations Women and many others are international organizations that are committed to ending gender inequality. In Africa, we have African Women's Development Funds which provides funds to women who are ambitious in business. The First Ladies of African countries meet on the sidelines of the African Union (AU) to discuss the issues that have been affecting women and how they can improve them in the entire continent. In the year 1990, the constitution of Benin prohibited any form of discrimination in the country. Thus, the issue of having more women in leadership by giving those equal chances for leadership positions as well as eliminating any other barrier are some of the problems that affect them globally.

Despite all those advancements, women still lack support from government or international organizations. In that matter, one of the interviewee stated:

*“It is true that government and organizations established laws that prevent women discrimination at the workplace, but those laws are just written, and there are not genuinely applied. For instance, even our government does not promote women leadership. Among 22 Ministers, only three are women. You can see by yourself that we still have a long way to go.”* **Deo aged of 45**

Again, it was observed that most women staff lack the mentorship required at some certain level of management basically because they are discriminated against it or simply because they are women they are not subject to any mentorship. In fact, one of those interviewed, affirmed that lack of mentorship programs at their workplace has greatly affected her performance due to the rapidly changing demands of the work environment. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of constant staff training and therefore lack of any program to mentor women is a catalyst to poor performance and lack of motivation to do better at workplaces (Metcalf, 2007).

The women respondents pointed out lack of networking to be one among their challenge. Although this study does not compare women leadership from men leadership, yet, it is important to understand that women leaders lack access to social network where informal decisions are taken. As such, it impacts on their formal organizational leadership. In fact, one of those interviewed, affirmed that lack of mentorship programs at their workplace has greatly affected her performance due to the rapidly changing demands of the work environment. She added:

*“To give my own experience when I joined the team of this ministry as HR manager, I was the first women in this position and I can assure you it wasn't easy. I didn't*

*have much support from the management and men in the team were reluctant to have a women as HR. Everything was done to make me fail my objectives.... This was hard to live with". Sissi 38*

In conclusion to this section, it was deduced that lack of support/mentorship is one other challenge that is refraining women from ascending top management level (UN-women,2016)).The management at a higher level is a demanding task that requires cultural, economic, and political strategies to make the organizations successful (Martin and al.,2001). The nature of these tasks is what makes the requirements of those applying for the position to be many. However, due to the small number of the women leaders in these positions women lack mentors who can guide them to great heights of international organizations' leadership (World Bank Group Gender & Development Report, 2014).

#### **E. The entrance and success of women in leadership position.**

The outcome of this study intended to determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in both public and non-governmental sectors in Benin Republic. When research participants were asked to explain how women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in the public sector, majority of respondents (80%) argued that their entrance depends on their individual knowledge, skills and experiences, from both academic qualification, work experiences and above all resilience.

For instance, one of the interviewee affirmed:

*I overcame all the challenges I have faced in my career by making a lot of sacrifices. One of them was to get divorced, I chose my career over my marriage*

*and I didn't regret it. Not all women would do that, I chose this option because I was totally convinced of where I want to stand in my career.” Kristy 35 years old*

Moreover, another respondent said:

*“Many people said that I was selfish, but let me ask you this question «Aren't men selfish when they're asking us to choose them over our career? » And imagine if all women chose to stay with their husband than to have a professional life, I don't think that women situation in this country will improve in the next coming years. Again you will have no one to interview for your research.” Samy 38 years.*

One woman working with the Ministry said:

*“Being woman leader means to sacrifice your life as a woman, your joy to be with your husband, or even to be separated from your children and be rejected by the society. Nevertheless, I really believe that all those sacrifices are valuable, we need more woman in the higher position in this country and if this means sacrifices we are ready to pay the price.” Balkissa 40 years*

Another respondent affirmed that:

*“I overcame all the challenges I have faced in my career by staying focused on my goal and objectives. It was hard, but when you made up your mind on your career, you have to fight to it, no matter what happens.” Awa aged 45*

In addition to all said above, three themes were suggested to increase women success and entrance at the workplace. The identified themes were availability of *in house gender policies* within any structure, and *women empowerment strategies* through *mentorship program*.



## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### I- SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic and sociological aspects of a sample help in understanding factors like the level of education, sex, and marital status, place of origin, interests, household status, and membership of various organizations, social groups, and values. These aspects are necessary if we want to understand the issues surrounding the African woman in Benin and how in one way or another have been limiting her success in corporate and political leadership not only within the African borders but also in other parts of the world. These issues can be extrapolated to show the state of the woman in the world and the challenges that she has been facing in a bid to compete with the male figures. For instance, by looking at the sex of the subjects under analysis one can determine whether been a woman has been pulling back women leaders across the world. In this case, we can ask whether gender can be used to discriminate one in a particular field. The reasons as to why some members of the community are discriminated because of their gender also fall under this demographic characteristics.

The situation can be traced back to the societies that we were brought up where the male is regarded as the head of the family and women settle for the roles of caring for the members of the society. Although this study doesn't imply to change the social settings of our community, it would be necessary for women not to let the traditional parameter of a male domination undermine the entire generation of women. Women across the world need a wake-up call to fight for their position in the society since women rights are seen as human rights.

The issue of gender discrimination and how to end it calls for women involvement into finishing it than any other gender. Women must first believe that they can and fight for their positions in all sectors of our economy. Once they have been given the opportunity to head certain organizations and proof that they can do better than men, they will not only have made justice to themselves but also to other young girls in the society. In so doing, the demographic factor of the status of women in the community will have improved.

Involvement in social organizations within the community is also critical in determining the sociological factors leading to discrimination of women in leadership positions in Africa. Social organizations are started with the aim of improving the status of women in the society. Countries across the world are encouraged to have policies that will ensure there is growth in these social organizations as a way of bettering the status of the minority or discriminated members of the society. Leadership forums are some of the activities that these social organizations are involved in different parts of the world. The Republic of Benin has several women organizations that were started to improve the status of women in the country as well as act as a forum that they can use to prepare for future leadership positions.

Association des Femmes Beninoises pour le Development (ACORD), the Association des Femmes de Tchakaloke (AFT), the Association Des Femmes Juristes Du Benin (AFJB), the Alliance des Femmes pour la Democratie et le Developpement du Benin, the Association Lonlon-Beha, and the Bibliothèque et Centre de Documentation de la Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques (BIDOC-FSA) are all women association in the Republic of Benin that has been used to improve women situations. Most of these organizations have been used to fight for the women representation in government like ministerial positions. Also, some women politicians have had the support of these associations, and that increased their chances of winning political seats in the

country. The *Alliance des Femmes pour la Democratie et le Development du Benin* is one of the bodies that was started to improve the economic status of women in the Benin Republic as well as help in political careers in the country.

Several women have used this political vehicle to access strategic positions in the government. That has been an encouragement to many other girls and young women in the country. Therefore, this is a case of how the socio-demographic aspects surrounding women in Africa have been used to further women interests, and in most cases, there are many success stories. In association with other international organizations like the UN, WHO, World Bank, and some African First Ladies more is to be achieved today and for the future.

## II- CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP POSITION

Women leaders in many parts of the world have been facing many challenges. Some of these challenges cut across all parts of the world while some can be found in various countries depending on the social and political structure of those nations.

The roles of women in many countries have changed in the last five decades. Currently, we have many women joining colleges and proceeding for masters programs in some of the best universities in the world. Also, the introduction of online degree programs has globalized the courses as one can study for any plans and from various colleges from their home country. As things have continued to change the challenges that have been affecting women leaders, have also changed. For instance, it would be humiliating and demeaning to think that a woman whom you spent many years in college studying with best grades cannot do specific tasks just because of her

gender. Women just like men are looking for the highest positions in the society in social, political, and corporate sectors of our economy.

For example, in the United States, it would have been a far-fetched dream 50 years ago to think that a woman could vie for president and stand a better chance to win. Hillary Clinton presidential ambitions have given hope to many women in the world. Back in our continent, Africa, we have seen women presidents in countries like Liberia and Mauritius and many others who have been competing for those positions. In the banking industry, the ratio of women to men has been improving tremendously over the last ten years. However, saying that women have equal chances as men or they no longer face challenges in leadership would be a farfetched idea. Women continue to lag behind in many areas of the economy.

#### **A- Organizational Challenges**

In most organizations across the world, there is a clause that states at least there should be a woman on the board. Although such terms are meant to increase the number of women in leadership positions, they also show that women are not given equal chances like men. Thus, organizational barriers start from the selection period to promotions of the women leaders within an organization.

#### **B- Selection and promotion process**

This is the stage where discrimination of women starts. Many organizations claim that the pool of women they have does not have the leadership skills required to warrant a promotion within the organization. As a result, in five men who are promoted one woman also undergoes a development indicating why we have so many male leaders in countries like Benin but very few women in same or similar positions. Also, most of the senior places in the country are held by men

who have a high affinity of promoting fellow men at the expense of the women in the same organizations.

### **C- Workplace Relationships and Challenges**

According to the International Management Mentors Group All successful people have someone they look upon for mentorship. Mentors help develop the confidence and skills one needs to get ahead. They will be there to support and guide the mentee through challenges in his/her career. In fact, 80% of CEOs polled by Management Mentors have mentors who have provided career boosts (International Management Mentors Group, 2013). Such a person will be able to inform someone to take specific career paths if he or she wants to succeed in specific fields. Thus, birds of the same feathers tend to fly together in these organizations (Elmuti, Jia, & Davis, 2009). For example, men will find it easy to choose a mentor from the vast pool of the male executives surrounding them in the organization. Women, on the other hand, have limited choices of other women in top management which complicates their situations. Also, some male leaders find women to be more emotional and thus close relationships that could have led to mentorship.

### **D- Globalization of businesses and leadership activities**

Leaders should be someone who is flexible enough to leave the comfort of his or her family to pursue a career in any part of the world (Zakaro, & al., 2014). Governments' officials are always busy just like top leadership leaders who attend many summits in all parts of the world. Women find it difficult to leave their young children or family to visit business leadership forums, and that makes the issue of promoting them sensitive (Elmuti, Jia, & Davis, 2009). As a result, they are given less tedious tasks that can help them have time with their families.

In addition to the work demands women are also expected to take care of their families making it even more difficult to succeed to top levels. Therefore, women have to choose whether to spend most of their time at a job or look after the family. A close look at several women who are top managers in corporation one will notice a common trend where most of them do not have kids or are not married since they know other family responsibilities will affect their career (Elmuti, Jia, & Davis, 2009). Also, children make it impossible for women to travel for long hours in fear of leaving the kids with another person and this also limits the chances of promotion.

These challenges are either institutional or societal issues that make it impossible to promote women in various organizations. Women seem to be affected by family responsibilities that require them to spend most of their time looking after their homes. One way to solve this issue is to ensure that the family work is not left to women only. Men should support women for family cares. This, will bring a generation that allows women to spend more time in their careers to increase their chances of succeeding in various posts.

### III- WOMEN ENTRANCE AND SUCCESS IN LEADERSHIP /MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Women are doing well in various management positions despite the many challenges that they face. Their entrance in these management positions is preceded by a struggle for equality within the organizations they work. Not all women can make it to the highest levels of their organizations, but with time there has been an increase. For instance, in the year 2005, the Fortune Top 500 companies had less than 2% women in the chief executive position (Antonakis & Day, (Eds.). (2017). Today, there is an about 10% woman CEOs heading the Fortunes top 500 organizations across the world. The figure seems small, but it is an indication many more women

are being considered for leadership duties around the globe. It has taken the efforts of these women coupled with high education levels to make it to the prime of many firms across the world. In the corporate world, some women have made a name in Africa courtesy of their determination.

The website Africa.com lists Njeri Rionge (Kenya), Isabel Dos Santos (Angola), Folorunsho Alakija (Nigeria), Sibongile Sambo (South Africa), Divine Ndhlukula (Zimbabwe), Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu (Ethiopia), Tabitha Karanja (Kenya), Hajia Bola Shagaya (Nigeria), Salwa Akhannouch (Morocco), and Bridgette Radebe (South Africa) as some of the most successful businesswomen in the world. Some of these women have founded and managed industries that have grown to be international organizations. Security companies, beer industries, technological companies, as well as Information Technology firms under the managed by these women have developed to be the most successful organizations in Africa. It took sheer determination and necessary skills to overcome hurdles that are associated with women leaders for them to rise the corporate ladder. Many men of their generation tried to compete with these women, but they were out shined. Thus, this is an indication that if women are given an opportunity to prove themselves, then they can do better jobs than men (Kuhlmann et al., 2017). Also, many women leaders in the political world have used their influence to advocate for women empowerment in Africa and in any other parts of the world.

#### IV- SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Transformation in organizations and national issues which affect the economic development of West African countries can only be realized if gender balance in the public sector leadership is achieved. Since the public sector is the largest employer in many nations, women should be actively represented in all areas and help eradicate any notion of discriminating their

role in the society. Tackling stereotypes and other community norms directed towards women should be taken care of and create an environment which is supportive of the girl child in all aspects of public life. Measures on how to strengthen public institutions to promote transparency and effective governance which is based on gender equality should be formulated and effectively stipulated to clearly show the implications associated with any willful violation of these rules. With gender diversity in the public sector, programs to mentor women into leadership positions will be of great importance not only to Benin Republic alone but the West African countries at large. When women are in leadership position, there is the feeling of friendliness since women are naturally caring and therefore staff can interact well, and subsequently, this promotes the throughput of an individual employee.



## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a summary of the study key findings, main conclusions; and recommendations on the study that investigated challenges faced by women leaders in leadership position in the public administration. It also proposes areas for further research.

### I. SUMMARY

#### **A. Summary of the study**

A case study research was undertaken in the Benin Republic to investigate carriers' challenges faced by women manager in the public administration and women leaders. This research, was motivated by finding out what could be the career barriers and challenges that have been hindering women from ascending to the top position in management; in order to recommend effectives policies to solve this issue in the Benin Republic.

A combination of both secondary and primary sources of data was collected for this study. The techniques used for collecting primary data were face-to-face semi structured interviews. To support the study secondary data was sourced from UN-women, World Bank, Word Economic Forum, literature related to leadership positions, gender and leadership in Africa, gender inequality

in management, gender stereotype, challenges to women in leadership, inequity in education, recruitment, employment and advancement, government policies supporting and promoting status and welfare.

Ten Beninese women were included in the study: Five (05) women who work with the ministry of Labour and Public service in the Benin Republic government and (05) other women who are non-Governmental organization leaders. All the participants are above 20 years old with a minimum of five years' experience in a leadership position.

The following is the summary of the study key findings.

## **B. Summary of the keys findings**

Upon completion of the research the following main themes were identified, namely, social and cultural barriers, psychological factor, the problem of balancing reproductive/workplace functions, and the lack of government policies towards women development. In addition, it was mentioned challenges included the rivalry, the negative perception on competencies of women leaders among women themselves and lack of confidence.

### **1. How Socio-cultural Practices leads to woman challenges in Leadership**

Gender-based stereotypes have gained much recognition in the workplace, and thus women are seen as lesser humans when the idea of management position comes on board. The way African patriarchal system is designed can be described as the genesis of all types of women discrimination when seeking leadership positions. This issue starts with the home unit where all house chores are done by the woman as men are described the head of the family who should sit and be served. Many women seem to have married this ideas, and they show no sign of opposition as it will be seen as going against the traditions of the community.

Consequently, at workplace most of the men leaders do not see the need of promoting women to senior positions since they assume that family chores will dragged women behind. Moreover, the difficulty for women to balance between their families and work-related businesses is one the consequence of cultural practices in African society. In addition, the difficulty to access to education limited to girls, thus women lack qualifications to compete with men.

## **2. Emotion management issues.**

Many participants reported that emotion management as one among the challenges faced by women in the public and private administration. It was noted that many women have some difficulties to manage their emotions and feelings at the workplace. Consequently, this limited their capacity of critical thinking, and lead to many professional issues.

## **3. The problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions**

Another finding is the fact that family responsibilities are squarely shouldered on women which have limited their ability to manage managerial posts and take care of their family (Wirth, 2001). Balancing reproductive and workplace functions was also mentioned by participants as one major challenge they face in their leadership journey. Many or almost all the interviewees affirmed that they do face hard times balancing their families and professionals lives.

Given the demanding nature of any family, most women are likely to decline chances of being promoted at their workplace even when they are suitably qualified and offered such an opportunity. This clearly indicates the burden associated with social demands and what the society expects of women.

#### **4. Lack of enough mentors to mentor more women to leadership**

Most of the senior executives are men, women are then left with few people to consult in their careers. In most cases when it comes to mentorship, people feel comfortable when they have someone who they can look up to them, someone who can support them unconditionally. Therefore, many women lack mentors to encourage them in their careers, they lack of confidence, and give up in their journey of leadership. In the long-run, this situation makes women seen as not being ambitious in their leadership dreams, and that lowers their chances of becoming leaders in the societies. More women should come out and advocate to be examples to others.

#### **5. Lack of Government support**

Despite the Benin government initiatives that seek to empower women on various aspects, it has failed to address social cultural stereotypes of women leadership, as such compromising with access and success of women in leadership opportunities. It was noted that the government failed to address the gender imbalances in the various structures of the public and set up affirmative actions. There is no any laws or policies concerning the quota system, where a certain number of positions are allocated to women. In addition, the government failed to implement effective actions toward girl's access to education.

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the study findings, the following seven (07) points are recommended for different groups:

### **A. Recommendation to women leader**

First, there is a need to encourage women leaders to work through the moments of self-doubts and self-esteem. Women must learn how to ignore others people negative influence on

them. Moreover, women shall ignore the inner voice that may discourage them taking tough decisions, speaking up and getting outside their comfort zone.

Second, women need to learn how to be bold and courageous, and not be afraid of failures. Women should learn how to balance the family and work-related issues to be able to compete competitively with their male colleagues. Most women leaders prefer to look at their families at the expense of work, and that limits their chances of being promoted.

Third, since women leaders often lack the support of other female colleagues or leaders, there is a need of establishing women based networks, and networking events as well as online forums to support and promote each other.

## **B. Recommendation to the government**

Fourth, the state and local government have a responsibility of helping women in the society tackle managerial challenges. One way of doing this is passing regulations that will increase the total number of women leaders in the cabinet and government. Although many countries have these regulations, there are many discrepancies when it comes to implementation. Thus, the state must ensure these policies are fully implemented to help women cope with various professional and leadership challenges.

Despite the Benin government initiatives that seek to empower women on various aspects, it has failed to address social cultural stereotypes of women leadership, as such compromising with access and success of women in leadership opportunities. The study therefore recommend for reviewing the existing women empowerment policy in order to reflect the true and real situation of women 'situation in the country. Therefore, the government should address the gender imbalances in the various structures of the public and set up affirmative actions.

The quota system, where a certain number of positions are allocated to women, through Presidential appointments should be implemented. It is assumed that once the situation of gender equality has normalized, the attainment of such positions will be through a competitive process. In addition, many women leadership platform or network should be created in order to help women share success and challenges they face in their leadership journey

Fifth, the government should facilitate access to the education to the young girls. Sending girls to school must become compulsory and the government should implement and apply effective laws and regulations on girl's education.

### **C. Recommendation to institutional leaders**

Six, Institutional leaders act as mentors to other potential leaders within or outside an organization. They are also the policymakers who determine the rules governing promotion of women in the institution. As such we would recommend they be more active in ensuring women are given equal chances as men in the institution. Consequently, more women will feel they have a chance of fulfilling their leadership dream in a corporation. For instance, we expect the institutional leaders to come with policies that state all managerial positions must have a specific percentage of women.

### **D. Recommendation to national/international institution**

Lastly, the number of women in corporate leadership has been increasing in the last one decade. However, we cannot say that women have equal chances like men of becoming executive members of the international or national institution in any part of the world. Corporations, national/international institution need to introduce a gendered rule that will ensure a certain proportion of its leaders are women. This, will give more chances to women leaders in the future.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the contentious issue of challenges faced by women in their career and during their journey of leadership. It also showed some of the factors that have led to these challenges. In the light of the study findings, it can be concluded that while women have the potential and ability to be leaders to perform at the top level of public life, the vicious cycle of challenges against their gender often limited their success. Besides internal factors among women themselves, *external factors such as socio- cultural stereotypes, the problem of balancing reproductive and workplace functions, emotion management, lack of networking, difficulty to have access to education, the inexistence of gender policies by the government* have contributed significantly on constraining women career development and leadership success.

If the purpose of this study was to classify the challenges faced by women in their career, from the most to less important, cultural stereotype will definitely occupy the first place. Community and cultural norms through *Patriarchy* have been heavily hindering women capacities and roles in Africa. Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the African traditional society. It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. This system clearly defines sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specified gender roles (Aina, 1998, p 6).

Benin Republic like most of Africa countries, is patriarchal in nature, with attendant unequal gender relations which cast women in a subordinate position. The patriarchal society in the country commands women to go with the will of men. This state is oppressive for women in all areas, including social, economic, political and cultural. Patriarchal assumptions have inhibited women's ability to achieve in male-dominated sectors of the economy and the government. Public statements glorifying women's roles as mothers and wives have encouraged women to stay home and raise children rather than enter the workforce or seek more training. Consequently, this isolate Beninese women from public and private life, reducing their chances to have access to any kind of power. The way African patriarchal system is designed can be described as the genesis of all types of women discrimination when seeking leadership positions. This issue starts with the home unit where all house chores are done by the woman as men are described the head of the family who should sit and be served. Family's responsibilities make them busy to the point of having less time for work-related issues and their career. Therefore, there is a need to change a mindset among men to appreciate the potential of women capacity and leadership.

Transformation in organizations and national issues which affect the economic development of West African countries can only be realized if gender balance in the public sector leadership is achieved. Since the public sector is the largest employer in many nations, women should be actively represented in all areas in order to help eradicate any notion of discriminating their role in the society. Tackling stereotypes and other community norms directed towards women should be taken into consideration by creating an environment which is supportive of the girl child in all aspects of public life. Measures on how to strengthen public institutions to promote transparency and effective governance which is based on gender equality should be formulated and effectively stipulated to clearly show the implications associated with any willful violation of



these rules. With gender diversity in the public sector, programs to mentor women into leadership positions will be of great importance not only to West African countries alone but the world at large.

In addition, it has been observed that the political force has experienced radical changes especially in countries where women have taken leadership positions such as Brazil which has female president since 2010 and has women in high profile roles (Lisa, 2016). Also some countries of the South Africa like Malawi and Liberia are promoting women on the presidential position. For instance Dr. Joyce Banda and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf where the two first female presidents in Africa. The same can be encouraged in West African countries and eventually with a good balance in gender equality; more opportunities are going to be embraced in this part of the continent. Democratic power may be ideal in promoting the education and other formal government sectors into realizing much aligned balance, and as a result, the countries are going to form a formidable force on the continent.

Although this research reflects on the issue that many women have been facing as leaders, it is essential to clarify that it might not be exhaustive to cover all problems. The literature reviewed in this study as well as personal research in the Benin Republic might miss several factors that might need further investigations.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

It would be pertinent to further explore a comparative study of women and men in leadership/management positions in Benin Republic on a wider scale. The challenges they face and the issue of what values of leadership women bring in compared to men to justify calls for more inclusion of women in leadership positions also merits further study.

## APPENDICIES

### **Appendix 1: Interviews questions**

#### Interview group 1- Women NGO's leaders

1. What is your educational background?
2. What are the barriers and challenges you have faced in your journey as women leader?
3. How those existing barriers prevent you as women from entering management positions?
4. How did you overcome all the challenges you have face in your career?
5. How will you describe your role or impact as female leader?
6. What is women current role in NGOS in Benin Republic?
7. Are you currently in partnership with any international organization that support in women leadership?
8. I yes, how can you describe their role of empowering women's leadership?

#### Interview group 2: Interviews questions

1. What is your educational background?
2. What are the barriers and challenges you have faced in your journey as women in the government?
3. How those existing barriers prevent you as women from entering your current position?
4. How did you overcome all the challenges you have face in your career?
5. What is the role of the current Ministry for women, and how can they further support women's leadership development?
6. What is the evaluation of the role of international organizations in supporting women's leadership and capacity development in Benin?
7. How can international organizations support women's leadership and capacity development role in the government of Benin Republic?

## **Appendix 2: Consent to Participate Form**

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

Consent to participate in a Research Study for a Master in Human Resources Management

\*\*\*\*\*

Title of the study: Career barriers for women's leadership development in Public Sector: Case Study of Benin Republic (West Africa)

Primary Investigator:

Name: Dr. Beverly Metcalfe Dawn Faculty: Suliman Olayan School of Business (OSB)

Phone\_ +961-1-350000 Ext. 3950

Co-Primary Investigator: Ayaba Brunelle Bessanvi Faculty: Suliman Olayan School of Business (OSB)

Phone\_ (00229) 96950002

Introduction

You are being invited to participate in a research study of Career barrier for women's leadership development in the Public Sector: Case Study of Benin Republic (West Africa). The purpose of this project is to critically evaluate the Career barriers and obstacles to women's leadership in the workplace in Benin (West Africa), and consider the policies that can be developed to support the capacity building of women to effectively cope gender discrimination at the workplace. This research is conducted within the Master in HRM program at the American University of Beirut.

The study seeks to recruit women working in the public sector in the Benin Republic, either as female managers of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and/or women managers with the Ministry of Labour and Public Service. You are being asked to participate in this study as you are a woman leader working in Benin.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Before deciding to take part in this study, please take some time to read this information letter in order to be aware of what the research involves. This document shall provide you with information related to participation, risks, discomforts and benefits.

### **Participant/subject recruitment and selection:**

The participants are women leaders of non-governmental organizations, and women managers working with the Ministry of Labour and Public Service in the Benin Republic.

The population will consider women working in the Benin Republic chosen on purpose regarding their managerial level. To prevent possible error, and to obtain the best relevant data, the interviewees will be holders of academic and professionals degrees.

A sample of ten (10) women leader will be identified. Participants are females Beninese from 20 years or above with experience in leadership. The first sample will include 5 females' leaders of NGO chosen from the database of existing NGOs in the Benin republic via the Board of the National Association of non-governmental organization who have operated at least for five (5) years. The second sample will constitute five (5) women managers chosen among women working with the Ministry of Labor and Public Service via the Ministry's Administrative Secretary.

### **Ethical considerations, risks, benefits, and risk/benefit ratio, privacy and confidentiality**

The people involved in the study are not exposed to unreasonable risks. Participants will be informed that in case they are interested to participate in the study and are really willing to assist with it by providing information about their experiences, the interview shall be conducted according to the participant preference at their convenient timing and place in order to ensure their privacy as participants and the confidentiality of data.

The risks of this study are minimal. The interview questions are related to the participant work experiences and career development. Some questions might possibly raise emotions of distress or embarrassment related to the interviewee previous experiences. Nevertheless, participation in the present study can never lead to an actual physical harm.

Therefore, research ethics will not negatively impact anybody in a difficult situation as all are committed to a social and gender ethics that are inclusive and which support women empowerment.

### **Description of the Study Procedures**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked a series of questions. The relative time for the interview is approximatively between 15 to 30 min

### **Benefits of Being in the Study**

Your participation will help have a depth understanding of barriers that prevent women entering in managerial position. This will give a new insight of women's role and status at the workplace in West Africa, and what measures are in place for supporting women's development.

### **Confidentiality**

- This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.
- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file.
- We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.
- In case you prefer not to be recorded, the interview will be transcribed manually directly by the co-investigator and this might extend the interview to one (01) hour.

### **Data Safety Monitoring Plan**

Participants' privacy shall be accurately respected. Names of participants will not appear in the thesis or reports resulting from the study. Participants will not be identifiable.

It is also assured that women leader or CEO' identities will remain confidential, and will never be cited in the thesis or any other report.

The confidentiality of the collected data shall be fully protected. Complete data will be stored in the co-investigator office at Porto-Novo (Benin republic). It's all confidential and passwords shall be used to not jeopardize privacy and confidentiality. All paper field notes collected will be retained locked in the PI office, and audio-taped interviews will be confidentially destroyed after five years.

Only the principal investigator at AUB, the co-investigator, and the IRB may have access to these materials. All notes, recordings, and data collected shall be subject to ongoing inspection to make sure data is fully protected. The whole process will be monitored on a regular basis and with a 100% assurance of data privacy. Continuous and proper daily monitoring shall be performed to guarantee participants' safety. All associated data shall be secured and protected.

Furthermore, contact details for both the PI and the co-investigator are provided to all participants to voice any concerns that might exist.

Subjects can also contact the AUB-IRB Office at the online link or at IRB direct contact information (phone-e-mail) for any clarification or concerns that they might have regarding the study or for any questions about their rights as participants.

We are committed to the confidentiality of data.

### **Payments**

The participation in this research is totally up to and you will not have any financial payment.

### **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may decide to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the American University of Beirut in any way. Refusal to participate in the study will involve no consequence and will not affect your relationship with the American University of Beirut in any way.

### **Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns**

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Ayaba Brunelle Bessanvi at [abb06@mail.aub.edu](mailto:abb06@mail.aub.edu) or by telephone at (00229) 96950002. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you.

- If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact the IRB Board at the American University of Beirut at American University of Beirut PO BOX: 11-0236 F15

Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020 Lebanon Tel: 00961 1 374374, ext: 5445 Fax: 000961 1 738025 Email: [irb@aub.edu.lb](mailto:irb@aub.edu.lb)

- If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the IRB Board at the American University of Beirut at the address above.

### **Consent**

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Do you voluntarily consent to take part in this study?

I agree to participate in this study.

I refuse to participate in this study.

Do you voluntarily consent to be audio taped?

I agree to be audiotaped

I refuse to be audiotaped

Do you voluntarily consent to be quoted noted that a pseudonym will be used to hide your identity?

I agree to be quoted

I refuse to be quoted

Interviewers' name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Recruitment material - Information letter-**

#### **Recruitment Material**

**\*This is not an Official Message from AUB\***

Date:

Dear Madam,

My name is Ayaba Brunelle Bessanvi. I am a graduate student at the American University of Beirut. I am kindly requesting your participation in a master's thesis research study that I am conducting titled: Career barriers for women's leadership development in Public Sector: Case Study of Benin Republic (West Africa). The research focuses on understanding the multi-level barriers to women's leadership development in West Africa and in identifying public policy frameworks that support women's leadership development. The focus will principally be on literature that is linked to the public sector and NGO organizations. The study involves a collection of data through semi structured interviewed with women leaders.

I am contacting you as you are a woman leader in Benin and I hope that you will accept to participate in my study. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely anonymous; therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. If you would like to participate in the study, please contact me by email and I will then provide you more information about the study, and will provide you with the consent form.

Your participation in the research will be of great importance to help provide a set of clear recommendations and relevant solutions to improve women's development in Benin and West Africa



*If you have concerns about the study or questions about your rights as a participant, you can contact the AUB IRB Office at <http://www.aub.edu.lb/irb/Pages>*

*IRB Contact Information*

American University of Beirut

PO BOX: 11-0236 F15

Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020 Lebanon.

Tel: 00961 1 374374, ext: 5445

Fax: 000961 1 738025

Email: [irb@aub.edu.lb](mailto:irb@aub.edu.lb)

For any further information about the study, feel free to reach out to me or to the Primary investigator, Dr. Beverly Metcalfe. Our contact information is listed below

Dr. Beverly Metcalfe Dawn / Principal Investigator

Suliman Olayan School of Business- American University of Beirut

Tel: +961-1-350000 Ext. 3950 mail: [bm47@aub.edu.lb](mailto:bm47@aub.edu.lb)

Ayaba Brunelle Bessanvi/ co-investigator

E-mail: [abb06@mail.aub.edu](mailto:abb06@mail.aub.edu)

Mobile: [00229](tel:0022996950002) 96950002

Introduction and Background

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmed, J. U., Uddin, M. J., Ashikuzzaman, N., & Khan, N. (2016). Women in management: A developing country perspective. *International Journal of Gender Studies in Developing Societies*, 1(4), 376.
- Aina, I. Olabisi (1998) "Women, culture and Society" in Amadu Sesay and Adetanwa Odebiyi (eds). *Nigerian Women in Society and Development*. Dokun Publishing House, Ibadan
- Alarcon, N., "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism" in *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, (ed.) Anzaldúa, G., Aunt Lute Books, 1995.
- Anet Finch (2007) Feminism and qualitative research, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 7:1, 61-64, DOI: 10.1080/13645570310001640644
- Antonakis, J., & Day, D. V. (Eds.). (2017) *The nature of leadership*. Sage publications.
- Arat, Z. F. K. (2015). Feminisms, Women's Rights, and the UN: Would Achieving Gender Equality Empower Women? *American Political Science Review*, 109(4), 674-689.
- Beverly D. Metcalfe, Carol Woodhams, (2008) "Critical perspectives in diversity and equality management," *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 Issue: 6, pp.377-381, doi: 10.1108/17542410810897508
- Brannon, L. (2016). *Gender: psychological perspectives*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cingano, F. (2014). Trends in income inequality and its impact on economic growth.

- Dabla-Norris, M. E., Kochhar, M. K., Suphaphiphat, M. N., Ricka, M. F., & Tsounta, E. (2015). *Causes and consequences of income inequality: A global perspective*. International Monetary Fund.
- De La Rey, C. (2005). Gender, Women and Leadership. *Agenda 65 Gender and Society* 4.
- Elmuti, D., Jia, H., & Davis, H. H. (2009). Challenges women face in leadership positions and organizational effectiveness: An investigation. *Journal of leadership education*, 8(2), 167-186.
- Elsesser, K. M. (2016). Gender bias against female leaders: A Review. In *Handbook on Well-Being of Working Women* (pp. 161-173). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Epstein, C. F. (2007). Great divides: The cultural, cognitive, and social bases of the global subordination of women. *American Sociological Review*, 72(1), 1-22.
- Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn (Fall 2000), Gender Differences in *Pay Journal of Economic Perspectives*—Volume 14, Number 4—Fall 2000—Pages 75–99 retrieved from <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.14.4.75>
- Gberevbie, D.E. and Osibanjo, Adewale Omotayo and Adeniji, A. A. and Oludayo, O. Olumuyiwa (2014) An Empirical Study of Gender Discrimination and Employee Performance among Academic Staff of Government Universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social, Human Science and Engineering*, 8 (1). pp. 101-108.
- Global Network for Advanced Management (March 2017) What are the Obstacles to Women in the Global Workforce? Retrieved from <http://gnp.advancedmanagement.net/article/2017/03/what-are-obstacles-women-global-workforce>

- Goodson, Ivor (November 12, 2009). "The Story of Life History: Origins of the Life History Method in Sociology". *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*.
- Grown, C., Addison, T., & Tarp, F. (2016). Aid for Gender Equality and Development: Lessons and Challenges. *Journal of International Development*, 28(3), 311-319.
- Guy, M. E., & Meier, K. J. (2016). *Women and Men of the States: Public Administrators and the State Level: Public Administrators and the State Level*. Routledge.
- Ibarra, H., Ely, R., & Kolb, D. (2013). Women rising: The unseen barriers. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(9), 60-66.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004), *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, (Second Edition), New Age International Publishers.
- Kuhlmann, E., Ovseiko, P. V., Kurmeyer, C., Gutiérrez-Lobos, K., Steinböck, S., von Knorring, M. & Brommels, M. (2017). Closing the gender leadership gap: a multi-centre cross-country comparison of women in management and leadership in academic health centres in the European Union. *Human resources for health*, 15(1), 2.
- Mary Thierry Texeira, (August 2002) "Who Protects and Serves Me?": A Case Study of Sexual Harassment of African American Women in One U.S. Law Enforcement Agency, *Gender & Society* Vol 16, Issue 4, pp. 524 - <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243202016004007>
- Martin, L. L., & Simmons, B. A. (Eds.). (2001). *International institutions: An international organization reader*. MIT Press.
- McBride, A. (2011). Lifting the barriers? Workplace education and training, women and job progression. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(5), 528-547. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00574.x

- Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M., & Jessop, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Sage.
- Moran, R. T., Abramson, N. R., & Moran, S. V. (2014). *Managing cultural differences*. Routledge.
- Murray, R. (2014). Quotas for men: Reframing gender quotas as a means of improving representation for all. *American Political Science Review*, *108*(3), 520-532.
- Nkomo, S. M., & Ngambi, H. (2009). African women in leadership: Current knowledge and a framework for future studies. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, *4*(1), 49-68.
- Osibanjo Adewale Omotayo and Iyiola Oluwole Oladele and Anthonia Adenike, (2013) Glass-Ceiling and Female Career Advancement: A Study of the Nigeria Police, ANVESH The Journal of Management Volume 6, Indian Education Society, Management College and Research Center Mumbai
- OECD Global Forum on Public Governance Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth (2-4 April 2014), Women's Leadership in Public Life retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/gov/oecdglobalforumonpublicgovernance.htm> Paris
- Patwardhan, Vidya & Mayya, Sureshramana & Joshi, H.G.. (2016). Barriers to Career Advancement of Women Managers in Indian Five Star Hotels: A Gender Perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*. 6. 248. 10.5296/ijhrs.v6i2.9720
- Ramazanoglu, Caroline; Holland, Janet. (2002). Chapter 2 - Reason, science and progress: Feminism's Enlightenment Inheritance. In *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices* (pp32–50). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

.S. Aqeel Tirmizi, John D. Vogelsang, (22 dec. 2016), *Leading and Managing in the Social Sector: Strategies for Advancing Human Dignity and Social Justice*, Management for Professionals p - 288 pages

Samantha C. Paustian-Underdahl, Lisa Slattery Walker and David J. Woehr (2014), *Gender and Perceptions of Leadership Effectiveness: A Meta-Analysis of Contextual Moderators*, *Journal of Applied Psychology* © 2014 American Psychological Association retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/apl-a0036751.pdf> 2014, Vol. 99, No. 6, 1129 –1145 0021-9010/14/\$12.00 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0036751>

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. Random House.

Schein, V. E. (2001). A global look at psychological barriers to women's progress in management. *Journal of Social issues*, 57(4), 675-688.

Stamarski, C. S., & Son Hing, L. S. (2015). Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, 1400.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) (March 2016) *Barriers and Bias, The status of women in leadership* retrieved from <https://www.aauw.org/research/barriers-and-bias/>

The Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations (February 2009) *WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES* retrieved from [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/women\\_leadership/Online\\_discussion\\_report\\_Women\\_in\\_Leadeship\\_Roles.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/women_leadership/Online_discussion_report_Women_in_Leadeship_Roles.pdf)

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) (March 2016) Barriers and Bias, The status of women in leadership retrieved from <https://www.aauw.org/research/barriers-and-bias/>

Tripp, A. M. (2003). Women in Movement: Transformations in African Political Landscapes. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5 (2): 89-93.

Trond Petersen, Thea Togstad (2004) *Getting the Offer: Sex Discrimination in Hiring*, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Working Paper Series (University of California, Berkeley) retrieved from <http://www.irlle.berkeley.edu/files/2004/Getting-the-Offer.pdf>

UN, Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, China - September 1995 Action for Equality, Development and Peace retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, (May 2016) ,Girls' and women's literacy with a lifelong learning perspective: issues, trends and implications for the Sustainable Development Goals retrieved from <http://dide.minedu.gob.pe/bitstream/handle/123456789/4530/Girls%E2%80%99%20and%20women%E2%80%99s%20literacy%20with%20a%20lifelong%20learning%20perspective%20issues%2c%20trends%20and%20implications%20for%20the%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Sara G. Miller, (June 16, 2017) The Science of Sexism: Why Workplaces Are So Hard to Change retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/59522-science-of-sexism.html>

Stephen J. Zaccaro and Cary Kemp and Paige Bader (2004) Leader traits and attributes retrieved from

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/37161158/Zaccaro\\_et\\_al\\_-\\_2004\\_-\\_Leader\\_traits\\_and\\_attributes.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1524496921&Signature=m%2FZB2U8U2nzNXnz8TLAYWQdNOdA%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DZaccaro\\_et\\_al\\_-\\_2004\\_-\\_Leader\\_traits\\_and.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/37161158/Zaccaro_et_al_-_2004_-_Leader_traits_and_attributes.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1524496921&Signature=m%2FZB2U8U2nzNXnz8TLAYWQdNOdA%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DZaccaro_et_al_-_2004_-_Leader_traits_and.pdf)

True, J. (2012). *The political economy of violence against women*. Oxford University Press.

True, J. (2015). The Political Economy of Violence against Women in Africa. *Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa*, 13.

UN, Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, China - September 1995 Action for Equality, Development and Peace retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html>

Uschi Schreiber (2013) Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders Opening doors for women working in government retrieved from [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EYWorldwide\\_Index\\_of\\_Women\\_as\\_Public\\_Sector\\_Leaders/\\$FILE/EY-Worldwide-Index-of-Women.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EYWorldwide_Index_of_Women_as_Public_Sector_Leaders/$FILE/EY-Worldwide-Index-of-Women.pdf)

Wilson, F. M. (2017). *Organizational behaviour and gender*. Routledge.

Women, A. (2016) Empowering African Women: An Agenda for Action.

Yousaf, R., & Schmiede, R. (2017). Barriers to women's representation in academic excellence and positions of power. *Asian Journal of German and European Studies*, 2(1), 2.

World Bank, (2012), World Development report, Gender Equality and Development, retrieved from [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)



World Economic Forum (2015-2016), The Global Competitiveness Report retrieved from [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/gcr/2015-2016/Global\\_Competitiveness\\_Report\\_2015-](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/gcr/2015-2016/Global_Competitiveness_Report_2015-)

Wajcman, J. (2013). *Managing like a man: Women and men in corporate management*.

John Wiley & Sons.